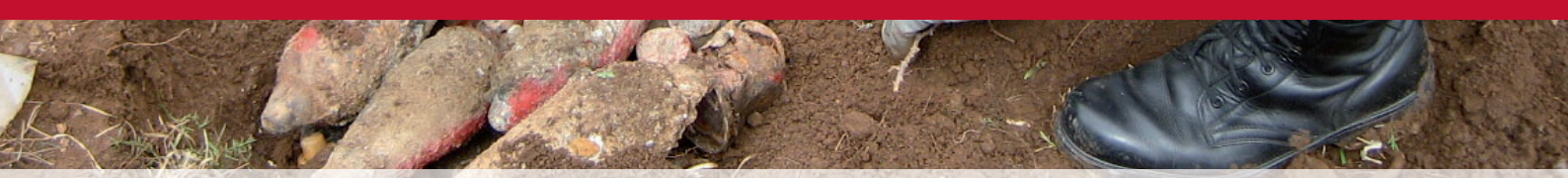


Using Mine Action Capacity for UXO Hotspots
Clearance | Albania Mine and Munitions
Coordination Office and DanChurchAid

MINE ACTION AND ARMED VIOLENCE REDUCTION



Albania

CASE STUDY | SEPTEMBER 2012

GICHD | CIDHG



The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), an international **expert organisation** legally based in Switzerland as a non-profit foundation, works for the **elimination** of mines, explosive remnants of war and other explosive hazards, such as unsafe munitions stockpiles. The GICHD provides **advice** and capacity development support, undertakes applied research, disseminates knowledge and best practices and develops **standards**. In **cooperation** with its partners, the GICHD's work enables national and local authorities in **affected countries** to effectively and efficiently **plan, coordinate, implement, monitor and evaluate** safe mine action programmes, as well as to implement the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, the Convention on Cluster Munitions and other relevant instruments of international law. The GICHD follows the humanitarian principles of **humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence**.

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INTRODUCTION¹

Albania used to have a mine and explosive remnants of war (ERW) contamination problem, as a result of the 1999 Kosovo conflict. During the conflict, mines were laid along both sides of the border in Albania, contaminating the North-Eastern Kukes region. In 2009, Albania fulfilled its obligations under Article 5 of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in known mined areas, nine months ahead of schedule. The Albania Mine Action Executive (AMAE), responsible for the management and coordination of mine action in Albania, played a key role in achieving completion.

While Albania managed to address its landmine problem, ammunition stored in former military depots, left over from Albania's former communist regime, still pose a serious threat to safety. As of January 2012, there was approximately 26,000 tons of ammunition in storage depots awaiting disposal.² Approximately 90 per cent of the surplus ammunition is reportedly over 40 years old. The risk of an unplanned explosion remains high given inadequate storage conditions, poor handling practices and the large amount of ammunition that has lost its physical and chemical properties.³ Several minor explosions have taken place. The largest and most serious explosions took place in Gërdec in March 2008, which killed 27 people, injured over 300 and resulted in the evacuation of over 4,000 residents. In addition to the threat of unplanned explosions, there are 19 unexploded ordnance (UXO) hotspot areas in the country. These are defined as ammunition depots or abandoned army camps where ammunition explosions have taken place resulting in the areas being contaminated with UXO.

In 2011, the Albania Mine Action Executive (AMAE) was renamed the Albania Mines and Munitions Coordination Office (AMMCO). It was officially given the mandate to coordinate and monitor the clearance of UXO hotspot areas, undertaken by DanChurchAid, and ammunition disposal undertaken by the Albania Armed Forces' (AAF) explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) teams. There are few instances where a national mine action centre has completed its APMBC Article 5 mine/ERW clearance obligations and then used its expertise to address broader security threats. The purpose of this case study is to examine: the rationale for the shift from mine action to UXO hotspot clearance; how Albania's mine action capacity supports UXO hotspot clearance; and lessons learnt from this transition.

CONTEXT

Albania's demilitarisation programme

In 2004, Albania initiated a National Action Plan to destroy its surplus ammunition stockpiles; however the programme lacked sufficient resources.⁴ Following the Gërdec ammunition depot explosions, Albania's Prime Minister, Sali Berisha, announced in 2009 the demilitarisation⁵ of all hazardous ordnance and endorsed the "Action Plan for the Elimination of the Excess Ammunition in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Albania".

