



**MAG**

saves lives **builds futures**

# IMPACT

— **Spring 2016** —

Middle East and  
Emergencies



## ↑ Cover story

This mother and child fled devastating violence, seeking safety on Sinjar Mountain in northern Iraq. Life is hard living in tents on top of the mountain.

The camp where they are staying has been cleared but there are landmines and unexploded bombs in the surrounding areas.

← Twelve-year-old Amin and his family were also forced to flee here. Leaving war behind, Amin walked straight into danger when he stumbled across a hidden bomb that ripped off his hand, and left his legs so damaged that he can barely walk. Amin may have survived this deadly weapon but he faces a life of difficulty and pain.

With your help we are delivering vital risk education to these families, spreading life-saving lessons so they know the dangers and how to stay safe.

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# WELCOME TO IMPACT

The sad truth is that new conflicts are putting ever more people at risk. Women, men and children are forced from their homes to take refuge in strange places, in unfamiliar circumstances - often places which themselves have a legacy of conflict and are still scattered with landmines and unexploded bombs. This edition of Impact focuses on the Middle East and MAG's emergency work in that troubled region. In Iraq alone, the ongoing crisis has forced three million people to flee their homes and seek safety elsewhere in their own country.

MAG has been at the forefront of emergency response in Iraq, clearing land and helping fleeing, frightened people to take refuge in real safety. As land is gradually reclaimed, all that anybody wants is to get back home, to rebuild their lives far away from the crowded and unfamiliar camps. But this brings with it one of the biggest challenges for the humanitarian community - how can families return home to villages that have become riddled with landmines and unexploded bombs during their absence? This is where, with your support, MAG can help. Chris Loughran, MAG Director of Policy, looks at the situation in more depth on page 4.

The people of the Middle East have suffered greatly, and to see one family get back to their land, grow their crops and rebuild their lives, motivates everyone at MAG to do more. On one level MAG's work is beautifully simple - making unsafe places safe, whether that is the places people flee to, or return to. It is quite extraordinary to witness the difference that basic physical safety makes to someone who has had to live without it. Your donations make this possible.

This is a truly regional emergency. Huge refugee communities now live in Lebanon, Jordan, the Kurdish region of Northern Iraq

and in Turkey. In Lebanon, the threat from landmines and unexploded bombs has long been part of life. Everybody knows the land around their neighbourhoods, schools and workplaces may be contaminated with lethal explosive devices. But life must go on - whether going to school, or farming the land - even if it means taking one's life in one's hands when stepping out of the door.

On page 10-11 see how MAG is helping Syrian refugees and Lebanese children to stay safe. Simply teaching vulnerable people how to recognise and avoid the hidden dangers, until they can be cleared, could be critical to their survival.

Everyone has a right to live in safety and free from fear. Everyone has a right to hope for a better future. Everyone has a right to provide for their family and work their way out of poverty. With your help, more and more people in the Middle East ARE safer every day, and DO have a future to look forward to.



**Nick Roseveare**  
Chief Executive

# MIDDLE EAST REGIONAL CRISIS



↑ Chris Loughran, Director of Policy, speaking in Geneva at a meeting on international cooperation.

**The regional crisis and emergency in the Middle East is one of the most complex and extensive that MAG and other humanitarian organisations have had to respond to.**

The media spotlight has shone predominantly on Europe's borders and the peace process for Syria, often focusing on the refugee crisis, but the effect of the emergency extends deep into the region. There are over three million men, women and children internally displaced in Iraq alone. Most of these families are fleeing Islamic State's appalling human rights abuses, seeking safety in other areas of the country. This equates to the entire populations of Manchester, Edinburgh, Birmingham, Cardiff and Bristol displaced into camps and host communities.

One of the biggest challenges, as land is being regained from Islamic State in Iraq, is how and when families can return home safely. Improvised mines, booby-traps and bombs that have failed to function lie everywhere - including in the rubble of destroyed homes, hospitals and schools. Some of these have been laid deliberately to target civilians and the people trying to help them. The risk to life is huge.

This is where we can help - with your support MAG is clearing villages so that families can return home and our humanitarian partners can get through safely. Humanitarian priorities extend from providing shelters in Iraq's hot summers and freezing winters to ensuring access to water, sanitation, healthcare and education.

MAG's work is vital and the impact is huge.

