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Progress Report

(January – March 2017)

“Capacity Support to Albanian Mine & Munitions Coordination Office (AMMCO)”



1. Executive Summary

This is the progress report of the project “**Capacity Support to Albanian Mine & Munitions Coordination Office (AMMCO)**”, funded by the Government of the United States through ITF Enhancing Human Security for implementation period of January 2017-December 2017. The report provides a description of activities and progress for the period January – 31 March 2017.

At the end of March 2017, the current number of dangerous UXO hotspots is at present reduced to 5 from initially 19 ones identified in 2011. On 31 March 2017, the clearance operations are successfully completed in UXO hotspot of Kordhoc, therefore the area will be handed over to the respective authorities and local communities for productive.

Overall goal is to contribute in achieving that Albania is safe from ERW/UXO and to the fulfillment of the Albanian Government commitment to eliminate the ammunition risk by 2017.

The specific objectives of the project are:

- *Survey/Clearance and certification of four remaining contaminated areas Sinanaj-Tepelene, Jube Sukth–Durrës, Qafe Shtame and Suç-Burrel in full compliance with international humanitarian standards.*
- *Inspection and certification as safe and free from ammunition of three former military ammunition depots in Borizane Kruje, Vertop Berat and Berzhite in Tirana.*
- *Community liaison, public awareness and risk education of local communities living around the affected areas in Gjirokaster, Tepelene, Durrës, Burrel, Skrapar and Librazhd.*

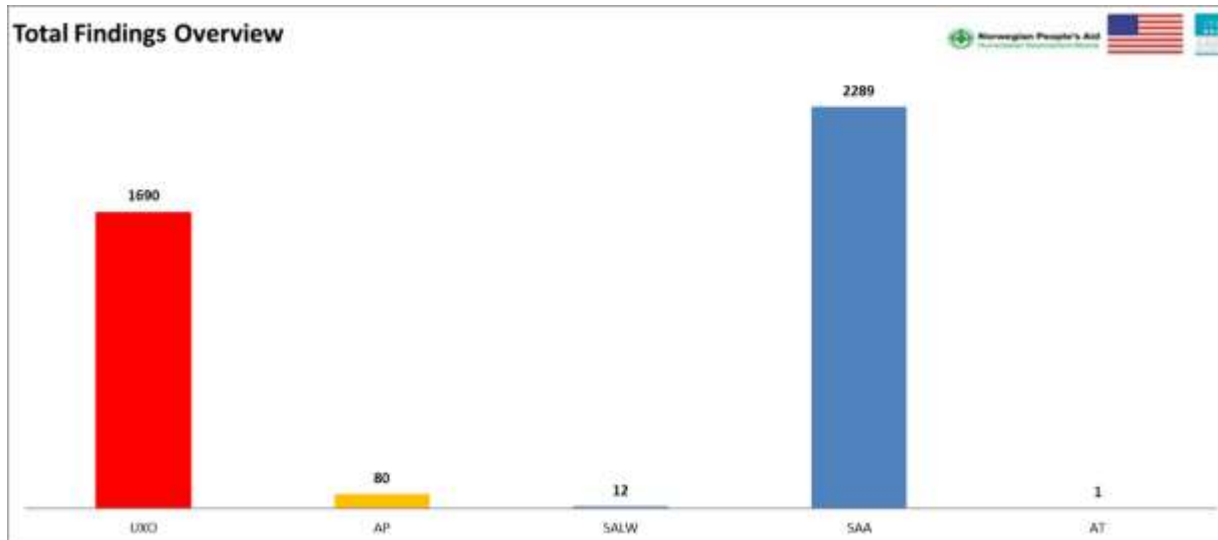
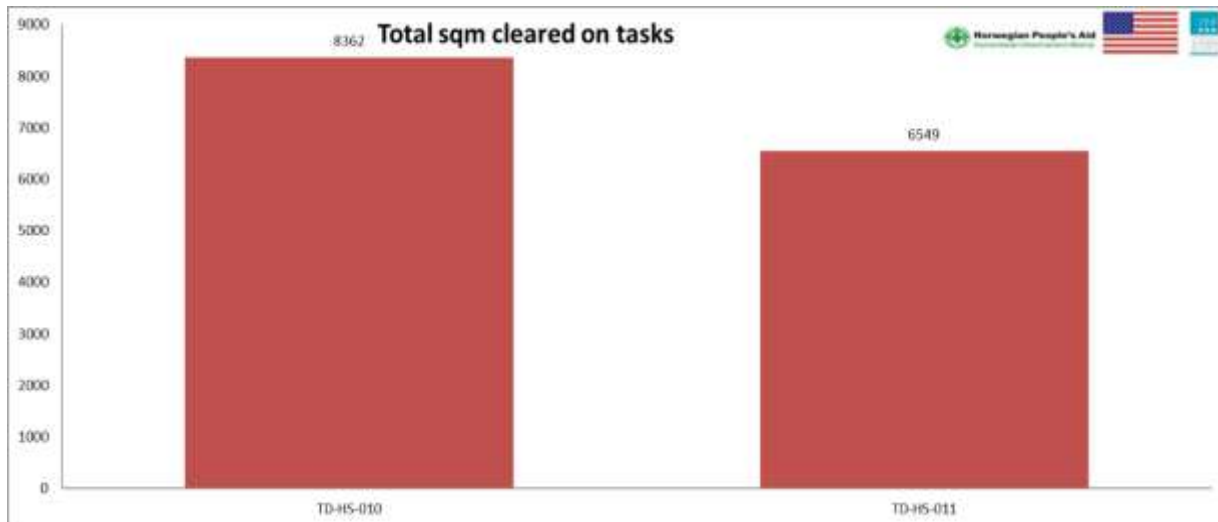
AMMCO continues to provide technical assistance to the Government of Albania, in complying with the Disarmament Treaties such as the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBT) and Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) obligations.

