“COUNTERING THE THREAT POSED BY IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICES”

The Rescue Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) of the Republic of Armenia implements various safety protocols aimed at minimizing risks associated with the detection of improvised explosive devices (IEDs). These measures encompass proactive safety initiatives and, when required, decontamination procedures to mitigate potential hazards effectively.

In case of detection of IEDs, due to safety measures, the area is immediately being demarcated and defined as a dangerous zone, safety rules are strictly observed, since the neutralization of IEDs is extremely dangerous for both the sappers' and people's lives, as well as for the environment.

Before starting the activities a non-technical research is being implemented, which mainly involves collecting as much information as possible about IEDs and refining the collected information, in particular:

Prior to commencing activities, preliminary non-technical research is conducted, primarily focused on gathering comprehensive information concerning IEDs and subsequently refining this information, notably in the following aspects:

1. The person, who saw it, found, discovered,
2. Detection time,
3. Appearance (description), dimensions,
4. Open or closed,
5. The environment.

In order to minimize the level of danger, all the information about the detected suspicious object is clarified so that the sapper team can make accurate calculations about the shock wave caused by the possible detonation of the IEDs (suspicious objects), the flight distances of the fragments and the scale of destruction.

Clearance activities of IEDs may vary depending on the situation and the technical characteristics of IEDs, in particular:

1. from the dimensions of the improvised explosive device,
2. from the weight of the explosive charge,
3. from the place of installation,
4. from the operating principle of an improvised explosive device,
5. from the number of detonators (primary and secondary), type (contact, non-contact, slow-acting, remote-controlled, non-detonating element, self-dissolving, etc.).
Furthermore, sapper engineers from the National Security Service of the Republic of Armenia on a regular basis undergo recurrent training at specialized centers to enhance their proficiency in detecting and neutralizing improvised explosive devices.

The continual technical upgrading of the competent department within the National Security Service of the Republic of Armenia for the detection and neutralization of improvised explosive devices is consistently undertaken.

As part of the comprehensive efforts to enhance the anti-terrorist security of critical facilities and areas of mass gathering in Armenia, the pertinent exercises are routinely arranged and executed aimed at focusing on refining the professional competencies of the competent authorities of the Republic of Armenia in detecting and neutralizing improvised explosive devices.

A procedure has been developed for the coordinated joint actions of the National Security Council and the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the event of receiving information regarding the placement of explosive devices.

Moreover, pursuant to decrees N143-N dated 17 February 2011 and N454-N dated 23 April 2014, the "Center for Humanitarian Demining and Expertise” state non-commercial organization (CHDESNCO) is tasked with the identification, disposal, and explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) pertaining to improvised explosive devices (IEDs) as part of its mandate.

EORE initiatives are designed to mitigate the risks of death and injury resulting from explosive remnants of war (ERWs) and IEDs by enhancing awareness and promoting safe behavior. These activities are conducted across educational institutions, communities, and various governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Recognizing the distinct risks posed by IEDs, a training program titled "Improvised Explosive Devices" was conducted for CHDESNCO personnel in 2024 to bolster their expertise in this area. Moreover, during the planning and execution of demining operations, comprehensive assessments of mine, ERW, and IED risks are conducted, and strategies for risk mitigation are formulated accordingly.

From January 1, 2022, to February 2024, eleven criminal proceedings were initiated within the units of the Investigative Committee of the Republic of Armenia, responsible for conducting pre-trial investigations into cases involving illegal trafficking of improvised explosive devices. Among these, four proceedings were consolidated into one single proceeding.

Out of the eleven cases, three were sent to court with an indictment, while three others were determined to be terminated in accordance with paragraphs 1 and 3 of Article 13 of the Criminal Procedure Code of the Republic of Armenia.

The preliminary investigation remains ongoing in five criminal proceedings, with one case still pending identification of the individual subject to public criminal prosecution. In the remaining four proceedings, which have been consolidated into one, public criminal prosecution has been initiated against four individuals.
It is also important to highlight that there have been no reported incidents involving the detection of improvised explosive devices within the penitentiary institutions of Armenia. Regarding the measures implemented to prevent and mitigate the risks associated with such devices, it is noteworthy that all individuals entering the penitentiary facilities under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice of Armenia undergo screening procedures utilizing state-of-the-art security equipment, including the "Rapiscan ORION 920CX" X-ray devices and modern transition metal detectors from the "SECUPLUS" brand, which also include handheld metal detectors.

These security measures are administered by the staff members of the respective penitentiaries. Additionally, thorough searches are conducted on personal belongings, packages, and parcels brought into the penitentiary premises.