



Press Release

Republic of Iraq, European Union join efforts to meet commitments towards landmine survivors and other persons with disabilities in Iraq

Baghdad, Geneva 25 August 2018 – The Republic of Iraq, one of 29 States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention having reported responsibility for significant numbers of landmine survivors, will hold a three-day National Stakeholder Dialogue seeking to kick-start the development of a national action plan to cohesively address not only mine survivors' needs but those of all persons with disabilities in Iraq.

The National Dialogue taking place **25-26 September at the Prime Minister's Guest House**, is hosted by the **Directorate of Mine Action (DMA) of the Ministry of Health and Environment of Iraq**, co-hosted by the **European Union (EU)**, and supported by the Convention's Implementation Support Unit (ISU).

"The National Dialogue will bring together relevant ministries and national authorities; organisations representing landmine survivors and other persons with disabilities; and, international and non-governmental organizations including the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) and other important international partners and donors," said **DMA Director-General Essa Alfayadh**, who also oversees the work to collect data on casualties and situation of mine victims in conflict-affected governorates in Iraq.

"We hope to continue our steadfast commitment to integrate victim assistance into national policies, plans and legal frameworks related to the rights of persons with disabilities," said Essa Alfayadh.

"The overall objective of the **Decision adopted by the EU Council** is to favour actions to implement key aspects of the Convention including assistance to landmine survivors, in particular, to empower those injured by landmines or other explosive remnants of war to become agents in their own development," said **H. E. Ramon Blecua, Head of the EU Delegation to Iraq**. "A victim assistance (VA)/disability plan of action would serve as roadmap to strengthen victim assistance coordination and disability rights in Iraq, and to raise awareness on these commitments among the various government ministries, international partners and donors," said Ambassador Blecua.

The European Union Council adopted Decision 2017/1428, to support States Parties to the Convention in the process of implementing victim assistance obligations, in particular when these efforts are complimentary to commitments undertaken through another international instrument, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

In addition to Iraq, in 2018 the European Union will support Bosnia and Herzegovina, Senegal and Uganda efforts to implement mine clearance and victim assistance commitments under the Convention. The EU will also support a global conference on victim assistance and disability rights in 2019.