The Action Plan outlined a wide programme of activities focused on destroying surplus ammunition by 2013 and reducing the number of ammunition depots located close to civilian communities.⁶ The plan refers to five methods of surplus disposal: industrial disposal, disposal by burning, open detonation in demolition sites, shooting and sale or donation.⁷ In order to dispose of all surplus ammunition, the Government is using its factories in Mjekes, Gramsh and Polican, as well as national EOD demolition capacities for open burning and open detonation (OBOD) of ammunition.⁸

In addition, 19 sites have been identified so far as “hotspot” areas which require sub-surface clearance. Preliminary assessments of the hotspot areas indicate that the extent of the contamination and the risk to surrounding communities remains high. The Albanian Armed Forces (AAF) conducted surface clearance in some of these areas, but not according to international humanitarian standards, and UXO-related accidents have occurred. According to estimates, there have been at least 699 abandoned explosive ordnance (AXO) casualties, killing 109 people and injuring 590. It is estimated that hotspot clearance will continue beyond 2013, although all of the high priority areas should be cleared by then.

The Government of Albania is contributing to the achievement of the Action Plan through several substantial elements: OBOD operations, transportation of ammunition, repackaging, loading and unloading of ammunition, personnel and associated logistic management. The overall monetary cost is approximately 8.5 million EUR. Given limited government capacity and resources, the Action Plan relies heavily on external technical assistance and support.⁹ The Government has only been able to mobilise 30 per cent of the funding needed to implement the plan. Donor meetings were organised in Brussels in December 2010 and in Tirana in October 2011, but met with a lukewarm response. As Albania is now a NATO member, it can no longer benefit from demilitarisation support through the NATO Partnership for Peace Ministry of Defence, and donors have been reluctant to channel support directly to the Albanian military.

RATIONALE FOR THE SHIFT

When Albania succeeded in clearing all of its known minefields, the mine action programme was due to be phased out, with residual mine action capacity transferred to the AAF’s EOD unit. However, the ammunition depot explosions that took place in Gërdec in 2008 highlighted constraints on the part of the AAF in coordination and emergency EOD response; gaps which AMAE was able to fill. The Ministry of Defence eventually agreed that the involvement of AMAE would be beneficial given: the complexity of the Government’s demilitarisation programme; the fact that it lacked sufficient external funding; the tight deadlines established for work that needed to be done according to international safety and quality control standards; and the fact that the demilitarisation programme did not include any mechanism for risk education and community liaison in areas contaminated by UXO.

The Government also recognised that the hotspot clearance undertaken by private contractors in areas such as Gërdec needed to be done according to international standards. It was clear that a body was needed to provide accreditation for private contractors to clear UXO hotspot areas and operate OBOD ranges.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)’s Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Response (BCPR) conducted an internal assessment in 2010 to determine whether AMAE, as the national mine action coordination body, could use its skills and experience to support the Ministry of Defence with the implementation of the Action Plan on excess ammunition. The September 2010 assessment report strongly supported this transition based on the clear need for monitoring and coordination of the safe disposal of ammunition stockpiles and survey and clearance of hotspot areas.¹⁰ The report recognised that AMAE “has already gained years of experience performing task management of demining operators to perform demining in vast areas of north-eastern Albania. The government should engage the existing capacity of AMAE to manage and ensure the proper clearance of hazardous hot-spots.”¹¹

Using AMAE's capacity and the demining teams trained by DanChurchAid to address UXO hotspots was a logical decision. AMAE had developed expertise in several critical areas which were directly relevant to the Government's Action Plan on excess ammunition. These included for example:

- > field experience in quality management of UXO/AXO and mine clearance operations, risk education and victim assistance
- > a national accreditation body for Mine Action - 10 years' experience in managing international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and Commercial Operators in the areas of clearance operations, risk education and victim assistance according to International Mine Action Standards (IMAS)
- > international training in mine action management and EOD
- > experience in international resource mobilisation

UXO HOTSPOT CLEARANCE PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

As part of the Government's wider demilitarisation programme, a UXO hotspot clearance programme is being implemented to make Albania safe from ERW/AXO and to fulfil Albania's commitment to eliminate the ammunition risk by 2014.

The expected outcome for the programme is that regional and local development strategies will be implemented with the full participation of communities. The expected outputs of the programme are:

- > improved ammunition disposal standards
- > coordination and monitoring of UXO hotspot clearance and OBOD disposal
- > community participation and expanded ERW/AXO survivors assistance for enabling social reintegration and community cohesion¹²

AMMCO, with UNDP financial support, is coordinating and monitoring the UXO clearance operations. Between 2011 and mid-2012, UXO hotspot clearance was undertaken by DanChurchAid, subcontracted by Sterling International, with funds from the U.S. Department of State and the German Government through ITF. DanChurchAid has since ceased operations in Albania due to lack of funding, so AMMCO is engaged in completing technical and socio-economic assessments for the three remaining hotspots and providing coordination and Quality Management for clearance operations in Gerdec carried out by Sterling Int. until the end of September. After that, the AAF EOD teams, which suspended OBOD operations during the summer due to very hot weather conditions, will start clearance operations in Gerdec. The AAF's EOD teams have started rapid surface clearance of newly discovered ERW hotspots areas such as Otlak and Berzhite; AMMCO will also start cancellation procedures for four hotspots which will be released as free from the threat of ammunition.

