

# DEADLY MINES NO OBSTACLE TO PEACE AND CIVILIZATION!

As a result of the 44-day Patriotic War of 2020, which ended exactly four years ago, and the subsequent less than 24-hour anti-terror operation of September 2023, Azerbaijan put an end to Armenia's occupation of almost a fifth of its territory in the west of the country, in Karabakh and Eastern Zangezur economic regions. This is one of the most significant events in the new and modern history of Azerbaijan. Moreover, it reversed the tendency of the Azerbaijani people losing their lands, their living space, which started in the early 19th century. During the occupation, which lasted a little less than 30 years, these lands were subjected to devastation, towns and villages were razed to the ground, the economic infrastructure was ravaged, natural resources were plundered, and the environment of the region sustained irreparable damage. Immediately after the liberation of this territory, large-scale work on restoration and creation began. As a matter of fact, civilization began to return here, and with it the rightful owners of these lands who were forcibly expelled during the first Karabakh war in the early 1990s. An extensive article is dedicated to this topic in this issue of IRS-Heritage.

It is only natural that the restoration of Azerbaijan's territories liberated from occupation and the return of the population there have been facing various problems. The humanitarian toll of landmines is staggering. Data from the AzCBL indicates that Azerbaijan has a higher number of landmine victims compared to other regions in the South Caucasus. The statistics are troubling: from 1991 to 1 November 2024, more 3400 individuals have been recorded as victims of landmines and UXOs, including 38 women and 359 teenagers. From 10 November 2020 to 1 November 2024, 70 people (55 civilians) were killed and 311 people (143 civilians) were injured in 228 incidents as a result of landmine and UXO explosions. The Armenian military have planted a total of 1.5 million mines in Azerbaijani territory. This problem poses a serious obstacle to the restoration of liberated territories and the return of the population and is extensively discussed in an article by a representative of the Azerbaijan Campaign to Ban Landmines.

Other stories worthy of attention include an article devoted to the issue of origin of Shirvani, a traditional men's outerwear of a number of peoples of South Asia from Afghanistan to Sri Lanka. The word "Shirvani" is connected with the name of Shirvan, a historical region of Azerbaijan. This provides interesting information on the history of historical and cultural relations between Azerbaijan and the region of South Asia.

The issue also includes stories about one of the crucial stages in Azerbaijan's history – the Renaissance period of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, which was marked by a significant rise in the social, spiritual and educational spheres. These articles talk about the reflection of the problem of equal rights and liberation of women on the pages of the famous magazine "Molla Nasreddin" magazine and the activities of the Muslim Enlightenment Society "Saadat", which played a major role in the development of culture and education in this period.

The above gives reason to hope that this issue of our magazine contains extensive information that will help our readers expand their knowledge about Azerbaijan.

**By Musa MARJANLI,  
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