

UK aid-funded mine clearance success in Angola to be repeated in Zimbabwe

Thousands of people will be safe from the threat of landmines in Zimbabwe, thanks to fresh UK support for demining charity The HALO Trust.

UK aid will match public donations to the charity's Zimbabwe appeal, International Development Secretary Alok Sharma announced today (Sunday 6th October).

Zimbabwe is still one of the worst affected countries in the world as more than 75,000 people live near mines. Every day people cross dangerous land to reach schools, clinics and homes. Tragically more than 1,600 have lost their lives since the war in the region ended in the 1980s.

This is a widespread problem that is also felt in Angola. Last week HRH The Duke of Sussex retraced his mother's footsteps in Huambo, Angola, and saw that what was once a dangerous, landmine-littered field is now home to a thriving community.

UK aid, in partnership with demining charities, has helped clear 15 million square metres of landmines in Angola to make it safe again and educated more than 35,000 people about the dangers of mines.

The new UK aid support for The HALO Trust's Breaking Boundaries appeal aims to repeat the successes of demining in Angola in Zimbabwe.

International Development Secretary Alok Sharma said:

Landmines are indiscriminate weapons of war that maim and kill innocent men, women and children. Their devastation lasts long after conflict has ended.

I am proud to announce that, through UK Aid Match, we will double generous donations from the British public to help rid Zimbabwe of these deadly explosives.

The UK is deeply committed to clearing landmines in Zimbabwe and across the world, so no one has to live in fear of one wrong step.

James Cowan, HALO's CEO said:

The UK's support to HALO has freed hundreds of thousands of people from the fear of landmines and helped them rebuild after conflict.

Now the British public can donate to the Breaking Boundaries appeal knowing that every pound they give will be doubled by the UK

Government. We will clear twice as many minefields and help twice as many people thanks to this new support.

Clearing landmines is a painstaking process and so often this is done by hand. The UK Aid Match appeal will give communities access to the 'mine muncher', a pioneering innovative machine, developed by British company MMD in Derbyshire. This chews up tough ground and has the potential to dramatically speed up the process of clearing mines.

With donations from the British public and the Breaking Boundaries appeal, The HALO Trust hope to clear 105,600 square metres of land in Zimbabwe over 12-months, helping more than 3,000 people get access to safe land which is vital for producing food and creating jobs.

Notes to editors

1. At the time of its independence in 1980, Zimbabwe was left with seven major mine areas along its borders with Mozambique and Zimbabwe. By the end of 2017, there were five remaining major minefields.
2. Since 2018, UK backed mine action has cleared 3.6 million square metres of contaminated or thought to be contaminated land in Zimbabwe.
3. Cleared areas will help rebuild those parts of Zimbabwe that have suffered from the threat of landmines. It will help generate opportunities for local farmers, commercial agriculture, and business, allow for the construction of schools and clinics, and enable the safe return of those displaced.
4. UK aid has provided mine risk education to over 12,000 adults and children in Zimbabwe.
5. The UK government will match up to £2 million of public donations to The HALO Trust's Breaking Boundaries appeal until 22 December.
6. For every £1 donated to a UK Aid Match charity appeal by a member of the British public, the UK government will also contribute £1 of UK aid, up to a set limit – in this case of £2 million – to help these projects go further in changing and saving lives.
7. All UK Aid Match funding announced today will go to The HALO Trust's project in Zimbabwe but the charity works in 25 countries and territories around the world to clear mines.
8. The UK Aid Match appeal for The HALO Trust builds on a £100 million UK Aid package announced in 2017 which aims to clear and make safe 150 million square metres of land and help 800,000 people live their lives free from the threat of mines by 2020 across Asia and Africa.
9. UK Aid Match is designed to provide opportunities for the UK public to engage with international development issues and to have a say in how UK aid is spent, whilst boosting the impact of the best projects to reach the poorest people in developing countries.
10. Over the last six years, 61 organisations from across the UK have run UK Aid Match projects in 37 countries, helping around 23.4 million people.

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