NEEDS DRIVEN. PEOPLE CENTRED.

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Findings from research for an Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) Media Campaign Targeting Most At-Risk Communities

UNMAS Iraq

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0.1 Introduction

As part of efforts to support a more informed EORE approach in Iraq, UN-MAS Iraq commissioned a strategic communications company to develop and implement an EORE campaign to improve awareness, increase understanding, and induce behavioral change among a diverse target group in Iraqi governorates liberated from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).As a first step towards the creation of this campaign, research was undertaken to identify appropriate and effective communications methods that would resonate with the target population. The principal objective of the research was to evaluate how best to communicate with the target population and develop an effective campaign based on this research. This report summarizes the main findings of the research and is divided into the following headings:

- General outlook

- Perceptions of EO

- Reporting

- Media access and consumption habits

- Existing EO messages

- Conclusion

- Annex A - Respondent's demographics

The research methodology was a mixed approach consisting of qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data comes from four Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with male and female respondents in Mosul and Kirkuk, all of whom were 18 years of age or over. In addition, five in-depth interviews (IDI) with two females and three male youth were conducted in Mosul. The quantitative data consisted of 1,035 face-to-face individual questionnaires that were conducted in Ninewa, Kirkuk, Salah Al Din, Diyala and Al Anbar governorates. A significant effort was made to include a diversity of respondents which reflected the campaign's target group, including men, women, people living with disabilities, geographic locations, employment status and education level. The demographics of the respondents are summarized in Annex A - Respondent's demographics.

0.2 General outlook

Assessing the general outlook that Iraqis felt enabled an understanding of how important EO contamination was to the target group. For example, if there are other, more pressing issues, they may choose not to listen to EO messaging or not deem it important enough to listen to. This will affect the design and delivery of EO messaging. Similarly, an understanding of the general attitude of the target population may indicate the type of content that is appreciated.

To this end, the research attempted to understand some of the most pressing challenges which respondent's felt. Unemployment, lack of infrastructure and lack of basic services (electricity in particular) were cited as the main challenges faced in the respondent's neighbourhoods. Only one respondent cited EO contamination as any of the three main important challenges facing their neighbourhood.

It was further found that many civilians rely on their personal efforts when facing a threat like EO; they are more likely to remove the EO themselves than seek help.

However, respondents also demonstrated optimism and remained hopeful for the future; when asked about life in their community a year from now, just over half of the responden's interviewed (53%) said life will be better. The local security situation appears to be a decisive factor in their outlook on life. This was true for both optimists and pessimists. Among those who predict life will be better in a year's time, three out of five (60%) said they thought so because security is improving. Pessimists also prioritise security with almost half (49%) of respondents thinking that life will be worse based on their prediction that security is worsening.

The above findings are hardly surprising given the challenging context of Iraq – a country that has been plagued with on and off again conflict for over two decades. However, what the findings do emphasize is the necessity to develop effective materials that penetrate through the many, other legitimate concerns felt by respondents.

0.3 Perceptions of EO

In addition to understanding general attitudes, understanding perception of EO amongst the target audience was explored. The purpose of this was to understand how messages and materials could be adapted that would most effectively promote behaviour change. As such, a series of questions were asked related to perceptions of EO.

Although the presence of EO was not mentioned in the top three issues of concern, three out of every four respondents interviewed said that EO has an impact on their daily lives. Concern over the threats of EO was particularly high among those with a disability, with 63% of them saying it seriously affects their ability to go about their daily life.

In terms of sex, women were more likely to show concern over EO than men. Fifty percent of women reported that the presence of EO seriously affected the ability to go about their daily lives, compared to only 37% of men. In total, of all respondent's surveyed, 60% reported being seriously or moderately affected by the presence of EO. Moreover, 70% of all respondents reported having been injured or knowing a family member that was injured by an EO.

When asked who was most at risk from EO, one quarter of the respondents reported that Internally Displaced Persons were most at risk of EO. Almost the same proportion said it was agricultural workers as their work is done in areas that are mostly contaminated by EO. Fifty-two percent of respondents of the individual interviews perceived men, women, and children to all be equally at risk of EO. However, during the FGDs opinions were split between children and adults (mainly men) who are required to travel to areas affected by EO, such as shepherds, cleaners and farmers.

