

On June 4 2021, three civilians, including two media representatives were killed and four other civilians, including one journalist were injured while on duty as a result of the deadly landmine explosion in the liberated territories of Azerbaijan from Armenian occupation. This mine explosion happened, when a vehicle carrying civilians crossed over the anti-tank landmine, while moving in the direction of Susuzlug village in the Kalbajar region of Azerbaijan. As the result, Maharram Ibrahimov, a reporter of the state news agency AzerTag, Siraj Abishov, a journalist of AzTV Broadcasting Company and Arif Aliyev, local representative of executive power lost their lives.

The trilateral statement of the leaders of Azerbaijan, Russia and Armenia from 10 November 2020 has put an end to the long-standing conflict and opened up a unique prospect for achieving lasting peace and stability in the region. However, the massive mine contamination in the liberated territories is seriously hampering the post-conflict rehabilitation and endangering the lives of innocent people. Most importantly, it affects the realization of inalienable right of the hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijani IDPs to return to their homes in safety and dignity.

Since 10 November 2020, 27 persons were killed, and 115 others were injured as a result of explosion of various types of mines and explosive remnants of war. During this period of seven months, among the total 142 landmine victims, 49 were civilians. The other 93 servicemen were killed and injured as a result of mine explosions during the humanitarian missions, which included the search for the bodies (including the bodies of Armenian servicemen) and mine clearance, as well as a supplement of food and other supplies of vital importance to the region, etc.

Deliberate and large-scale planting of landmines by Armenia in the territories of Azerbaijan is a gross violation of international humanitarian law, including the Geneva Conventions of 1949, as well as of the rights of the Azerbaijani population, arising from Articles 2 and 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, Article 1 of Protocol No. 1, Articles 2 (1) and 3 (2) of Protocol No. 4.

The tragic incident in Kalbajar once again showed the urgency of addressing the issues pertaining to the demining of the liberated territories of Azerbaijan to prevent further loss of innocent lives. The Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights and the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media among others have already spoke out about the tragic death of Azerbaijani journalists. The Committee to Protect Journalists, the International Federation of Journalists, European Federation of Journalists and other NGOs who are global voices of journalists, have called on the Armenian authorities to hand over the plans of the mined areas, in order to avoid further civilian casualties.

Armenia bears full responsibility for killing the Azerbaijani civilians, including journalists, who were fulfilling their responsibilities to report the truth.

Azerbaijan is deeply concerned about this situation, posing a serious threat to the lives and health of human beings, and overall, to human rights in the region. We strongly believe that disclosure of minefield maps would be an important step forward to peace. For its part, Azerbaijan will take all appropriate, including legal measures, to ensure peace and security.