



United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)  
In support of DMAC

دفتر خدمات ماین پاکي ملل متحد  
د ماین پاکي د همغږی او انسجام د ریاست په ملاتړ کې

اداره ملی آمادگی مبارزه با حوادث  
Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA)  
ریاست انسجام و هماهنگی تطهیر ماین  
Directorate of Mine Action Coordination (DMAC)



PRESS RELEASE

## MINE ACTION BRINGS HOPE AND PEACE

- International Day of Peace in Afghanistan spotlights impact of mine action.

**KABUL, 25 September 2017** – The Directorate of Mine Action Coordination and The United Nations Mine Action Service celebrated the International Day of Peace in Shamshad TV Studio, Kabul, bringing together civil society, academics institutions, International organizations, embassies, government and individual citizens in a global partnership in support of peace in the country as well as reiterating their commitment to work towards the goal of a mine-free Afghanistan by 2023.

While conflict is still raging, the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA), one of the largest and oldest mine action programs in the world, continues to work to remove the threat posed to the lives and livelihoods of Afghan civilians by landmines and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW), and to assist the Government in meeting its obligations under the Ottawa Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty.

“Mines and other ERW are weapons of war, but continue to claim lives and limbs of civilians’ years after war is over or the fighting has passed. The MAPA’s contribution to peace is both immediate and long term” said Ms. Yngvil Foss, the UNMAS Country Programme Manager. “The MAPA is often the first agent of peace, deployed to contaminated areas to make them safe for communities to resume their daily lives in peace” she reiterated.

The work of the MAPA would not be possible without the partnerships between government, civil society and non-governmental organizations that are working together to provide life saving risk education; clear areas contaminated by fighting; and help support those unfortunate enough to have fallen victims to mines and other Explosive Remnants of War (ERW).

“The Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan is contributing towards peace in its efforts to save lives” said Mohammad Aslam Sayas, Deputy and Acting Minister of the State Ministry for Disaster Management and Humanitarian Affairs. “It is clearly mentioned in the Quran that whoever saves one man – it is as if he saved mankind entirely” added Mr. Sayas.

“One of the key aspects of establishing peace is to create a secure environment for people to live”, said Mr. Mohammad Shafiq Yosufi, Director of the Directorate of Mine Action Coordination of the State Ministry for Disaster Management and Humanitarian Affairs. Mr. Yosufi added “Since its inception in 1989, the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA) has removed more than

20 million explosive devices and has promoted safety of people and facilitated development and economic activities which are vital to peace-building”,

Afghan deminers continue to be targeted during mine action operations. In 2016, 20 incidents took place against humanitarian deminers, resulting in 19 casualties (nine deaths and 10 injured), fortunately in 2017 this number dropped, but taking this opportunity, we would like to call upon all involved parties to the fighting to support humanitarian mine action programme and do not target the deminers. said Mr. Mohammad Wakil Jamshidi, Chief of Staff, United Nations Mine Action Service.

The theme of this year’s commemoration is “Together for Peace: Respect, Safety and Dignity for All” which aims to highlight the importance of all segments of Afghan society to work together to strive for peace.

Peace is the right and the desire of all people. Mine action brings peace and hope and it is the foundation for progress and well-being — happy children, thriving communities, and peaceful, prosperous countries.

### **About the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA)**

The Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA) is one of the largest and oldest mine action programs in the world: operational for 28 years, it brings together approximately 50 humanitarian and commercial organizations. Since the start, the MAPA has addressed 78 per cent of mines and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) in the country. However, 3,820 minefields covering 588 square kilometres are yet to be cleared. They continue to affect 1,500 communities in 256 districts, in all but one of Afghanistan’s 34 provinces. In addition to the legacy of decades of war, ongoing armed conflict in different parts of the country continue to add to the scale of contamination by unexploded ordnance (UXO).

### **About Peace Day**

The International Day of Peace was established in 1981 by the United Nations General Assembly to coincide with its opening session, which was held annually on the third Tuesday of September. The first Peace Day was observed in September 1982. In 2001, the General Assembly by unanimous vote established 21 September as an annual day of non-violence and cease-fire.

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