



REPORT
of the Public Council under the
Azerbaijan Mine Action Agency (ANAMA)

January - 2023

Contents

1. ESTABLISHMENT AND COMPOSITION OF THE COUNCIL	3
2. MEETINGS AND TRIPS	3
First meeting	3
Members of the Public Council in Aghdam	4
Members of the Public Council in Tartar	5
Meeting with EORE project participants in Barda	5
Installation of educational billboards	6
Meeting with local communities	6
Discussions on the mine problem on Azerbaijan Television	7
3. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS and CONFERENCES	8
Roots of Peace in Azerbaijan	8
Open session for the press	9
The role and participation of council members in the international conference held in Baku	9
Discussions about Azerbaijan's mine problem in Israel.....	10
Event on the Ottawa Convention in Geneva	10
Participation of the Chairman of the Council in the international event in the USA	11
Mine problem of Azerbaijan in "Washington Outsider Report"	12
The role and participation of council members in the international conference held in Baku	12
A conference on landmines in the South Caucasus	13
ANAMA official and board chairman at an international event in the United States	13
Council members at the eco-protests in Shusha	14
4. WORKING WITH MINE VICTIMS	14
Organization of courses for family members of mine victims	14
Council members at the eco-protests in Shusha	14
Meeting with mine victims in Tartar	15
Preparation of life stories of mine victims	15
Al Jazeera Media Network reports on mine victims	16
In the New York office of the President of the Council of the United Nations	16
5. FINAL REPORT MEETING	16

1. ESTABLISHMENT AND COMPOSITION OF THE COUNCIL

In order to ensure public participation and control in the activities of the Agency for Mine Action of the Republic of Azerbaijan, on 21.06.2021, elections to the Public Council were held at the Agency and a council consisting of 7 members was formed. On June 30, 2021, the first meeting was held at ANAMA with the members of the Public Council and the leadership of ANAMA, and by voting the Council was appointed by Chairman Umud Mirzayev (President of the International Eurasia Press Fund), Deputy Chairman Emil Hasanov (Management of the Public Union "Support to Development and Reforms" Member of its delegation) and secretary Hafiz Safikhanov (Chairman of the Azerbaijan Campaign Against Landmines Public Union) were unanimously elected. Ray Gasimov (Chairman of the Association of Mine Victims in Azerbaijan), Shahin Ibrahimov (Chairman of Dayag Non-Governmental Humanitarian Aid Organization), Nadir Jafarov (Director of "Chirag" Humanitarian and Development Public Union) and Mammadhasan Hasanov (Chairman of Mine Victims' Socio-Economic Problems Support Public Union) were elected as members of the council.



2. MEETINGS and TRIPS

On June 30, 2021, the first meeting of the Public Council under ANAMA was held. The chairman of the commission, Samir Poladov, congratulated the members of the Public Council and wished each of them success in future joint activities. Also, at the meeting, Vugar Suleymanov, Chairman of ANAMA's Management Board, presented membership cards to the members of the Public Council. In the meeting with the members of the Council, discussions were held regarding future directions of action, support of civil society in the field of mine threat education, involvement of international organizations, holding press conferences on a wider scale in the direction of education, as well as assistance programs for mine victims.



On September 1, 2021, a meeting of the Public Council was held under the Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA). At the meeting, the action plan was discussed by the members, and directions for future work were determined. Within the framework of the meeting, opinions were exchanged about the requisites and attributes of the Public Council. One of the important topics of discussion was related to the appeal of Daniel Craig, the UN's World Advocate for Mine and Explosive Ordnance Elimination, to the current situation in Azerbaijan by the members of the Public Council. The main goal here is to contribute to efforts to protect the lives of citizens and bring peace and prosperity to the region.



Members of the Public Council regularly held meetings and held discussions with ANAMA. On December 3, the members of the Public Council under the Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA) visited Aghdam and got acquainted with the ongoing demining operations. Chairman of the Public Council Umud Mirzayev, secretary Hafiz Safikhanov, members Ray Karimoglu, Shahin Ibrahimov and Mammadhasan Hasanov took part in the visit. During the visit, the operation manager of ANAMA, Ehtiram Jafarov, brought to the attention of the council members the report on the demining operations carried out until that period in the liberated areas of Aghdam region. The members of the council, who met with the Mine Action team, learned their opinions and problems and said that they will provide the necessary support. Later, they got acquainted with the construction of a new base built for ANAMA's staff in Aghdam.



