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Letter dated 5 June 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to submit to you a letter from Jeyhun Bayramov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, in connection with the continuing serious threat emanating from the massive contamination of the liberated territories of Azerbaijan with mines and other explosive devices by Armenia and the latest mine incident, which claimed the lives of two media workers and one civil servant and caused serious injuries to four other persons who were carrying out their professional duties near the Susuzlug village of the Kalbajar district of the Republic of Azerbaijan on 4 June 2021 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 34, 35, 40, 63, 64, 68, 72 and 86, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Yashar Aliyev
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated 5 June 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Letter dated 4 June 2021 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan addressed to the Secretary-General

With reference to my previous letter on the serious threat emanating from the massive contamination of recently liberated territories of Azerbaijan with mines and other explosive devices deployed by Armenia, I am writing to inform you of the latest tragic mine incident, which caused the deaths of two media workers and one civil servant.

The explosion of an anti-tank mine took place in the Susuzlug village of the Kalbajar district of Azerbaijan on 4 June 2021, while representatives of different mass media outlets were carrying out their professional duties. As a result, Mr. Siraj Abishov (1988) from the AzTV broadcasting company, Mr. Maharram Ibrahimov (1982) from the AZERTAC State Information Agency and Mr. Arif Aliyev, a representative of the local executive power, were killed and four other civilians were seriously injured.

It is of particular importance to underline that the explosion took place in the village, from where the armed forces of Armenia were to withdraw under the trilateral statement of the leaders of Azerbaijan, the Russian Federation and Armenia, signed on 10 November 2020. Thus, the said area was not a zone of military operations, and there should not have been a necessity to plant mines.

As you may be well aware, Armenia asked for a 10-day extension for its withdrawal from the Kalbajar district out of allegedly humanitarian considerations. Yet, it exploited this period to massively and indiscriminately plant mines in the area while looting and destroying public and private property, cutting and burning the forests and committing other crimes. Therefore, the mine was supposedly planted by Armenia during its withdrawal from the area to inflict as much damage as possible on Azerbaijan.

This tragic incident demonstrates, yet another time, the seriousness of the threat emanating from the massive contamination of territories of Azerbaijan with land mines and other explosive devices. Armenia's continuing refusal to release the maps of the minefields seriously aggravates the situation, causing more and more human losses and material damages, and undermines the overall process of post-conflict normalization.

Given the scale and gravity of the mine contamination, there is an urgent need for an international response in order to prevent further human losses, to enable hundreds of thousands of displaced persons to finally return to their homes and to seize the opportunity for regional peace and cooperation that emerged after the resolution of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict. As such, this is a serious humanitarian and human rights issue, exposing a dire need for international assistance and requiring an urgent response from the entire international community.

It is with this understanding that I appeal to you once again to mobilize all resources and expertise available at the United Nations and among the broader international community to render assistance for humanitarian demining in Azerbaijan. Your active engagement with Armenia to persuade it to finally honour its obligations under humanitarian law by releasing the maps of the mined areas is also of utmost necessity in this regard.

(Signed) Jeyhun **Bayramov**