



**STATEMENT BY
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AT THE
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
DELIVERED
AT THE NINTH MEETING OF THE STATES PARTIES
TO THE MINE BAN CONVENTION
(AGENDA ITEM 12(C))
(GENEVA, 27 NOVEMBER 2008)**

Mr. President,

Taking this opportunity, we wish to inform the States Parties on our ongoing efforts with regard to our obligations arising from the Article V of the Convention.

Turkey has cleared additional 601 anti-personnel land mines and 31 anti-tank mines since January this year. As of November 2008, there remain 981.854 laid mines in Turkey, of which 164.457 are anti-tank mines.

As it was indicated in our first national report, anti personnel land mines are laid along the border lines. Nevertheless, the western borders that we share with Greece and Bulgaria, as well as the border with Georgia are mine-free.

At present, a mine clearance programme along the borderline with Syria, which is the longest land border of Turkey, is a priority.

Currently, a draft law on the "mine clearing and tender activities along the land border between Turkey and Syria" is on the agenda of the Plenary of the Turkish Grand National Assembly. Once this law is enacted, we will be able to call for a tender on mine clearance activities along the borderline, of which the clearance period will not exceed 5 years. And, once the area is mine-free, it will be opened up for agricultural purposes.

Furthermore, while awaiting for this legislation to be adopted by the National Assembly, we are proceeding with complementary mine-clearing activities at five separate border check-points between Turkey and Syria.

I will try to explain these efforts with the slide you see on the screen.

a. Pre-tender and tender specification activities with regard to clearing mines in an area of 8.771 square meters within Kilis-Öncüpınar customs district are conducted under the auspices of the Office of the Governor of Kilis.

b. In accordance with the relevant decisions taken at the meetings between respective Turkish and Syrian authorities, the Office of the Governor of Kilis was authorized on March 2008 to carry out activities, including the issuing a tender for mine clearance, in an area of 38.500 square meters in Kilis, Çobanbey district.

c. A protocol is being prepared for clearing mines in an area of 663.800 square meters within Gaziantep Karkamış district.

d. "The Protocol Regarding Mine Clearance Activities to be carried out by the Turkish Armed Forces around Akçakale border crossing" was signed on 30 January 2007 to clear landmines, within the framework of broadening the Akçakale check-point. This is an area of 7.175 square meters. The clearance activities were completed in July 2007.

e. "The Protocol Regarding Mine Clearance around Nusaybin Check-Point" was signed on 6 December 2007. In line with this Protocol, under the auspices of the Office of the Governor of Mardin, the tender agreement was signed on 14 March 2008 and the mine clearance of an area of 200.000 square meters has been completed.

We will continue to inform the States Parties on further efforts and preparations regarding the Article V obligations.

I thank you, Mr. President.