This seems straightforward, but raises complex issues. There is no sign of an end to the fighting in Iraq and Syria, but the need of these families is immediate and we have a moral obligation to find ways to respond quickly and safely.

The reality is that humanitarian organisations like MAG need to find ways of working in places where fighting has stopped. To do this, we need to hang on to our principles of impartiality, humanity and independence and keep thinking on our feet about new ways of working. It is challenging, but our work in the Middle East shows what we can achieve with your help.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Chris'.

# LIVING WITH RISK

**“The village can’t survive.  
The people can’t rear their  
animals, they can’t eat.”**



Mihar is a farmer living in a village on Iraq’s border with Syria. When the fighting stopped in his village he dared to start farming again, but there were hidden and deadly explosives buried in the soil. The danger surrounding him became apparent when some of his grazing sheep triggered an explosion. Then a tractor set off another device.

“We didn’t know where was safe anymore. We were so afraid and couldn’t go into any of our fields. A shepherd was killed just the other day.”

The terrifying violence in Iraq has put ordinary



people like Mihar in immediate danger. Condemned to live with the daily risk and terror of landmines and unexploded bombs, many people have been left trapped, unable to use their land.

As Mihar describes: “You can imagine how we felt when MAG came here. We were very happy. They came first to educate us about the dangers and now the teams are here clearing our land.”

When you donate to MAG, you give people like Mihar back their livelihood, you give them the chance to provide for their families in safety.



A villager speaks to Omar from the MAG team in Iraq. The remains of this school were believed to be booby-trapped. MAG cleared the buildings and surrounding area so the school could be rebuilt.

“We are so grateful to MAG for coming and clearing it for us.”

