



**Intersessional meetings of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
Thematic session – Mandate of the President**

**Right of Reply
delivered by Mr. Seymur Mardaliyev,
Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan
to the UN Office and other International Organizations in Geneva**

Geneva, 22 June 2021

Mr. President,

I am taking the floor to exercise my delegation's right of reply to statement made by the representative of Armenia.

No matter how high is the desperate desire of Armenia, it will never escape from its responsibility for refusing to release the maps of minefields in the liberated territories of Azerbaijan. By refusing to hand over the maps to Azerbaijan, Armenia deliberately and indiscriminately targets human lives and attempts to impede post-conflict rehabilitation, reconstruction and humanitarian efforts in the liberated territories and return of the Azerbaijani displaced population to their places of origin in safety and dignity. Since signing of the trilateral statement, more than 140 people, including 20 civilians were killed and 29 civilians were seriously injured as a result of mine explosions in the liberated territories.

The six members of two Armenian armed sabotage groups were captured by the armed forces of Azerbaijan while planting mines in the liberated Kəlbəcər district of Azerbaijan bordering with Armenia at the end of May. Following several contradicting statements by the Ministry of Defence of Armenia in the immediate aftermath of this incident, the Prime Minister of Armenia himself admitted that Armenian military were engaged in planting of landmines. Moreover, most recently, Armenian colonel Gumashyan openly and hypocritically admitted the planting of landmines in Kəlbəcər and Laçın districts of Azerbaijan and I quote "My units and I have planted 17 trucks of mines near Lachin and Kalbajar, you will not be able to do anything in the area due to mines".

So these facts speak louder than ridiculous, absurd and illogical attempts by Armenia to deny its responsibility for massive and indiscriminate planting of landmines in the liberated territories of Azerbaijan both during the occupation of these lands by Armenia and in the course of the forcible withdrawal of the armed forces of Armenia from the occupied territories after Armenia's crushing defeat in the military hostilities in 2020.

Armenia's unacceptable behaviour constitutes a clear violation of international law and demonstrates its unwillingness to comply with its imperative obligations under the international law, including international humanitarian law and refrain from confrontational policy. This also goes contrary to the spirit and letter of the Ottawa Convention.

As this meeting strives for the universalization of the Ottawa Convention, we must think seriously how the countries like Armenia could be enforced to comply with its obligations under the international law in order to prevent further human loses and achieve the ultimate goal of world free of landmines.

All statements by Armenia about its compliance with anti-mine obligations would remain mere words unless they are translated into action that in case of Armenia would mean, *inter alia*, immediate release of the information on location of minefields in the liberated territories to Azerbaijan.

We call on state parties to the Convention to raise their strong voice against refusal by Armenia to release the maps of the minefields. Urgent international response is crucial to ensure justice, accountability and protection of lives and human rights of those under threat of landmines and other explosive remnants of war.

I thank you.