



## UNMAS Somalia

### Case Study - DHS MPR#3

#### UNMAS: Creating a safe and conducive living environment

In October 2024, UNMAS multi-skilled team (MST) visited Buulo Butkey village to conduct a non-technical survey (NTS), through which they learnt of Madkey, a man popular for collecting explosive remnants of war (ERW) and burning them as a way to protect his children and community from their devastating risk.

Madkey, 45, lives in Buulo Butkey village which is located 15 kilometres northwest of Baidoa town in central Somalia's Bay region. The village, like the region, has a long history of conflict, rooted in civil war, access to and control of pastoral resources as well as the negative impact of ERW.

Through a stockpile-related workshop, the team approached and equipped Madkey with the requisite knowledge about the risks associated with ERW. Indeed, the workshop proved effective in convincing Madkey to desist from the life-endangering activities.

Madkey was pleased to share his previous experience with the team during an interactive explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) session. *"Anytime I saw ERW, I would participate in life-threatening actions such as collecting and burning them,"* Madkey began his tale with deep regret.

*"I didn't have a backup plan for keeping my children and community safe. The conditions relating to a lack of awareness prompted me to engage in this extremely dangerous action, but the safety of my community was the driving force. I also escaped multiple times and purposely put my live in danger,"* Madkey narrated and then continued emotionally: *"I am discouraged now from conducting these perilous activities and will utilize my new acquired knowledge to mitigate the risks of ERW."*

Madkey acknowledged and appreciated the team's expert information, and began showing the team where he used to gather and burn ERW. The team discovered a hand grenade at the same location where Madkey used to collect and burn the devices.

*'Qaldaa ma qaldo'* is a common phrase in Somali communities synonymous with the commission of errors concerning mines and ERW during wartime. The phrase loosely translates to *'If one makes an ERW mistake, he will never repeat the mistake because it kills him on the spot'*.

The team carefully removed the hand grenade and destroyed it at a nearby post of police, who assisted in cordoning the hazardous radius during the disposal activity, preventing a possible accident that was imminent.

*"We did everything we could to help Madkey and other people understand the scale of the threat to their life, and in turn, they showed willingness to cooperate with us,"* remarked EORE facilitator Mr. Mohamed.



Team leader collecting information from Madkey during NTS in Buulo Butkey village



MST providing EO awareness messages to Madkey and key persons of Buulo Butkey village



Team leader setting up to destroy ERW cleared with support of Madkey

During the 3 months of the current project, the teams visited and surveyed 104 villages across the four federal member states. During this activity, the team facilitated 113 EO risk education sessions with a reach of 2,251 beneficiaries (419 girls, 1,104 boys, 390 women, and 338 men) in the EO impacted areas and disseminated EORE promotion materials, such as 1,874 risk education leaflets and 205 risk education talking devices. Based on feedback from the local communities, the teams cleared 142,500 m<sup>2</sup> of land, removing 1,344 ERW.

*"As a result, the people have always appreciated our efforts to providing the local communities with much-needed assistance by raising their awareness concerning the risks posed by explosive ordinances and removing the explosive hazards that have persistently continued to adversely affect the population across the country,"* concluded team leader Mr. Abdirizak.



*MST and SPF after joint demolition of ERW in Buulo Butkey village, Bay Region*

Explosive hazards remain widespread threat to many communities today, civilians and local troops alike. Recently, dozens of people were affected by explosive remnants of war resulting from conflict in Somalia. Driven and dedicated, UNMAS contracted multi-skilled teams continue to tackle the threat of unexploded ordnance for the benefit of local communities, and internally displaced people, prioritizing reconstruction and development. Furthermore, the afore-explicated efforts complement the objectives of SDG 3 by promoting health and safety for all as they support the creation of a conducive environment where Somali families can live freely.