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Progress Report

(01 October – 31 December 2017)

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



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List of Acronyms

AAF	Albanian Armed Forces
ALB – AID	Albanian Association for Integration and Development
AMMCO	Albanian Mines and Munitions Coordination Office
APMBC	Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
ARC	Albanian Red Cross
ASS	Ammunition Storage Sites
AXO	Abandoned Explosive Ordnance
CCM	Convention on Cluster Munitions
CCW	Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons
FFE	Free from Explosives
EOD	Explosive Ordnance Disposal
ESH	Explosive Store Houses
ERW	Explosive Remnants of War
GICHD	Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining
ICRC	International Committee of Red Cross
IMAS	International Mine Action Standards
IMSMA	Information Management System for Mine Action
ITF	International Trust Fund Enhancing Human Security
MoD	Ministry of Defense
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
NPA	Norwegian People's Aid
QA	Quality Assurance
QC	Quality Control
QM	Quality Management
RE	Risk Education
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
US DoS	United States Department of States
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance

1. 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. During 2017, three accidents are registered in Albania; one on 20 January 2017 and two others on 22 and 25 March 2017.

The accidents happened in private property in Pogradec, and around the army buildings in Porto Romano Durres and Yrshek Tirana. In total six people are involved in accidents; 5 injured and one dead after being transported in National Trauma Hospital. From the 5 injured; 2 are children, two are civilian and one is an army sergeant's.

As a result of national and international efforts in undertaking clearance activities, at the end of December 2017, the current number of dangerous UXO hotspots is reduced to 4 from initially 19 ones identified in 2011.

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

NO	UXO Hotspots	Originally suspected Hazard in 2014 (m ²)	Total area cleared as of 31 December 2017 (m ²)	Clearance Plan for 2018 (m ²)
1	Gjeroven-Berat	63.000	68.423	-
2	Sinanaj – Tepelene	200.000	0	200.000
3	Picar – Gjirokaster	62.000	62.000	-
4	Kordhoc – Gjirokaster	2.400	24.470	-
5	Jube Sukth – Durres	1.326.714	169.993	1.156.721
6	Klos – Burrel (1 tunnel)	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 tunnels)	360	180	180
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		2.302.491	1002.029	1.365.251

2. UXO hotspots clearance operation activities

During the reporting period, UXO hotspots clearance operations were ongoing in Jube-Sukth Durres, carried out by Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) and funded by US Government through International Trust Fund Enhancing Human Security (ITF) and in Qafe Shtame (Selixë) 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 funded by US Government through International Trust Fund Enhancing Human Security (ITF).

2.1 UXO Hotspot Qafe Shtame (Selixe), Burrel

The ammunition contamination of the Qaf- Shtame(Selixe) tunnel is related to the 1997 appraisal in Albania. Local people, including children, went inside the tunnels in Qaf Shtame and started to take ammunition out of the tunnels to sell for scrap. Due to this, there was an explosion and 23 people were burned/dead inside the tunnels. The entrance to the two tunnels that exploded is “blocked” by the Albanian army, but locals have managed to open some parts of the tunnels to go inside.

Qafe Shtame village is part of the Komsj Commune, district of Burrel. There is road access in the village, and the car must be in good condition (4X4 vehicle only). The distance from Burrel to Selixe village is around 35 kilometers. The EOD Team of AAF started the clearance operations at UXO Hotspot Qafe Shtame Burrel on 10 July 2017, based on the MoD plan for 2017 and Support Command task order. Based on the Support Command request the AMMCO QM Team provided the quality control of cleared land and quality assurance visits to this UXO hotspot.

The figures of the clearance progress for the reporting period follows: (i) clearance progress, (ii) items found in this UXO hotspot are respectively:

- I. **50** square meters of contaminated land in the UXO Hotspot of Qafe Shtame is cleared by EOD unit of AAF.
- II. **6,614** items of unexploded ordnance (UXO) items of small arms and ammunitions (SAA≤ 23 mm and bullets) were found in total during clearance process. The main items found included fuzes, hand grenades, electronic detonators, SAA, as well as larger items such as mortars and projectiles.

The total figures of the clearance progress for the period from July-November 2017 are: (i) clearance progress, (ii) items found in this UXO hotspot are respectively:

- I. **180** square meters of contaminated land in the UXO Hotspot of Qafe Shtame is cleared by EOD unit of AAF.
- II. **20,000** items of unexploded ordnance (UXO) and **350,000** items of small arms and ammunitions (SAA≤ 23 mm and bullets) were found in total during clearance process. The main items found included fuzes, hand grenades, electronic detonators, SAA, as well as larger items such as mortars and projectiles.

EOD Albanian finalized the clearance of operations on 1 (one) tunnel. The Clearance task was suspended due to bad weather conditions in late November 2017 and will restart with Clearance Operations of the other tunnel and surrounding areas in spring 2018. All items found during this period which were safe to transport, were destroyed by EOD team in Biza demolition range in November 2017.

