

# COP29 GLOBAL CALL TO ERADICATE LANDMINES IN AZERBAIJAN AND WORLDWIDE

*World Food Prize Laureate, Heidi Kuhn with IEPF President Umud Mirzayev Walks Minefields of Karabakh*

BAKU, AZERBAIJAN, November 18, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Heidi Kuhn, World Food Prize Laureate, Founder, Roots of Peace and Umud Mirzayev, President, International Eurasia Press Fund (IEPF) took bold footsteps yesterday by walking the dangerous minefields of Karabakh in an effort to raise global awareness for the urgency of eradicating landmines and restoring the agricultural bounty of the once thriving vineyard region— turning MINES TO VINES by replacing minefields with grapevines in these once lush fields.



Heidi Kuhn, World Food Prize Laureate, Founder, Roots of Peace and Umud Mirzayev, President, International Eurasia Press Fund (IEPF)

As global leaders gather for the COP29 United Nations Climate Summit hosted in Baku,

Azerbaijan, Kuhn and Mirzayev say that the world has overlooked the impact of landmines on climate change in their own backyard.

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*Umud Mirzayev, President, International Eurasia Press Fund (IEPF)*

The minefields of Karabakh are situated just three hours from Baku Stadium, where delegates from nearly 200 countries and 72,000 delegates have gathered. Meanwhile, the region continues to grapple with the presence of an estimated 1.5 million landmines that remain hidden, posing ongoing risks to communities and the environment. Tragically, since November 2020, 382 innocent Azerbaijani

citizens have become victims of landmines.

“The COP 29 Theme is: In Solidarity for a Green World,” states Kuhn. “Yet, a ‘green’ world cannot

be achieved when there are landmines lurking in the ground, and the bloodshed of war prevents farmers from cultivating their fields. The very first step towards a green world is safe and fertile land, which cannot be achieved in conflict or where there are landmines present. There will be an estimated 10 billion people in the world by 2050, and these seeds of terror sown in both the soil and soul of humanity due to escalating wars will prevent us from feeding future generations.”



The minefields of Karabakh are situated just three hours from Baku

Together, Roots of Peace and IEPF are calling upon world leaders to urgently support their campaign to eradicate all landmines in Azerbaijan, as a legacy to COP29, so that peace through agriculture may be restored. It is their hope that a regenerative agricultural program may be replicated across war-torn lands worldwide, on which there are an estimated 110 million landmines in over 60 countries.

Landmines leave a devastating legacy that extends far beyond the immediate harm to civilians, killing and injuring long after conflicts end. They also wreak havoc on the environment, harming wildlife and domestic animals while setting off a cascade of ecological damage. Landmines contribute to soil degradation, deforestation, and the contamination of water sources with heavy metals. By destroying habitats and disrupting food supply chains, they can also alter entire species populations, further compounding the environmental toll.

Explosions have permanently damaged areas that once supported diverse flora and fauna, turning vast, ecologically vibrant spaces into contaminated zones that require extensive and costly remediation. The fertile agricultural lands, forests, and water resources were also affected, creating a domino effect that undermines food security, threatens livelihoods, and endangers biodiversity.

It is recognized that understanding the environmental footprint of landmines is crucial for developing sustainable, long-term remediation strategies. These strategies are essential not only for ensuring safety but also for supporting ecosystem recovery.

Roots of Peace and IEPF have joined together to issue an urgent plea for international support and funding to address the crisis.

“Landmine clearance efforts are costly and require advanced technology, skilled labor, and sustained international support,” says Mirzayev. “Without urgent investment, the ongoing

environmental degradation will continue to escalate, threatening biodiversity, natural ecosystems, and the livelihoods of communities who rely on these resources. Accelerating the pace of landmine removal is not just a humanitarian necessity but an ecological imperative to prevent further damage to our planet's biosphere."

#### ABOUT ROOTS OF PEACE;

Roots of Peace is a humanitarian non-profit founded in 1997 with a mission to restore economic vitality by creating livelihood opportunities in post-conflict regions and helps the world's most vulnerable local economies recover after conflict. Over 8 million fruit trees have been planted providing exports to new markets which has benefited millions of farmers and families worldwide. Peace through Agriculture is the pathway forward for world peace. Please join us by generously donating to <https://rootsofpeace.org/>.

#### ABOUT IEPF:

The International Eurasia Press Fund (IEPF) is a non-governmental organization established in 1992 which is a member of the UN ECOSOC with the General Consultative status. IEPF, which was established as a media and civil society organization, started implementing social and humanitarian programs in the mid-1990s. Since 2000, IEPF has joined the Mine Action Program with the support of UNDP, and today it has become one of the main partners of the Azerbaijan Mine Action Agency (ANAMA). To date, the organization has cleared more than 14 thousand hectares of land from landmines and unexploded ordnance handed it over to the end user. The mission of the IEPF is "Peace for All".

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