AMMCO's role

In March 2011, AMAE was renamed AMMCO to reflect its new mandate. In November 2011, the Government of Albania and the UNDP formally agreed to use AMMCO to monitor and coordinate the clearance of the 19 UXO hotspot areas across the country.

AMMCO consists of a Director, three Quality Management monitors, specialists for mine action, victim assistance, socio-economic reintegration and IMSMA and administrative staff.¹⁵



AMMCO is responsible for:

- > coordinating and monitoring UXO hotspot clearance, risk education, community liaison and victim assistance
- > reviewing existing standards on safety, Quality Assurance and Quality Control, community liaison, operations, accreditation and risk education for ammunition disposal and hotspot clearance and upgrading them to international standards
- > developing a standard package for eventual accreditation of private contractors seeking to operate UXO hotspot areas
- > Quality Management for clearance operations in Gërdec
- > conducting detailed technical assessments of the hotspots
- > developing a plan for clearing all UXO hotspot areas based on the assessments
- > adopting mechanisms for ensuring Quality Assurance and Quality Control of hotspot clearance in assigned locations
- > developing adequate public awareness and risk education mechanisms for local communities in hotspot areas
- > expanding Albania's existing victim assistance programme to include UXO survivors for possible assistance schemes
- > establishing a national database for mines/ abandoned ammunition victims throughout Albania
- > resource mobilisation and liaison with government, in particular the Ministry of Defence

The Government of Albania, mainly through the Albanian Armed Forces (AAF), contributes the following support for the UXO hotspot clearance programme:

- > storage of the ammunition collected in UXO hotspot areas in designated AAF depots
- > transportation of ammunition to approved demolition ranges with AAF vehicles
- > ammunition disposal in demolition ranges by AAF EOD experts
- > in-situ destruction of ammunition and components found in UXO hotspot areas that are considered too dangerous for transport
- > standby medical evacuation support by helicopter through the AAF
- > accommodation of clearance operators in military bases during operations
- > logistical support and storage of mine action equipment in AAF facilities

Given its inter-ministerial composition, the Albanian Mine Action Committee is providing oversight for ammunition hotspot clearance. This will complement the activities of the Demilitarisation Board that oversees the government's demilitarisation programme, which only has AAF and Ministry of Defence representation.

DanChurchAid's role in UXO hotspot clearance

Following the closure of its mine action operations in Kosovo, DanChurchAid set up operations in Albania in 2002, transferring its equipment and staff. From 2004 onwards, DanChurchAid became the sole mine/ERW operator working in Albania with international funding. DanChurchAid played a key role in developing national mine clearance capacity, to the extent that at the time of completion, apart from one expatriate staff member, all other staff was national, including those responsible for operations planning and supervision of survey/clearance teams. With funding from UNDP, the European Commission and the U.S. Department of State, DanChurchAid trained and equipped six national demining teams, in addition to administration and logistics staff. DanChurchAid also provided managerial and financial oversight of the teams.

DanChurchAid remained in Albania in 2011 as it was sub-contracted by Sterling International to clear UXO hotspots. Between 2011 and mid-2012, DanChurchAid employed 35 national staff and one expatriate, and used two teams for survey and clearance of UXO hotspot areas. DanChurchAid was tasked by AMMCO, based on an order by the Ministry of Defence, to identify, mark and collect explosive items, while ammunition disposal was undertaken by the EOD unit of the AAF. DanChurchAid was unable to undertake ammunition disposal as the EOD capacity of the DanChurchAid-trained demining teams was not at the level required for UXO hotspot/Battle Area Clearance (BAC), ie EOD Level Four.

DanChurchAid's funding ended in May 2012 and by June, their UXO clearance operations and all staff in Albania were terminated. All equipment has been handed over to AMMCO for storage in AAF facilities for use under AMMCO's management in the hotspots clearance programme. Upon completion of the programme, the equipment will be handed over based on the requirements of respective donors.

PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES

Strategic planning

AMMCO has developed a national clearance plan in association with key partners, which was submitted to the Ministry of Defence for approval in May 2012. The Action Plan provides a detailed analysis of the ammunition contamination throughout Albania. Its main goal is the clearance of UXO hotspots throughout Albania by 2014 according to international standards, in order to contribute to making Albania safe from ERW/AXO and to fulfil the Government of Albania's commitment to reduce the stockpile of excess ammunition. The specific objectives of the Action Plan include the: a) development of a humanitarian framework for UXO hotspot clearance and ammunition disposal; b) clearance of all ammunition hotspots throughout Albania, handover to the community and extension of the victim assistance programme to ERW/AXO survivors nationwide.

Technical assessments

To date, AMMCO has carried out an assessment of 16 of the 19 hotspot areas. Each assessment provides detailed information on the hotspot, for example: history, description of location, accessibility, local infrastructure, soil type and vegetation, live ammunition found, other hazards, contamination level, type of clearance and clearance requirements, victims and potential beneficiaries of clearance. See Annex 4 for a sample hotspot assessment. AMMCO has also carried out the first of four technical assessments of former demolition ranges.

Quality Assurance/Quality Control

AMMCO has drafted a Standard Operating Procedure for Quality Assurance (QA) and Quality Control (QC) for hotspot clearance. AMMCO's Quality Management team conduct QA/QC of the clearance teams and are preparing standards and monitoring templates. AMMCO has been requested by the Government to also take charge of the certification of clearance procedures in Gërdec.

First aid training

In association with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), AMMCO will train the AAF's EOD unit in first aid skills, and has already provided the AAF with three ambulances. AMMCO also ensures that MEDEVAC services are available for the UXO hotspot clearance and ammunition disposal teams in these areas.

Information Management

GICHD's Information Management Section is helping AMMCO adapt IMSMA^{ng} so that in addition to covering mine action, it also covers hotspot clearance and ammunition disposal. IMSMA^{ng} is being used to upload, manage and analyse the operational data related to hotspot clearance and ammunition stockpile management. This database system ensures efficient and safe management of the information as received by the operators and partners. The progress and completion reports generated by the system are currently shared regularly with the Ministry of Defence and AMMCO's implementing partners.

Discussions are also underway to provide the Kukës Regional Council (the first region to digitalise its cadastral records) with IMSMA^{ng} in order to facilitate regional development planning, eg road development and mapping, identification of mineral resources, tourist sites, foot paths and land ownership.

AMMCO also migrated all of its mine victims into IMSMA^{ng} and is adding the 699 AXO casualties (109 deaths and 590 injuries). One future possibility is to eventually market IMSMA^{ng}, with assistance from GICHD, as a tool for the wider disability sector, ie to track needs, services available, etc for all people with disabilities in Albania, which number at approximately 90,000. At present, the government lacks full data on people with disabilities.

Victim assistance

AMMCO is working closely with the wider disability sector in Albania on the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD).

AMMCO intends to conduct a detailed assessment of the physical, medical and socio-economic conditions of victims injured in abandoned ammunitions accidents in Albania, as well as try to replicate the model of the Kukës prosthetic and orthotics workshop in other regions of Albania. So far, AMMCO has conducted socio-economic impact assessments for each of the hotspots which include: an assessment of the socio-economic situation of the areas surrounding the UXO hotspots, risk education, community liaison and victim assistance needs, and identification of UXO survivors and their medical and socio-economic needs. The data will be used to identify and develop assistance projects for the unexploded ordnance survivors throughout Albania.

Albania has a national prosthetic and orthotic centre in Tirana, but it is badly managed and is not accessible to people with disabilities. AMMCO is exploring options to relocate the prosthetic centre and further upgrade its managerial capacities.

FUNDING

AMMCO's projected annual budget for 2012 is approximately 300,000 USD. AMMCO remains a UNDP DEX project implementation unit and depends on UNDP funding to cover AMMCO salaries and running costs. UNDP BCPR has pledged support for AMMCO until October 2012, and AMMCO has initiated negotiations with the European Union for long term support. Securing longer term funding for AMMCO operations and UXO hotspot clearance has proven difficult given the wider global financial crisis.

There are no plans currently in place to integrate AMMCO within the Ministry of Defence or any other government structure or ministry. AMMCO, UNDP and others acknowledge that in theory, AMMCO should be part of government. However, given the Albanian context, they caution against AMMCO being based within the Ministry of Defence due to: the likelihood that AMMCO's capacity would dissipate (risk of losing long standing staff due to reduced pay and benefits, and the command structure within the Ministry of Defence); limited capacity within the Ministry; and competing political demands.

DanChurchAid's UXO hotspot clearance operations were funded mainly by the U.S. State Department, with some funding also provided by the German Government through the ITF. The EOD operations for in situ ammunition disposal and transportation to the army depot are supported financially by the Albanian Government. Given the departure of DanChurchAid, the Government plans to involve more AAF EOD teams for the clearance of UXO hotspots.

