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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE
REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA TO
THE INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATIONS
VIENNA

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NOTE VERBALE

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Albania to the International Organizations in Vienna presents its compliments to all Permanent Delegations and Missions to the OSCE and to the Conflict Prevention Centre, and in accordance with Decision 7/04 of the Forum for Security Co-operation, has the honor to transmit herewith the Albania's replay to the OSCE Questionnaire on Anti-Personnel Landmines and on Explosive Remnants of War.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Albania avails itself of this opportunity to renew to all Permanent Delegations and Missions to the OSCE and to the Conflict Prevention Centre the assurances of its highest consideration. 



Vienna, 29 May 2017

To: All Permanent Delegations and Missions to the OSCE
OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre
OSCE Secretariat



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

**QUESTIONNAIRE
ON ANTI-PERSONNEL LANDMINES**

(FSC.DEC/7/04)

2017

OSCE QUESTIONNAIRE - 2016

PART I

1. *Is your country a State Party to the 1996 Amended Protocol II on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-Traps and Other Devices annexed to the 1980 Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW)?*

Yes, Albania is a State Party to the Amended Protocol II of the CCW.

2. **If yes:**

3. **If no:**

Is your country considering ratification/accession to the Amended Protocol II?

N/A

4. *What measures have been taken to prevent the indiscriminate use of mines, booby-traps and other devices?*

Albania has passed since April 2006 a New Law on the implementation of the APM Ban Convention, which imposes administrative and penal sanctions on any activity involving indiscriminate use of anti-personnel mines.

5. *Would your country be interested in receiving assistance related to the implementation of this Protocol? If so, please describe.*

N/A

6. *Does your country have the capacity to assist others related to this Protocol? If so, please describe.*

No

PART II

7. *Has your country ratified or acceded to the 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction?*

Albania has ratified the 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel mines and on their destruction since February 2000.

8. (a) *If yes, please attach the most recent report submitted by your country in accordance with Article 7 of the Convention or give the appropriate electronic address for the report.*

[http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/DAC559D714DAE9E1C1257FAB0053AF84/\\$file/APLC+ART.7+2015+Albania.pdf](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/DAC559D714DAE9E1C1257FAB0053AF84/$file/APLC+ART.7+2015+Albania.pdf)

(b) *If no, is your country considering ratification/accession to the Convention?*

N/A

(c) *Has your country adopted legislation to address the humanitarian objectives of the convention, or taken any specific measures regarding the use, production, storage, transfer and destruction of anti-personnel landmines? In case a moratorium has been introduced, what is its scope and duration and when was it introduced?*

Albania has passed since April 2006 a new Law on the implementation of the APM Ban Convention, which imposes administrative and penal sanctions on any activity prohibited for a State Party to the Antipersonnel-Mine Ban Convention undertaken by persons or on Albanian territory, and confirms the Minister of Defense as the authority in charge for all mine action activities in the country.

9. *Does your country have any specific measures in place to provide assistance to victims?*

There are at least 996 UXO casualties (150 killed and 846 injured) all over Albania including the victims from mines, unexploded ordnances and other ERW. Desegregation of data by age and gender are available for every prefecture/region of Albania. There is a National Plan aiming to support the mine/UXO victims throughout Albania. The plan complies with several International Treaties ratified by Albania, such as Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty, Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, Convention on Cluster Munitions and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The implementation of the National Plan contributes to the emergency, medical care, physical rehabilitation, psychosocial support, socio-economic reintegration, data collection, as well as in implementation of relevant laws and policies for all mine/UXO victims throughout Albania.

The Prosthetic Workshop in Regional Hospital of Kukës was upgraded with equipments, raw materials and relevant elements to repair and produce prostheses and orthoses. During 2015, the Prosthetic Workshop at Kukës Regional Hospital was able to support about 30 amputees with new prostheses and 91 others with major repairs.

Ministry of Health provided an amount of 45,000 EURO for the raw materials and components for the repairs and production of new prostheses to Kukës Prosthetic workshop, but this is not enough to cover all the needs. The workload at Kukës prosthetic workshop is continuously increasing, due to the poor functioning also of the national prosthetic center in Tirana.

