

28 January 2021



## Strong cooperation will improve safety for civilians in South Sudan

**South Sudan experiences unprecedented humanitarian needs including the need to clear the country of unexploded remnants of war. With support from the Government of the Netherlands, Danish Demining Group and Mines Advisory Group will address the threat of deadly explosive ordnance under a four-year programme.**

**Juba, 28 January 2021** – The Government of the Netherlands has contributed EUR 4.8 Million to Humanitarian Mine Action (HMA) in South Sudan, under its four-year award [“Mine Action and Cluster Munitions Programme 2020-2024” \(MACM\)](#). Globally, this multi-year funding stream is providing a total of EUR 41 million to HMA activities across nine countries through five partners. Supported by this contribution, Mine Action agencies, Danish Demining Group (DDG)<sup>1</sup> and Mines Advisory Group (MAG) will support the Republic of South Sudan in its efforts to reduce physical harm to civilians, increase access to farming land and basic services, and help South Sudanese rebuild their lives after decades of conflict.

This support is being provided to South Sudan’s Mine Action capacity at a critical time in the country’s history; the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-

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<sup>1</sup> DDG is a technical unit within Danish Refugee Council

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The Danish Refugee Council is a leading, international humanitarian displacement organisation, supporting refugees and internally displaced persons during displacement, in exile, when settling and integrating in a new place, or upon return, . We provide protection and life-saving humanitarian assistance. We support displaced persons in becoming self-reliant and included into hosting societies - and we work with communities, civil society and responsible authorities to promote protection of rights and peaceful coexistence. Founded in Denmark in 1956, 9,000 staff, 7,500 volunteers.

ARCSS) presents the strongest opportunity for peace and post-conflict recovery in several years. However, South Sudan continues to experience unprecedented humanitarian needs. Predictions for the coming year indicate that 60% of the population will face severe acute food insecurity by mid-2021.<sup>2</sup> In this context, Humanitarian Mine Action agencies act to remove barriers to sustainable population returns and economic recovery. DDG and MAG, supported through the Government of the Netherlands, will address the threat of deadly explosive ordnance that present risks of injury or death to local populations, and impede access to safe land for housing or farming.

The UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) records that all known contamination currently amounts to an area of 18.85 km<sup>2</sup>, and much of the contamination straddles the primary return routes for refugees in neighbouring countries.<sup>3</sup> According to the South Sudan Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020,<sup>4</sup> 685,000 people were impacted by anti-personnel, anti-vehicle mines and ERW. Data analysed by UNMAS between 2000 to 2018 indicates that minefield hazardous areas (HAs) are most likely to be located on, or very close to agricultural land. Of the minefields for which data was available, 52% of HAs were located less than 50m from agricultural land and 14% were located less than 50 metres from land used for natural resources.<sup>5</sup> Due to contamination, women and girls may also be forced to travel further to gather resources for the household, thereby increasing their vulnerability to Sexual- and Gender- Based Violence (SGBV).

South Sudan has committed to removing all known mined areas by July 2026 as part of its international commitments under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC). The requirement for a clearance capacity to dispose other types of unexploded ordnance is, however, likely to remain for decades. Hence, there is a requirement to build the Government of South Sudan's National Mine Action Authority's (NMAA) capacity to respond appropriately to the threats and manage long-term issues posed by explosive ordnance.

The Ambassador of the Netherlands to South Sudan also notes that “The Netherlands is proud to Chair the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention for 2021. We will focus our efforts on the themes of capacity building, innovation and inclusivity. We encourage the Government of South Sudan to work with us and our partners in South Sudan, MAG and DDG, to achieve a safer South Sudan for its people through the goal of a mine-free South Sudan by July 2026. “

The Dutch MACM programme's contribution to Mine Action in South Sudan marks a four-year commitment to clearing land of explosive ordnance and releasing it back to communities for safe use, delivery of Explosive Ordnance Risk Education messaging promoting safe behaviours in areas affected by explosive ordnance, as well as support in developing national capacity that can address and manage threats that will remain for years to come. South Sudan finds itself at a crucial juncture with respect to recovering from conflict; the Government of Netherlands and its partners believe that a concerted investment in Mine Action will remove important obstacles to this goal.

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<sup>2</sup> OCHA, “[Humanitarian community in South Sudan scales up response to save lives](#)”, 18 December 2020

<sup>3</sup> Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) data, as of 30 November 2020.

<sup>4</sup> [South Sudan Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020](#), UN OCHA

<sup>5</sup> [South Sudan APMBC Article 5 extension request](#), p.45.