

'You Have Removed the Devil From Our Door'

An Assessment of the UNDP Small Arms and Light Weapons Control (SALWC) project in Albania



SEESAC

South Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons



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Development Programme



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Executive Summary

The Small Arms and Light Weapons Control (SALWC) project was undertaken in 2002-2003 by UNDP in co-operation with the Albanian government, at a programme cost to the international community of US\$ 3.47.8 million. Its objectives were to help remove illegally held weapons and explosives from the population, to make the population more aware of the dangers of the illegal possession of such items and to enhance the ability of the authorities to control the private possession of arms and ammunition.

This report concludes that the project was successful in meeting these objectives.

In judging its success and its cost-effectiveness, one must bear in mind that it was not a straightforward weapons collection programme. Instead of offering individual rewards to people handing in weapons, it offered collective incentives in the form of community-based development projects. This avoided many of the problems associated with individual rewards for the surrender of illegal weaponry. UNDP had earlier used this approach in other parts of Albania. The SALWC project was different from these earlier projects in that it covered a much larger number of communities, it offered smaller projects, and it did not reward all participating communities. Instead, the communities had to compete for a project by handing as much weaponry as possible. All in all, the project collected about 8,000 weapons in 2002 - 2003, and the figure is expected to rise to about 8,500 or 9,000. It also collected a large amount of illegally held explosives.

The benefits to Albania in terms of removing illegal weaponry and ammunition, making people more aware of the risks of keeping such items, providing development assistance to poor communities, and encouraging such communities to tackle their problems in a constructive and co-operative way, seem worth the money and effort invested. The authors do not believe it is fair or appropriate to judge the success of the project only, or even primarily, by the cost of the programme per weapon collected.

The authors also believe that the approach to disarmament and development used by this project was an improvement on earlier attempts, like those used in Gramsh and Elbasan and Dibra. Engaging communities in a competition for collective rewards for the surrender of illegal SALW and ammunition seems to have worked well. It used the available resources more effectively and does not appear to have provoked much resentment among the losers, or as the project prefers to call them, those who did not win.

In the authors' opinion, this approach deserves a better name than 'Weapons in Exchange for Development' or 'Weapons in Competition for Development'. We suggest 'Disarmament for Development'. The authors believe that such an approach will work only under certain conditions. It will only work if the possessors consider the SALW to be unnecessary and unlikely to fetch a good price. Also, it will only work if the possessors to some degree regard the SALW as common property and, once the decision is made to surrender SALW, discourage people from opting out.



In the opinion of the authors, the SALWC project would have been more successful if:

- a) the Albanian government had consistently apprehended and prosecuted the illegal possession of SALW and ammunition after the amnesty elapsed on 4 August 2003. As a result of its failure to take action, Albanians can continue to violate the weapons laws. The government made this impunity official when it proclaimed a new amnesty in March 2003;
- b) UNDP had not encouraged the government to proclaim this new amnesty;
- c) the collection of weapons had been independently monitored;
- d) the government had committed itself to destroying the collected items;
- e) the items counted in the competition had included ammunition and explosives, but had excluded broken weapons¹, incomplete weapons and weapons that can only fire blanks; and
- f) the national media in Albania had taken a greater interest in issues of SALW and gun violence.

UNDP's decision to focus more on promoting security sector reform than on weapons collection after the end of the SALWC project seems an appropriate choice.

¹ SEESAC Comment. Whilst not disagreeing with this statement, it should be recognised that the possession of broken or incomplete weapons provides individuals with a ready supply of spare parts to keep other weapons operational. Therefore the return of broken or incomplete weapons should not be discouraged since their return reduces capability.



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An assessment of the UNDP Albania SALW Control project

1 Introduction

This report seeks to achieve two things: first, it reviews the outcomes and the impact of the SALWC project and discusses its value in terms of the resources used. Second, it describes the approach used in the project and possibilities for its replication elsewhere.

This study was commissioned by the South East Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC) in Belgrade, and carried out with the full co-operation and generous assistance of the UNDP country organization and the UNDP SALWC project in Albania. However, its contents are the responsibility of the authors alone.

1.1 Lessons learned on SALW² collection

The last ten years have seen an increase, spread and evolution of SALW collection programmes of various types. Students of these efforts suggest a number of lessons that have been learned, though these will be tested, qualified and revised as our knowledge of this new field of study increases.³ Here are some of the most important:

The point of SALW collection programmes is not to collect as many weapons and as much ammunition as possible, although this would obviously be a desirable event. SALW are collected primarily to enhance safety, security, stability or state power. In the context of post-conflict peace building, SALW collection programmes are typically used in an attempt to deny a defeated party its firepower and reduce the risk that ex-combatants resume fighting or take up a life of violent crime. In the context of public safety, the goal of SALW collection is usually to reduce the number of casualties caused by accidental or frivolous shooting or the unintended detonation of explosives. In the context of crime prevention, its aim may be to make it more difficult for petty criminals to arm themselves.

