

Mr. Hakim Salih Hakim is the head of his family, and he has three children. Hakim was born in 1983 in Soran municipality, Erbil Governorate. Earlier he was working as a guard at a government office, and his salary was the family's only income.

“Life was not too bad then, we had our own place, and I had a steady income from my job with the government,” Hakim remembers.

His life and the situation of Hakim's family changed unexpectedly on a winter day in 2008, however. As his work was far from home, he could only see his family during weekends and holidays. On the 10th of February, 2008, Hakim arrived at his home for a few days of leave. The father of three particularly looked forward to playing with his youngest son, which he did every time he could, Hakim recalls.

During his home visit, Hakim and his father wanted to make some small improvements to their house and the piece of land surrounding it. They got their shovels and other tools out and started making a new ditch to reroute a small stream nearby their house.

While digging the ditch, some 40 meters from the house, Hakim's father struck a mine with his spade. The mine went off with a big explosion, killing his father. Hakim himself had his legs injured, and was forced to have them amputated. In an instant, his life and the situation of his family were changed forever. His son, who witnessed the fatal accident, got severely traumatized, and has had nightmares and

THE HIDDEN DANGER

Victim Assistance (Erbil), Hakim story



psychological problems ever since.

Being a double amputee, life suddenly became quite difficult for Hakim and his family. Their home was in a rather dilapidated state prior to his accident, and with his handicap it has also become hard for him to repair it, as well as live there.

Thankfully, the Diana Orthopaedic Limbs Centre (DPLC), with funding from the Government of Japan through UNDP, was able to help the now severely handicapped family head by both improving the house for him as well as modifying it so he can more easily move around in it. The centre also provided him with prostheses and in addition helped him set up a small shop close to the home. Through his small business, the father of three now provides for his family, and the shop is their only income.

“After the accident, the whole family's life was turned upside down, and we believed that was the end to all our happiness,” Hakim's wife noted. “Through the kind support of the DPLC, things changed and the smiles returned to our faces, as some of our worst problems were solved,” she added.

Today Hakim is still suffering from unhealed wounds and fractures in both of his thighs, and needs continued medical treatment and more surgery. Despite all his suffering and painful experiences, Hakim's face nevertheless carries a smile and his expression and outlook remain hopeful.