Most respondents (55%) interviewed individually feel they can identify an EO if they see one. However, this result should be viewed in the context of the qualitative findings which showed that even those who were initially confident in their abilities to identify an EO admitted, after being shown images of EO, that this was the first time they had actually seen what an EO could look like. This is concerning as it indicates misconceptions, giving people false confidence and putting them at further risk from EO. In particular, male respondents in the quantitative data collection seemed to have more confidence in their ability to identify EO with 65% saying they feel confident they can identify one. However, only 33% of those male respondents had ever encountered an EO before. Anbar governorate recorded the highest level of confidence in EO identification, with 57% of respondents from this governorate completely confident in their ability to identify an EO.

Another worrying perception from some respondents was the belief that since it has been approximately three years since liberation, the chances of encountering EO have reduced in probability. They believed that most of the EO would have either been safely removed or already exploded and was therefore of less concern. Despite this, the majority of respondents from the FGDs and the IDIs thought that if EO threatens lives, the presence of EO is as important as other problems the country is currently facing. This is particularly true for rural areas and outskirts of cities that were under ISIL

control.

> "It rarely happens, from time to time we hear of an incident, almost a week ago we heard of one, in an area north of Mosul, a football player, some explosives blew him up but that's it. There are more pressing issues' – *Male FGD participant, Mosul.*

0.4 Reporting

Reporting refers to the reporting of EO to the relevant authorities by the affected community. The purpose of this section was to understand to what extent EO was reported, if at all. Respondents who claimed to have encountered an EO previously were asked whether they reported the EO to the authorities. Less than half, 45%, said that they did not report to any authorities. When asked why, the main reason reported by 19% of the respondents was fear of being linked to the threat. Fear of ISIL accounted for 14% of non-reporting and 12% said that the contact numbers were not available when they tried to call. Of those who did claim to report EO to the authorities, they reported it to the local police. Some also reported to the army or directly to a clearance operator. The majority of those reporting were men (64%) with only 41% of women who said that they reported the threat.

0.5 Media access and consumption habits

After having a general understanding of the perception of EO and general attitude, the research moved on to explore effective communication methods. Media access and consumption habits were evaluated to understand which media tools were more popular and credible with which to disseminate RE messages. Discussions with respondents on this subject revealed several distinct trends.

During the FGDs, most of the adult respondents said that they rely equally on television channels and internet sources (in particular, social media platforms) to obtain the news. Additionally, some of the adult respondents said that they rely on social media to verify the news they get from other media sources. Meanwhile, youth in the IDIs reported relying almost entirely on internet and social media for news and information. When asked

specifically about information related to EO, the youth participants of the IDI said that they would go online to look for information on EO. In contrast, adult participants said they would expect to receive this information from either the government or from Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO).

In terms of source credibility, younger audiences had different factors to measure credibility of social media. This included whether the social media platform offered live broadcasts, provided video evidence to support posts, and allowed comments/reactions from other users on their post. Government pages were also mentioned as sources for official information. Similarly, adult participants measured the credibility of a platform by its live coverage from a scene (for example, whether the media provided video or photo evidence), as well as by coverage without any clear biases towards certain Iraqi politicians or parties.

> 'If you are looking for some official decisions, like a public holiday or something like that, you see it on the government's pages, depending on who is making the decision.' – *Female FGD participant, Mosul.*

> 'Any channel reports news, but not any channel would get the correct information. Each one would report the same thing differently.' – *Male FGD participant, Mosul.*

Television and social media were by far the most frequently used media platforms by the participants. Three in every five respondents (59%) consumed local Iraqi television channels daily. Respondents from Ninewa governorate had the highest consumption at 76%. Additionally, over 70% of participants aged 35 and above reported watching television multiple times a day. Men, women and people with disabilities all had similar television usage rates. However, figures for social media platforms such as Facebook and Youtube were even higher with three in every four (74%) using them daily. Only 6% of participants reported not using them at all. In particular, Facebook consumption was high across all age groups except for those between 45 to 55, who reported that they were less likely to use it more than once a day (56%). However, at least 77% of all other age groups reported using Facebook multiple times a day.

The least used form of media were print media and radio. For each of these tools, 78% and 81% of participants respectively reported never using these tools.