It is not desirable, and can even be dangerous, to engage in SALW collection on its own. To be effective, it needs to be part of a wider package of measures to promote national reconciliation, build confidence in the state authorities, teach people how to avoid injury and death, or enforce the law.

So SALW collection programmes need to be embedded in wider efforts of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) or Security Sector Reform (SSR), and their success needs to be measured by their contribution to the greater endeavour. The crop of weapons collected is one of several performance indicators that can be used. However, it means little unless combined with the others.

There are also risks involved in SALW collection programmes. One is suspicion. Especially in tense situations, the group that is being asked to surrender arms may feel threatened. Another is the promotion of arms trafficking. The demand created by the programme may lead to undesirable arms flows, and any cash rewards may be used to buy other weapons. Yet another is resentment. People who have not broken the law, and people who were threatened, harassed, robbed or injured at gunpoint will not be pleased to see the holders of illegal weapons being rewarded for disarming. Finally, the surrender of weapons can potentially lead to less, rather than more, security and stability. This may happen if it disturbs the balance of power between rivals or between criminals and their victims. So SALW collection programmes need to be planned and implemented with care, taking into account the negative and positive lessons learned in previous endeavours.

² Throughout this report, the term weapons will include all aspects of SALW. The terms are used interchangeably unless otherwise specified.

³ Sami Faltas and Joseph Di Chiaro III, editors, *Managing the Remnants of War: Micro-disarmament as an Element of Peace-building*. Baden-Baden, Nomos Verlag, 2001.



SALW collection programmes use a combination of incentives⁴, threats and advocacy. To be effective, they cannot rely on just one of these. The incentive may be collective or individual. It can consist of money⁵, goods, services or a symbolic gesture. It can also be a mere guarantee of anonymity and freedom from prosecution. The threat may be explicit, as in an announcement that possessors of illegal weapons who fail to surrender their arms will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law, or implied. Arguments seek to convince the possessors that it is in their own interest to hand over weapons and are typically conveyed by public awareness and information campaigns.

1.2 Marrying disarmament, public works and community development

Since 1998, the United Nations has been helping and encouraging the Albanian authorities to remove the tools of war from society. UNDP has been the leading agency in this effort, but the UN Department of Disarmament Affairs, UNOPS, UNIFEM and other parts of the UN system have also made limited, but important, contributions.

Some 20,000 weapons and significant quantities of ammunition and explosives have so far been collected by the three SALW collection programmes led by UNDP in Albania, and it is also fair to say that some of the credit for government collection efforts in other parts of Albania must also go to UNDP. However, the significance of UNDP's SALW collection programmes goes beyond these figures. They were also intended to promote the improvement of the infrastructure and the development of local communities in Albania, and their achievements in these areas seem significant, as we will argue.

The Gramsh Pilot Programme (GPP, 1999-2000), executed by UNOPS and UNDP, was the first weapons collection programme ever to be entirely based on community-based development incentives. This approach avoided some of the risks associated with conventional SALW collection programmes. For instance, it did not reward the person who held the surrendered weapon and may have acted irresponsibly or illegally, but rewarded the community as a whole. So it was less likely to cause resentment. Another advantage of the new approach was that it underscored the social and economic benefits that improved security can bring.



The community-based approach requires people to meet, debate and decide on common concerns and priorities. This not only increases the chance that the development project will meet their most urgent needs and gives the local people a leading role in the process. It also encourages them in a wider sense to work together for a better future. This, we suppose, benefits ownership, participation, empowerment, sustainability and gender-sensitivity. Finally, more recent comparisons of the Weapons in Exchange for Development (WED) approach suggest that it is an effective and appropriate intervention when there is a perception, or reality, of a community shared ownership of the weapons. Recent experience in Kosovo during Autumn

2003 has now shown that when the weapons are individually owned, a collective approach is not particularly effective, although other factors undoubtedly had a major impact on the effectiveness of the Kosovo SALW amnesty.

In the event, the GPP collected a satisfactory number of weapons and an amazing quantity of ammunition and explosives. It carried out public works that were highly appreciated by the local population and contributed to the social and economic development, as well as improving the maintenance of law and order. Most strikingly, it inspired in the local communities a sense of purpose, co-operation and confidence that continues to benefit them beyond the end of the project. The independent analysts who evaluated the project stated that had it not

⁴ Throughout this report, the term weapons will include all aspects of SALW. The terms are used interchangeably unless otherwise specified.

⁵ See SEESAC RMDS 01.10 (www.seesac.org) for a discussion of the various incentives to support SALW interventions.