On December 4, 2021, the operations manager of ANAMA in Tartar region, Shahin Allahverdiyev, presented a report to the members of the Council on the areas cleared from landmines so far. The members who met with the demining team in Sugovushan and Talish villages listened to their ideas and suggestions and said that necessary measures will be taken. Later, the members of the Public Council met with the head of the Tartar District Executive Authority, Mustaqim Mammadov, and discussed the work done in the district on the awareness of the danger of explosive ammunition.



On December 5, 2021, the members of the council met with the participants of the project "Education on the danger of explosive ammunition" (EORE) held with the financial support of the European Union, the support of ANAMA and UNICEF Azerbaijan, and the International Eurasia Press Fund in the district of Barda, and watched the progress of the training. Proposals voiced by local residents on mine issues and UXO awareness were recorded as discussion topics.



In April 2021, on the initiative and coordination of IEPF, the heads of civil society organizations consisting of current Public Council members launched an international petition regarding Armenia's refusal to submit mine maps. With the participation of well-known public figures,

cultural workers, civil society representatives, and human rights defenders, more than 20,000 votes were collected.



In October 2021, members of the Public Council, together with ANAMA's staff, participated in the installation of mine education billboards in Aghdam, Tartar, Goranboy, Fuzuli, Jabrayil regions and held educational conversations with local residents.



On December 29, 2021, a meeting was held on the 4-month activity of the Public Council and in the meantime, the future action plan was discussed. At the meeting held online, the chairman of the council, Umud Mirzayev, suggested holding an international conference on mine safety next year. Council members stated that they support the establishment of international relations and the holding of conferences in these areas, and identified this as a top priority. In 2021, 4 meetings of the Public Council in total were held, two of which were held in the region.

On 01.09.2022 - 01.11.2022, the public association "Azerbaijan Campaign Against Landmines" chaired by Hafız Safikhanov, Secretary of the Public Council under ANAMA, with the financial support of the State Support Agency for Non-Governmental Organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan, held an international conference on the problem of mines and unexploded ordnance in areas liberated from occupation. ANAMA, mine clearance regiment of the Ministry of Defence, relevant divisions of the Ministry of Emergency Situations, State Border Service, four national commercial demining companies (Gaya Safety Solutions), each working together with an international commercial subcontractor, Alpha Demining, Safe Point, Azerbaijan Demining Company and national demining NGO - "International Eurasia Press Fund" held meetings with managers and the demining team, and informed that the necessary persons will be approached to learn about their opinions and problems and provide the necessary support. Meetings were also held with mine victims living in Fuzuli, Tartar, Goranboy and Aghjabedi districts.



On October 24, 2022, "On the problem of landmines and unexploded ordnance in areas freed from occupation" organized by the Azerbaijan Campaign Against Landmines Public Union, chaired by Hafiz Safikhanov, the secretary of the Public Council under ANAMA, and with the financial support of the State Support Agency for Non-Governmental Organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan In order to inform the international community, a press conference was held on the results of the project "conducting research and preparing a report".

On November 1, a meeting was held with the participation of the members of the Council in order to inform the public about recent mine incidents and to develop joint activities at the head office of ANAMA. The members of the Public Council addressed the statement to the international organizations regarding the recent mine incidents in our country.

Hafiz Safikhanov, a member of the Public Council under ANAMA, and the chairman of the Azerbaijan Campaign Against Mines public union, gave more than 150 interviews, materials and press releases in the mass media operating in the country about the problems caused by mines and the programs to combat them during 2022.



The Deputy Chairman of the Council, Emil Hasanov, made a speech on the TV programme "Əsas Məsələ"- "Main Issue" broadcast on AzTV on the international community's approach to demining operations in our country and the role of the mine problem in establishing peace in the region.



3. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS and CONFERENCES

On July 9, 2021, Chairman of the Public Council Umud Mirzayev and Deputy Chairman Emil Hasanov, Acting Deputy US Ambassador to Azerbaijan and Head of the Azerbaijan Mission of the International Development Agency, Mr. Jaydev Singh, Counselor of the Embassy, Mrs. Laura Daniels, and Kanan Mustafayev, expert on Political Affairs at the embassy held a meeting at the office of the International Eurasia Press Fund (IEPF). At the meeting, officials from embassy were informed about demining operations conducted in Azerbaijan. Also, the action plan of the newly formed public council was brought to the attention of the guests.



On December 7, 2021, Hafiz Safikhanov, secretary of the Public Council under ANAMA, chairman of the Azerbaijan Campaign Against Mines public association, held a Zoom meeting with members of the Canadian Parliament. At the meeting, Hafiz Safikhanov provided information about demining operations in Azerbaijan, and the importance of involving international donors in this activity was emphasized. In the end, the secretary of the council invited the members of parliament to our country and suggested that they familiarize themselves with the current situation on the spot.

On March 1-4, 2022, Mrs. Heidi Kuhn, the founder and head of the world-famous Roots of Peace, a non-profit organization for Mine Action, visited Azerbaijan at the invitation of the Chairman of the Council Umud Mirzayev and with the support of ANAMA. During the visit, discussions were held between the members of the Public Council and Heidi Kuhn regarding the demining of Azerbaijani lands and the launch of joint international campaigns. Heidi Kuhn, who is closely familiar with the demining operations conducted in Karabakh, participated in the tree planting campaign with the participation of Vugar Suleymanov, chairman of ANAMA's board of directors, and Umud Mirzayev, chairman of the Public Council. On March 4, a memorandum of understanding formalizing cooperation between the two organizations was signed at the head office of the International Eurasia Press Fund. The event was attended by members of the Public Council, the vice-chairman of ANAMA's management board Samir Poladov and media representatives.





The members of the Public Council familiarized themselves with the destroyed cultural objects under the mine threat and demining work carried out in March 2022 in the territory of Fuzuli and Aghdam regions, (Aghdam Juma Mosque, Qiyasli Mosque, Shikhbaba Tomb, Shahbulag Castle, Fuzuli District Gorgan Piri, Merdinli Mosque, Gargabazar Caravanserai). They also met with the mine action team.

On March 25, the members of the Public Council gathered together within the framework of the project "Preparation for Mine-Free Azerbaijan, Safe Karabakh Conference" implemented by the International Eurasia Press Fund with the financial support of the State Support Agency for Non-Governmental Organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan. At the meeting, after listening to current statistical information, brochures printed in Azerbaijani and English languages were presented. The activities implemented by the council within the framework of preparation for the conference - regional visits, holding meetings with mine victims, inviting foreign guests, preparing reports, and so on was brought to the attention of the public.



A conference on "Humanitarian Mine Action and Sustainable Development Goals" was held in Baku on April 1 with the joint organization of the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). The purpose of the conference held on the initiative of the members of the Public Council was to discuss the importance of humanitarian demining activities in eliminating mine threats to people's lives and normal living conditions and to direct the attention of the international community to this field. The Public Council directly participated in inviting event participants from different countries of the world. The chairman of the Public Council Umud Mirzayev, deputy chairman Emil Hasanov and secretary Hafiz Safikhanov spoke in different panels and brought to the attention of the conference participants the landmine problem in the country and the work done by the council in this direction.



On July 14, 2022, the next meeting of the Working Group on demining and unexploded ordnance (UXO) of the Inter-Departmental Center operating under the Coordinating Headquarters established for the centralized solution of issues in the liberated territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan was held. The chairman of the council, Umud Mirzayev, who participated in the meeting, presented the one-year report of the Public Council and drew attention to the future action plan.

On July 28, the Dona Gracia Diplomatic Center in Jerusalem with the participation of the Open Minded Solutions Ltd., an Israeli demining company, held a round table together with Emil Hasanov, deputy chairman of the public council at ANAMA, spoke about the obstacles to peace in Karabakh. He stressed that according to the latest research, 8,700 square kilometers of territory in Azerbaijan were affected by mines and cluster bombs. Only 25% of mine maps of these areas handed over by Armenia are correct. To date, Armenia has refused to provide all mine maps, which hinders peace process.



