Mine Clearance Experts Receive UK Humanitarian Medal for Lifesaving Work in Gaza

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, September 30, 2026 / EINPresswire.com/ -- Seven Humanity & Inclusion staff have been awarded the Humanitarian Medal, approved by HM The King, for their lifesaving work in Gaza. They are the first Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team to receive the award.

"They are the best of us and we celebrate them today"

Kirsty McNeill, the UK Minister of State for International Development said:

“My heartfelt congratulations to these remarkable recipients of the UK’s Humanitarian Medal, which recognises the incredible dedication and selfless service of individuals on the frontline of the UK’s responses to some of the world’s most devastating crises.

“Every day, humanitarian workers put themselves in harm’s way to bring food, healthcare, shelter and protection to communities facing crisis. Yet the challenges they face have rarely been greater: more than 250 million people are expected to need humanitarian assistance this year alone. Despite the scale of the problems, these extraordinary people are determined to be part of the solution. They are the best of us and we celebrate them today."

Humanity & Inclusion works alongside disabled and vulnerable people affected by poverty, conflict and disaster around the world, and specialises in activities including humanitarian mine clearance and Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD).

First EOD team to receive the Humanitarian Medal.

The seven colleagues (Glenn Cripps, Simon Elmont, David Hilton, John Montgomery, Rhiain Moses, Gary Toombs and Daniel Young) who worked on Humanity & Inclusion’s emergency response protecting civilians in Gaza are among some of the first recipients of the prestigious new medal – and the very first mine clearance team to be honoured. The seven colleagues attended a Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace in May and their medals have now been

received.

Saving lives and enabling humanitarian access in Gaza

The risks associated with unexploded ordnance in Gaza are huge: it is estimated that around 70,000 tonnes of explosives have hit the Gaza Strip since the start of the conflict. The layers of rubble are considerable, in an extremely dense and confined environment. Unexploded ordnance (UXO) is everywhere - on the ground, in the rubble, and under the ground.

From October 2023 to February 2026, Humanity & Inclusion's team provided valuable EOD expertise to help protect civilians and aid workers in Gaza. Their activities included conducting 186 explosive hazard assessments of humanitarian sites to assess whether they were free from explosive ordnance and therefore able to be used for humanitarian purposes, this included hospitals, shelters, and spaces for internally displaced people. Another role was escorting humanitarian convoys delivering aid supplies, ensuring that they could navigate the Gaza Strip safely, mitigating the threat from unexploded ordnance. Humanity & Inclusion's team in Gaza also conducted 57,000 sessions of Explosive Ordnance Risk Education, reaching over 700,000 individuals, including over 700 humanitarian staff. Educating communities on the danger of UXO is vital as people are now living with the lethal threat of UXO and will be for a very long time.

An honour celebrating extraordinary humanitarian commitment

Gary Toombs, Global Land Release & EOD Technical Operations Director at Humanity & Inclusion said:

"I am deeply honoured, alongside members of my team, to have been recognised as a recipient of the UK Humanitarian Medal for our work supporting humanitarian operations relating to Gaza. For me, this represents far more than an individual achievement. It reflects the extraordinary commitment of colleagues, partners and humanitarian professionals working in some of the most difficult and dangerous circumstances imaginable. Our work is ultimately about protecting civilians, reducing the risks posed by explosive ordnance, enabling safer humanitarian access and helping communities affected by conflict. I accept this recognition with enormous pride, but also with humility and with particular respect for our colleagues working on the ground, whose professionalism, courage and commitment to humanitarian principles make this work possible every day."

Simon Elmont, Global Land Release Technical Specialist for Humanity & Inclusion said:

"I am deeply honoured to have received this award in recognition of work carried out in Gaza. I am very much part of a larger team and so accept this on behalf of all those people who work hard every day to aid the response of Humanity & Inclusion in Gaza."

Tom Shelton, Chief Executive of Humanity & Inclusion UK said:

“This is an incredibly well-deserved recognition of the expertise, courage and dedication of our Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) teams and the local colleagues in Gaza working alongside them. For Humanity & Inclusion’s EOD team to be the first of its kind to receive this honour is a real landmark and a testament to the professionalism and commitment of everyone involved.”

"Over the past two and a half years, I have watched with enormous admiration and respect as my colleagues have responded to challenge after challenge, continuing their vital work in the most unimaginable conditions. The impact of this lifesaving work cannot be overstated, and I am incredibly proud of what our teams have achieved.”

Notes

Spokespersons
Gary Toombs, Simon Elmont and Tom Shelton are available for interview

Pictures
Pictures of the team at the Buckingham Palace event available as well as pictures of the medal and Gary Toombs holding it.

For more info on the Humanitarian Medal see:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-humanitarian-medal

About Us
Co-winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, Humanity & Inclusion (HI) is a charity working in situations of poverty and exclusion, conflict and disaster. We work tirelessly alongside disabled and vulnerable people to help meet their basic needs, improve their living conditions and promote respect for their dignity and fundamental rights.

Registered Charity no. 1082565

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This press release can be viewed online at: https://www.einpresswire.com/article/946335813

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