⁶ The United Nations (UN) policy is that it will not financially support any 'buy back' SALW interventions.

suffered from adverse conditions and made some mistakes, the GPP could have been more successful. All in all, the evaluators estimated the benefits the GPP brought to Gramsh and Albania were well worth the money and effort expended.⁷

The community-based weapons collection programmes carried out by UNDP in Albania are hybrids. They marry weapons collection (and the SALW public awareness⁸ campaigns that are a necessary part of it) with public works and community development. With these three prongs, they are more costly than the straightforward kind of weapons collection programme that was requested by the Albanian government when it approached the UN for assistance in 1998. It follows that their performance and cost-effectiveness must be measured by their contribution to the three goals they seek to promote, in relation to their use of resources. We will later provide figures on programme cost divided by weapons collected, but we will argue that these alone are an inadequate criterion of success, as the intangible benefits of improved perceptions of human security are difficult to measure.⁹

The Gramsh Pilot Programme was followed by the 'Weapons in Exchange for Development' (WED) Project, which ran from 2000 - 2002 in the districts of Elbasan and Diber (in the prefectures of the same name), and employed a very similar approach. Unfortunately, the name encourages people to think of the endeavour as a barter transaction, in which people buy public works by the weapons they hand in. It also suggests that Development is something that can be bought or awarded. For both reasons, we consider it a misnomer. 'Disarmament for Development' would have been a much better name. It implies that people are getting rid of weapons and explosives in order to enhance their security.

The Small Arms and Light Weapons Control Project (SALWC) is scheduled to run from 2002 until 2004. It differs from its predecessors in three major respects. One, it covers 15 of the 36 districts of Albania (almost half the country). Second, it covers 15 of the 36 districts of Albania (almost half of the country). Secondly the entire process of collecting, removing and disposing of weapons and explosive ordnance¹⁰ is in the hands of the Albanian authorities. Third, the development projects are not promised to all participating communities. Indeed, it is clearly announced that only a few communities will be rewarded. Communities compete for the development projects by collecting as many weapons as they can. We will discuss the advantages and drawbacks of this innovation, which is referred to as Weapons in Competition for Development (WCD), another poorly chosen name in our opinion¹¹. UNDP Albania took a calculated risk in developing this approach, and, regardless of the effectiveness of the intervention, should be congratulated for taking micro-disarmament theory into new territory yet again.



1.3 The changing political environment

In 1997, Albania narrowly escaped civil war. During riots that are difficult to understand even with the benefit of hindsight, military depots around the country were opened and vast quantities of arms, ammunition, explosives, as well as some heavy military equipment were looted. Current estimates put the number of weapons stolen at about 550,000.

⁷ This based on the confidential evaluation report of the Gramsh Pilot Project by an international team, commissioned by UNOPS. The conclusions as quoted here are not confidential.

⁸ SALW Awareness includes three components; 1) Risk Education; 2) Public Information; and 3) Advocacy.

⁹ The developing field of SALW Survey as a distinct operational component of SALW interventions now makes it possible to identify these perceptions, although this component was not available to UNDP Albania until very recently, as the theory has only just been developed.

¹⁰ Defined in RMDS O2.10 as: 'all munitions containing explosives, nuclear fission or fusion materials and biological and chemical agents. This includes bombs and warheads; guided and ballistic missiles; artillery, mortar, rocket and small arms ammunition; all mines, torpedoes and depth charges; pyrotechnics; cluster and dispensers; cartridge and propellant actuated devices; electro-explosive devices; clandestine and improvised explosive devices; and all similar or related items or components explosive in nature.

¹¹ It can be taken to mean a competition between weapons, or the use of weapons for development purposes.



In 1998, the Albanian government turned to the United Nations and requested assistance in recovering this ordnance by carrying out buy-back programmes. Instead, the UN Department of Disarmament Affairs recommended a community-based approach, using collective inducements in the form of development projects to encourage the population to give up the illegal ordnance it held. This approach had never been fully tested, but it built on experiences and ideas acquired in West Africa, especially Mali.

It was first tried out in the Gramsh Pilot Programme, which can be regarded as a success if its impact on the development of the district, the encouragement of the population and the increased awareness of the dangers of arms and explosives are taken into account as significant benefits. However, if one measures the success of the programme only by the number of weapons collected (some 6,000) in relation to programme cost (about US\$ 1.2 million), one will find that at US\$ 207 per weapon this is a costly approach. UNDP justifiably argues that this is the result of donor insistence on supporting that particular project, rather than expanding the concept into surrounding areas after additional funds were made available, which would have significantly lowered the price per weapon.