Chairman of Azerbaijan Campaign Against Landmines public association and head of the department of work with youth participated at the 10th annual Conference of Member States to the UN Convention "On Cluster Munitions" held on 30.08.2022 - 02.09.2022 and the 20th annual Conference of Member States on "Use of anti-personnel mines, on the collection, production, prohibition of transfer and their destruction" of the UN Convention (Ottawa Convention). Within the framework of these events, meetings were held with the director of the Support Division for the Implementation of the Ottawa Convention, detailed information was provided to the official representatives of the governments of Türkiye, Great Britain, Canada, the United States, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden, Switzerland and international organizations. The head of the German delegation, the laureate of the Nobel Peace Prize, the director of the "International Campaign to Ban Landmines", the head of the Arms Control Department of HRW and the manager of the "Landmine Monitor Report" project, organized a meeting with the official delegation of Azerbaijan (ANAMA, MFA and representation in Geneva) and participated in these meetings.



Chairman of the Council Umud Mirzayev participated in the 25th anniversary event of "Roots of Peace" organization, one of the world's leading organizations in the field of demining, held in the United States. Before Umud Mirzayev's speech, a video showing Heidi Kuhn's visit to Azerbaijan was presented. After the video, which grabbed plenty of interest by the participants of the event, the chairman of the council gave more detailed information about the global mine problem of Azerbaijan during the speech allocated for him. Later, the presentation of Heidi Kuhn's book "Breaking Ground" dedicated to the mine action activity and published by IEPF in Azerbaijani language took place. Chairman of the Council Umud Mirzayev also participated in the symbolic tree planting campaign.



The Deputy Chairman of the Public Council, Emil Hasanov, was a guest of the "Washington Outsider Report" talk show. He answered the presenter's questions about the current situation in the region and Azerbaijan's mine issues. The interview, which lasted more than an hour, was watched by tens of thousands of viewers.



On November 17-18, 2022, under the organization of ANAMA, an international event was held under the theme "Mine Action: Challenges and opportunities". Members of the Public Council under ANAMA closely participated in the organization of the event, which was attended by more than 60 representatives of international organizations operating in the field of demining, and manufacturing companies from 28 countries of the world, and gave speeches about the problem related to landmine of our country in panel discussions. The chairman of the Public Council Umud Mirzayev and the deputy chairman Emil Hasanov spoke in various panels dedicated to action against landmines and brought the problem of mines in the country to the attention of participants at the conference.



On November 30, 2022, a conference called "Day of solidarity with landmine and IED victims in the South Caucasus" was held in Baku. The conference was organized by LINKS Europe and the Caucasus Policy Analysis Centre with the participation of the Azerbaijan Campaign Against Landmines within the framework of the "Mine-free South Caucasus 2022" campaign and was attended by officials, members of parliament, ambassadors, representatives of various embassies and international organizations, mine victims, NGOs, as well as participation of media representatives. During the event, the chairman of the Azerbaijan Campaign Against Landmines public association made a special presentation about landmine victims in the country.



On December 2, 2022, the International Committee of the Red Cross organized a Round Table dedicated to the problems of landmine victims at ADA University. Representatives of ministries, international organizations, NGOs participated in the Round Table. Members of Public Council Ray Gasimov and Hafiz Safikhanov made speeches about the situation of mine victims in the country at ANAMA.

Hafiz Safikhanov, the secretary of the Public Council under ANAMA, regularly held meetings with the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Azerbaijan and other officials in 2012-2022 years. The information obtained about its disposal was brought to the attention of the national community, as well as the international donor community.

On December 2-3, 2022, the traditional "Festival of Bells" was held in Napa Valley, California, with the call for a mine-free world. The event was attended by Umud Mirzayev, Chairman of the Public Council of ANAMA, and Ramil Azizov, Head of ANAMA's International Relations, Education and Press Department. Speaking about the role of civil society in the ongoing intensive demining operations in our country, Umud Mirzayev called on international donors. At the event, the video about Heidi Kuhn's visit to Azerbaijan was also viewed with great interest.