THE TRANSITION FROM MINE ACTION TO UXO HOTSPOT CLEARANCE

The transition in mine action capacity to address UXO hotspot clearance is an achievement for the Government of Albania, and one which other mine action programmes should take note of. Few national mine action programmes have completed their APMBC clearance obligations and used their expertise to support wider Armed Violence Reduction (AVR) initiatives.

Prior to completion, AMAE, the Government of Albania and the UNDP needed to make a decision on the future of the mine action programme, in particular the national technical and coordination capacity and expertise that had been built up over the years. Would this capacity dissipate with the closure of the programme? Would parts of it be transferred to the AAF, or could it be used to address wider security threats in Albania?



The process involved in using mine action capacity to address hotspot clearance in Albania took place over several years. The transition process was slow, met with numerous delays and did not proceed according to a clear, well-defined transition plan. It took the Government of Albania considerable time to recognise the value of using mine action capacity to support demilitarisation. Although the problem of excess ammunition and the risks associated with unsafe storage in military depots was known prior to Gërdec, ammunition disposal and safe storage were regarded as strictly military issues.

The following is a brief overview of the main developments:

- > AMAE carried out an assessment in 2005 on the needs of mine and AXO survivors country-wide, and considered continuing and expanding its victim assistance programme post-completion.
- > Albania's 2006 Completion Plan stated that: "...In 2005 alone, there were 21 casualties from AXO throughout Albania. Since 2000, there have been 94 casualties as a result of AXO and, what is most relevant is that the trend is increasing. In this perspective, it can be considered that the capacities and methods already developed and currently used in the Kukës Province for the mine problem can be used for other areas of the country to deal with the remaining ERW threat." While the Plan provided clarity regarding the remaining km² to be cleared and gave a clear date for completion, it also clearly signalled that there was scope to use mine action capacity to address AXO/ammunition issues in Albania. However, at this time, no clear decision was taken by the government on the future role of AMAE beyond completion.

- > In 2007, the UNDP commissioned an evaluation of the Albanian Mine Action Programme, which found that given that completion was in sight and as there was no clear plan in place to use mine action capacity for other purposes after completion, AMAE should focus its efforts on completing its clearance obligations and closing down.
- > The March 2008 Gërdec ammunition depot explosions were a turning point for AMAE. The Ministry of Defence asked AMAE for assistance in coordinating a response to the explosions at the ammunition storage depot in Gërdec, and the resulting contamination. The response on the part of the AAF indicated constraints in coordination and emergency EOD response capacity. AMAE was able to assist by mobilising two DanChurchAid teams, with support from the German Government, for emergency clearance, and worked with the Association of Albanian Assistance for Integration and Democratic Development (ALB-AID) and the Albanian Red Cross to deliver emergency risk education in affected communities. The explosions in Gërdec helped to slowly shift the mindset of the Government but again, this was not immediate. Despite the clear contributions that AMAE was making to the emergency response and that it could potentially make to hotspot clearance and demilitarisation more generally, the Government still failed to make a clear decision about the future of AMAE after completion.



- > Completion in November 2009, while a clear success, inevitably prompted renewed questions about the future role of AMAE. In late 2009, the Albanian Government and the UNDP discussed options for using AMAE to address residual mine/ERW contamination as well as surplus ammunition. Eventually UNDP BCPR sent a team to Albania to conduct an internal assessment of AMAE's capacity to support ammunition disposal and UXO hotspot clearance. The assessment took place in mid-2010, and strongly supported a wider mandate for AMAE and provided AMAE with strategic guidance on options for achieving this transition. The assessment report argued that the closure of AMAE would be a loss to Albania's development and disarmament communities, and Albania's capacity to address its residual mine/ERW threat and support for mine/ERW survivors.
- > In 2010, as part of preparations to close the mine action programme down, AMAE reduced its staff from 14 to six.
- > A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Ministry of Defence and UNDP was signed on 1 November 2011, which officially approved AMMCO's new mandate.

