

APPEAL
of the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman)
of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the international community regarding
4 April - the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in
Mine Action

As it is known, according to the UN General Assembly Resolution of 8 December 2005, every year, 4 April is observed as the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action.

In 2023, the main goal of this day, held under the campaign "Mine Action Cannot Wait", is to bring attention to the areas contaminated with mines.

Regretfully, it must be noted that Armenia did not only suffice to keep our cities and districts in the Karabakh and East Zangazur regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan under occupation for nearly 30 years but also massively contaminated those areas by mines in order to damage human lives and health.

As a result of numerous mine explosions that occurred after the tripartite Statement, signed on 10 November 2020, civilians were victimized by this mine terrorism, along with servicemen.

The Armenian side not only avoids providing accurate maps of landmines buried in our territories during the last period of time but also continues contaminating our liberated areas with mines through sabotage groups.

Thus, according to the information of the Mine Action Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan, during the period after the Patriotic War, 289 citizens became victims of mines and other explosive devices, 51 of whom were killed and 238 received injuries. In general, since 1991, as a result of mine explosions, 3368 people, including 357 children and 38 women, have been killed or injured.

The current mine problem, which causes numerous human losses, serious injuries and disability, is seriously hindering large-scale construction, building and restoration works, as well as the peace in our liberated territories.

First of all, to ensure the safe return of our former internally displaced persons, who had been forced to leave their ancestral lands as a result of Armenia's ethnic cleansing and occupation policies carried out for many years, those areas should be cleared of mines, and the infrastructure, which was completely destroyed there, should be restored.

Armenia intentionally has not shared accurate maps of minefields despite the repeated demands.

Armenia violated the norms and principles of international humanitarian law, particularly the Geneva Conventions relating to the Protection of Victims of War dated 12 August 1949 and Additional Protocol I, by contaminating our liberated areas with mines, and by officially declaring this, it demonstrated open disrespect to the international community.

We think that the world community should be united in the fight against mine terrorism for the sake of protecting the rights to life, to live in safety, and the right to health of human beings.

In this regard, in our statements and appeals, as well as in our special report, addressed to international and regional organizations working in the field of human rights, and different national human rights institutions, we provided facts on the mine problem in the liberated areas and urged them to take urgent measures within their mandates.

Unfortunately, the international community has not expressed concern about the landmine threat created by Armenia against Azerbaijan until today and has not shown any interest in taking effective measures in this regard.

As the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan, I once again appeal to the international community to take a decisive position regarding the elimination of the existing problem and to support the demining process.

Sabina Aliyeva

**The Commissioner for Human Rights
(Ombudsman)
of the Republic of Azerbaijan**

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