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COHAFA 18
DEVGEN 29
MAMA 30
MOG 10
RELEX 181
INTER-REP 23

NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
On: 9 February 2022
To: Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA)

Subject: Obstacles to humanitarian aid in North Africa and the Middle East:
Administrative obstacles: relations with the authorities
- presentation by HAMAP-Humanitaire

Following the COHAFA meeting of 9 February, delegations will find in Annex presentation made by HAMAP-Humanitaire⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾.

¹ HAMAP-Humanitaire (HAMAP), identification number in the EU Transparency Register: 192956245310-04.

² This document contains a presentation by an external stakeholder and the views expressed therein are solely those of the third party it originates from. This document cannot be regarded as stating an official position of the Council. It does not reflect the views of the Council or of its members.

HAMAP-Humanitaire

COHAFA February 9, 2022



HAMAP-Humanitaire

Created in 1999, HAMAP-Humanitarian is a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) of international solidarity specialized in two main fields : water and sanitation, and mine action.

HAMAP-Humanitaire mine action expertise

- In **Iraq** since 2016, where HAMAP-Humanitaire has conducted explosive risks education projects in the areas liberated from the Islamic State in the north of the country.
- In **north-eastern Syria** since 2019, where HAMAP carry out direct demining activities in the area of Raqqah and its suburbs.

HAMAP-Humanitaire faced two main challenges : the Middle East region itself, and the field of mine action, which is a highly political field as it concerns military and territorial aspects

1- Obstacles to humanitarian access (people and goods) in North-East Syria

Dependent on the **geopolitical context** between North-Eastern Syria and Iraqi Kurdistan :

- Closure of the border linked to **growing tensions between the Syrian and Iraqi Kurdish authorities**;
- Since 2021, the border seems to be becoming a point of **crystallization of tensions**, and this is having a major impact on our activities in north-east Syria on several points: difficulties in moving staff in place, shortage of products in the NES, difficulties in supplying material goods.

Requesting a long-term exception for humanitarian NGOs, because this situation is occasionally detrimental to our activities, and ultimately impacts civilians' beneficiaries that are in need

2- Increasing interference by the authorities in humanitarian assistance in North-East Syria - specificity of demining activities

In the frame of its **demining activities**, HAMAP deals on a daily basis with **NESMAC** (North-East Syria Mine Action Cluster), who claims to be civilian, but is unofficially attached to the Syrian Democratic Forces. HAMAP notes a recent change in the NESMAC's behavior towards NGOs, which can be broken down into **several points** :

- A **lack of transparency** in terms of obtaining registration to carry out activities;
 - Interfering in the **recruitment** of NGOs;
 - Trying to **control the activities** carried out on their territory;
 - **FOCUS** – Specific taxation on mine action NGOs
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3- Recent change in attitude of local authorities towards NGOs in Iraqi Kurdistan

Over the past year, HAMAP has seen **an evolution in relations between the Kurdish government and the NGOs**, towards greater rigor and politicization.

For example : the Kurdish government now wants NGOs registered in the KRG to be active in the KRG. We have recently encountered some difficulties with IKMAA (Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency), which validates and distributes mine action permits for NGOs.

It is necessary to maintain strict neutrality in the analysis of humanitarian needs, so that NGOs work in areas that are objectively the most needy, without discrimination.