Members of the Public Council under ANAMA, under the leadership of chairman Umud Mirzayev, along with mine victims actively participated in the protest started by eco-activists and NGOs on December 12, 2022, on a part of the Shusha-Khankendi road where Russian peacekeepers are stationed. During the action, the members of the council, who spoke with slogans such as "End environmental terrorism!", "End landmine terrorism!", and "Present mine maps", delivered joint messages to the international community.



4. WORKING WITH MINE VICTIMS

According to statistics from ANAMA's Awareness and Victims Affairs Department, a total of 282 people suffered from landmines between November 2020 and January 2023. 127 of them were civilians (36 died, 91 wounded), and 155 were military personnel (10 died, 145 wounded). Members of the Council, who regularly hold meetings with mine victims, keep them and their families in mind and try to provide the necessary support. Members of the Council visit our citizens who were injured as a result of a landmine incident in the Second Karabakh War, take a close interest in their health and consider their needs.

On February 1, 2022, the "Reintegration of landmine victims and their family members into society" project was launched under the organization of the Association of Mine Victims in Azerbaijan (AMVA) and with the financial support of the State Support Agency for Non-Governmental Organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan. A 2-month computer course was organized with the participation of 20 mine and war victims and their family members at the Regional Vocational Training Centre of the International Eurasia Press Fund in Tartar region under the leadership of Rey Karimoglu, the chairman of AMVA and a member of the Public Council under ANAMA.



Rey Kerimoglu, member of the Public Council and chairman of AMVA, negotiated and assisted the representatives of the TABIB and the Ministry of Education and Culture to obtain the degree of disability of Bayramov Rafael, who was hit by a mine in October 2020. Later, AMVA representatives held 4 extensive meetings with mine victims in Aghdam and Barda. In February-March 2022, 93 landmine victims' needs were learnt.

Also this year, the project "Conference on support for solving the problems of landmine and war victims" was successfully implemented with the organization of the Association of Mine Victims in Azerbaijan (AMVA) and the financial support of the State Support Agency for Non-Governmental Organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Within the framework of the project, the main goal of which is to strengthen the integration of landmine victims into the Azerbaijani society, to educate both landmine victims and relevant state structures about concessions and privileges granted to them by the state, council members held regular meetings. On November 15, a conference was held at ANAMA's Tartar regional office of IEPF with the participation of members of the Public Council, mine and war victims and their family members. The head of the District Executive Power Mustaqim Mammadov and other authorized persons also participated in the event.



Within the framework of the project "Creating a small business for landmine victims and their families living in Fuzuli, Tartar and Gazakh districts" implemented by the Azerbaijan Campaign against Landmines public association with the financial support of the State Support Agency for Non-Governmental Organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan, three landmine victims living in these districts were given goods, materials and equipment. Regular meetings are held with all three people and their business is active.

The members of the Public Council, under the leadership of Umud Mirzayev, regularly visit mine victims living in Tartar, Aghdam, Fuzuli, Barda and other districts and prepare educational documentaries reflecting their life stories. Most of the films produced have been broadcasted at conferences held in the United States, UN offices and other international audiences, and have gained great interest of people.



With the support of the Chairman of the Public Council, Umud Mirzayev, Al Jazeera Media Network, one of the world's leading media organizations, regularly publishes news and articles about Azerbaijan's landmine problem. At this time, the main focus is on the life stories of mine victims and their family members. At various times in 2022, at the initiative of IEPF, the staff of Al Jazeera's Public Liberties and Human Rights and Documentary departments broadcast interviews with mine victims in Tartar, Aghdam and Fuzuli in several languages on Al Jazeera's news website, Al Jazeera Arabic and English channels.



On December 5, 2022, Chairman of the Council Umud Mirzayev participated in the event dedicated to the Day of the Disabled at the UN New York office. U. Mirzayev spoke about the landmine problem in Azerbaijan and the current situation of persons who became disabled as a result of the landmine incident.



5. FINAL REPORT MEETING

On December 27, 2022, at the office of the International Eurasia Press Fund, the members of the Public Council held a meeting regarding the preparation of the annual report of the council. Chairman of the Council Umud Mirzayev, deputy chairman Emil Hasanov, secretary Hafiz Safikhanov and member Rey Karimoglu took part in the meeting. The future action plan and its directions were also discussed at the meeting.