The clearance operations are successfully completed at the end of March 2017 in UXO hotspot of Kordhoc. A completion report and handover certificate are prepared and the UXO hotspot of Kordhoc is ready to be handed over to the respective authorities.

1.1 Land cleared and released

During the reporting period January – March 2017, AMMCO was carrying out Coordination and Quality Management (Quality Assurance & Quality Control) of the cleared areas in UXO hotspots of Kordhoc and Picar, respectively;

- **14,911 square meters** of contaminated land was cleared by Norwegian People’s Aid (NPA), while AMMCO QM Team provided quality assurance/control in the UXO hotspot of Kordhoc (**8,362 square meters**), Picar (**6,549 square meters**) in Gjirokaster region.
- **1,690** items of UXO (different calibers of artillery ammunitions, fuzes hand grenades), **81** AP mine bodies, **1** AT mine body also **2,289** items of small arms and ammunitions (≤ 23 mm and bullets) (SAA) are found during this reporting period in UXO hotspots of Kordhoc and Picar. The main items found included fuzes, grenades and electronic detonators, as well as larger items such as mortars, shells and projectiles. All dangers items found are destroyed in situ from EOD team of AAF and others are collected and stored in the military depo for further destruction on the demolition range from the EOD AAF, coordinated from AMMCO.



1.2 Application of international standards and Quality Management

AMMCO and clearance organizations (NPA and EOD unit of AAF) are operating in full compliance with National and International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs) developed for UXO hotspot clearance programme. NPA has already developed the UXO clearance SOPs, based on their previous experience and EOD of AAF manual. This document is reviewed, update as needed and approved by AMMCO along with AMMCO’s work to ensure that clearance activities are carried out safely and in full compliance with national and international Humanitarian Standards. Thus, no accidents recorded during the reporting period. The AMMCO Quality Management (QM) Team carried out regular monitoring visits and is also weekly liaising with the Albanian Armed Forces (AAF) to request and supervise the demolitions conducted by AAF in the NPA UXO hotspot clearance sites in Kordhoc and Picar Gjirokaster. During the reporting period the AMMCO QM Team has performed Quality Assurance (QA) visits and has conducted the Quality Control in the cleared areas by NPA. The QM Team has conducted **27** Quality Managements visits.

