



ALB-AID

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Needs Assessment Report on the risks posed by the ammunition demolition (UXOs and ERW) in 5 open demolition centers of Albania

Dates of the completion of the Survey : **1-20 December 2010**

Demolition Places visited: **1.Livadhët e Hamzët (Pukë), 2.Jubë, (Durrës), 3.Bizë, (Tirana), 4.Voskopojë (Korçë) and 5. Zgare (Librazhd)**

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1. Background on the situation of weapons and munitions¹ in the territory of Albania.

Before the '90s, Albania was listed in the map of countries with considerable amounts of weapons and munitions. After the end of WWII, according to statistics of the Ministry of Defense, military bases counted a total of about 80,000 weapons of different types: pistols, rifles, etc. Part of them was obtained from battles with the invaders and a small amount was donated by the allied forces. The post-war Albanian army also inherited an amount of artillery armaments and munitions. Ministry of Defense data stress that from 1944 up to 1950, the Albanian government, based on an ideological policy for the protection of the country, considerably increased the amount of armaments. The former Soviet Union was the basis of supply for the Albanian army with weapons. In the '60s, following the termination of diplomatic relations between Albania and the Soviet Union, Albania initiated weapons trade with China. By 1982, Albania's military map was "invaded" by about more than 300,000 tons of weapons and munitions, placed in storehouses of the army across the country.

In the '90s, following the fall of communism regime, Albania was faced with a challenging situation regarding the management of this large quantity of weapons and munitions found in military depots. The majority of the munitions was very old products and did not meet technical conditions of armaments. In these circumstances, military policies of the '90s included their sale and disassembling as alternatives.

The collapse of the pyramid schemes and the civil unrest, poverty and other reasons lead Albania to the destruction and robbery of the military depots in 1997. During these riots in 1997, more than 1,300 army stores were looted by civilians during the anarchy that was spread all over the country. As a result of the ammunition depots

¹ General Overview of SALW incidents and ammunition situation in Albania"(1997-2009)

being looted, people took grenades, UXO, anti-personnel landmines, ammunition, and weapons into their own hands and distributed them all over the country. In addition to this about 38 ammunition depots exploded casting UXO around the areas creating more than 15 huge hotspot places nationwide. It is estimated that about 650,000 pieces of small arms and light weapons, and over 1,5 billion rounds of ammunition from military warehouse were looted during that time².

After 1997, the Albanian Government with the assistance of international agencies stimulated the voluntary handing over of weapons in exchange for development projects. Later on, the Albanian government approved strict laws about the possessors of weapons. The war in Kosovo was another period that contaminated Albania's northern border with mines and unexploded ordnance.

Another serious threat in Albania is the concentration of huge unused munitions, shells and projectiles in 26 military depots near the populated areas, badly maintained and with the lack of security reasons. In the end of 1990 Albania had 294.000 tons of conventional munitions of Russian and Chinese origin³. Although a lot of munitions have been demolished, Albania still has surplus about 63,000 tons of dangerous munitions in 26 depots near the inhabited places spread in all Albanian territory⁴. Many accidents have been registered in these depots causing deaths of civilians in the last 10 years.

In March 15, 2008 an ex- military depot used for the demolition of munitions, in Gerdec ,suburbs of Vora, about 12 km far from Tirana, exploded scattering shells and UXO's to the surrounding villages at a distance of 5 km, contaminating an area of 1000 km². As a result of the incident 26 persons died 300 injured, 4200 houses, 32 businesses and 34 agricultural farms destroyed⁵. The Explosion caused dramatic consequences for the population of the area. 7 villages with a population of 17,620 inhabitants, out of which 2,820 children were heavily contaminated with scattered munitions and ERW.

After the riots of 1997 the government took action in collaboration with other foreign stakeholders to address the problems of collection of munitions and SALW looted from the military depots. Many efforts have also been made in order to reduce the quantity of surplus old munitions scattered in 26 depots all over Albania . As a result of such efforts of the Albanian Government, in April 2009 Albania became part of the NATO Alliance.

Albanian government has started a new projects⁶ which intend to complete in 2013 the demolition of all stock Soviet-Chinese ammunition inherited from the time of communist dictatorship. The projects aim to avoid the potential danger in time of their explosion near the areas where depots, where these munitions are located.

The process of its destruction and demolition of surplus munitions began in 1999 as an obligation of one of the conditions of the process of membership of Albania into NATO and avoiding the potential risk from the explosion of their population.

² Sami Faltas , McDonald, and Waszink-Removing Small Arms from Society, pg 18.(July 2001) www.smallarmsurvey.org

³ Panoram, 27 March 2008, 9:00 , Document of the Parliamentary Commission of Security On the situation of Military Depots" presented on 16 November 2007 to the Albanian Parliament"

⁴ Ekrem Spahiu, Deputy Minister of Defense of Albania, January 2011.