Apart from media, it is worth noting that communication by word of mouth was also seen to be widely used amongst the participants. Of all the

respondents, 60% reported using word of mouth as a form of communicating news multiple times a day.
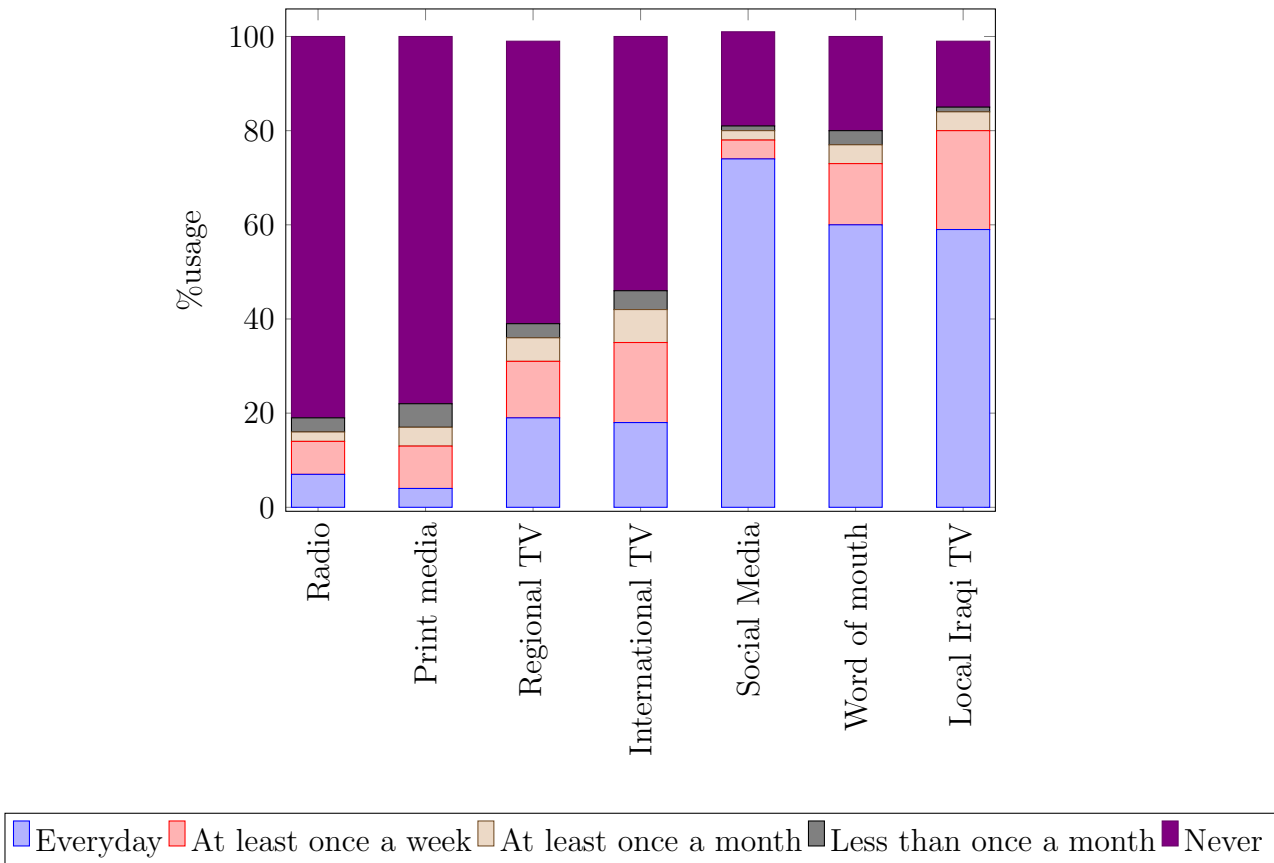

Figure 1: How often do you typically use the following media platform?

The research also explored the different access to certain media tools. The results of this are summarised in Figure 2. The findings of this suggest that in order to reach the largest number of people in the fastest way possible, social media and television would be the most effective communication methods to use. Social media has additional benefits too as it allows messages to be shared and reach to be more easily measured.

(a) 81% has access to internet

(b) 19% has access to a radio

(c) 91% has access to a smartphone

(d) 99% has access to television

Figure 2: % of access to each media tool

0.6   Existing EO messages

The research further explored existing EO messaging and assessed how this reached target groups to date. The component of the research tried to understand the types of messaging that best reached and resonated with the target population and inform future messaging.