1.3 Risk Education and public awareness

Risk education (RE) and community liaison activities were ongoing as part of UXO hotspots clearance programme. Meetings and awareness raising sessions with local inhabitants were conducted in Kordhoc and Picar UXO hotspots to inform them about the potential risk. Awareness raising activities targeted 5,100 inhabitants, including men, women, boys and girls without any discrimination due to their involvement in risky activities, such as scrap metal collection and farming or animal husbandry in contaminated areas. Awareness sessions together with NPA teams delivering appropriate messages are held with inhabitants of Kordhoc and Picar in support of the clearance operations.

1.4 Victims Assistance

There are at least 998 UXO casualties (151 killed and 847 injured) all over Albania. The last accident with unexploded ordnance was registered on 20 January 2017, where a hand grenade exploded in Verdove Pogradec and two males were involved in the accident; one injured and the other one was dead in hospital.

There is a national plan aiming to support the mine and UXO victims throughout Albania. The plan complies with several Disarmament International Treaties ratified by Albania.

A “Needs Assessment of Social-Economic and Medical needs of marginalized Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) victims in Albania” supported by the Austrian and US Government, has been completed during 2013-2016. The focus of the assessment was to review the status of the survivors, identifying their specific needs and drafting due recommendations for assistance to the Government and donors. Based on the above Needs assessments, US Department of State through ITF Enhancing Human Security funded two projects in Victim Albania during 2016-2017.

1.5 Disarmament Treaty support

Albania is a State Party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and Cluster Munitions Convention. As such, it has reporting obligations deriving from the respective Articles of each of these Conventions on yearly basis. AMMCO is providing its technical support and expertise to the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is in process of preparing the convention annual transparency reports on: (i) Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), (ii) the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), (iii) the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBT) and (iv) the OSCE questionnaire for the year 2016. Reports will be made available on the respective websites of each convention in April – May 2017.

2. The UXO/ERW hotspots problem in Albania

The ammunition contamination of the territory is a problem in Albania. Among the causes of such contamination are the accidental explosions at Ammunition Storage Sites (ASS) across the country during the civil unrest in 1997, the unexploded remains of the WW I & II as well as former army ammunition demolition areas that need to be cleared of explosive remnants. Ammunition hotspots have also been created in few former army demolition areas and shooting or firing ranges polygons (former shooting & training sites), which have been closed recently by the Albanian Armed Forces (AAF). Most of these areas need a full subsurface clearance at a depth of 20 to 50 cm, before being used by the army or being released for further use.

In order to respond to the ammunition contamination situation, the Albanian Government, supported by the international community, embarked on a consolidation reform, focusing mainly on the reduction of storage depots, the destruction of a considerable number of SALWs and ammunition stockpiles and the clearance of the existing UXO hotspots by 2018.

According to AMMCO database, there are 1002 abandoned explosive ordnance casualties (151 killed and 851 injured) recorded all over Albania during the period from 1997 until to date. Last accident is registered on 25

March an explosion was reported claiming to injure two children playing near an old army building in Yrshek area, just outside Tirana. The report said that police thought that children hit a projectile by accident with stones and it exploded. The two children were wounded and helped by local population.

At the end of March 2017, the current number of dangerous UXO hotspots is at present reduced to 5 from initially 19 ones identified in 2011. In March 2017, the clearance operations are successfully completed in UXO hotspot of Kordhoc, therefore the area will be handed over to authorities.