The Weapons in Exchange for Development programme (WED), which was subsequently carried out in Elbasan and Dibra did not collect as many weapons and was more expensive. The programme cost per weapon collected was US\$ 557. We cannot tell whether the social, political economic and psychological impact of the programme justified this high cost, because we did not evaluate the WED programme. Nor did anyone else, as far as we can tell.¹² Yet it must not be forgotten that a significant amount of development work was carried out that was of benefit to the community; particularly as this was the only real development funding available to the area at that time.

The SALWC project was initially conceived as a sequel to the WED, except that it was to be conducted on a national scale, or at least in as much of the country as possible. The GPP had focused on one district and the WED on a much larger area, namely two districts. The ambitions for the new project were even greater. When its weapons collection activities are over, it will have collected around 8,500 weapons at a programme cost of about US\$ 404 per weapon collected.¹³ We will discuss its cost-effectiveness and the considerable problems involved in interpreting this data at a later stage.

In early 2002, a few months before the SALWC project was to be launched, the newly appointed project manager realised that the resources available for this project would not allow it to carry out enough public works to have a national impact, if all participating communities were to be offered such an inducement. This could not even be achieved by making the projects smaller and cheaper. So the SALWC adopted an approach that made communities compete for small development projects. This was a major innovation, and it clearly distinguished the project from its predecessors.

Perhaps the greatest difference between the SALWC project and its predecessors lies in the changed political and social environment. In 1998, the country was still reeling under the impact of the 1997 riots. There was much fear and a lack of confidence in the police, which led some people to hold on to weapons in hope of being able to protect themselves. But there was also a sense of anxiety about the masses of ordnance held illegally by the population and a sense of urgency about removing them.

The Kosovo crisis of 1999 provided what most Albanians considered a good outlet for this illegal ordnance. A considerable part was trafficked to Albanian Kosovars through the prefectures of Shkodra and Kukes, though the weapons and ammunition probably came from all over Albania. We can safely assume that the people who had been holding the ordnance illegally, and more particularly, the arms traffickers, made money out of this. Arms smuggling was also extended to ethnic Albanians in Macedonia and to overseas markets. In this connection, the port of Vlora is often mentioned, as a well-known transit point for various types of smuggling.

By the time the WED programme ended in late 2001, a good part of the 550,000 weapons looted in 1997 were no longer in the hands of the population. They had been exported, surrendered voluntarily in UNDP programmes

¹² However, we are aware of one brief consultancy report on the WED project.

¹³ See 3.1 on how to avoid misinterpretations of programme cost per weapon collected.

or efforts led by the Albanian police, or confiscated. How did these changes affect the prospects for weapons collection? In various ways, it would seem.

On the one hand, after an initial export boom, it had become more difficult for ordinary people living in the countryside without connections to organized crime to sell illegal ordnance. So many of them must have started thinking about getting rid of the illegal guns and explosives they still had, especially as their country was obviously becoming calmer, safer and more stable. Add to this the accumulated effect of SALW Awareness campaigns and the images of other people surrendering arms, and one gets the impression that weapons collection must have become easier.

On the other hand, many of the people who were inclined to co-operate had surrendered their weapons, so that much of the remaining weapons and explosive ordnance were now in the hands of people who thought they needed it. These people, one imagines, were unwilling to give up their weaponry just because someone offered to build a road or a school for their village.

So it is hard to say whether, all things considered, from 1998 to 2002 it had become easier or more difficult to get people to surrender illegal ordnance.

By the second half of 2001, many Albanian and foreign observers felt that the time was rapidly approaching when the government would need to start enforcing the prohibition on the unauthorized possession of ordnance. This probably inspired the use of the word **control** in the name of the SALWC project, though **collection** would have reflected the main thrust of the project more accurately. It also led to the organization of two workshops on Human Security and Weapons Control in January and April 2002, one focusing on Albania and another devoted to the wider region.

At the first, held in Tirana on 10-11 January 2002, the Deputy Prime-Minister and Chair of the National Steering Committee on Weapons Collection, Mr. Skënder Gjinushi, made reference to the expiry on 04 August 2002 of the 1998 law that promised freedom from prosecution to those surrendering illegally held weapons. He said that every effort should be made to collect as much illegal ordnance as possible before 04 August 2002. Immediately after the expiry date of the law, he went on to say, *“we should strengthen measures for penalties against illegal keeping of arms, especially for people who move with them in the public.”*¹⁴

In his summary of the workshop’s findings, the rapporteur, Sami Faltas, wrote: *“until August 2002, Albanians will have the opportunity of giving up illegal arms without having to fear prosecution, then the amnesty will end, and the authorities will implement more forceful policies of confiscation, prosecution and weapons control. Nevertheless, there may still be a need for local amnesties, providing a brief opportunity for the possessors of illegal weapons to disarm.”* He added: *“so far, Albania has strongly emphasized weapons reduction. Now it needs to place more emphasis on weapons control”*. (Ibid.).

