



**THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN
TO THE UNITED NATION**

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**Statement by H.E. Mr. Yashar Aliyev
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations
at the Security Council virtual open debate on the theme:
“Maintenance of international peace and security: Mine action”**

8 April 2021

Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate the delegation of Viet Nam for assuming the presidency of the Security Council. Azerbaijan welcomes the initiative of Viet Nam to convene this meeting on a matter of high relevance and importance.

Landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices continue to affect many countries in conflict or post-conflict situations, posing a deadly threat to civilians, servicemen, peacekeeping and humanitarian personnel.

We appreciate the support of the United Nations for strengthening mine action capacity in Azerbaijan. Established in 1999, the Azerbaijan National Mine Action Agency (ANAMA), with the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme, has helped clear more than 800,000 mines and other explosive ordnances in Azerbaijan over the past 20 years, helping to ensure the safe return of over 160,500 displaced people to their homes.

However, Azerbaijan is among those countries in post-conflict situation that continue to suffer from deadly effects of landmines and explosive remnants of war.

As is known, at the end of 1991 and the beginning of 1992, Armenia unleashed full-scale war against Azerbaijan. As a result, a significant part of the territory of Azerbaijan was occupied by Armenia. The war claimed the lives of tens of thousands of people and ruined cities, towns and villages; all captured areas were ethnically cleansed of more than 700,000 Azerbaijanis.

As a result of the counteroffensive operation undertaken and successfully accomplished by the armed forces of Azerbaijan in response to yet another act of aggression committed by Armenia on 27 September 2020, some 10,000 km² of the territory of Azerbaijan, with more than 300 cities, towns and villages of Azerbaijan, were liberated from occupation.

The statement of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and the President of the Russian Federation, signed on 10 November 2020, has put an end to the almost three-decades-old armed conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan and set agreed parameters for establishing durable peace in the region. On 11 January 2021, the leaders of the three countries signed another joint statement aimed at implementing a number of practical steps to remove obstacles to economic and transport links in the region.

However, since the signing of the aforementioned statement on 10 November 2020, 20 citizens of Azerbaijan, including 14 civilians, were killed and 87 citizens, including 16 civilians, were seriously wounded as a result of mine explosions in the liberated territories. Throughout the conflict, most of the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, including even the cemeteries, historical sites and other civilian objects, have been systematically and indiscriminately mined by Armenia.

Armenia refuses to release information about the minefields in the liberated areas, thus deliberately targeting human lives and attempting to impede post-conflict rehabilitation, reconstruction and humanitarian efforts in the liberated territories and the return of the internally displaced persons to their homes in safety and dignity.

Armenia's conduct constitutes a clear violation of international law and demonstrates its unwillingness to comply with its international obligations and refrain from confrontational policy.

The Secretary-General emphasized in his report on the comprehensive approach to mine action that, as a precursor to peace and sustainable development, mine action provides important practical contributions to the building of trust between parties (S/2018/623). Along the same lines, the concept note prepared for today's meeting points out, in particular, that mine action is critical to sustainable development and positively contributes to stabilization and sustaining peace (S/2021/284).

These words are highly pressing today, as the new situation in our region paves the way for hundreds of thousands of forcibly displaced persons to exercise their right to a safe and dignified return to their places of origin and, despite the devastating consequences of the war, offers a unique opportunity and real prospects for building peace, consolidating stability, restoring peaceful coexistence, advancing the reconciliation agenda and investing in economic development and cooperation. Therefore, urgent international response is crucial to ensure justice, accountability and the protection of the lives and human rights of those under threat of landmines and explosive remnants of war.

Thank you.