Albania

Country Profile
Center for International Stabilization and Recovery at JMU (CISR)

Follow this and additional works at: https://commons.lib.jmu.edu/cisr-journal

Part of the Defense and Security Studies Commons, Emergency and Disaster Management Commons, Other Public Affairs, Public Policy and Public Administration Commons, and the Peace and Conflict Studies Commons

Recommended Citation
Profile, Country (2007) "Albania," Journal of Mine Action : Vol. 11 : Iss. 1 , Article 33. Available at: https://commons.lib.jmu.edu/cisr-journal/vol11/iss1/33

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Center for International Stabilization and Recovery at JMU Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of Conventional Weapons Destruction by an authorized editor of JMU Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact dc_admin@jmu.edu.
From an operational point of view, the clearance was fairly straightforward, although the majority of the area was thinly covered with trees, bushes and tall grass. There were rocky outcrops and steep slopes that made manual clearance very difficult. The area was divided into blocks, and each block was cleared in accordance with priorities determined by the DNP. One of these blocks surrounded an old reservoir, dating from the same period as the temple, with an earthen dam at one end.

The clearance was initially managed by van Zyl, and later supervised by Yutaka Koidi, aided by Raungh Linn May, Tripot Timack, and Commander Rahib Mancetta. They had a team of 24 deminers and 5 free surveyors. Introduced to integrated demining by van Zyl at Sadok Kok Tom, the JAHDS team made extensive use of hand-held geosimeters, a Hitachi vegetation cutter and a Bosea 4 Rilt. In addition to their clearance duties, JAHDS staff carried out mine-risk education in local schools and communities, which was effective, and soon the MRE was passed to the locals by deminers from their own communities.

The area cleared was 668,000 square metres (165 acres) and, although there were some difficulties due to delays of UXO demolition, the work proceeded on schedule. Quality Assurance was carried out by the Thai Mine Action Centre, but the DNP was confident enough with the clearance that redemining of each block was seen as the JAHDS left the block. It was heartening to see how quickly previously-mined areas were developed for civilian purposes.

JAHDS also funded the building of a perimeter-safety barrier beside a walkway near the cliff edge. This view over Cambodia from this walk is breathtaking, but the cliff is almost vertical at this point, and there was a need to prevent people from falling off.

...And They Finished with a Temple

Despite its successful demining experience, JAHDS ceased operating as an NGO at the end of October 2006. The decision to fold was mainly due to the difficulty of obtaining sufficient funding (close to US$1.8 million annually) from corporations and private donors in Japan. Thailand is seldom seen by international donors as an underdeveloped country because foreign visitors see only major cities like Bangkok or the well-developed tourist resorts on Phuket Island. Much of the funding collected for the clearance of Sadok Kok Tom and Kha Pho Viham National Park came from private Japanese donors, but the burden of seek- ing such donations became too high for the small group of enthusiasts involved.

Future Plans

Although JAHDS’ NGO operations have ceased, it is expected that the mine-clearance capability it created will not. A Thai civilian NGO called the Peace Road Organisation will continue the project. The JAHDS Board donated all funds and equipment to the new NGO in November 2006, allowing the group to carry out further clearance for the development of this important sector of DNP lands. It could also be highly important for the economy of the local area, especially if a new road is constructed linking Phra Viharn with the complex of temples at Angkor Wat, expanding the “temple cir- cuit” and increasing the number of visitors to this important cultural area. This road would also be a commercial artery because a border market would likely establish itself, further enhancing the economy of the area.

In addition, mine clearance would further remove the hazard of mines for villagers who harvest the local forests for timber and roof grass. Construction of the road is expected to be completed by September 2007.

Above all, the skills JAHDS transferred to local deminers could be used to establish a nucle- us for a larger Thai NGO, established in accordance with the latest TMAC mine-ac- tion programme, and supplementing the work of the TMAC Humanitarian Mine Action Units. There is still much clearance work to be done along the border and this extra clearance capacity is sorely needed.

In Summary

The Japan Alliance for Humanitarian Demining Support had six years as a research and development NGO for GPR mine de- tectors and nearly two years as a mine- and UXO-clearance NGO in Thailand. Of the clearance teams, it could fairly be said, “They started with a temple, and they finished with a temple.” It was a short life per- haps, but a good one.

See Endnotes, Page 1

Albania

by Kateland Shane | Mine Action Information Center |