It was in this spirit that the SALWC project geared up to provide an attractive last chance for the population to hand over the illegal ordnance it still held, pointing out the dangers of such possessions, offering development projects to communities that yielded the largest crop, and emphasizing the risk of being arrested, tried and punished for the illegal possession of ordnance after 04 August 2002.

At the end of July 2002, the Albanian parliament voted in a new government under Fatos Nano of the Socialist Party. This was the fourth time he assumed the post of prime minister. Under this government’s administration, there was no noticeable increase in the number of arrests and prosecutions for the illegal possession of arms when the amnesty expired. Nor were there any signs that, contrary to earlier statements, it planned to announce a new amnesty. Indeed, it seemed that the government had lost interest both in collecting and controlling SALW.

Very soon after 4 August, the new government dismantled the structure for the collection of illegal weapons, from the National Steering Committee chaired by the Deputy Prime-Minister and the team at the Ministry of Public

¹⁴ Human Security and Weapons Control in Albania, 10-11 January 2002. Tirana, UNDP and the Albanian Atlantic Association, 2002.



Order in Tirana, to the local weapons collection experts in the offices of the 12 prefects. About 250 officials in total lost their jobs. Some, like the highest official responsible for SALW collection, police Colonel Todi Grazhdani, were made redundant, while others were given other duties.



These policemen had learned, by trial and error as well as by receiving instruction, how to organize collection campaigns, how to register the items taken, and how to handle, transport and store them. The safety, security and transparency they provided had not yet reached international standards, but they were far better than in December 1998, when the Gramsh Pilot Programme was about to be launched. At that time, people were throwing boxes of ammunition out of third-floor windows into the streets of Gramsh and sending children with guns and unexploded ordnance to the collection sites. The UNDP staff had failed to consider any technical implications for the safe collection of weapons and explosive ordnance during the project development and the police were at a loss how to deal with the problem.¹⁵ The Ammunition Technical Officer (ATO) from NATO and later UK DfID, put proper procedures in place and showed the Albanian authorities how to conduct weapons collection and disposal with a fair degree of safety, security and transparency.

After 04 August 2002, the people who had acquired these skills were dispersed. There was no longer an authority within the government to whom people could turn for guidance and support in weapons collection. Besides, no one knew what, if anything, the government wanted its officials to do about illegally held ordnance. Some policemen turned to foreigners working for organizations like UNDP or the OSCE and asked them what they should do if people wanted to give up illegal weapons after the amnesty had expired.¹⁶

UNDP had tried to prevent this. It had urgently asked for a special meeting of the National Steering Committee for Weapons Collection, which took place on 24 June 2002. At the end of that meeting, the Deputy Prime-Minister, Mr Skënder Gjinushi, had announced that the government had decided not to extend the deadline of the amnesty period any further. It would end on 04 August 2002 as foreseen. He had also agreed to the Action Plan drawn up by the SALWC project and proposed by the Working Group.¹⁷

This Action Plan, dated 14 June 2002, laid out what needed to be done to obtain the best possible results before the expiry of the amnesty on 04 August 2002. At this stage, weapons collection was not progressing well in four of the five prefectures, the exception being Shkodra (ibid.). The plan said nothing about what would happen, or should happen, when the amnesty expired.¹⁸

However these issues were clearly addressed in a letter sent on 27 June 2002 to Deputy Prime-Minister Gjinushi by the Working Group on Weapons Collection, (consisting of three senior officials from the ministries of public order, local government and defence), and the SALWC Project.

This letter fully supported the decision not to prolong the amnesty. It went on to say,

“we are of the opinion that it will be most important to fully apply the provisions for penalties to those still in possession of illegal weapons. We are of the opinion, that it will be most important to fully publicise the arrest and prosecution of some people who break the law through the continued possession of illegal weapons and to apply the most severe penalties foreseen by the legislation. In our view, this will provide vivid examples of the seriousness of illegal possession and that it may motivate people to be more willing to surrender the weapons

¹⁵ The problem was solved by the timely intervention of the NATO Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Support Team to Albania, whose Operations Officer, Major A E A Wilkinson MBE RLC (UK Army), provided technical advice and direct EOD cover to the project until the deployment of two UK Ammunition Technical Officers (ATO) in February 1999. Indeed, on the first day of the collection in Gramsh, he conducted Render Safe Procedures (RSP) on over 30 items of unstable and dangerous explosive ordnance. This work was continued by Kenn Underwood and John Napolitano for the remainder of 1999 and 2000.

¹⁶ Interview: Phil Figgins, OSCE, 14 September 2003.

¹⁷ Minutes of the National Steering Committee meeting held on 24 June 2002. Provided for us by the SALWC project.

