



International Organization for Migration

IOM Partners with Mines Advisory Group in Sulaymaniyah



MAG not only removed the mines but with the help of IOM educated the local population on mine awareness and safety

May 10, 2011 – The Mines Advisory Group (MAG) has partnered with IOM Iraq to safely remove landmines from a karez restoration site in the northern governorate of Sulaymaniyah.

Since March 2011, IOM has been working to restore traditional “karez” systems in the Halabja district of Sulaymaniyah. Karez systems are ancient traditional water systems which provide rural areas with irrigation and drinking water in a sustainable manner. The project is supported by the US Commander’s Emergency Response Program (CERP), and is planned to cover the restoration of 10 karez systems.

At the beginning of May, a team of IOM staff and local community members excavating a karez in a small village discovered several landmines scattered around the site. IOM immediately contacted the local office of MAG and a joint assessment was undertaken to evaluate the situation. The mines were found to be over 20 years old, and had recently washed down into the karez site from a nearby mountain.

A team of experts from MAG returned to the karez soon after the assessment and conducted a full demining operation to clear the work site of any landmines or other dangerous remnants of war. After marking the site and constructing a stone wall to prevent any further mines from being washed down from a higher elevation, the site was declared clear and the karez team was able to safely return to work.

“IOM and MAG have doubly benefitted our village” said Mr. Kamaran, the owner of the karez. “Now we will have both

fresh water and an area safe from landmines.”

To further educate and protect both IOM staff and the members of the communities in which they are working, IOM and MAG followed up on the demining operation by holding a Mine Risk Education training session. The session was held on May 10 in Halabja city, and was attended by four IOM staff and 16 community members, as well as a representative from the military. A team of MAG trainers instructed participants on the various types of mines and other explosives common to Iraq, and what to do should they encounter one.

“We sincerely appreciate MAG’s assistance with demining our karez site and educating our staff and members of the community on the risks posed by mines” said IOM Project Manager Lucie Dupertuis.

For further information on the Mines Advisory Group (MAG), please visit: www.maginternational.org



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