⁵ Newspaper Panorama, 25 March 2008

⁶ Gazeta "Shekulli" date 28.02.2010

In the time frame of 11 years over 90 thousand tons of ammunition have been destroyed, not including in this amount mines, torpedoes and missiles for MIG fighter jets. The military destroyed 20,660 tones of old ammunition in 2010, Deputy Defense Minister Ekrem Spahiu said in an interview January 4th at News 24, (Balkan Web - 04/01/11). The army continues to destroy old ammunition inherited from communism and its main aim is to eliminate all of it by 2013, he added, pointing out that under such plans another 24,000 tones should be dismantled only during this year (2011). The Deputy Minister declared that “there are still about 63,000 tones of old ammunition on Albanian territory to be destroyed.” (News 24, Balkan Web - 04/01/11). Removing ammunition and dismantling depots from populated areas is one of the successes that the ministry is promoting.

Brigadier General, Xhemal Gjinkshi, in command of the Logistics Brigade, who heads the new project of the government talks about this goal: "Disposal of all ammunition by 2013 and reducing the ammunition depots near the inhabited places in order to increase the level of security in the country and the region."⁷

2. Methodology used

ALB-AID with its own resources conducted a survey in 5 most exposed Demolition pits in December 2010. The aim of the survey was two fold: 1) to collect information of the risks posed in the demolition centers ; 2) to identify the needs for ERW/UXO risk educations and Victims assistance in the areas,

The evaluation for UXO RE went through three stages.

In terms of methodological approach, this evaluation combines quantitative and qualitative ways of collecting and processing information which helped build the core and frame of the needs assessment report

On a more specific level, quantitative methods were applied to take surveys from community, local institutions, middle and high school students of the demolition areas of Livadhet e Hamzit (Puke), Jube, (Durrës), Bize, (Tirana), Voskopoje (Korce) and Zgare (Librazhd). A total of 150 questionnaires have been filled in the areas where the risk is evident. Such surveys extended to school level on a random pick based on their class registers proportionately to the number of students in attendance per academic year. This survey will help to identify the needs as regard to RE on UXOs/munitions.

Qualitative methods consisted in taking semi- structured interviews and gathering information from focus groups.

Semi-structured interviews were taken from the community members, local institutions near the demolition areas.

These interviews will help us to better understand if there is a potential risk for the community from UXOs and to plan RE activities in the area.

⁷ Interview with Xhemal Gjinkushi, 16 December 2010

3. Analysis of Questionnaires (Surveys) conducted

The team of ALB-AID has conducted field visits to 5 demolition areas to fill the questionnaires with community members, heads of villages, heads of communes and school children. The visits consisted in : a) gathering information on the risks posed by the munitions remained unexploded at the demolition area; b) gathering information about UXO/ERW victims and their needs.

We will analyze the situation according to the data gathered in each demolition areas (centers) as follows.

Livadhët e Hamzit, Puke:

On November 23, 2010 the team of ALB-AID visited the polygon of “Livadhët e Hamzit” in Puka. “Livadhët e Hamzit” belongs to the Gjegjan commune of Puka district. The polygon is placed in the south of city of Puka and in the west of Gjegjan commune at 1182 m altitude. This polygon is classified as the biggest one in Albania because of the big quantity of demolition of munitions.

From the data gathered in the field results that the Gjegjan commune inhabitants are

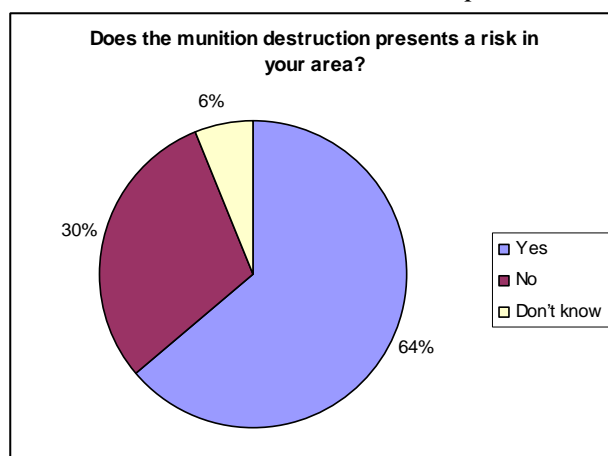


exposed to the risk posed by the demolition activities taking place in this polygon. This is also favored from the short distance between village and the polygon/demolition area (only 8 km). Villagers also use the area to collect mushrooms and in the period of summer for daily activities. They move up in the mountains with livestock. The high level of poverty has urged the inhabitants to collect the remained UXO for scrap in order to sell it to reduce their poverty.

