

MASG MEETING – GICHD WRITTEN UPDATE – 10 APRIL 2025

SAHEL/WEST AFRICA

In recent years, the GICHD has increasingly engaged and formed partnerships with national authorities, mine action programmes and operators active in the Sahel and West Africa. For example, through its Francophone Regional Cooperation Programme (FRCP), the Centre organises every year one or two regional workshops or trainings bringing together Sahel and West African countries to discuss key mine action issues for the region. The GICHD has also started to provide bilateral support on Information Management to Senegal and Mauritania.

In late February 2025, a GICHD delegation led by the Director of Operations undertook a scoping mission to Mali and Burkina Faso. The purpose of this mission was to meet the national mine action authorities of these two countries, operators and other relevant humanitarian actors to better understand the needs on the ground and which types of bilateral support the GICHD could potentially offer, in complement to the work conducted by partners on the ground. This mission showed the GICHD that, although these two countries are at different stages of development in the establishment and implementation of their respective mine action programmes, they face some similar challenges in the following key areas: information management, operational management, capacity-building, coordination and access issues (in particular when it comes to EORE activities). The GICHD also visited Burkina Faso's National Demining Centre (Centre national de déminage, CND), a key actor in the country's National IEDs Strategy 2023-2027. Burkina Faso aims to develop CND as a centre for cooperation, facilitating exchange of information, experiences and good practices with other countries and organizations.

The GICHD aims to contribute to enhanced security and resilience in Sahel, and more broadly West Africa, by strengthening explosive ordnance risk reduction efforts. Through close collaboration with national authorities, regional stakeholders and international organizations, the Centre's objective is to contribute to both safe, efficient and effective ammunition management and mine action in the region. A cornerstone of this strategy is partnering with dedicated training centre(s) to serve as a regional hub for IED mitigation, expertise development, and sustainable capacity enhancement.

MENA

The GICHD has been working in support of the MENA region for years, both through bilateral, country-specific support and via its Arab Regional Cooperation Programme. The region has witnessed recent and ongoing conflicts with grave impact on civilian populations; this hinders development as well as impedes safe return and access to housing, schools and agricultural land. Two planned upcoming regional workshops on Information Management (17-19 June) and Inclusive Leadership (22-25 June) will take place in Amman, Jordan. In parallel, the Centre is supporting Yemen in its information management and strategic planning processes. The Centre is also cooperating closely with UNMAS and MA AoR on Gaza and Syria.

Gaza: The GICHD has been part of the Gaza Mine Action Area of Responsibility (MA AoR) since September 2024. In mid-November 2024, the Centre convened a technical mine action workshop for relevant stakeholders and in liaison with the partners of the Gaza MA AoR. 37 participants from 15 organizations attended the workshop, engaging in discussions on key technical and operational challenges. As a follow up to the workshop, UNMAS shared with the GICHD its newly developed Technical Standards Guidelines

(Explosive Hazard Assessment-EHA, EOD, Marking and Medical support). The GICHD conducted a review of these documents, with a focus on the EHA oneguidelines. In parallel, the GICHD updated the CORD (Collaborative ORDnance data repository) database with explosive ordnance expected to be found in Gaza and disseminated this update to the MA AoR. More recently, the Centre participated in the West Bank AoR and disseminated recently translated IMAS in Arabic via the MA AoR for Gaza and West Bank.

Syria: The GICHD has attended an online meeting in December 2024 organized by UNMAS MA AoR for Syria. The Centre has offered to UNMAS and MA AoR a wide range of support, including capacity building, Information Management support, standards development, and participation to the Arab Regional Cooperation Programme. The GICHD is discussing with different stakeholders with regards to their needs and priorities.

Yemen: The GICHD held on 17 February 2025 a workshop for Yemen in Amman entitled “Finding a Path for Sustainable Mine Action in Yemen”. The workshop was designed to serve as a collaborative platform for the Yemen Executive Mine Action Centre (YEMAC), the Yemen Mine Action Coordination Centre (YMACC) and other stakeholders engaged in Mine Action in Yemen. In addition, the GICHD shared the draft Yemen Mine Action Strategy 2023-2028 with YEMAC and YMACC leadership before organising a strategy review workshop in Amman on 15 February.

AFGHANISTAN

Despite longstanding support and previous engagement with the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA), the GICHD halted its technical support to the MAPA after the regime change in 2021. Following a meeting with the Afghanistan Chief of Mine Action Section in UNAMA during the 2024 NDM, the GICHD conducted a fact-finding visit to Afghanistan in September 2024 to know more about the current MAPA set-up of the and the areas of support needed. I Part of the identified support included a review of MAPA's 31 National Mine Action Standards (NMAS), not updated since 2017.

To effectively support MAPA in review ofits NMAS, the GICHD conducted an NMAS development workshop on 23-27 February 2025 in Kabul. The workshop, which was the first technical intervention of GICHD with the MAPA since 2021, was attended by 24 participants from the Directorate of Mine Action Coordination (DMAC), national and international operators, United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), United Nations Assistance Mission for Afghanistan (UNAMA) and Mine Action Technical Cell (MATC), a UN-funded initiative which engages in technical-level coordination of mine action efforts in Afghanistan. The workshop aimed to help the participants learn the concept and principles of the NMAS development process, familiarize participants with how to use IMAS to review NMAS chapters, better understand relevant treaty obligations, and discuss roles and responsibilities of mine action organizations involved in the NMAS development process. Furthermore, the importance of re-establishing the NMAS review board was discussed to review and update the other Afghanistan NMAS chapters.

The GICHD is requested to provide further capacity enhancement support to MAPA by conducting trainings on land release, quality management as well as courses specifically for mine action managers. Technical support on maintaining and updating the IMSMA database, including transitioning to IMSMA Core, has also been requested and started in 2025.