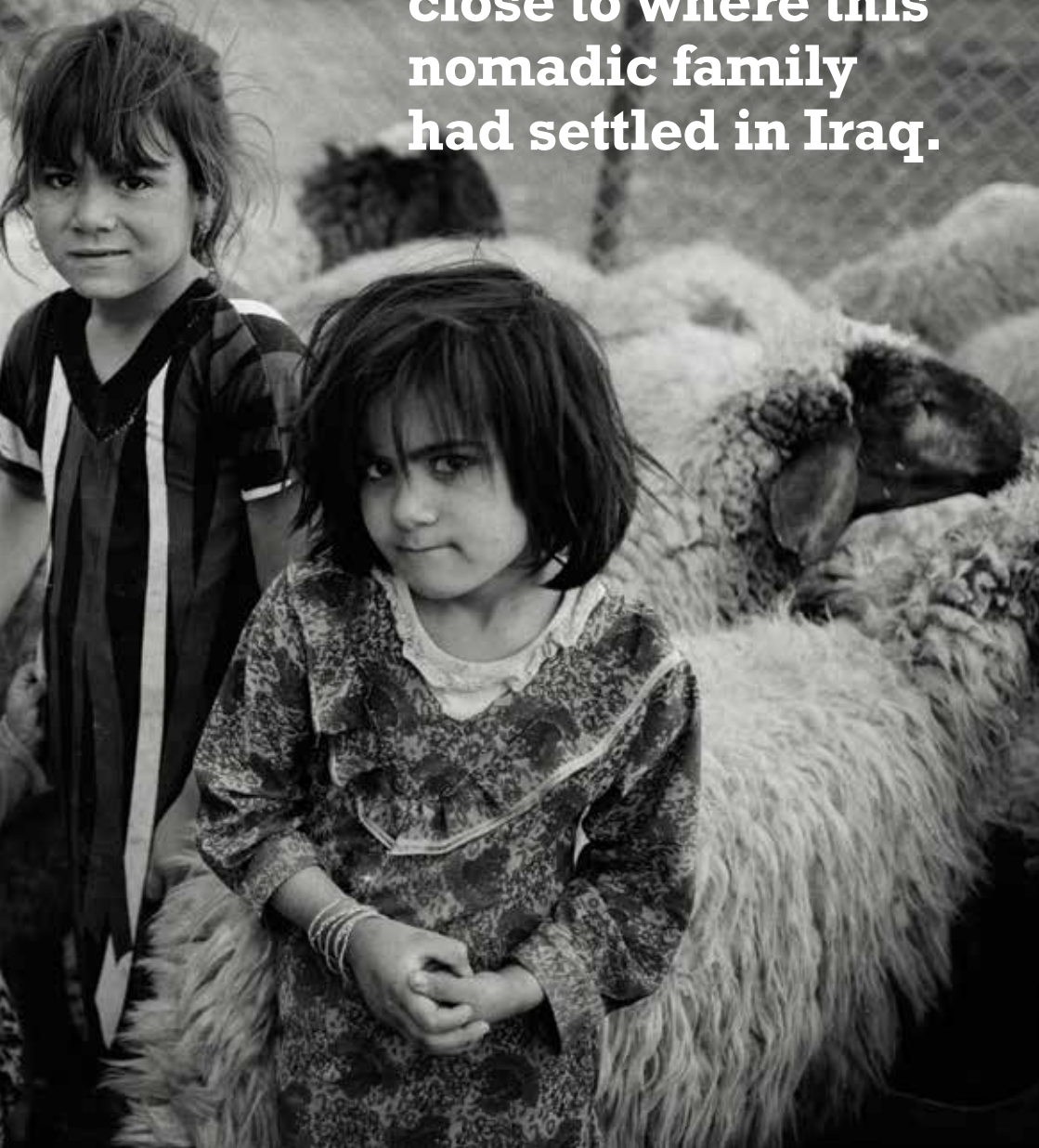


**In just five months, MAG  
cleared 1,100 homemade  
landmines in northern Iraq**





**MAG found and  
destroyed one  
complete rocket  
and one rocket part  
close to where this  
nomadic family  
had settled in Iraq.**









In February 2016, some of the most senior names in the UK's convenience retail sector joined forces and cycled 440km across Sri Lanka, using their pedal power to clear landmines and save lives.

Executives from My Local, Spar and Him! International were among the 24 people who cycled from Colombo to

Trincomalee, through intense heat and the island's extremely hilly interior.

My Local's Trading Director Neil Turton, who is also one of MAG's trustees, said, "I did my first MAG cycle seven years ago and I have seen the real difference MAG's work makes. The climbs, distance and heat were really tough in Sri Lanka,

but raising money to tackle the problem of landmines is a wonderful incentive. I know that our fundraising helps MAG get to landmines and bombs before a child does."

Special thanks to Bridge Insurance Brokers for sponsoring Cycle Sri Lanka 2016!

**Cycling 11,040km  
and aiming to raise over**

**£125k**

**this could fund a  
landmine clearance  
team for a year**



**GET INVOLVED**

Find out more here:  
**[www.maginternational.org/getinvolved](http://www.maginternational.org/getinvolved)**

We'd love to hear about  
your fundraising plans:

**[fundraising@  
maginternational.org](mailto:fundraising@maginternational.org)**

**0161 236 4311**



Image © Clowns Without Borders

# LEARNING HOW TO STAY ALIVE CAN BE FUN

In fact, it needs to be. Here are just two ways the MAG team in Lebanon are getting children involved in the lessons that could save their lives...

## THE CLOWNS PROTECTING LEBANESE CHILDREN FROM MINES

MAG and Clowns Without Borders have created lessons that could be the most important of children's lives.

The performance was shown in schools across Lebanon, teaching vulnerable Syrian refugees and Lebanese children about the dangers of landmines, cluster bombs and other explosive items. The children were also

given specially designed games and leaflets to share with siblings and family members to spread awareness across the community.

As well as getting the children talking about the dangers of deadly devices, the lessons teach them how to report anything they find to MAG so we can clear the threat. This knowledge is invaluable for the Lebanese children but also for the Syrian refugees who need to understand the risk for when they return home.



↑ The team in Lebanon use puppets to capture the children's imaginations. MAG's commitment is to make sure each child walks away from our risk lessons with the knowledge that can keep them safe for the rest of their life.

**We need to reach every child before the unthinkable happens.**

## PUPPET PLAY

Working with the Arab Puppet Theatre Foundation, the MAG team have created a show to grab the children's attention.

Based on situations faced everyday by the MAG team in Lebanon, the play tells the story of naughty Nabil and his sister Nada who tries to keep him safe from the threat of landmines in their village.

The team are now travelling to schools and communities across the area with the show, spreading life-saving lessons for these children and families.

Mariam has worked with MAG Lebanon for two years:

"We started taking the play to schools in February. The children were amazed by the puppets. They even helped the storyteller by shouting warnings to Nabil about the dangerous items. We are really happy with the positive and encouraging reactions from the children."

Children are most likely to fall victim to landmines and cluster bombs because they are most likely to run, to explore, to play and to be curious.

We need to reach every child before the unthinkable happens.