AMMCO QM team performed Quality Assurance of this area, based on the Support Command request in this task.





Photos from the inspection visit in the UXO Hotspot Qafe Shtame(Selixe) Burrel

2.2 UXO Hotspot Jube-Sukth, Durres

This former AAF (Albanian Armed Forces) training area and later ammunition demolition area (OBOD) lies on the beach North of Durres, which is an area used regularly by the local community. Fisher nets are pointing to fishing activities in the area. Ammunition metal scrap collectors are collecting metal pieces in the water for selling them on the market. This activity contains a certain threat and should be halted. Numerous demolition pits scattered over the area are witnessing OBOD activities. The last demolition happened in April 2011. The Albanian MoD closed this demolition range and intends to handover the area to local authorities. The AAF carried out a surface clearance but the area will need a sub-surface clearance according International Standards (IMAS) before the land can be released to the local communities.

During the assessment, no explosive containing items could be found and no accident involving an explosive containing item was reported during the last years.

On 2 February 2017, AMMCO sent the Technical Assessment reports for TD-HS- 017 (Jube-Sukth UXO Hotspot) to NPA. On 8 May 2017, AMMCO issued a task dossier for a Technical Survey of UXO Hotspot of Jube- Sukth (TD HS 017) to Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), based on the MoD action plan and priorities. NPA deployed two clearance teams to the UXO hotspot of Jube- Sukth, executing technical survey from 23 May until 23 June 2017 over the whole area (with expectation of the part that is underwater), totaling **974,177 sqm**.

In total **32,719 sqm** were physically investigated by different instruments, i.e. Schonstaedet 72-ga, Ebinger PIDD and Ebinger Large loop UPEX-740 with the purpose to determine contamination type, depth and the best methodology tools NPA have. In addition, soil was excavated with the help of JCB 3cx excavator in 19 different boxes over the area, and then checked with different instruments. In total, **126 UXO** were removed and handed over to EOD AAF during the Technical Survey operation. These items were found in the depth up to 20 centimeters, except for the training bombs that were found on the depth to 1 meter and discovered by large loop.

Based on the Technical Survey findings, NPA prepared the Clearance Operation Plan, which was introduced for approval on 26 June 2017. The full clearance of the Jube-Sukth hotspot can be considered as "challenging" because it includes the beach shore (underwater clearance), sand and muddy areas.

After the Technical Survey completed, based on the NPA Clearance Operation Plan approved on 28 June 2017 AMMCO issued a task dossier based on the MoD Order to do Clearance Operation of UXO Hotspot of Jube- Sukth (TD HS 017) to Norwegian People's Aid (NPA). NPA deployed two clearance teams to the UXO hotspot of Jube- Sukth, executing Clearance Operation.

The figures of the clearance progress for this task are: (i) clearance progress, (ii) items found in this UXO hotspot are respectively:

- I. **77,331 square meters** of contaminated land in the UXO Hotspot of Jube-Sukth Durres is cleared by Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) during reporting period.
- II. **521 items** of unexploded ordnance (UXO) were found during clearance process. The main items found included fuzes, grenades, electronic detonators, as well as larger items such as mortars and projectiles and bombs.

The total figures of the clearance progress for this task for the period from June- December 2017 are: (i) clearance progress, (ii) items found in this UXO hotspot are respectively:

- I. **169,993 square meters** of contaminated land in the UXO Hotspot of Jube Sukth Durres is cleared by Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) during reporting period.
- II. **1,389 items** of unexploded ordnance (UXO) were found in total during clearance process. The main items found included fuzes, grenades, electronic detonators, as well as larger items such as mortars and projectiles and bombs.

AMMCO QM team performed Quality Assurance and Quality Control of this area, with sampling procedures based on the clearance progress in this task.



Photos from the UXO clearance operations in the Hotspot Jube-Sukth Durres

3. 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 Qafe Shtame (Selixe) Burrel and Jube Sukth Durres. 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 and EOD Teams.

4. Operational Meetings

The operational meetings are held monthly at the Norwegian People's Aid field offices Durres and Tirana. The operational meetings provide a good basis for the discussions of 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.

5. 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 are 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 Qafe Shtame (Selixe) Burrel and Jube-Sukth Durres were 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 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 in contaminated areas.

6. Victims Assistance

There are at least 1002 UXO casualties (151 killed and 851 injured) all over Albania. There is 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.

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 is supporting the vocational training of 25 survivors. A selection process is done and 25 survivors have already completed the vocational training courses in Albania.

AMMCO is monitoring the project and continuously coordinating with relevant partners of the project. The second project supported with raw materials and components for the production and repair of prostheses at prosthetic Workshop in Kukës Hospital. Materials and components are delivered in Kukës regional Hospital in June 2017.