Overall, it was found that 64% of respondents had seen or heard RE messaging related to EO. This referred to all sorts of messaging, from seeing a television clip, poster, or billboard in their community, to having a RE session delivered in a school or university, as well as having a flyer shared with them by a family member. The findings showed that those with a university level education were more exposed than any other group to materials (74%). In terms of age, those over 55 years of age seemed less exposed to RE messaging than other groups; only 47% of this age group say they have seen or heard such messaging whilst between 64% - 66% of all other age groups reported seeing messages. Only 20% of people with a disability, who was a group identified as most concerned about EOs, reported seeing the messages. Slightly more men (55%) reported seeing messages than women (45%).

Television messaging seems to be the most popular and most remembered

form of messaging, although it does not provide shareable materials for the audience. Forty-one percent of those who remember seeing RE messaging remember seeing it on television. Messages on social media and billboards in the community came in second and third place with 34% and 33% respectively. Overall, only 28% say they share messages that they have seen with friends and family. Respondents in Anbar had the highest percentage of respondents most likely to share a message at 45%. In addition, respondents between the ages of 18 and 34 (76%) seem most likely to share a message than the other age groups. The majority of respondents who reported seeing or hearing messages say they hear or see the messages a few times a week.

In terms of sharing, the majority of respondents who did report sharing messages said they did so via word of mouth. Facebook and WhatsApp were cited as the most popular means of sharing messages via social media.
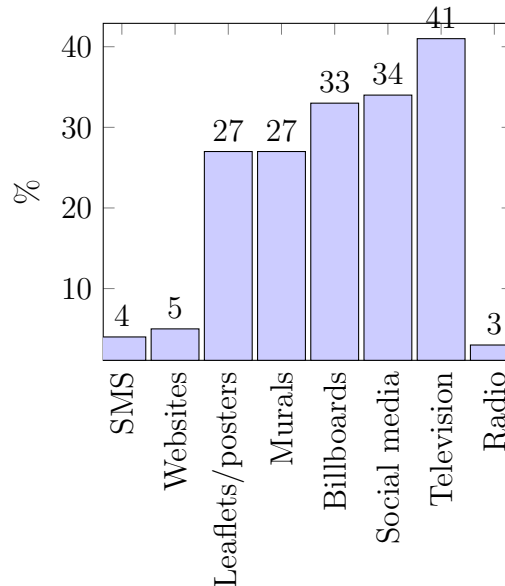

Figure 3: % respondents reporting to have seen or heard messages by media source

During the FGDs, the participants were shown a sample of posters, leaflets, billboard designs and videos from existing EO material used in Iraq, and asked to comment on them. The posters, leaflets and billboard designs were very well received. Respondents reported thinking that the posters deliver a clear, concise and much needed message. In particular, the respondents stressed that they did not know what an EO might look like until seeing the posters. They further claimed that seeing the EO on the posters was valuable knowledge to have. A number of the FGD respondents claimed

to have already seen these posters or similar material in their schools or distributed by an NGO, suggesting that respondents remember the material shared and distributed. Moreover, all respondents who said that they saw the posters/leaflets before also said that they shared it with friends and family, and suggested that the posters should be shared all around their cities in order to benefit as many people as possible.

> 'I've seen similar ones, like the photo that has the mines and their shapes. They used to hand them in schools, especially when we first were liberated from ISIL. Now, they don't anymore. I shared it with my family, I showed them this flyer, and told them exactly what I was taught.' – *Female FGD participant, Mosul.*

> 'These posters should be spread around any area that might have unexploded remnants, because from what I see in them, EO might have different shapes and colours' – *Female FGD participant, Kirkuk.*

The billboard designs were also seen to be informative. They were praised for providing photos of what EO might look like. Most respondents said, during the discussion, that they preferred to see the real images of EO that resemble their environment and illustrate scenes that they might come across in real life.

The films shown to the FGDs were similarly well received. The video's seemed to deliver safety messages to the participants. The participants noted that after watching the video, they understood the importance of being alert, not playing in a dangerous area, and reporting any suspicious object. They also learnt the numbers of the Directorate of Mine Action and the civil defense, as well as the need to report to a trustworthy adult for youth under 18 years of age.