The commune of Gjegjan has around 4960 inhabitants and it is composed by 9 villages as follows: Gjegjan, Gojan i Vogel, Gojan i Madh, Shkoze, Rrase, Kuzhnel, Kalivare, Kimez, Mesul, Dome; from these villages, the most exposed to the risks from UXOs are Gjegjan, Gojan i Vogel, Gojan i Madh. Nearly all of them use the lands around demolition center to graze their animals and other daily activities

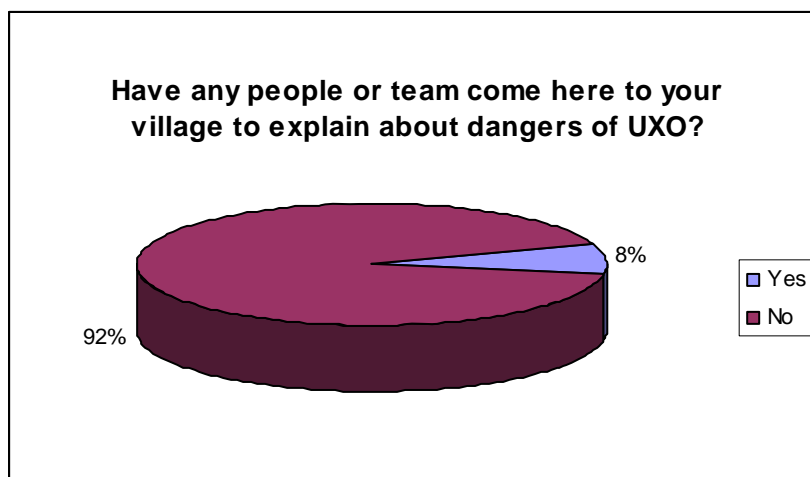
From the survey conducted in Gjegjan Commune results as follows;

Chart nr 1: Does the munitions destruction present a risk in your area?



According to the chart above 64 % of the respondents interviewed mentioned that there is a potential risk from the demolition process as regard to incidents from the scrap collecting from the inhabitants especially children. Also the community is concerned about the damages that the demolition of the ammunitions brought to the agriculture plants and fruit trees. Based to the gathered information agriculture products and fruit trees are decreased comparing to the last year.

Chart nr 2: Has any one/ authority/agency/NGO visited your village to explain the demolition process and the dangers posed by UXOs/ERW in the last 5 years?

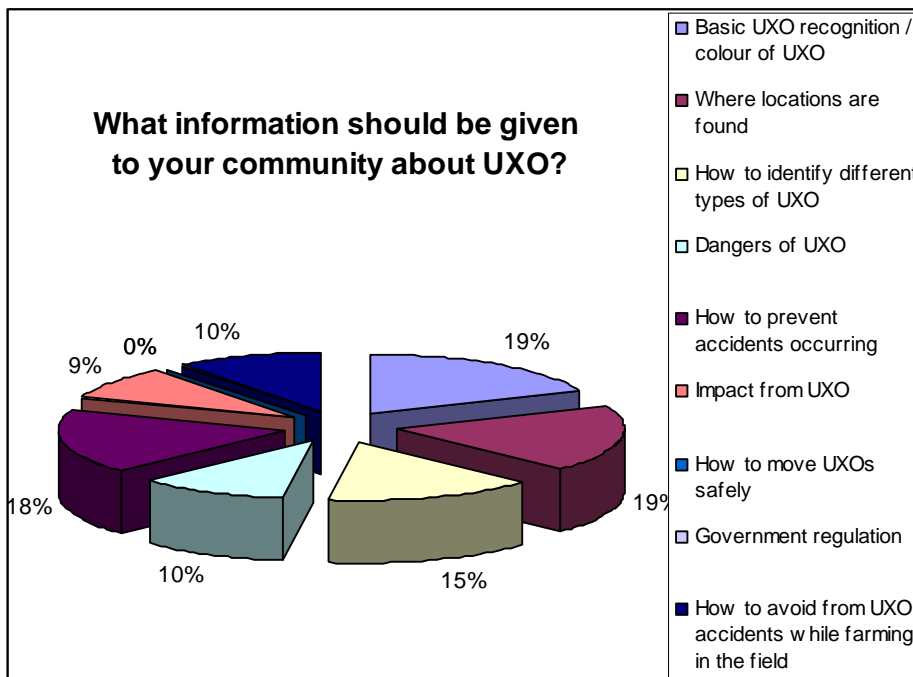


92 % of respondents explained that no one showed up to the village to make people aware about the risks of UXOs. Based in these figures the community is not aware of the risks posed by UXOs.



During the survey we met several people that in reality collect scrap metal (UXO) but they hesitated to answer the questions. This is shown also by the piles of scrap munitions collected by the community in order to sell it. (Look at the picture)

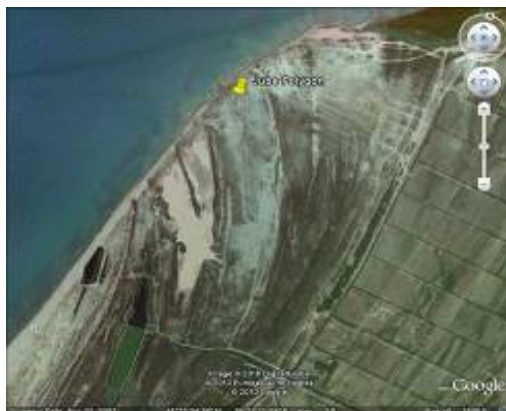
Chart nr 3: What do you do in case you come in front of UXO/REW/What information should be given to your community about UXOs/ERW?



