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Progress Report

(01 January – 31 March 2018)

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



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
ASS	Ammunition Storage Sites
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
SAA	Small Arms and Ammunitions
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. The last accident registered is in March 2017.

As a result of national and international efforts in undertaking clearance activities, at the end of March 2018, 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 March 2018

No	UXO Hotspots	Originally suspected Hazard in 2014 (m ²)	Total area cleared as of 31 March 2018 (m ²)	Clearance Plan for 2018 - 2020 (m ²)
1	Gjetroven-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	215.681	1.111.033
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	1.047.777	1.319.563

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 (Selixe) conducted by the EOD unit of Albanian Armed Forces (AAF) funded by Ministry of Defence.

AMMCO team was coordinating, monitoring and conducting the 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 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 send the Technical Assessment reports for TD-HS- 017 (Jube-Sukth UXO Hotspot) to NPA. On 8 May 2017, AMMCO issued a task dossier to do 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.

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 starting from 28 June 2017 and on.

The figures of the clearance progress for the reporting **period January- March 2018** for this task are: (i) clearance progress, (ii) items found in this UXO hotspot are respectively:

- I. **45,748 square meters** of contaminated land respectively; **19,428 square meters in January, 6,780 square meters in February, 19,540 square meters in March**, in the UXO Hotspot of Jube Sukth Durres is cleared by Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) during reporting period.
- II. **174 items** of unexploded ordnance (UXO) and of small arms and ammunitions (≤ 23 mm and bullets) (SAA) were found in total during clearance process. The main items found included fuzes, grenades, electronic detonators, as well as larger items such as mortars, projectiles, bombs and SAA. All dangers items found are destroyed in situ from EOD team of AAF and others are collected and stored in the military depot for further destruction on the demolition range from the EOD AAF, coordinated from AMMCO. AMMCO QM team performed Quality Assurance, based on the clearance progress in this task

The clearance figures are low due to continuous heavy rain and flooding especially for the months of February and March 2018. NPA hopes that will be able to compensate for the productivity loss by the end of the project.



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

3. Inspection and certification of former military ammunition depots.

Upon the request of MoD' Support Command, AMMCO team in cooperation with EOD unit of AAF conducted an inspection and certification of military factory Poliçan (Zone B).

3.1 Former military factory in Poliçan (Zone B).

Based on the request no. 240 date. 11.01.2018 for the inspection of **military factory Poliçan (Zone B) former production lines which are closed in 1992**. Also based on the Report of the EOD Team for the completion of the control and clearance operation of the Zone B Poliçan, the AMMCO team on 22.02.2018 and 02 & 05.03.2018 conducted inspection and visual control Zone B Poliçan.

The EOD team performed clearance operation of this area for the period February 08 till March 02, 2018.

On 5 March 2018, the AMMCO team in cooperation with the EOD unit of AAF conducted an inspection of military factory Poliçan - Zone B.

The overall land inspection included a surface of **131,522** square meters. The inspection was carried out visually and by using metal detectors Schonstedt G72. There were no munitions discovered in the area, in and outside the areas checked during the inspection; as a result, the area complied with standard procedures for certification.



Photos from the AMMCO QM Team during inspection activities in the Poliçan factory (Zone B)

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

AMMCO and clearance organizations (NPA and EOD units 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 Jube-Sukth Durres and Qafe Shtame (Selixe) Burrel. 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 Team.

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.



Photos from the AMMCO QM Team during QA and QC activities in the UXO Hotspot Clearance Operations

5. Operational Meetings

The operational meetings are held on a monthly basis at the Norwegian People's Aid regional offices in 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.

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 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 target 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 1002 UXO casualties (151 killed and 851 injured) all over Albania. There is a 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 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.

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 the prosthetic workshop in Kukes Hospital. Materials and components are delivered in Kukes regional Hospital in June 2017.

With funding provided by USA government in 2017, for the raw materials and components for production and repair of prosthesis, during the reporting period, at least 7 new prostheses and 11 major repairs are done to amputees in need at the Prosthetic Workshop in Kukes Hospital and at 91 physiotherapy sessions are done to 23 patients.