> '[About the film] The message is we should report any explosives. it tells us a bit about what they look like, but reporting is the most important thing' – *Male FGD participant, Kirkuk.*

Several respondents thought that the prints would be more efficient than videos in reaching a larger number of people since they can be placed all over the city and be highly visible, while people might miss seeing the videos. They also preferred the print posters as they showed more images of EO which was important to them. In comparaison to the videos, the print products are seen to carry broadly the same message, but most participants think that

print products are more clear, more direct and easier to share.

0.7 Conclusion

The need for EORE and safer behaviour in Iraq is evident. In particular, this is evidenced by the 70% of respondents to this research who reported being injured, or knowing a family member injured by EO. In addition, although EO may not always be listed as a priority challenge, it continues to have an important impact on daily lives, in particular for those living with a disability. Combined with this is a need to clarify information regarding EO, as evidenced by an over-confident ability to identify EO, as well as assumption that the threat of EO will diminish over time. Moreover, there seems to be a desire to learn more about the threat of EO, and a general consensus that communities and groups at risk need more information on this threat. To this end, there is also a clear need to deliver EORE messages effectively, in order to cut through the 'noise' of the many other challenges faced by the target populations.

The effective delivery of EORE messages should be adapted to the target groups. The research suggests that sharing optimistic messages may be more effective than pessimistic messages. However, as indicated during the discussions on existing material, messages also need to be realistic. In addition, a focus on samples of EO could be emphasized. However, this must also be done without giving the impression that all EO look as depicted in the selected images. This is particularly important not to create over-confidence in abilities to identify EO. Furthermore, it appears that EO messages can be improved by catering to populations with lower literacy levels. Meanwhile, more emphasis on targeting people with disabilities and women should be considered, as well as other groups that communities deem at risk.

Television and social media seem to be the more popular form of media. This was noted both in terms of access to television, internet, and smartphones, as well as reported means of obtaining news. Social media has an additional benefit to television as it can potentially be shared, for example, through WhatsApp and Facebook. Facebook, in particular, appears to be a very popular tool and may also be very credible with the right interaction and content. Beyond electronic media, billboards, posters and leaflets also appear to resonate well with the respondents. In particular, the focus on real images of EO on designs was emphasised several times.

0.8   Annex A - Respondent's demographics

(a) 49% were female

(b) 51% were male

(c) 23% were living with a disability

(d) 34% were from Ninewa
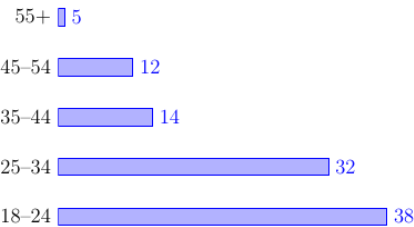

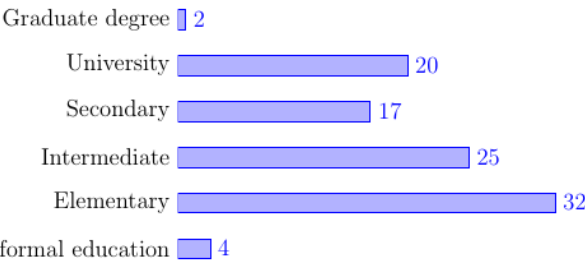(e) 14% were from Kirkuk

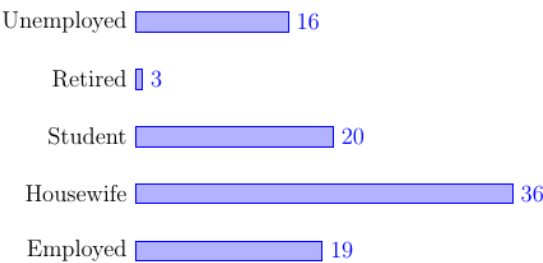(f) 14% were from Salah Al Din

(g) 16% were from Diyala

(h) 20% were from Anbar

(i) Respondent's age

- 55+ : 5
- 45–54 : 12
- 35–44 : 14
- 25–34 : 32
- 18–24 : 38

(j) Respondent's education level

- Graduate degree : 2
- University : 20
- Secondary : 17
- Intermediate : 25
- Elementary : 32
- No formal education : 4

(k) Respondent's status

- Unemployed : 16
- Retired : 3
- Student : 20
- Housewife : 36
- Employed : 19