19 % of interviewed persons answered that the basic UXO recognition is one of the main information that should be provided to the community and in schools as well. Also location of the demolition area, identifying different types of UXO, danger from UXO are ranked as necessary information for the communities.

- Jube, Durres

On November 24, 2010 the team of ALB-AID visited the polygon of “Jube” in Durres. Jube belongs to the Katund i Ri commune of Durres district. The polygon is



placed in the north of Durres city and in the west of Katund i Ri commune at the sea side. This polygon is classified as a small one because of the small quantity of demolition of munitions. According to the head of Filake village the demolition process does not affect directly the community as regards the incidents from collecting scrap metal. Also from our conversation with the head of village it results that from the beginning of demolition process no incidents have been registered.

Meanwhile the director of Bisht-Kamez village school confirmed that the Risk Education on the recognition of the danger from UXOs is necessary for the schools pupils in order to prevent incidents that might happen because children often graze animals in the surrounding areas.

The inhabitants of this area mainly use the land for agricultural purpose and the explosion of the ammunition has directly affected their agriculture products. Based on the interviews with the fishermen, they expressed concerns about the explosions in this polygon because fishing is one way of their incomes and explosions have made difficult fish catching.

The distance from the polygon with the nearest village is only 3 km and this make easier for inhabitants to go and collect scrap metal. During our visit at the polygon we met people collecting scrap at the area and it is worth to mention that they belong to the community of Egyptians. Egyptians is a poor community called as nomad and the only way of living is scrap collecting for sale.

The population of Katund i Ri commune is 15,665 inhabitants and it is composed by 9 villages. Highlighted villages are the most affected from the risk of UXO.

Population and nr of families per village

Nr	Village	Population	Nr of families
1	Juba	1631	414
2	Katund i Ri	2018	621
3	Qerret	1868	504
4	Fllake	593	158
5	Sukth	3000	924
6	Erzen	2699	771
7	Bisht-Kamez	840	300
8	Rinia	1555	344
9	Adriatik	1461	344
10	Total	15665	4380

Bize, Tirana

On November 25, 2010 the team of ALB-AID visited the polygon of “Bize” in Tirana. Bize is located between three districts Tirana, Librazhd and Diber in a remote area and it is an abandoned military settlement. The nearest village from the area of demolition is 7 km away. Shengjergji commune is approximately 9.5 km far from the demolition polygon. The population of Shengjergji commune is 3000 inhabitants. Shengjergji commune is composed by 9 villages (Shengjergj, Vvri, Ure, Shemri, Shengjin, Porpaj, Fog, Vakune, Faqesh) and Biza belongs to Shengjergji commune as an administrative area. ALB-AID team during conduction of the survey had several meeting with commune inhabitants and the head of commune too. Based on findings of interviews with inhabitants, local institution personnel and the officer in charge for the demolition the Shengjergji commune inhabitants do not collect scrap around the

area of demolition. Instead, citizens from Bathore often go and gather scrap metal there.



This is because of the long distance from the polygon. During our visits at demolition polygon we did not meet any inhabitant from the surrounding villages. According to the chief of the commune only during summer vocations few inhabitants from the surrounding villages go with their livestock up in the Bize Mountains and use the areas around the Demolition center for grazing. Some “seasonal” Risk Education activities during the summer time should be considered in this area.

Voskopoje, Korca

On December 9, 2010 the team of ALB-AID visited the polygon of Voskopoje in Korca. Voskopoje is a commune of Korca district and it is located in the west of the city in a distance of 21 km in 1162 m altitude. The polygon of demolition is around 7 km from the village. Voskopoja is known as a touristic zone and the community has the possibilities to get employed in different service units.

Voskopoja commune has a population of 2,633 inhabitants. The respondents asked about the risk of UXO's confirmed that the children do not go to the demolition area to collect scrap. From our visit to the polygon of demolition and the



interviews with the head of the village we concluded that there are community people around the area that collect scrap metal. The head of the commune mentioned that only recently (2009) 2 incidents were registered in the area. The persons injured lately came to the demolition area from the city of Korca to collect scrap for survival. The head of the commune further mentioned that in the last 10 year many accidents have happened in the demolition area among citizens collecting scrap, but the accidents were not recorded by any agency.

Considering the location of polygon, it results that the commune of Voskop is affected from the demolition process too. The commune of Voskop is located at the other side of the polygon. The Dersnik is the village that has a highest number of villagers that collect scrap metal. The director of the elementary school of Dersnik expressed

concerns about the risk from UXOs explaining the reason: “*The community of Dersnik village as the most villages of Albania is suffering from the poverty. They destroyed the bunkers of the communist regime to get the iron and then sell it, but know, he said, listening to the conversations of pupils their parents begun to collect scrap at the polygon area because it is easier and they get more benefits.*

Highlighted village in the table below is the most affected from the risk of UXO

Nr	Village	Population	Nr of families
Voskopoje Commune			
	Voskopoje	2633	696
Voskop Commune			
1	Voskop	2115	568
2	Dersnik	1233	305
3	Polene	697	170
4	Vincani	500	125
5	Goskove Poshtme	459	111
6	Goskove e Siperme	960	248
7	Damianec	213	248
8	Total	6177	1775

Although the army is providing limited information for the community about the area of demolition and the danger from the explosions still exist a potential risk for the inhabitants that collect scrap.