LESSONS LEARNT AND CONCLUSIONS

This case study illustrates that national mine action centres often have the capacity and expertise necessary to support AVR-related programmes, which is an important lesson for other national mine action programmes. While many mine/ERW operators have AVR policies and programmes in place¹⁴, there are few national mine action centres and national mine action authorities who have made similar shifts or widened the scope of their activities. Additional lessons learnt from the Albanian experience include:

- > Albania's experience demonstrates that national mine action programmes should not wait until after completion to consider using mine action capacity to support AVR-related programmes – this should be explored well in advance of completion. Even if completion is not in sight, and there is sufficient capacity, resources and opportunity, then efforts should be made to engage actors involved in the wider security sector to discuss collaboration.
- > Although AMAE had excelled in its efforts to rid Albania of landmines and cluster munitions, it still required significant effort to engage the Ministry of Defence and other key stakeholders in its ability to monitor and coordinate UXO hotspot clearance and the Government's wider demilitarisation programme as these are areas that have tended to be strictly within the domain of the military. The efficiency and effectiveness of AMAE's involvement in supporting the response to Gërdec helped to convince the Ministry of Defence of its value. Building trust, demonstrating results and constant engagement were key factors that AMAE/AMMCO used to help mobilise support for its transition.
- > In 2010, the UNDP's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery undertook an assessment mission to determine the feasibility of using Albania's mine action capacity to help support the Government's wider programme on excess ammunition, and to develop guidance on the transition. This assessment and the guidance provided proved extremely useful to AMAE, UNDP and Albania's Ministry of Defence. National mine action programmes should consider requesting similar assessments where appropriate.
- > DanChurchAid piloted a reintegration programme for its deminers in Albania, undertaking a market study and consulting deminers on their training and reintegration needs. However, DanChurchAid recognised that in hindsight it could have offered some of the deminers EOD training in order to develop the skills required to undertake ammunition disposal, which typically requires EOD Level Four certification. Demining expertise is a different skill set and is not transferable. Reintegration programmes for ex-deminers should consider the capacities needed to support wider security programmes.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Research for this case study was carried out by Sharmala Naidoo as part of a joint GICHD/UNMAT study on Transitioning Mine Action Programmes to National Ownership. In-country research and interviews were conducted in September 2011.
- ² AMMCO, February 2012.
- ³ South-east European Surplus Arms: State Policies and Practices”, Issue Brief, No.1, November 2010, Small Arms Survey and The Regional Approach to Stockpile Reduction (RASR).
- ⁴ Pierre Gobinet, Significant Surpluses: Weapons and Ammunition Stockpiles in South-east Europe, Special Report. Small Arms Survey, The Regional Approach to Stockpile Reduction, Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement, US Department of State, December 2011.
- ⁵ Demilitarisation refers to “...the complete range of processes that render weapons, ammunition, mines and explosives unfit for their originally intended purpose. Demilitarisation not only involves the final destruction process, but also includes all of the other transport, storage, accounting and pre-processing operations that are as critical to achieving the final result.” South-east European Surplus Arms: State Policies and Practices”, Issue Brief, No.1, November 2010, Small Arms Survey and The Regional Approach to Stockpile Reduction (RASR).
- ⁶ Electronic Mine Information Network, Albania, accessed 25 July 2011.
- ⁷ South-east European Surplus Arms: State Policies and Practices”, Issue Brief, No.1, November 2010, Small Arms Survey and The Regional Approach to Stockpile Reduction (RASR).
- ⁸ Matt Goodyear, Albania makes progress in demilitarisation, Journal of Mine Action, Issue 14.3, Fall 2010.
- ⁹ For example, the NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency (NAMSA) is cooperating with the US Department of States Weapons Abatement and Removal Programme (WRA) to destroy excess ammunition over a four-year period.
- ¹⁰ Assessment of the Albanian Mine Action Executive (AMAE) & Transition Plan, Final Report, UN Bureau of Crisis Prevention and Recovery, September 2010.
- ¹¹ Assessment of the Albanian Mine Action Executive (AMAE) & Transition Plan, Final Report, UN Bureau of Crisis Prevention and Recovery, September 2010.
- ¹² UNDP Albania, Project Document, “Coordination and monitoring of humanitarian mine action, UXO hotspots clearance in Albania – Albanian Mine Action and ammunition Disposal – AMAAD”, 2012.
- ¹³ AMMCO may also recruit a community liaison officer, an operations officer and possibly a public information officer. The ICRC has provided EOD training to AMMCO staff as well as an emergency EOD and Risk Education team in case of further ammunition depot explosions.
- ¹⁴ MAG, DDG, DanChurchAid, HALO Trust and others all work on broader weapons contamination and several have developed specific strategies and programmes to guide their work on SALW and AVR more broadly. For example, see: MAG’s Conventional Weapons Management and Disposal Programme <http://www.maginternational.org/silo/files/mags-approach-to-conventional-weapons-management-and-disposal-cwmd.pdf>; DDG’s Community Safety Interventions <http://www.danishdemininggroup.dk/about-armed-violence-reduction/armed-violence-reduction-interventions/>.

