

Berlin, December 2022

Dear All,

As recently indicated in my letter to you of March this year, we are encountering a dangerous turning point in our history after World War II. So it is not surprising that the German term "Zeitenwende" has been elected as the "word of the year 2022".

More than two generations after the World War II, still explosive remnants are found in the German soil as demonstrated in repeatedly discovering unexploded aircraft bombs when ditching foundations for new buildings, as mentioned in all the years before. So it is more than obvious that the war in the Ukraine will also leave countless threats in its soil for a long time.

Moreover, there are reports in the news about ubiquitous mines and explosive traps, no wonder since Russia, like the USA, has not signed any of the recent treaties pertaining to avoiding unnecessary wartime atrocities, neither that of Dublin nor that of Ottawa. Astonishingly, a much earlier resolution of such a kind was already adopted in Saint Petersburg in 1868, the "Declaration Renouncing the Use, in Time of War, of Explosive Projectiles Under 400 Grammes Weight". It was deemed necessary since that kind of ammunition was maiming horribly. This declaration is regarded as a precursor of the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907 (unfortunately not strong enough to prevent the World Wars). As a consequence, you never can condemn a whole folks historically to commit war crimes. But right now, it is a war crime to attack civilian critical infrastructures principally condemned in the Hague Conventions but frankly admitted by Russian officials. Terrorism, period.

Hopefully, this nightmare will end soon. However, then the tedious work of clearing the fields will start, a work the EFNDT Working Group 5 is committed to support: (<http://www.efndt.org/Organisation/Working-Groups/Working-Group-5-Public-Security>) Fortunately, this website still exists.

As in all the years before, I wish you all a Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year 2023, stay with hope and remain confident.

Best regards  
Kurt Osterloh