The officer in charge for demolition process in Voskopoja polygon appreciated the initiative and he considers very useful the UXO risk education of the community and school children.

- From the survey conducted in Voskopoja and Voskop Communes results that;

Chart nr 1: Does the munitions deemolotion present a risk in your area?

The chart gives a clear opinion of the community of these two areas on the different risks that comes from the UXOs/ERW.

Considering that 2 incidents have been registered in this area recently the need for Risk Education activities is obviously necessary.

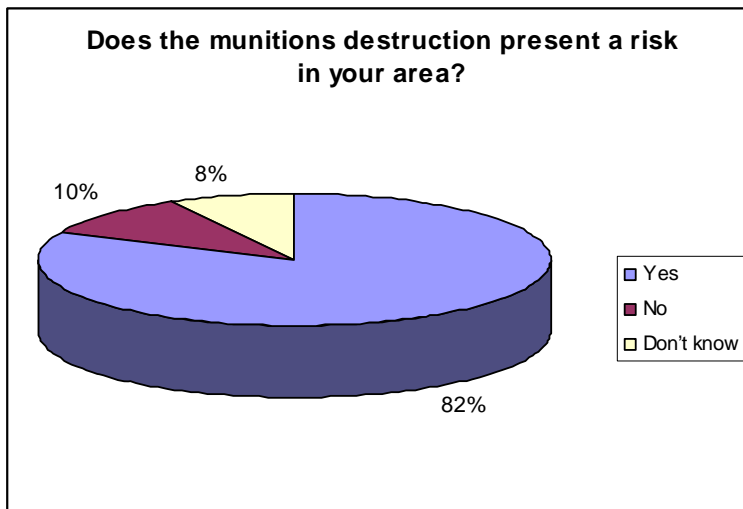
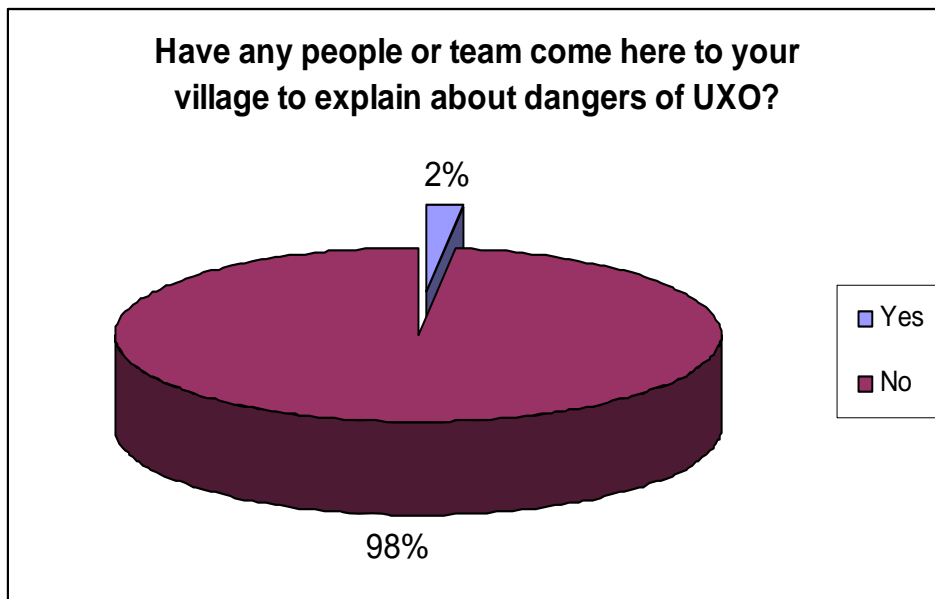
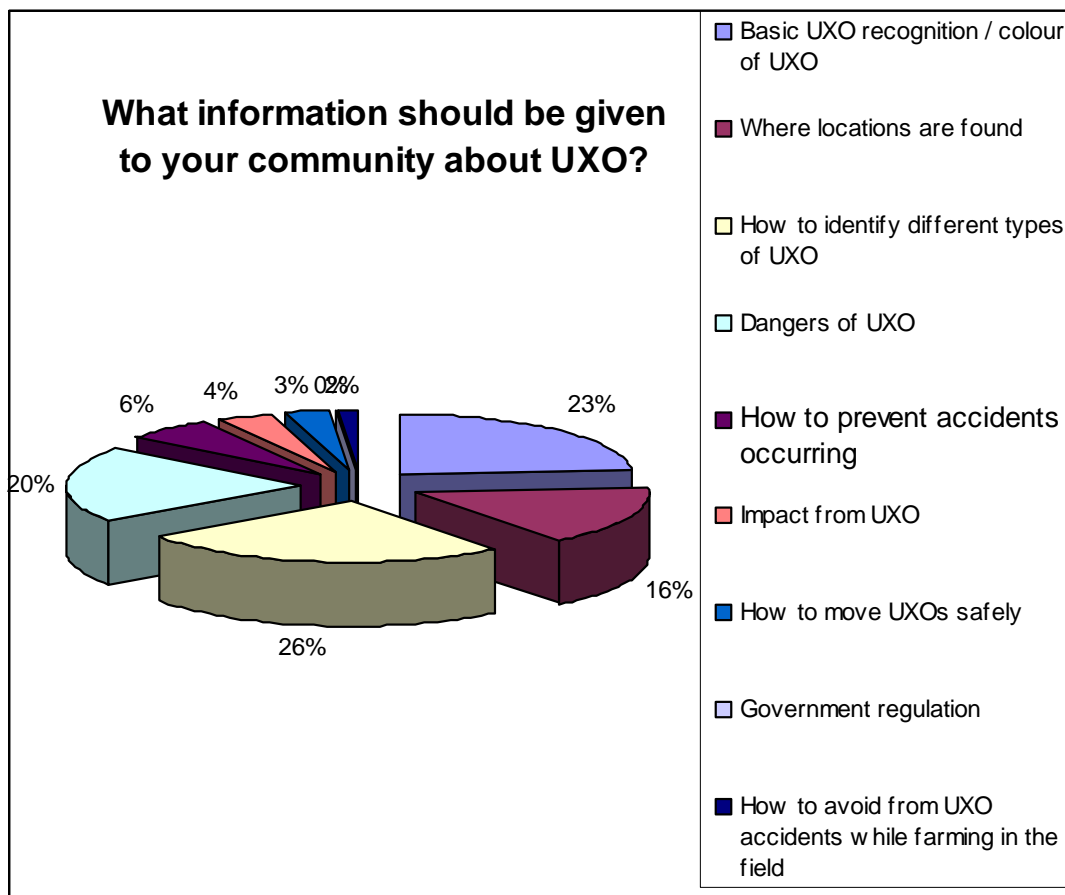