Table 1: Updated List of UXO hotspots as of 31 March 2017

NO	UXO Hotspots	Originally suspected Hazard in 2014 (m²)	Total area cleared as of 31 March 2017 (m²)	Clearance Plan for 2017-2018 (m²)
1	Gjeroven-Berat	63.000	68.423	-
2	Sinanaj – Tepelene	200.000	0	200.000
3	Picar – Gjirokaster	62.000	20.897	41.103
4	Kordhoc – Gjirokaster	2.400	24.470	-
5	Jube Sukth – Durres	1.326.714	0	1.326.714
6	Klos – Burrel (1 tunel)	180	180	-
7	Mbreshtan – Berat	30.720	65.227	-
8	Palikesht – Berat	12.000	13.321	-
9	Laç (1 tunel)	1.117	350	-
10	Suç-Burrel	84.000	75.650	8.350
11	Qafe Shtame -Burrel (2 tunele)	0	0	360
12	Gerdec – Vore	368.000	368.000	-
13	Ura e Gjadrit-Shkoder	91.000	93.295	-
14	Otlake-Berat	3.000	3.000	-
15	Gryke e Manatise-Lezhe	6.000	6.000	-
16	Rreshen-Lezhe	10.000	10.000	-
17	Brezhdan-Peshkopi	30.000	30.000	-
18	Pilure-Vlore	12.000	12.000	-
19	Shen-Vasil, Vlore	0	0	-
Total		2.302.131	790.813	1.576.530

3. UXO hotspots clearance operation activities

During the reporting period, UXO hotspots clearance operations were ongoing in Kordhoc and Picar Gjirokaster carried out by Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) funded by US Government through ITF Enhancing Human Security and in Qafe Shtame (Selixe) and Suc in Burrel conducted by the EOD unit of Albanian Armed Forces (AAF) funded by Albanian Government.

AMMCO team was continuously coordinating, monitoring and conducting Quality Management of the cleared land on those areas of operation.

3.1 Kordhoc UXO Hotspot in Gjirokaster

During the uprising in Albania, on the 11 March 1997 there were several explosions at the Kordhoc Ammunition Storage Site (ASS) which resulted in UXO contamination of the surrounding area. At least three ESH were involved in the explosions; these contained approximately 220 tons of ammunition and explosives at the time of the

incident. The UXO hotspot has been assessed on 05 August 2011, and technical assessment detailed report has been provided by AMMCO Technical Assessment Team.

In 2016, AMMCO issued a task dossier of UXO Hotspot of Kordhoc (TD HS 010) to Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), based on the MoD action plan and clearance priorities. On 25 July 2016 NPA deployed one clearance team to the UXO hotspot of Kordhoc. The figures of the clearance progress for the reporting period follows: (i) clearance progress, (ii) items found in this UXO hotspot are respectively:

- i. **8,362 square meters** of contaminated land in the UXO Hotspot of Kordhoc is cleared by Norwegian People's Aid (NPA).
- ii. **1,173 items** of unexploded ordnance (UXO) were found in total during clearance process, the main items found included fuzes, grenades, as well as larger items such as mortars and projectiles including items of small arms and ammunitions (≤ 23 mm and bullets) (SAA).

AMMCO QM team has continuously monitored and conducting Quality Assurance and Quality Control of this area, with sampling procedures based.

From the commencement of clearance operations to 31 March 2017 at the UXO hotspot of Kordhoc, a total of **24,470 square meters** of contaminated land and **1,730 UXO, 90 AP** and **2 AT** mine bodies including the **748 SAA** items were found and destroyed on-site or were transported to be demolished from EOD Team in the approved demolition ranges designated by MoD for this purpose.

The clearance operation from NPA team is successfully completed at the end of March 2017. A completion report is being prepared by NPA clearance organization and the handover certificate of UXO hotspot of Kordhoc is ready prepared by AMMCO to be handed over to the respective authorities and local communities for productive use.