Kukës Hospital has been upgraded with CT Scan in 2015 with the support from Japan. In additions, Cardiology cabinet and the emergency department at Kukës regional Hospital have been upgraded in equipment and training with financial support from Turkey.

AMMCO is recording in IMSMA database, all incidents of previously unreported

victims and information withdrawn from the needs assessment forms, assembled by ALB-AID during the reporting period.

10. *Does your country require assistance in mine clearance, stockpile destruction, mine awareness and/or victim assistance? If so, please describe.*

Albania has completed the clearance of its mine/UXO contaminated areas since November 2009, which is well ahead of the August 2010 deadline under the Article 5 of the Convention.

In addition, the total amount of 1,683.863 stockpiled anti-personnel mines in Albania has been destroyed since April 2002, by complying so with the Article 4 of the Convention.

There are at least 998 Mine/UXO casualties (151 killed and 847 injured) all over Albania. Desegregation of data by age and gender are available for every prefecture/region of Albania. There is a National Plan aiming to support the mine/UXO victims throughout Albania. The plan complies with several International Treaties ratified by Albania, such as Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty, Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and Convention on Cluster Munitions. The implementation of the National Plan contributes to the emergency, medical care, physical rehabilitation, psychosocial support, socio-economic reintegration, data collection, as well as in implementation of relevant laws and policies for all mine/UXO victims throughout Albania.

The capacities to support mines/UXO survivors were created during the previous Albanian Mine Action Programme. These capacities in emergency medical response, medical care, surgical capacities and physical rehabilitation are developed at national and local level and are not serving merely to mine/UXO survivors and other persons with disabilities, but to all people in need.

The Prosthetic Workshop in Regional Hospital of Kukes was upgraded with equipments, raw materials and relevant elements to repair and produce prostheses and orthoses.

During 2016, the Prosthetic Workshop at Kukes Regional Hospital was able to support about 42 amputees with new prostheses and 40 others with major repairs.

Recently, a "Needs Assessment of Socio-Economic and Medical needs of marginalized Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) victims in Albania" was conducted all over Albania with the financial support of Austrian Government, and US Government through International Trust Fund Enhancing Human Security. The assessment focused in reviewing the status of the survivors, identifying their specific needs and drafting due recommendations for the Government to provide them with relevant assistance.

**The major needs identified from the above projects are summarized below;
Medical/Rehabilitation Needs;**

527 persons with amputations need to be fitted and periodic maintenance of their

prosthesis, orthoses; this number includes below and upper limb prostheses, including partial foot and lose of fingers.

- 528 injured persons need to have regular medical checks.
- 610 persons need to attend physiotherapy sessions.
- 137 injured survivors should have periodic checks of their eyes from the specialists.
- 12 injured survivors should undergo operation for their vision.

Economic reintegration/income generation activities;

- 583 survivors are in need of further economic support such as; employment opportunities, income generation activities and support with micro - loans for family home based businesses.
- 347 survivors wish to attend vocational training Courses.
- 57 survivors wish to attend high school (Secondary school) and 34 persons to attend university studies.
- 123 families of survivors need to be supported for re-imburement of studies of their children.
- 20 survivors ask to have access to daily Care Centers.

Psycho-Social/Peer Support, Sport Activities;

- 262 injured survivors should attend psycho-social sessions
- 32 injured survivors have special needs such as following: supplies with reading tools for blind persons (Braille), Sign language media(sound with brails), Somniferous books (special books with sound with brails)
- Almost all survivors want to participate in recreational activities and psychosocial support to overcome the trauma, including in the peer support programs.

A national workshop with participation of all stakeholders including donors was held in 2016, presenting all the findings from the needs assessment projects.

Based on the above Needs assessments, US Department of State through ITF Enhancing Human Security funded two projects in victim assistance in Albania during 2017.

All activities were monitored and coordinated by AMMCO and carried out in cooperation with various implementing partners including the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Welfare and Youth, Kukës Regional Hospital, and Directorates of Public Health, UNDP Albania, International Trust Fund Enhancing Human Security (ITF), University Rehabilitation Institute Republic of Slovenia and the NGO “Albanian Association for Assistance Integration and Development” (ALB-AID).

11. *Does your country have the capacity to assist others in mine action? If so, please describe.*

No

PART III

1. *Has your country notified the Depositary of its consent to be bound by the 2003 CCW Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) once it enters into force? Is your country considering doing so?*

Albania is a State Party to Protocol V of the CCW on Explosive Remnants of War (ERW).

