Oil-for-Food Programme in Iraq

Ian Steele
United Nations

Follow this and additional works at: https://commons.lib.jmu.edu/cisr-journal

Part of the Defense and Security Studies Commons, Emergency and Disaster Management Commons, Other Public Affairs, Public Policy and Public Administration Commons, and the Peace and Conflict Studies Commons

Recommended Citation
Steele, Ian (2003) "Oil-for-Food Programme in Iraq," Journal of Mine Action : Vol. 7 : Iss. 2 , Article 38. Available at: https://commons.lib.jmu.edu/cisr-journal/vol7/iss2/38

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Center for International Stabilization and Recovery at JMU Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of Conventional Weapons Destruction by an authorized editor of JMU Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact dc_admin@jmu.edu.
Landmine surveys and clearance operations funded by the Oil-for-Food Programme have enabled thousands of Iraqis in three northern governorates to re-establish their farming and grazing lands and restore infrastructure vital to their economic progress.

Survey teams, managed by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), found that one in every five people in the three northern governorates of Iraq lives in a community with a risk of death or injury from unexploded mines and other ordnance. The surveyors identified 3,444 minefields and 1,096 mine-affected villages during landmine mapping operations undertaken between 1997 and 2000. An extensive Landmine Impact Survey (LIS) conducted in Dahuk, Erbil and Sulaymaniya governorates from February 2001 to April 2002 also shows that 24 of the 25 districts in the northern governorates and some 740,000 people are impacted by landmines.

The data that has been gathered is being used to guide strategic demining operations and mine risk education (MRE), with the following results:

- Landmine accidents have declined.
- Community safety and confidence to pursue normal activity in cleared areas has been restored.
Crop and livestock production in cleared areas has increased.

The UNOPS survey found that a total of 339 square kilometers (almost one percent of the three northern governorates) contain landmines and almost 94 percent of the identified areas contain anti-personnel mines as well as other pieces of UXO. The minefields were laid at various times throughout the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. Since 1998, UNOPS has worked with local deminers who have been trained in mine clearance techniques, including the use of detectors, mechanical flailing machines and mine-sniffing dogs. Local demining non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were established in mid-2002 to ensure sustainable capacity.

Since 1998, the UNOPS Mine Action Programme has cleared some 76,500 mines from 9.1 million square metres of land, of which 3.95 million square metres have already been returned to the local population for productive use. Elsewhere, communities remain restricted in their ability to move safely from place to place, to farm their land and tend livestock, and to collect fuelwood and drinking water for their homes in safety.

In addition to clearance operations, the programme has worked with some 2,000 mine accident and war victims, providing minor and major surgery, prostheses for lost limbs, and other rehabilitation services. Tens of thousands of women and children have received MRE that trains them to navigate their environment more safely and to report—but not touch—unfamiliar objects. Mined areas that have been identified but not yet cleared are marked with warning signs.


Contact Information

Ian Steele
Media and Public Affairs Adviser
Office of the Iraq Programme
United Nations, New York
Tel: 212 963 1646
E-mail: steelei@un.org
Website: http://www.un.org/Depts/oip/index.html