

Press release: UK aid helps clear lethal landmines in war-torn countries following generosity of British public

Mines Advisory Group (MAG) deminers at work in Angola. Picture: MAG

In response to the unprecedented generosity of the UK public in supporting the most successful Christmas landmine-clearing appeal ever, International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt has today (29 December) announced that Britain will extend its demining work to save lives in emergencies in Angola, Iraq, Lebanon, Sudan, Syria and Yemen.

Through the support announced today, the UK will work in Angola to eradicate the scourge of landmines, through both UK aid programmes and the UK Government matching pound for pound public donations to the [Mines Advisory Group's \(MAG\)](#) appeal. Angola was where Princess Diana once walked through a landmine littered field to raise awareness of the devastating impact they have on innocent lives.

At an event this year with HRH Prince Harry, DFID made a £100 million commitment to demining to make 15 million square metres of land safe again and Ms Mordaunt is today announcing the war ravaged countries that will benefit from this support. As part of the UK's ongoing commitment, 15,000 community visits will also educate people about the risks of landmines – a paramount and essential lifeline to safeguard entire communities from being maimed or killed.

The MAG's 'Walk Without Fear' appeal on Radio 4 was the station's most successful ever radio appeal. Money donated by the generous UK public to the demining cause has been matched by the UK government, doubling the total amount raised to allow even more lives to be saved.

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

Landmines have left a shameful legacy of suffering across the world, and the British public can be proud of their contribution to eradicating this hidden, indiscriminate killer.

These barbaric weapons of war kill innocent people years after a conflict has ended, and have left so many devastated families mourning the loss of loved ones. The thousands that do survive have been left maimed and seriously disabled forever, unable to work, unable to feed their families and suffering from a lifetime of debilitating pain.

Twenty years after Princess Diana's call for action resonated in every corner of the world, Britain is at the forefront in saving

thousands of lives and ensuring that future generations will now have the chance to live without fear of being killed by a weapon from the past.

MAG's appeal raised a total of over £200,000, which will be doubled by UK aid to over £400,000. This will clear 120,000m² of land from landmines, allowing people to live without fear in their own communities.

Notes to Editors

- The money raised by MAG in its appeal, and the public donations matched by the UK Government are in addition to the £100 million commitment over three years made by DFID in April 2017. This £100m commitment comprises:
 - £12.6 million in the current financial year as an extension to the pre-existing contract of the Global Mine Action Programme, which is delivered by the Halo Trust, MAG and Norwegian People's Aid in Burma, Cambodia, South Sudan, Somalia, Zimbabwe, Laos, Sri Lanka and Vietnam.
 - £20 million for Afghanistan in financial years 2018/19 and 2019/20.
 - £15.4 million for the Middle East including Syria, Iraq, Lebanon and Yemen in financial years 2018/19 and 2019/20.
 - The remainder will be for demining programmes in financial years 2018/19 and 2019/20 in Angola, South Sudan, Sudan, Zimbabwe, Somalia, Burma, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam.
- This year alone Global Mine Action Programme has ensured that more than 140,000,000 square meters of land have been released. Mine risk education programmes have reached more than 426,000 people this year, including near 360,000 women and children.
- DFID will be continuing its programming in Asia and Africa including Afghanistan, Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Zimbabwe, Somalia and South Sudan.
- In January 2018, DFID will invite organisations to bid for work in Angola, South Sudan, Lebanon, Zimbabwe, Somalia, Burma, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam.
- In Afghanistan the UK has supported demining activities, through the HALO Trust in Herat (Western Afghanistan), Baghlan, Balkh and Samangan (Northern Afghanistan) since 2008, through two five year phases with a total of £20.5 million. This support to the HALO Trust in Afghanistan will end in March 2018. Through UK aid:
 - 193,650 families have benefited from cleared lands in Herat, Baghlan, Balkh and Samangan
 - 2,900 hectares have been unblocked for development purposes (agriculture, grazing, residential and road access)
 - 96% of households surveyed reported increased income as a result of mine clearance
 - 43 communities have been cleared of all known mine/UXO hazards
 - 380 direct and 660 indirect jobs have created in all target provinces
 - Over 39,147,860 square metres of accessible minefields have been

cleared in target provinces

- Over 45,609,000 square metres of remaining area of battlefield with unexploded ordnance and ammunition are cleared in target provinces.

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