3.2 Picar UXO Hotspot in Gjirokaster

During the uprising in Albania and on the 13 March 1997, there was an explosion at the Picar Ammunition Storage Site (ASS) which resulted in UXO contamination of area. On 15 May 1997 during a clearance operation done by AAF a further fire/explosion occurred in a working area where stocks (approximately 120 tons) of damaged ammunition and loose propellant were being consolidated. This resulted in 4 deaths and 10 injuries.

In 2016, AMMCO issued a task dossier of UXO Hotspot of Picar (TD HS 011) to Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), based on the MoD action plan and clearance priorities. On 25 July 2016 NPA deployed one clearance team to the UXO hotspot of Picar. The figures of the clearance progress for the reporting period follows: (i) clearance progress, (ii) items found in this UXO hotspot are respectively:

- i. **6,549 square meters** of contaminated land in the UXO Hotspot of Picar is cleared by Norwegian People's Aid (NPA).

- ii. **1,765** items of unexploded ordnance (UXO) were found in total during clearance process, the main items found included fuzes, grenades, as well as larger items such as mortars and projectiles items of small arms and ammunitions (≤ 23 mm and bullets) (SAA)

From the commencement of clearance operations to 31 March 2017 at the UXO hotspot of Picar, a total of **20,897 square meters** of contaminated land and **1,914 UXO** and **11,643 SSA** including **2,789 SALW** items were found and destroyed on-site or were transported to be demolished from EOD Team in the approved demolition ranges designated by MoD for this purpose.

AMMCO QM team is performing Quality Assurance and Quality Control of this area, with sampling procedures based on the clearance progress in this task. The clearance operation is ongoing in this UXO hotspot and is expected to complete May 2017.

4. Application of International Standard and Quality Management of UXO Hotspot Clearance Operations

AMMCO and clearance organizations (NPA and EOD unit of AAF) are operating in full compliance with National and International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs) developed for UXO hotspot clearance programme. NPA has already developed the UXO clearance SOPs, based on their previous experience and EOD of AAF manual. This document is reviewed, update as needed and approved by AMMCO along with AMMCO's work to ensure that clearance activities are carried out safely and in full compliance with national and international Humanitarian Standards. Thus, no accidents recorded during the reporting period.

The AMMCO Quality Management (QM) Team carried out regular monitoring visits and is also weekly liaising with the Albanian Armed Forces (AAF) to request and supervise the demolitions conducted by AAF in the NPA UXO hotspot clearance sites in Kordhoc and Picar Gjirokaster. During the reporting period the AMMCO QM Team has performed Quality Assurance (QA) visits and has conducted the Quality Control in the cleared areas by NPA. The QM Team has conducted **27** Quality Managements visits.

During the visits, there were no irregularities. In general, the operations were conducted in compliance with the respective SOPs and the safety standards. The cleared areas qualities controlled by the AMMCO QM Team are found to be free of unexploded ordnance.

5. Operational Meetings

The operational meetings are held on a monthly basis at the Norwegian People's Aid regional office in Berat Gjirokastra and Tirana. The operational meetings provides a good basis for the discussions of the detailed operational issues; clearance productivity, clearance requirements, types and quantities of UXOs and other small arms and ammunitions (SAA) found and their categorization, cooperation with Albanian Armed Forces in the handover/demolitions of the items found, cooperation/community liaison with local authorities and inhabitants living around contaminated areas. The agenda and minutes of the operational meetings are filed and documented, last operation meeting was held on 31 Mach 2017.