Chart nr 2: Has any one/ authority/agency/NGO visited your village to explain the demolition process and the dangers posed by UXOs/ERW in the last 5 years?



According to the findings from the interviews there is a total lack of risk education activities which is confirmed by the 98 % of respondents interviewed.

Chart nr 3: What information should be given to your community about UXO?



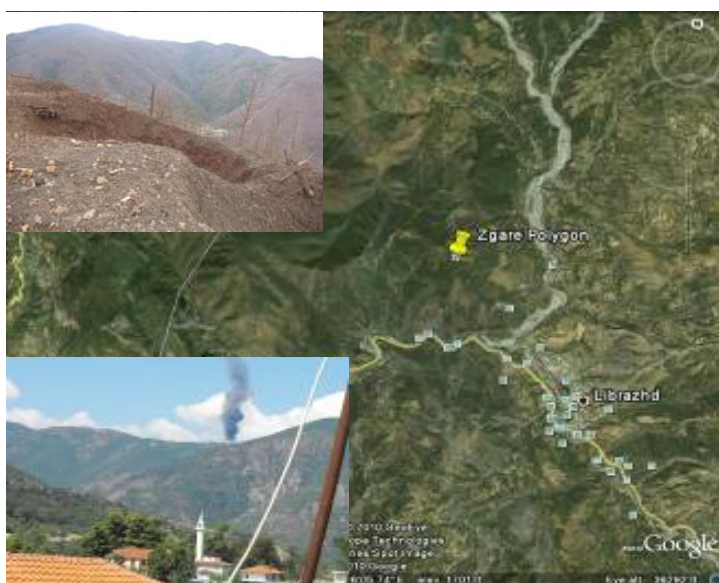
Based on team finding during interviewed with community members in Voskopoje, and Voskop communes, inhabitants lack the information about UXOs. The community is not informed about risks from the UXO in their area. The risk is most evident for those people and children that collect scrap metal in order to survive. The army officer personnel that our team members met during the visits in the demolition polygon stressed the need to conduct awareness and Risk Education activities with the community, especially with children of the areas. 26 % of persons interviewed replied that the immediate information must consist in how to identify different types of UXOs, 23% of respondents mentioned that the basic education for the UXO recognition is one of the main information that should be provided to the community and in schools, whereas 20% expressed that it is so important to make the community aware for the risks/dangers posed by UXO. Also the location of the demolition area, identifying different types of UXO, danger from UXO are ranked as necessary information.