2. *If yes, at what stage is the process?*
3. *Would your country be interested in receiving assistance in clearing or otherwise minimizing the risks and effects of ERW? If so, please describe.*

Surplus ammunition, unexploded ordnance (UXO) and explosive remnants of war (ERW) contamination is a nationwide problem in Albania. Aging ammunition stockpiles, a series of ammunition depot explosions, looting of weapons and ammunition by civilians as well as explosive remnants of the WWII, are among the causes.

During the civil unrest in Albania in March 1997 and shortly thereafter, there were a number of explosions at ammunition storages in Albania. According to Albanian Armed Forces (AAF) estimates at the time, 38 army depots (storages) were destroyed due to the detonation of about 5,700 tons of ammunition in different locations throughout Albania. Exploded ammunition was partially left in a very dangerous state on the ground, which led to death, injuries and tragedies of innocent civilians in the following months and years.

In early 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 Dures 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.

The AAF conducted initially surface clearance operations of these "hotspots" but these were not conducted based on humanitarian standards, therefore not going beyond surface clearance. Recent technical assessments of each of these hotspots by the Albanian Mines and Munitions Coordination Office (AMMCO) showed that most areas still contain live and dangerous ammunition.

The present ammunition hotspots include also few former army ammunition demolition areas and shooting or firing ranges polygons (former shooting & training sites), which have been closed down recently by the AAF. Most of these areas need a full subsurface clearance according to International Mine Action Standards before returning them to the community for civilian use.

The Government and the Ministry of Defense have outlined a new Plan of Action for Elimination of Excess Ammunition in Albania aiming to dispose of all its surplus stockpiled ammunition by 2015 and to clear all the UXO/ERW hotspot areas by 2018.

The Ministry of Defense requested UNDP's assistance to deal with the UXO hotspots problem by engaging AMMCO (Albanian Mine & Munitions Coordination Office) as a professional structure to contribute through institutional arrangement and role,

inclusive of its know-how in mine victim assistance and risk education/community liaison activities, in the area of hotspots clearance and ammunition disposal, to help ensure that these components are carried out in accordance with the International Humanitarian Standards. Coordination and monitoring activities are supported financially from US Department of State through ITF Enhancing Human Security and the Germany Government through UNDP Albania.

Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), a humanitarian NGO experienced in mine action, signed the contract with ITF Enhancing Human Security, to conduct clearance of UXO hotspots in Albania, with the financial support of USA Government.

During 2016 AMMCO was carrying out technical reassessments, Quality Management of the cleared areas in UXO hotspots, inspection and certification of former military ammunition depots. From January to December 2016, the overall land cleared, inspected, certified and released as free from ammunitions is 811,065 square meters, respectively;

- **100,238 square meters** was cleared by Norwegian Peoples Aid (NPA) and EOD of Albanian Armed Forces (AAF) and certified by AMMCO as free from ammunitions in the UXO hotspots of Gjeroven (6,243 square meters) and Mbreshtan (50,699 square meters), UXO Hotspot in Laç (350 square meters), UXO hotspot in Kordhoc (16,108 square meters) and Picar 14,348(square meters), UXO Hotspot Klos (180 square meters) and Gërdec (12,310 square meters);
- **79,594 items** of unexploded ordnance (UXO) and Small Arms and Ammunitions (≤ 23 mm and bullets) were found in total during clearance operation process. The main items found include fuzzes, grenades and detonators, as well as larger items such as mortars and projectiles and small arms.
- **710,827square meters** was inspected and certified as free from ammunitions in 5 former military ammunition depots of Poshnjë (62,909 square meters), Zaranikë (116,600 square meters), Nuaj (172,031square meters) and Qafë -Mollë - 1 (359,287square meters) upon the request of MoD.

The AAF Support Command provides all the necessary logistic arrangements according to safety regulations and respective international standards for the ammunition collected in the hotspots by the clearance company and considered safe for transport. In addition, the EOD experts of AAF dispose on the spot all dangerous ammunition was unsafe for transportation. AMMCO coordinates and closely monitors the UXO clearance and disposal operations in order to ensure that these are carried out in strict compliance with the international humanitarian standards. Community Liaison and Risk Education activities are carried out also along with the UXO clearance operations in order to inform the communities aware of the ammunition risk.