¹⁸ Meeting with NSC. Action Plan. Tirana, 14 June 2002. Provided for us by the SALWC project.

still in their possession. During the period following 04 August 2002, we believe that short periods of amnesty for further surrender of weapons (without penalty) could be applied in certain areas where the community members who are willing to give up their weapons.”¹⁹

The government had adopted the recommendations made by SALWC for the period after the expiration of the amnesty period on 04 August 2002 and had submitted to Parliament a new law foreseeing short-term local amnesties. However, due to internal changes within the ruling party at the end of July 2002, none of these recommendations were acted upon.

In the meantime, UNDP had proposed a new weapons collection project to potential donors. It would have worked on the basis of the strategy recommended to the government and was essentially a sequel to the SALWC project. The request was turned down, because the donors did not believe it was feasible under the changed political conditions.

The project now was in a crisis. If it could not somehow create the political conditions that would enable it to continue its work, it would probably have to shut down. Government officials indicated to UNDP and SALWC staff that the only possible way out of the impasse was a new period of general amnesty. So now they urged SALWC staff to draft a new bill proclaiming a two-year amnesty, and this was approved by the Council of Ministers in December 2002 and submitted to Parliament. The new amnesty law, which foresees the establishment of a new SALW collection structure within the state police with a complement of some 30 officials instead of the 250 that were in place before the previous amnesty expired, was finally passed by Parliament in March 2003.

Had the government changed its mind? Would it once again engage in voluntary SALW collection campaigns throughout the country, as it had before 04 August 2002. We believe the answer is no. The new structure for SALW collection that the government was obliged to put in place within 30 days after the law entered into force has yet to materialize. This means that the small-scale SALW collection efforts that continue, only on the request of the SALWC staff, are carried out by policemen who are not trained for this kind of work and have to do it on top of their many other duties. The consequence is that the standard of safety, security and transparency has seriously declined. SALWC staff told us that they are now in a sense back to the days before SALW collection was professionalised.²⁰

Another indication that the Albanian government does not regard continued weapons collection as a priority can be found in the National Strategy for Socio-Economic Development (NSSED), which defines the country's long-term objectives for social and economic development and the 'priority public measures' to be undertaken to achieve these objectives.²²

Improving public order, enhancing the security of the individual and the community and fighting crime, including organized crime, were among the priorities of the NSSED during 2002.²³ The relevant section of the NSSED report says that “*public order has finally been established in all the country's territory*” and announces an ambitious programme of police reform. However it does not specifically mention recent efforts to remove illegally held weapons, ammunition and explosives from the population. Nor are such aims included among the goals that the NSSED sets for 2003-2006 or the more detailed midterm priority measures programme for the Ministry of Public Order.

Finally, when the Albanian government reported to the United Nations in July 2003 on its implementation of the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicated the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, it made no mention of plans for the voluntary collection of weapons, though it referred to the UN

¹⁹ Letter from the working group for weapons collection and the SALWC project to the Deputy Prime-Minister. Tirana, 27 June 2002. Provided for us by the SALWC project.

²⁰ Sina, 04 September 2003.

²¹ Sina, 04 September 2003.

²² NSSED, Page 3.

²³ NSSED, Page 46.



programmes carried out in the past. It mentioned the SALW collection structure that existed within the Ministry of Public Order until August 2002, but not the law that established a new one.²⁴

All this leads us to believe that the government is no longer interested in voluntary SALW collection and does not regard the consistent, strict and visible prosecution of illegal weapons possessors as a priority either. We spoke to several policemen and members of local communities who were highly frustrated about this.

Mr Gjinushi, now the Deputy Speaker of Parliament, confirmed²⁵ that the interest in SALW collection had evaporated at the level of the government. He sadly admitted that he had so far failed to convince his colleagues of the need to continue the fight against illegal weapons possession. He added that the population had also lost interest. The dominant attitude in government circles today is best described as “*collecting weapons is no longer a big deal. Let the police do their job*”, he said.

He stressed the need for SALW control, as opposed to SALW collection. For instance, there is much concern about the use of illegal weapons in domestic violence. The use of arms by organized crime continues to be a huge problem. By contrast, the political use of firearms has sharply declined. There are no political militias in Albania today, Mr. Gjinushi added, even though there are friendships and ties between politicians and people who wield much firepower. “*Across the board, I would say that security has improved in the last few years*”, he concluded. He had praise for the SALWC, saying that the approach was right, at least at the time. Of course, its success depends on the level and consistency of support provided by the authorities at all levels, and that is flagging. Today, government and public opinion are tired of SALW collection. Perhaps the time has come to prosecute illegal weapons possession and legalise what is considered acceptable.