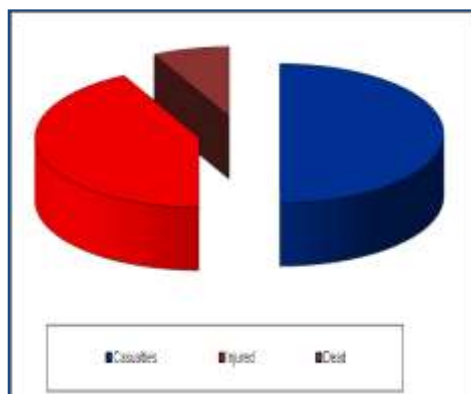
6. Risk Education and Community Liaison

Risk Education activities are closely linked with the community liaison efforts. AMMCO through its community liaison activities in cooperation with NPA teams are directly involved in the handover of cleared land to communities and is assisting in building confidence on the quality of clearance in line with international humanitarian standards. Regardless of the life threat: children, women and men are often involved in scrap metal collection around UXO hotspots. Therefore, local inhabitants of Kordhoc and Picar Gjirokaster, Jub - Sukth Durres and Suc and Qafe Shtame in Burrel are met, and awareness-raising sessions were organized with local community members to inform them about the potential risks that UXO hotspots pose. Awareness raising activities targets

5,100 inhabitants, including men, women, boys and girls without any discrimination due to their involvement in risky activities, such as scrap metal collection and farming in contaminated areas.

7. Victims Assistance

There are at least 998 UXO casualties (151 killed and 847 injured) all over Albania. There is a national plan aiming to support the mine and UXO victims throughout Albania. The plan complies with several Disarmament International Treaties ratified by Albania, such as Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty, Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and Convention on Cluster Munitions Convention. The implementation of the National Plan



is contributing to the emergency and continuing medical care, physical rehabilitation, psychosocial support, socio-economic reintegration, data collection, relevant laws and policies for all mine/UXO victims throughout Albania.

A “Needs Assessment of Social-Economic and Medical needs of marginalized Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) victims in Albania” supported by the Austrian and US Government, has been completed during 2013-2016. The focus of the assessment was to review the status of the survivors, identifying their specific needs and drafting due recommendations for assistance to the Government and donors. To this purpose, a national workshop with participation of all stakeholders including donors was held in Tirana to present the findings and more important the medical/rehabilitation and socio-economic needs of survivors and/or their families.

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Based on the above Needs assessments, US Department of State through ITF Enhancing Human Security funded two projects in Victim Albania during 2016-2017. The first project will support the vocational training of 25 survivors. A selection process is done and 13 survivors have already started the training courses these days in Albania. AMMCO is monitoring the project and continuously coordinating with relevant partners of the project.

The second project will support with raw materials and components for the production and repair of prostheses at prosthetic Workshop in Kukes Hospital. The tender process organized by ITF is at the selection phase and materials and components are expected to be delivered in Kukes Hospital in May- June 2017.



During the reporting period, at least 4 new prostheses and 20 major repairs are done to amputees in need at the Prosthetic Workshop in Kukes Hospital and at 316 physiotherapy sessions are done to 37 patients.

In addition, two difficult cases that are not able to be treated in Albania will be fitted with rehabilitation and prostheses in Slovenia during 2017.

8. Disarmament treaties support

Albania is a State Party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and Cluster Munitions Convention. As such, it has reporting obligations deriving from the respective Articles of each of these Conventions on yearly basis. AMMCO is providing its technical support and expertise to the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is in process of preparing the convention annual transparency reports on: (i) Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), (ii) the Convention on Cluster

Munitions (CCM), (iii) the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBT) and (iv) the OSCE questionnaire for the year 2016. Reports will be made available on the respective websites of each convention in April – May 2017.