Risk education and community liaison activities were ongoing as an important element of UXO hotspots clearance programme. Meetings and awareness raising sessions with local inhabitants were conducted in Suç, Klos and Gërdec, Kordhoc and Picar Gjirokaster and Sinanaj UXO hotspots to inform them about the potential risk that dangerous unexploded ordnances pose to them and their families.

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.

Since the Government of Albania is currently struggling with several priorities linked to the surplus ammunition demilitarization, the international financial support is a crucial need for both clearance and the monitoring process of the clearance of these UXO/ERW hotspots, and victim assistance in order to be cleared within the set deadlines and so ensure the safety of the surrounding communities in ensure the medical and socio-economic rehabilitation of victims.

Table 1: Updated List of UXO Hotspots as of April 2017

No.	UXO Hotspots	Originally suspected Hazard in 2014 (m ²)	Total area cleared as 31 Dec. 2016 (m ²)	Remaining areas for clearance in end of 2016 (m ²)	Clearance Plan for 2017-2018 (m ²)
1.	Gjеровен-Berat	63.000	68.423	Completed	-
2.	Sinanaj - Tepelenë	200.000	0	200.000	200.000
3.	Picar - Gjirokastër	62.000	14.348	47.652	Completed
4.	Kordhoc - Gjirokastër	2.400	16.108	In process	Completed
5.	Jubë Sukth - Durrës	1.326.714	0	1.326.714	1.326.714
6.	Klos-Burrel (1 tunnel)	180	180	Completed	-
7.	Mbreshtan - Berat	30.720	65.227	Completed	-
8.	Palikesht - Berat	12.000	13.321	Completed	-
9.	Laç (1 tunnel)	1.117	350	Completed	-
10.	Suç-Burrel	84.000	75.650	8.350	8.350
11.	Qafë Shtamë -Burrel (2 tunnels)	0	0	360	360
12.	Gërdec - Vorë	368.000	368.000	Completed	-
13.	Ura e Gjadrit-Shkodër	91.000	93.295	Released	-
14.	Otlakë - Berat	3.000	3.000	Released	-
15.	Grykë e Manatisë - Lezhë	6.000	6.000	Released	-
16.	Rrëshen-Lezhë	10.000	10.000	Released	-
17.	Brezhdan-Peshkopi	30.000	30.000	Released	-
18.	Pilurë-Vlorë	12.000	12.000	Released	-
19.	Shën-Vasil, Vlorë	0	0	Released	-
Total		2.302.131	775.902	1.583.076	1.535.424

The Underwater Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) contamination problem in Albania.

Due to our turbulent history, and as a result of various parties dumping large quantities of munitions during both World Wars, we have a significant problem with underwater unexploded ordnance along the entire coast of Albania.

The most significantly contaminated area is in Vlore bay, but other areas, particularly in southern Albania also have stockpiles of unexploded ordnance in the waters. Additional surveys need still to be carried out around Durres area.

As reported also previously, the most problematic site is an Italian ammunition ship that was sunk during World War II in very shallow waters in Vlore Bay. The ship remains completely full of unexploded munitions. The task of clearing this ship alone is a technically complex task.

However, the MoD lacks the necessary equipments for such a team and requests donor support. This will enable the MoD to make a serious commitment to cleaning up our coastal waters, and thus making these safer for our citizens. We need and will greatly appreciate the support of the international community in this regard. Three underwater operations are successfully completed in the costal line in Albania by the specialized EOD divers of the National Diving center during 2016.

The Albanian Armed Forces with USA Government Support are providing the training for a new diving team and as a result 6 divers are certified as "EOD level I" during the reporting year (2015-2016).

The MoD Albania is planning to do the renovation of the national diving center at Pashaliman-Vlorë in order to equip it with the necessary tools to facilitate safe diving.

4. *Does your country have the capacity to assist others in clearing and minimizing the risks and effects of ERW? If so, please describe.*

The Albanian MoD with request of the European Union provided the EOD team of Albanian Armed Forces under German Command to assist with European Union Military Committee (EUMC) in EOD operations in Mali during 2016. This cooperation will continue further during 2017.