During the reporting period, at least 4 new prostheses and 13 major repairs are done to amputees in need at the Prosthetic Workshop in Kukes Hospital and at 208 physiotherapy sessions are done to 31 patients.

7. EOD support to UXO Hotspots Programme in Albania

EOD unit of Albanian Armed Forces (AAF), based on the Minister of Defense Order, are coming every Friday of the week to do the demolition of item on site and doing transport of other item to the designated army depots. The items that are considered as “red ones” – as dangerous to move from the UXO hotspot are destroyed on site by EOD specialist.

Safety brief is done regularly before the EOD demolition operations are starting in the UXO Hotspots. A safety cordon/perimeter is secured before the demolition is starting. All local inhabitants including police and local authorities are informed on these operation and procedures. Military police are escorting the EOD team and securing and supporting the EOD operations on the field.

AMMCO is coordinating these weekly activities with EOD unit of Albanian Armed Forces.

8. Visits and Meetings

The following are meetings and visits made to UXO Hotspots Clearance programme in Albania during the reporting period;

8.1 Visit of Albanian Minister of Defense at UXO Hotspot Qafe Shtame (Selixe) Burrel

On **20 October 2017**, Ms. Olta Xhaçka - Minister of Defense together with high official representatives from General Staff and Support Command visited UXO Hotspot of Qafe Shtame (Selixe) in Burrel to witness the progress and challenges during the clearance operation at the UXO Hotspot of Qafe Shtame (Selixe) Burrel.

Minister of Defense Ms. Olta Xhaçka inspected the work initiated three months ago for the cleaning of the Qafe Shtame (Selixe) UXO hotspot, where 20 years ago, the explosion in tunnels filled with armament caused 23 casualties among the villagers.

"The Armed Forces are carrying out a dangerous job and I want to congratulate them for the extraordinary dedication in the service of the citizens. Out of the 19 hotspots identified in 2011, today there are only four, where currently it is being worked with the support of the USA government. Our objective is to clean all these hotspots by the end of 2018 in compliance with all safety standards and make it possible to use them for civilian purposes. Today I want to encourage all citizens who live near the dangerous areas to notify the Armed Forces whenever they may see artillery ammunition or dangerous explosive disposal that endangers the security of their lives. Calling at number 129 will help the engineering corps to identify the areas and intervene on time to avoid serious incidents ", - said the Minister after having inspected the situation inside the tunnel. Official link of visit in eng below;

www.mod.gov.al/eng/index.php/newsroom/747-ammunition-hotspots-xhacka-our-objective-is-to-clean-albania-by-the-end-of-2018



9. 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.

10. Planning for 2018

The MoD priorities and the demilitarization action plan focus on:

- Technical Survey/Clearance and certification of four remaining contaminated areas Sinanaj Tepelene, Jube-Sukth Durres, Qafe Shtame(Selixe) and Suç Burrel in full compliance with international humanitarian standards.
- Support to MoD for the upgrading the PSSM standards and relevant regulations.
- Support the MoD and General Staff to identify the needs on the CWD and PSSM.
- Inspection and certification of the remaining former military ammunition depots in Borizane-Kruje, Vertop-Berat and Berzhite Tirana.
- Community liaison, public awareness and risk education of local communities living around the affected areas in, Durres, Tepelene and Burrel.
- The handover of cleared land to MoD authorities and Local Government representatives

Based on above MoD priorities and updated action plan for 2018, 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.
- 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 Tepelene, Burrel and Durres to inform them about clearance operations in this region and seek their collaboration.
- Develop and distribute awareness raising materials in UXO hotspots of Sinanaj Tepelene, Qafe Shtame and Suç Burrel and Jube Sukth Durres.
- Update IMSMA database with the relevant information on UXO hotspot clearance progress.
- Assist Albanian Government to fulfill the reporting obligations of the disarmament conventions of CCW, APMBT, CCM and OSCE annual report.

Update list of remaining UXO hotspots as of December 2017

No	UXO Hotspots	Priority for clearance	Originally suspected hazard in m ² in 2012	Cleared areas in m ² as of December 2017	Planned for Survey & clearance by 2018-2020
1	Jube Sukth – Durres ¹	High	1,326,714	169,933	1,156,781
2	Qafe Shtame(Selixe) - Burrel (2 tunnels) ³	High	360	180	180
3	Suç-Burrel ³	Medium	75,650	0	8,350
4	Sinanaj – Tepelene ²	Medium	200,000	0	200,000
Grand Total			1,602,724	170,113	1,365,311

1) Clearance operation will be ongoing by NPA till October 2018 and clearance in the remaining contaminated area will be continued by AAF clearance teams.

2) Survey is done by NPA and the Clearance will be done by EOD AAF in 2019.

3) Clearance operation will be done by EOD AAF in 2018.



Unexploded Ordnances Hotspots Clearance in Albania



AMMCO June 2017.