ANNEX 1 | PEOPLE CONSULTED

Anthony Connell | Programme Manager | DanChurchAid

Arben Braha | Director | AMAE

Arben Kotobelli | Project Supervisor | NAMSA

Arian Starova | Deputy Minister of Defence | AMAC

Blerta Cani | Director | ARDF

Edlira Sina and Dr. Tidita Abhurrahmani | Specialist and Director | Institute of Development of Education (formerly Institute of Curricula)

Emin Ferati and Leze Korbi and Fadil Shehu | Director and staff from the Prosthetic workshop and Physiotherapy centre | Kukës Hospital

Eva Veble | Former DanChurchAid Mine Action Head

Franz Baer | AMAE/AMMCO Operations Advisor | Swiss Government

Gregor Sancanin | Project Manager | ITF

Halil Radogoshi | Systems Support Officer | GICHD

Jonuz Kola | Director | ALB-AID (formerly VMA)

Juliana Buzi | Mine Action Specialist | AMAE

Kerry Brinkert | Director | APMBC Implementation Support Unit | GICHD

Melanie Reimer | Former Victim Assistance Advisor | UNDP

Murph McCloy | Advisor | US Department of State

Paramdeep Mtharu | Implementation Support Officer | GICHD

Reuben McCarthy | UNICEF | Previously with UNDP BCPR

Richard McCormac | Head of Mine Action | DanChurchAid

Sabina Beber Boštjančič | Head of Department for International Relations | ITF

Shefqet Bruka | Kukës Former Regional Councillor and AMAE QM Supervisor

Stefano Calabreta | Former UNDP CTA | European Commission

Veri Dogjani | Victim Assistance Expert | AMAE

Vladimir Malkaj | UNDP Cluster Manager | UNDP

ANNEX 2 | DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

Albanian Mine Action Executive

- > Concept Note: Albanian Mine Action Programme Transition | 2010
- > Implementation Plan on the AMAE transition to the Hotspots clearance and Ammunition Destruction Programme | 2011
- > The Albanian Mine Action Programme. Transition of Mine Action Capacities to Clearance of ERW/AXO and Stockpiled Ammunition Disposal | 14th International Meeting of National Mine Action Programme Directors and UN Advisors | Presented by Arben Braha | March 2011
- > The Albanian Mine Action Programme. Transition of Mine Action Capacities to Clearance of ERW/AXO and Stockpiled Ammunition Disposal | APM Standing Committees Meetings Geneva | Presented by Veri Dogjani | 20-24 June 2011

Albania Mines and Munitions Coordination Office (AMMCO). Technical Assessments of Hotspots in Albania | Arben Braha and Franz Baer | August 2011

Goodyear, Matt | Albania makes progress in demilitarisation | Journal of Mine Action | Issue 14.3 | Fall 2010

International Campaign to Ban Landmines

- > Landmine and Cluster Munitions Monitor, Country Profiles | Albania | 2000-2011
- > The importance of residual demining capacity after a declaration of full compliance with Article 5 of the Mine Ban Treaty | ICBL Statement | 22 June 2011

NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency (NAMSA) | Update on NATO Trust Fund Project for Munitions Disposal in Albania | Presented by Arben Kotobelli for the RASR workshop | May 2011

Small Arms Survey

- > Scraping the Barrel: The Trade in Surplus Ammunition | Issue Brief 2 | April 2011
- > Unplanned Explosions at Munitions Sites | Research Note | May 2011

Small Arms Survey and The Regional Approach to Stockpile Reduction (RASR) | South-east European Surplus Arms: State Policies and Practices” | Issue Brief | No.1 | November 2010

UNDP Bureau for Crisis Response and Recovery

- > Assessment of the Albanian Mine Action Executive (AMAE) & Transition Plan | Final Report | September 2010
- > Evaluation of the Albanian Mine Action Programme | GICHD | August 2007

UNDP and Government of Albania | Capacity Building for Mine Action in Albania | ALB/02/001 | 2001

US Department of State and Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement | Dangerous Depots: The Growing Humanitarian Problem Posed by Aging and Poorly Maintained Munitions Storage Sites | Fact Sheet produced by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs | Summer 2010

ANNEX 3 | MAP OF UXO HOTSPOTS



TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT OF HOTSPOTS IN ALBANIA

Hotspot: Gjeroven (Berat)



