



Ressort: Politik

Unexploded mines: the cases of Ukraine and Azerbaijan

Rome, 23.04.2021 [ENA]

At least 100 million unexploded mines currently infest the countryside in about seventy scattered nations. This means that millions of square kilometers of land cannot be cultivated, inhabited or simply lived. But it also means that on average 70 people are killed or injured by a mine every day: since 1975 there have been more than a million. The main problem with mines is that they have a very long lifespan.

They are not eliminated at the end of a war but lie in unreported minefields or whose reporting has disappeared over the years, and then mutilate and kill the civilian population.

Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) to Ukraine Y. Halit Çevik on 23 April 2021 paid tribute to SMM medic Joseph Stone, who was tragically killed in 2017 when an SMM armoured vehicle was struck by an explosion, most likely caused by an anti-tank mine in a non-government controlled area near Pryshyb in Luhansk region.

“We mourn the loss of a colleague and friend, but we also pay tribute to a life committed to the cause of peace in eastern Ukraine,” Çevik said.

Mines, unexploded ordnance and other explosive objects have claimed the lives of 82 civilians and have injured an additional 241 since then, he said. “Clearing or at a minimum marking off these deadly objects is both a key step on the road to peace and a lasting legacy to a brave medic who made the ultimate sacrifice,” he added.

A TV program on landmines planted by Armenia in the liberated territories of Azerbaijan was aired as part of the show “The Contreras Report” by the well-known American journalist Raoul Lowery Contreras.

It should be noted that Contreras has authored books titled “Murder in the Mountains: WarCrime in Khojaly and the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict” and “The Armenian Lobby and U.S.Foreign Policy”,

both published in California. He also published many articles on Azerbaijan and the region. In the program, the journalist talked about devastating effects of landmines and stated that the majority of victims are usually civilians. He noted that anti-personnel mines are prohibited under the relevant international convention. Talking about Azerbaijan’s Patriotic war in 2020,

<https://www.ibs.it/2020-guerra-nel-nagorno-karabakh-libro-carlo-marino/e/9791220313476>

Raoul Contreras mentioned that as a result of the war, Azerbaijan liberated its territories from Armenia’s 30 years long occupation.

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He highlighted that during the occupation, as well as the last war and while withdrawing its troops after the joint statement of November 10, Armenia has planted hundreds of thousands of landmines in the territories of Azerbaijan subjected to military occupation. Moreover, Contreras stressed that during Armenia's occupation, almost all towns and villages, including houses of Azerbaijani civilians in the affected territories have been looted and destroyed. Raoul Contreras underlined that landmines in Azerbaijan's liberated territories impede the reconstruction efforts and create a serious problem for 800 thousand Azerbaijani civilians, who were forced to leave their ancestral lands as a result of Armenian occupation

in the early 1990s, to return to their homes. He noted that a large part of Azerbaijan's liberated territories has been contaminated by landmines, and that the demining process requires massive amounts of funds, large number of specialists and time. He stated that Armenia, seriously violating international humanitarian law, refused to provide the maps of minefields to this day. Contreras further mentioned that since the joint statement of November 10, 20 Azerbaijani citizens, including 14 civilians have been killed, and 85 Azerbaijanis, including 16 civilians have been seriously injured as a result of mine explosions.

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https://www.european-news-agency.de/politik/unexploded_mines_the_cases_of_ukraine_and_azerbaijan-81116/

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