

## THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

AZERBAIJAN NATIONAL AGENCY FOR MINE ACTION.

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**Position:** *Head of the Training, Survey and Quality Assurance Division. ANAMA.*

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**Event:** *16th Meeting of State Parties. Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.*

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**Mister President,**

Thank you very much for giving us the opportunity to describe the current situation regarding the Land Mine problem in Azerbaijan, to express the reasons of not joining to the treaty, and to brief you on our achievements.

**Mister President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.**

The land mine and ERW problem in Azerbaijan is mainly the consequence of the military aggression of the Republic of Armenia. Which eventually resulted with occupation of 20% of the territory of Azerbaijan. (*Nagorno Karabakh and surrounding regions*). The hostilities were suspended in May 1994 by establishing cease-fire. Currently 20% of Azerbaijani territories remain occupied by Armenian forces, and there are about 1 million internally displaced persons and refugees settled in various places of Azerbaijan. There are 4 UN Security Council resolutions 822, 853, 874, 884 on recognizing Armenia as an aggressor and calling it to withdraw its troops from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. But unfortunately mentioned above UN Resolutions are not fulfilled by Armenia, and internationally recognised territories of Azerbaijan still remain under the Armenian occupation.

In addition, the frequent military escalations along the Line of Contact results with the re-contamination of previously cleared areas which have been cleared for millions of dollars of donor funds. Last year in April during the military escalation Armenian troops used 122mm White Phosphorus projectiles fired from the occupied regions to the civilian zone of Tartar district. One of them failed to explode. This act has been witnessed by the invited representatives of the foreign Embassies located in Azerbaijan. In addition, during last 9 years floodwaters and rivers bring Armenian made AP blast mines (*similar to soviet PMN*) to the regions of Azerbaijan. These facts are well documented. It means that Armenia produces, transports and uses the mines in occupied territories of Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan cannot join the treaty until the Armenian troops withdrawn from the occupied territories. The another issue is that the HALO Trust without permission and accreditation from the government of Azerbaijan operates in territories that remain under occupation by Armenia. A number of times HALO Trust has been called to consider the internationally recognized borders of Azerbaijan, but unfortunately it has not been complied.

Azerbaijan supports the solution of humanitarian mine problems on a global level. Azerbaijan fully supports the principles and philosophy of the Ottawa Convention.

**Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action - established in 1998 by the Presidential decree.**

With the close support rendered by the UNDP ANAMA started its humanitarian demining operations in 2000. After additional support given by the US State Department, and international organisations ANAMA became able to act independently without foreign technical advisors since 2005. But ANAMA continues to renew its knowledge with the help of GICHD, James Madison University and other institutions. Since 2000 till now ANAMA with two national demining NGO's cleared **482** mln m<sup>2</sup> of mine and battle areas. We found and destroyed 785 000 UXO's and 1826 land mines. (*1278 AT, 548 AP*). In addition to the mine affected territories, Azerbaijan is contaminated with the thousands of the UXOs left at the former soviet union's abandoned military training ranges and destroyed ammunition supply points. The NATO funded projects are the largest projects conducted for clearing the north-west part of Azerbaijan from the soviet era fired and abandoned ammunition. ANAMA has all necessary operational recourses such as Manual demining and BAC teams, Explosive Ordnance Disposal units, Mechanical Demining Machines, Mine Detection Dogs, Survey teams, modern data logging systems, External QA and QC teams, Mine Risk Education department, IMSMA (info) department, and Mine Victims Assistance projects. (2056 injured, 383 killed)

ANAMA has a training centre. Except the training for the national staff we conducted training support for **3 States Parties**. We Conducted 5 training missions for Turkey, 1 training for Ukraine through OSCE, 25000 MRE books sent to Afghanistan, 14 trainings done for Georgian military units, (*9 through NATO + 5 through ITF*). In total we trained 315 foreign trainees.

Since 2014 ANAMA trained 150 personnel of the Ministry of Interior of Azerbaijan on humanitarian methods of demining.

ANAMA conducted humanitarian demining and Battle Area Clearance operations in Turkey. This year ANAMA found 16000 minimum metal AP mines during the Turkish Eastern Border Mine Clearance Project. Herewith, we express our level of cooperation with neighbouring countries and countries having a similar problem.

Mine Action is still remaining a high priority for Azerbaijan since 1998.

The Government of Azerbaijan voted for the UN resolution titled as "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and Their Destruction" (A/C.1/60/L.56) and expressed its hope that in future, when the armed conflict is settled and the Azerbaijani territories are liberated, our country will be able to accede the Ottawa Convention as a full member.

**Once again, I congratulate all of you with the 20th Anniversary of the convention.**

Thank You.