Zgare, Librazhd

On December 10, 2010 the team of ALB-AID visited the polygon of Zgare in Librazhd. Zgare is an area 8 km from the city of Librazhd and 4 km from the nearest village called Kuturman. The polygon is placed upon the hill with the same name. The short distance village-polygon stimulated the inhabitants to collect the remained pieces of UXO after explosions. Although the inhabitants does not accept to answer the questionnaire, from the semi-structured interviews with the director of the

elementary school and the head of the village result that the major part of the village collect scrap at the demolition polygon. They wait until the army finish the explosions and the inhabitants go and take what ever they find in the around the demolition area.

Based on our conversation with the head of the commune recently an incident has



been registered in this village, a child while playing with a fuse of the grenade lost 2 fingers. During our visit at polygon of demolition we met persons of Katurman village who were waiting for the army to finish explosions in order to collect the remained metal. When asked for incidents in the demolition polygon, they mentioned that such incidents have happened

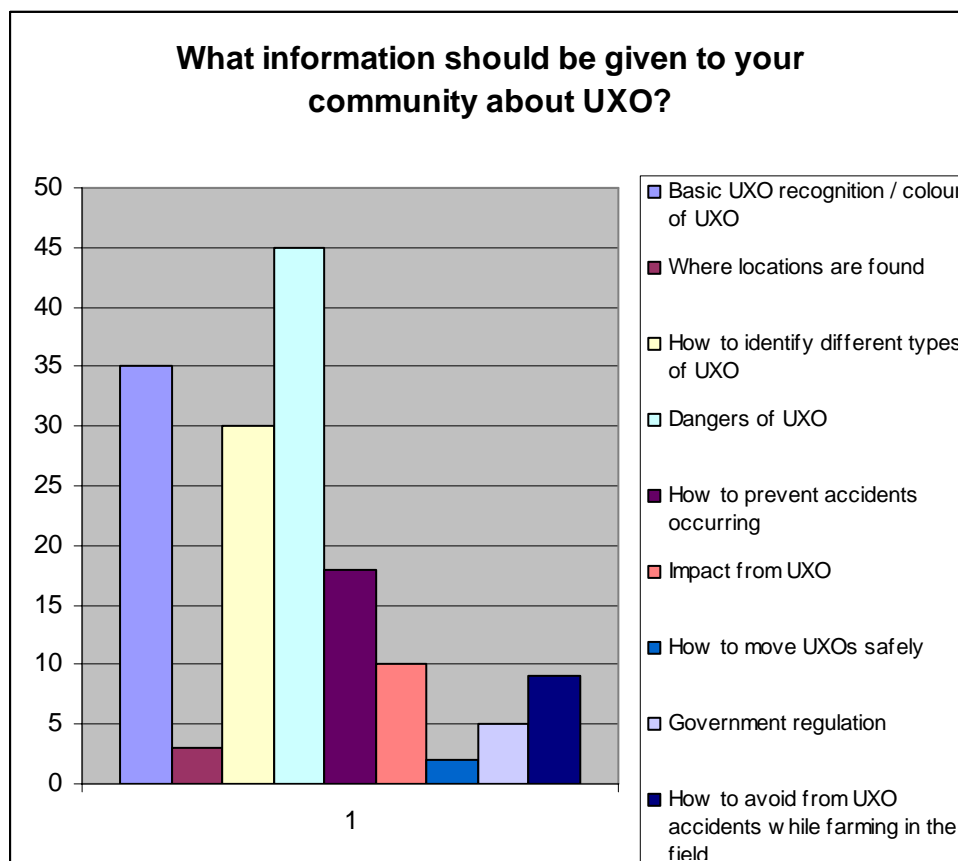
frequently, but they were afraid to give details, otherwise they were not allowed to gather scrap after the demolition process.

Katurman village which is part of Qender commune is the most affected from the risk of UXO.

Nr	Commune	Population	Nr of families
1	Librazhd-Qender	11107	2250
Village at high risk from UXO			
2	Katurman	850	170
3	Total	11957	2420

- From the survey conducted in Qender commune focusing at the Katurman village it results that the community considers the demolition as a chance which provide incomes for their families as they use scrap left behind for sale.
- Lack of other recourses of living constrains the heads of families to involve also children in scrap collecting in order to benefit as much as they can, without considering the chances of possible accidents. They mentioned that they did not have any idea about the risks posed by munitions demolished there. They were not instructed for the dangers posed by the REW. Only the old persons who used to do military training during Hoxha time mentioned that they were very careful while collecting scrap.
- During our visit at the elementary school of the Katurman village the director and school pupils stressed that the community and school pupils need education programs/trainings and seminars on the risks posed by UXOs/ERW and ammunitions. Specifically the topics they are interested to know are explained in the chart below.

Chart nr 1: What information should be given to your community about UXO?