The General Director of Police at the Ministry of Public Order, Mr Bajram Ibraj²⁶, painted a different picture. He admitted that the government had been slow to act after 04 August 2002, pointing to political divisions and a lack of resources, as well as a heavy workload. No one in the police force has been allowed to go on leave since May 2003, he said. However, he claimed that today the political commitment is stronger. “*The police must set priorities and pursue the most significant things*”, he said, pointing amongst other things to the continued strength of organised crime. “*Weapons collection cannot be viewed in isolation*”, he said. When we asked him whether weapons collection was still needed, he said that as long there are criminals with guns, the effort must continue.

We asked Mr Ibraj what would be necessary for Albania to solve the problem of illegal weaponry. He listed:

- a) the law must prescribe heavier and mandatory penalties;
- b) local authorities must commit themselves to this goal;
- c) outside interference must be avoided. The police can do the job alone;
- d) however, civil society can help by raising awareness;
- e) in general, propaganda and information are needed;
- f) the police must become more professional, more capable of absorbing information and better at working with the community; and also
- g) there is a need for a greater commitment on the part of the population.

²⁴ Letter dated 8 July 2003 from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Albania to the United Nations addressed to the Department of Disarmament Affairs on the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, A/CONF.192/BMS/2003/CRP.93.

²⁵ Interview: 01 September 2003.

²⁶ Interview: 01 September 2003.



He did not mention voluntary SALW collection programmes. This confirmed our impression that in the opinion of the Albanian government, these are no longer important.

The continuing uncertainty about the future of SALW collection and SALW control in Albania has led UNDP to take a different direction in the project that follows on the SALWC project, namely security sector reform (SSR). After five years of pursuing community-based SALW collection with development incentives, UNDP has, at least for the time being, suspended it in Albania pending further operational and functional analysis.



2 The achievements of the SALWC project compared with its objectives

2.1 Strategy and overall aim of the project

The SALWC project document, written in the second half of 2001 by the previous project manager, does not state an overall goal or aim for the project. It comes closest when it explains in its third paragraph:

*‘For sustainable human development to occur, small arms have to be removed from circulation. Without appropriate disarmament - involving the collection of residual small arms and the storage of state-owned weapons in protected areas - programmes for national rehabilitation and development cannot be sustained. Vital infrastructure needed for development projects is damaged by arms-related insecurity, while foreign-funded development projects must be cancelled or postponed to prevent the assets from being diverted toward criminal activities. Countries must also allocate large portions of their already limited resources to security measures, thereby decreasing the funds available for development’.*²⁷

Several pages later²⁸, the project document states that to support the government in achieving the development objective outlined in the above quotation, UNDP will provide assistance in:

- Public Awareness²⁹;
- Planning and policy development;
- Support for arms collection; and
- Linking collection and control to development.

These are then translated into the ‘immediate objectives’, as we shall see, for which ‘success criteria’ and outputs are proposed.

One of the principal messages used by the project in its SALW Awareness campaign summarises the strategy of the project more clearly and succinctly:

‘Less weapons - More security

More security - More investment

More investment - More development

More development - More prosperity’

We take this to mean that weapons collection and SALW awareness will lead to a situation in which people are safer and feel safer. That will encourage and enable new economic activities, which will create jobs, generate incomes and give people a wider range of options. True to its mandate, UNDP chose to pursue human development as its ultimate goal in this project.

Let us briefly examine the assumptions that fewer weapons means more security, and more security means more development.

²⁷ SALWC Project Document, 2001, Page 1.

²⁸ SALWC Project Document, 2001, Page 6.

²⁹ Now more commonly referred to as SALW Awareness.



There probably is a relationship between the stock of weapons in society and public security, but it is neither straightforward nor simple. If one reduces the number of weapons held by the population without taking any other measures, this will not necessarily lead to greater security. Whether security is enhanced depends on such matters as the purpose for which the weapons were kept, the number of households that continue to have access to weapons, whether the weapons are well hidden or within easy reach, and of course the nature and condition of the items removed. We will look at some of these variables in the Albanian context when we discuss the impact of weapons collection in the SALWC project.



The relationship between security and development is similarly complex. Certainly, the fear and the risk of armed violence are not conducive to sustainable development, but prosperity and development can to some extent co-exist with high levels of insecurity. On the list of countries where people face the greatest risk of dying by gunfire, we find Colombia, Brazil and South Africa, followed by the United States, occupying the top places. By global standards, these countries are very dangerous, but prosperous.

Today, Albania is less dangerous than Colombia, Brazil, South Africa or the United States, but it is very poor by European standards. Its least developed areas, like the district of Tropoje on the Kosovo border, are not poor primarily because they are unsafe. Certainly, when travel guides, such as the Blue Guide of Albania, stop warning travellers to avoid Tropoje that will help to attract more tourists; but despite the lovely scenery, not many will come. Tropoje is poor because it is hard to reach, politically neglected and without economic resources. Improved security will not change its economic prospects very quickly or fundamentally. In fact, if it puts an end to lucrative illegal activities like smuggling, it could result in greater poverty.