9. Visits and meetings in AMMCO Office

9.1 Participation on the 19th International Meeting of Mine Action National Programme Directors in Geneva

AMMCO Director participated in the 19th International Meeting of Mine Action National Programme Directors and United Nations Advisers, held in Geneva from 16 to 19 February. This annual meeting is an opportunity for us as a member of the mine action community to meet and to assess the progress and challenges within the sector. Participants include senior officials from mine action programmes, colleagues from United Nations departments and agencies, representatives from international non-governmental organizations, experts from donor governments and other mine action implementing partners. Organized by UNMAS for the first time at the Palais des Nations, on behalf of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action, this biggest annual meeting of mine action stakeholders registered a record number of more than 550 delegates, including representatives from Member States, the United Nations, civil society, as well as from the private sector. During the meeting, AMMCO Director has meeting with Mr. Ethan Rink Programme Manager of US WRA office for SE Europe including Albania. In this meeting organized by Ms. Sabina Beber ITF Deputy Director, we discussed the programme objectives and funds needed to complete the clearance of UXO hotspots in Albania including AMMCO funding issues. Mr. Ethan expressed the interested from US DoS and WRA office to support Albania and he is planning to visit the Albanian in July-August 2017.

9.2 Participation on the Regional Senior Managers' Course on ERW and Mine Action in Croatia

From 20 March - 7 April 2017, AMMCO participated in the Regional Senior Managers' Course on ERW and Mine Action 2017, held in Croatia, from CIRS in partnership with the Croatian Mine Action Centre (CROMAC). From Albania Mr. Haredin Kryeziu, AMMCO QM Team Leader was qualified to participate in this Course. The course participants where from mine action centers in the region and beyond: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, ITF Slovenia, Georgia, Kosovo, Turkey and Ukraine.

<http://www.jmu.edu/cisr/programs/training.shtml>

In this course from 26-28 March 2017, AMMCO Director was invited to provide a presentation on the Roundtable Discussion: Building Partnerships-Regional Collaboration and Communication (participants from AMMCO, NPA, ITF, SESSAC and MAG). Also, the AMMCO Director provided presentation on Programme Sustainability and Planning for Future” The Albanian experience and challenges in disarmament and rehabilitation process”. Experiences of Albania were shared in booth respective panels with all participants and other stakeholders at this course.



10. Visibility

AMMCO always ensures that the US Department of State and ITF are clearly visible as donors for the project, in accordance with visibility guidelines.

At all publications, meeting at the national and international level, various presentations and visits, donor support is mentioned. Donor logos and other visibility requirements are part of the promotion and awareness materials that are distributed at various events.

11. Planning for 2017

The MoD priorities and the demilitarization action plan focus on:

- Clearance of UXO hotspots contaminated areas in Kordhoc and Picar Gjirokaster, Sinanaj Tepelene and Jube –Sukth Durres by NPA under AMMCO coordination and monitoring.
- Clearance of UXO hotspots contaminated areas in Qafe Shtame (Selixe) and Suc Burrel by EOD of AAF under AMMCO coordination and monitoring.
- Inspection and certification of the remaining former military ammunition depots in Borizane-Kruje, Vertop-Berat and Berzhite Tirana.
- The handover of cleared land to MoD authorities and local government.

Based on above MoD priorities and updated action plan for 2017, AMMCO in cooperation with the General Staff aims to conduct the following activities:

- Conduct Quality Management (Quality Assurance and Quality Control) on the UXO hotspots clearance operations above mentioned.
- Preparing and issuing the new task dossier for Sinanaj and Jube Sukth to NPA for clearance operations in cooperation with EOD AAF.
- Based on the MOD request inspect and certify the above mentioned former military depots, in cooperation with EOD AAF and the Support Command.
- Conduct informative meetings with local authorities in Gjirokaster, Tepelene, Burrel and Durres in order to inform them about clearance operations in this region and seek their collaboration.
- Develop and distribute awareness raising materials in UXO hotspots of Kordhoc and Picar in Gjirokaster, Sinanaj in Tepelene, Qafe Shtame and Suc in Burrel and Jube - Sukth Durres.
- Update IMSMA database with the relevant information on UXO hotspot clearance progress and with data on UXO victims.
- Monitor the Risk Education and Victim Assistance activities in Albania.
- Assist Albanian Government to fulfill the reporting obligations of the disarmament conventions of CCW, APMBT, CCM and OSCE annual report.