4. Summary of the semi-structured interviews.

The respondents of the questionnaire below present information on the general situation as regard to the ammunition over the years. The main concerns of the respondents have been listed as follows:

No	Questions	Responses
1	Around your residential area are there ammunition found?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no ammunition in the street, but after the riots of 1997 different persons looted the munitions from the depots and when they realized that it is does not serve for anything they have thrown them in different places; environment is contaminated, there is a potential risk for the children, no one is taking care to clear the areas.
2	Are you aware on the risks posed by unexploded ordnance UXO/ERW?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority asked answered that they do not have any idea, besides old people who had served in the army during Communist system The majority of interviewed persons confirm that no one has gone to their villages to conduct awareness on the risks that UXOs/ERW present.
4	Does the demolition process pose a risk in the area, where you live?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The risk of incidents, environment pollution, damage to buildings blowout, damage to agriculture, road infrastructure etc Yes, besides striking wave and noise, agriculture and tree fruit are affected by pollution.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are cases of incidents registered where persons either have been injured or lost their lives
5	Do you consider a necessity awareness campaigns on the dangers posed by UXO/ERW in your area?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The risks is present, there are unexploded UXOs in the forests and bushes. • Education is a preventative measure. • It is necessary especially in schools because school children collect scrap. • Children have not the necessary information regarding to the UXO risks
6	What other concerns brought the demolition of UXOs/ERW in your residential area?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecological, noise, fear etc. • Damage to agricultural crops, environment pollution. • Concerns livestock, reducing products on agricultural and livestock. • Accidents, people are injured and have become with disabilities for the rest of their life
7	According to your opinion what can be the best way to prevent incidents with UXOs/ERW?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness Risk Education is considered as an important means/step. • Education, prevention of destruction of demolition of ammunition. • Reduce the size of the explosion of the blows. • Open risk education sessions with schools at the beginning of the academic year. • Awareness, meetings at school, preferably awareness sessions / these joint meetings conducted with students and parents, recognition of students to the danger that presents UXOs, / variety shows. • Conversation, coordination, working with different groups in the villages • Coordination/Liaison of all actors.
8	Do you know what types of monitions/ UXOs are being destroyed at the polygon area; do you have information from the Army?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the majority of cases respondents do not know the types of munitions/UXOs destroyed.

5. Recommendations:

Demolition in the areas visited are conducted without any security measure and without information of the communities. Although the authorities of the demolition and the government pretend the oposit and speak of “strict security measures applied during demolotion”, during file visits and discussions with the communities it was confirmed that there are NO technical safety procedures in place and that such procedures are notapplied at all in the demolition process. The munitions are blasted openly in the eyes of people waiting for the demolition to be compelted in order to run and collect the remannats and the scrap left behind. At one case the Alb-Aid team was presnet when the poeole were waiting for “the military trucks” to make use of the chance of collecting some scrap thus adding to their family incomes for survival. The

Albanian Media has also transmitted reportages of demolition taking place without any technical safety and people running to collect scrap left behind as soon as the trucks of the army have left the place...”

ALB-AID considers the situation in such demolition areas as extremely dangerous with regards to the risks posed by UXO/ERW and scattered munitions and application of safety procedures. While during de-mining in northeast Albania very strict safety procedures in compliance with International standards were applied, in the demolition process we find out that not a single standard is in place and demolition is carried out in very unprofessional way, thus posing a serious threat for the communities where the demolition is conducted

In such circumstances ALB-AID recommends as follows:

- The problem of Risk Education in demolition centers/pits all over Albania should be addressed immediately by AMAE or any other Internal agency before any other type of accident happens like the Gerdec one. This includes cooperation and Coordination of Activities with the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Education and specialised NGOs in order to help reduce accidents.
- The people, especially children does not have enough information about the risks posed by ERW/UXO's and scattered munitions. As such it is important UXO/ERW Risk Education with communities and school children of the villages around UXO demolition pits and centers is an immediate step that should be conducted as soon as possible in order to discourage life threat behaviours
- Immediate MRE sessions should be organized by qualified RE Organizations in the areas where demolition is taking place
- Intensive UXO/ ERW Risk Education activities should be conducted with school children first as they are largely exposed to the threat because of necessity and curiosity .
- Involvement school children to disseminate RE messages to the villages as it is the cheapest approach that has resulted very effective both in Northeast Albania and Gerdec
- Detailed information should be collected for UXO/ERW incidents/accidents, as well as for the needs of injured persons , as well as identification of any assistance provided to them.
- To address through the VA programme those survivors identified, as well as the communities
- Coordination/Liaison activities should be established as soon as possible in the targeted demolition pits/centers between all actors , operators, army, other contractors, police, school, village authorities and RE organisations..
- ERW/UXO Risk Education should gradually be mainstreamed in the school curricula
- Alb-Aid should approach urgently potential donors including UNICEF , US Embassy, UNDP or any other interested agency to find funding possibilities for quick MRE Activities /Sessions with the targeted communities and school children.

Annexes: Photos from Survey activities

Annex 1: Photos from the demolition areas



Scrap (UXO) collected at Livadhet e Hamzit



Livadhet e Hamzit, Demolition Polygon



Voskopoje, Demolition Polygon



Voskopoje, Scrap (UXO)



Zgare, Demolition Polygon



Bize, Demolition Polygon



Jube, Demolition Polygon

Annex 2: Photos from the interviews





Interviews in Voskopje, Korçë