Date of Assessment: 28 July 2011

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AMMCO QA/QC Team

Geographical Information

GRID RP (Reference Point)	N 40°40.447	E 19°55.962
GRID RP Location	Gate to former AAF facilities	
Height above Sea Level	120 m	
Estimated Confirmed Hazard Area (CHA) Size	12'000 m ² . Area needs urgent attention and clearance.	
Estimated Suspected Hazard area (SHA)	Must be determined with BAC Technical Survey (Sampling method)	
Used GPS	GPS GARMIN 62st	
Point of Contact (POC)	Mr. Guri Velcani, Head of village, 068 228 18 40	
Nearest Village/Town	Gjeroven	
District	Berat	
Risk assessment¹	☐ low risk ☐ medium risk ☒ high risk	
Socio economic impact	☐ low ☐ medium ☐ high	
Priority²	☐ low ☐ medium ☐ high	
Number of Beneficiaries	Cannot be determined at this stage	
Civilian victims related to the hotspot (as far known)	1 fatality, 5 injured	
Map N°	K-34-112-D-d (1:25'000)	
Markings/Signalization	No markings, place is freely accessible	

Summary

The area is very close to inhabited buildings and farming houses. The remains of the basements of the former Explosive Store Houses (ESH) are still well visible and accessible. At the time of the assessment, metal scrap collectors were encountered.

A lot of ammunition is scattered over a specific area and the mixed type of ammunition, fired projectiles (UXO) and density of the contamination leads to the assumption that considerable amounts of collected ammunition was dumped here.

Corroded, highly sensitive hand grenade fuzes are scattered too over this area which makes the area not safe to enter.

The collection of scrap metal through civilians should stop immediately otherwise serious accidents are matter of luck and time. Metal scrap for selling is brought to the village and Berat town.

¹ Risk assessment is done by AMMCO and concerns only explosive containing items

² Priority setting is the task of the Albanian authorities and should be done after all hotspots assessments in Albania are concluded by respecting the risk assessment, socio economic impact and the political interests of the concerned hotspot areas

ANNEX 4 | SAMPLE HOTSPOT ASSESSMENT REPORT

1. History of the Hotspot

During the uprising in Albania 1997, and on the 18 April 1997 there were a number of explosions on this ASS which resulted in the complete destruction of three ESH and created a UXO contamination of the surrounding area. The AAF surface cleared the area in 1999. The area is still contaminated with scattered ammunition; some are deep in the soft soil, making clearance a dangerous and time intensive job. Today, the ASS is abandoned and no signalization or marking are indicating a residual risk. Some former destroyed AAF buildings within the hotspot are used as hay stores or animal stables.

2. Description of the location

The hotspot area lies close to the village Gjeroven and is located approx. 5.2 km from the Berat town centre. The area can be reached by driving from the Berat town centre direction west and crossing the bridge to pass the village Velabisht. Following the road direction south leads to the village Gjeroven. The former ASS can be reached easily with a 4 WD car.

3. Access to the Hotspot

The hotspot area can easily and safely be reached by 4 wheel drive cars. It is recommended to park the cars only on the road and to walk up to the destroyed ESH.

4. Establishing Admin Area

There is enough suitable space and abandoned buildings to establish an admin area for the clearance of the hotspot.

5. Local Infrastructure

The town Berat can provide accommodation, food and fuel supply.

6. Type of soil and vegetation

The terrain is rocky and partially covered with impenetrable bushes, high grass and small trees. There are patches of soft soil too.

7. Live Ammunition found during assessment

<i>Ammunition Type found</i>
Small arms ammunition
Hand grenades & fuzes
Mortar 60/82/120 mm
Projectiles fuzed/unfuzed

8. Other Hazards

No other specific hazards than explosive containing items may be present in the SHA, in unknown numbers.

9. Contamination level (samples randomly taken over the contaminated area)

No samples were taken to determine the metal contamination level because the metal contamination is visibly high.

10. Type of Clearance and Clearance requirements

The area needs urgent clearance of the CHA and afterwards an instrument assisted BAC of the SHA. A full excavation of parts of the hotspot area will be partially needed. Vegetation needs to be cut to provide access for operators.

Permanent markings should be put on all access points to the former hotspot, making the civilians aware of the residual threat.

11. MEDEVAC

MEDEVAC by road is possible to the nearest hospital in Berat.

12. Clearance difficulties of the Gjeroven hotspot

- steep hill sides, rocky terrain, rubble, iron containing minerals
- parts of hardly accessible vegetation
- presumably ammunition dumps, deep in the earth (full excavation)

13. Other contamination than ammunition

There is no other known contamination than ammunition and explosive containing items.

14. Beneficiaries

It's obvious that the region of Gjeroven is prosperous and new buildings construction can be observed close to the former hotspot. The land is well cultivated and it's a matter of time until the hotspot area will be used permanently by civilians, is it for house construction, cattle grazing, cultivation or other activities.

15. Infrastructure projects in planning after clearance

At the time of writing this report, more details about any investments are unknown to the assessment team.

ANNEXES:

NOTES



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