

UK Funding for Land Mine Clearance Scrapped in Lebanon, Iraq and S. Sudan

Humanitarian organisations have warned of the dire consequences UK funding cuts to land mine clearance will have on some of the world's most vulnerable communities.

By [The New Arab](#)

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UK government funding for [land mine](#) clearance in Lebanon, Iraq and South Sudan, as well as three other countries, has been scrapped in what humanitarian organisations called a “catastrophic collapse in support”.

The Mines Advisory Group (MAG) released a statement earlier this week estimating that UK funding for mine action removal will be reduced by 80 percent following the British government's decision to [slash overseas development aid](#).

Six countries - [South Sudan](#), [Lebanon](#), [Iraq](#), Zimbabwe Myanmar and Vietnam - will no longer receive any support from the British government as a result of the cuts, leaving vulnerable communities at risk of unexploded weapons and with restricted access to arable land.

“Reducing UK funding for humanitarian mine action by 80% is a catastrophic collapse in support that'll harm the lives of vulnerable people across the world and do immeasurable harm to [#GlobalBritain](#)'s standing”

—MAG CEO [@DarrenCormack](#)'s statement on [#UKAid](#) cuts to mine action.

— MAG (Mines Advisory Group) (@MAGsaveslives) [October 7, 2021](#)

CEO of MAG Darren Cormack spoke to *The New Arab* from Senegal and said the UK government's decision was “shortsighted”.

“It shows naivety from a development, trade and security perspective,” he added.

In [South Sudan](#), said Cormack, land mine clearance helps maintain “political stability”.

However, following a 100 percent cut in UK funding, vital work removing unexploded weapons and freeing up more land for farming is under threat, said Cormack.

Around 8.3 million people in South Sudan need humanitarian assistance, and over 60 percent of the population is acutely food insecure.

“Lebanon is a country on its knees,” said MAG’s CEO.

[The country will also be hard hit](#) by a 100 percent funding cut to mine action removal. Over a hundred staff were already made redundant as a result of cuts.

Cormack said that the economic instability could urge more people to take risks and use arable land that has not been cleared of weapons – resulting in more injuries and deaths.

[New UK Foreign Secretary Liz Truss](#) will review these spending cuts following the ousting of her predecessor Dominic Raab. MAG hopes this will lead to funding being restored.

“We welcome the new leadership,” said Cormack and are “encouraged by Liz Truss’ plans to review the cuts.”

However, there is no certainty that the decision will be reversed.

Landmines and unexploded bombs affect 60 million people in the world, with 15 people killed or injured by these weapons every day.

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