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## **SLOVENIA AND COLOMBIA ENVOYS RAISE AWARENESS OF LAND MINES AT EVENT IN TOKYO**

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Japan Times (4 April 2018)

The Slovenian and Colombian ambassadors to Japan on Wednesday called for more awareness about the worldwide risks posed by land mines by rolling up their pant legs and sleeves in a symbolic show of support for those who have lost limbs due to the explosive remnants of war.

There are still many countries that are in the process of eliminating mines from their territories, and we continue having new victims every year, Colombian Ambassador Gabriel Duque said at the global Lend Your Leg event at the nations embassy in Tokyo.

The United Nations recognizes April 4 as International Mine Awareness Day.

Over 60 countries and territories are plagued by land mines, and as of 2015, an average of 18 people are killed or maimed by the explosives every day, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

Slovenian Ambassador Simona Leskovar brought the annual event to Tokyo last year in an effort to raise public awareness about the difference Japan makes □ as one of the initiatives major donors — in helping to eliminate land mines and in providing assistance to survivors.

The challenges are still out there, maybe not in Japan, but as a major donor, they are entitled to know why this money is spent, Leskovar said.

Leskovar said Japan has contributed over \$4 million to the demining and mine-victim support projects led by ITF Enhancing Human Security □ a nonprofit humanitarian organization established by the Slovenian government in 1998.

What shocked Leskovar following her designation as Slovenias top envoy to Japan more than two years ago, however, was that the public seemed to be mostly unaware of their contribution. In fact, most appeared to be oblivious to issues surrounding land mines, which remain one of the most persistent humanitarian issues worldwide, despite steady progress.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2018/04/04/national/slovenia-colombia-envoys-raise-awareness-land-mines-event-tokyo/#.WsSnbS5uaUk>