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 a yearly basis. AMMCO is providing its technical support and expertise to the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and during this reporting period have drafted 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 2017. The reports of CCM

and APMBT and CCW will be reviewed by respective authorities in Ministry of Defense and Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and made available on the respective websites of each convention.

9. Visits and Meetings

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

9.1 Visit of Military attaches in UXO hotspots Jube-Sukth Durres

On 26 January 2018 military attaches of; Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Italy, Romania, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States of America and representatives of Ministry of Defense and General Staff visited the UXO Clearance Operation in UXO hotspot of Jube-Sukth Durres.

The military attaches and other participants were briefed about the history and current situation in this UXO hotspot by AMMCO director, while the Norwegian People's Aid updated them about the clearance operations progress, challenges and plans. NPA teams demonstrated the clearance procedures and equipment used during the clearance process. Also, the AMMCO Quality Management team demonstrated to the participants the application of technical assessment procedures, carried out by AMMCO to define the boundaries of UXO hotspot hazard areas and the level and type of contamination. QA and QC procedures were introduced. During the visit.

During the field visit, all representatives expressed their appreciations for the important work done for UXO Clearance Hotspots in Albania.

9.2 Visit of ITF Representatives to UXO Hotspots Clearance Programme

On 28 - 29 January 2018, the representatives of International Trust Fund (ITF) Enhancing Human Security; Director and deputy Director of ITF together with the Program Manager visited Albania, in order to be informed about the progress and future plans UXO hotspot clearance and demilitarization programmes in Albania. Visits to UXO Hotspots clearance programme on 28 January aimed at acquiring updated information about the current situation and clearance operations in UXO hotspots, through discussions, presentations and on-site visit to UXO Hotspots of Jube-Sukth Durres.

On 29 January, ITF had a meeting with deputy minister of defense Mr Petro Koçi and Chief of Cabinet Ms Belioza Coku, Director of AMMCO and discuss the collaboration and support of ITF in the years of mine action and UXO hotspots programme; the focus of the meeting was in the following issues;

Progress and plans for UXO hotspots clearance, funding situation and possible increase of government contribution for the clearance capacities in the future.

Plans for training of AAF personnel in UXO hotspots clearance and then creation of two UXO clearance teams, in order to complete the clearance of remaining UXO hotspots, as per below NPA training plan;

- Supervisor training (4-weeks). ITF proposes to train up to 5 candidates from AAF, two of which would take on the supervision of the two teams. The candidates should be EOD 3 qualified, as well they will be able to do demolition of the item found. Training will focus on planning, organization, supervision of clearance operation. Training will not encompass training in demolition, as candidates should have those qualifications and will only focus on safety and security during demolition.

- Systematic Search Training (5-weeks). ITF propose that AAF/EOD nominates 30 candidates out of which 20 will be chosen to form 2 clearance teams. Two clearance teams are proposed as currently NPA has equipment for two teams. The candidates do not need EOD qualifications – it is preferable they do not have it. They need to be physically fit and preferably young(er).
- Medical training. Will be conducted throughout searcher training also to conduct CASEVAC exercise with searchers on regular basis. NPA senior medic will train army medics (maximum 5 medics) in use of the equipment and NPA medical SOPs, also to ensure that equipment that will be handed over will be used and maintained properly.

The above trainings will be conducted by NPA with funding provided by US DoS and International Trust Fund Enhancing Human Security (ITF).

Additionally, funding support provided by US DoS and ITF to AMMCO for three years of operations (until 2020) and possibility to include AMMCO into Albanian Government Structure beyond 2020, to address the remaining UXO problem in Albania appropriately.

Deputy Minister Koçi expressed the gratitude for the support provided from ITF and its donor partner such USA and ensured the further collaboration and support from Ministry of Defense and General Staff in fulfilling the above topics of discussion.

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 2018

The MoD priorities and the demilitarization action plan focus on:

- Clearance and certification of four remaining contaminated areas: Jube-Sukth Durres, Qafe Shtame(Selixe), Suç Burrel and Sinanaj Tepelene in full compliance with international humanitarian standards.
- Support to MoD and General Staff 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, Berzhite Tirana, Vertop and Polican in Berat
- 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.