



6 March 2019 - Um Hassan, from rural Aleppo, was collecting truffles in the countryside to sell in local markets. At the end of a long day of backbreaking work in harsh winter conditions, she and her children climbed into a crowded lorry to begin their journey home. Half-way through their trip, the lorry drove over an unexploded mine. Um Hassan's 10-year old daughter Lolo was killed instantly and two of her other children were seriously injured.

Lolo was one of six people killed in the explosion. Another 15 people were rushed to the WHO-supported University Hospital in Aleppo. Um Hassan's husband was frantic with worry when his family did not return home. He had no way of getting in touch with his wife and she was unable to get in touch with him. Like many people living in poverty in rural areas of Syria, the family has no mobile phone or landline.

"This is such a tragic event," said Elizabeth Hoff, WHO Representative in Syria. "Although the security situation in the north has improved recently, tens of thousands of landmines and other

unexploded devices continue to pose a severe threat to millions of innocent people. WHO is working to strengthen trauma care and emergency services in Aleppo and other northern governorates, but the underlying problem remains. Sustained efforts must be made to clear mines and other hazards from former conflict areas. Until then, people like Um Hassan and her family will be at risk of similar incidents.”

For Um Hassan and many others like her, there is no choice but to continue working every day, despite the risks. “Life is difficult and we have to keep working in our fields, no matter how hard,” said Um Hassan. “Our survival depends on it.”

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