So the formula 'fewer weapons, more security; more security, more development' is open to debate. As a slogan summarising what UNDP hopes to achieve in programmes like the SALWC project, it is appropriate and attractive. However, as a claim about causes and effects, it is just a working hypothesis, not the final word on the subject.

To their credit, the SALWC project staff did not make the mistake of expecting SALW collection alone to bring security and development. It combined weapons collection with SALW Awareness campaigns, political lobbying, the promotion of measures to control SALW, and small development projects.

The impact of this package lies partly in the hardware involved, that is to say the arms and explosives that were removed, the police computers that were installed, the schools and health centres that were repaired and the roads and water supply systems that were built. These visible and tangible outcomes are very useful in their own right, and also reinforce the message that things are changing for the better in the community as it tackles its security problems.



That message is one of the project's outcomes which affect the way people think and feel. We suspect that these are more fundamental than the hardware aspect. If the project has encouraged and helped the government to tackle Albania's weapons problem more effectively, made the population more aware of the risks of keeping illegal military ordnance, led local communities to work together for a better future, and done this at a reasonable cost, then we are inclined to consider it a success. We feel that the military hardware removed, and the public works put in place, have served to reinforce such a change of attitude. Or as the Albanians put it, such a change of mentality.

Another mistake that the SALWC project avoided was to think — or lead people to believe — that its approach was a strategy for the removal of all illegal SALW from Albanian society. It is not, nor could it be. First, it would be too costly. If the total cost of a UNDP SALW collection programme, albeit combined with development, security sector reforms or other intangible deliverables, stands at about US\$ 400 per weapon collected, and there remain about 200,000 illegal military weapons to remove from Albanian society, then the complete removal of illegally held weapons and explosive ordnance from the population could cost US\$ 80 million. We do not think so much



money can be raised for this purpose. Second, even if money were no issue, the UNDP approach would not be able to disarm the entire population. If they work at all, collective inducements can only lead people to give up arms and explosives they are no longer interested in, either because they have no need for them, or because they do not expect to be able to make any money out of them. As the number of military weapons in Albanian society diminishes, more and more of them, one must assume, are held by people who really think they need the arms for one purpose or another. So there is a limit to the amount of illegal weaponry one can collect by voluntary surrender, using collective or individual inducements. Such inducements must be appropriately targeted based on the results of a comprehensive and accurate SALW Survey.³⁰

Instead, the SALWC project sought to show the way toward an effective small arms policy in Albania, making a last-push effort to collect weapons on a wide scale before the expiry of the 1998 amnesty on 04 August 2002, encouraging and helping the government to put in place a policy to enforce the weapons laws, and demonstrating the social and economic benefits that a community-based SALW intervention can bring. In our opinion, this strategy made sense. Unfortunately, for reasons beyond UNDP's control, it is unlikely to have much of a long-term impact because, as we have seen, the government in Tirana seems to have lost interest in small arms action.

2.2 The developing theory of Weapons in Competition for Development (WCD)

The project document mainly presents the SALWC project as a sequel to previous efforts at Weapons in Exchange for Development (WED), but highlights some aspects that it considers new. These are an emphasis on preventive measures and SALW control, support to government policy-making and regional co-operation. We will touch on these when we come to the objectives of the project.

The SALWC project document, written in the autumn of 2001, fails to mention the project's novel approach to WCD, because the current project manager, Lawrence Doczy, introduced it when he took over in early 2002. That is the competition between communities for collective rewards, which changes the whole approach to community-based weapons collection in exchange for development.

Initial responses to this idea were sceptical. We were among the many who feared that it would cause severe disappointment, perhaps leading to hostility, amongst communities that failed to win development projects. This does not seem to have happened. Neither our interviews in Albania nor any of the written information we found suggests that the losers were seriously disgruntled. *"Of course we were disappointed"*, a teacher from Velipoya in the Shkodra prefecture told us, *"we would have loved to get the assistance we had requested. But we concluded that the project had helped us anyway by removing dangerous arms and explosives from our village. Awareness is a benefit in itself"*, he added (Teachers, Shkodra, 04 September 2003).

As we pointed out earlier, the competition was born of a shortage of resources and time. One would expect it to have made the project more cost-effective. However, as we will see, it is difficult to determine whether this was the case.

2.3 Raising SALW Awareness

2.3.1 Albanians moderately satisfied with public security

From late August to mid-September 2002, Albanian researchers conducted a poll among 569 people in the five prefectures in which the SALWC operated, as well as Gjirokaster and Durres, where the project was not active. This survey unfortunately does not provide any quantitative evidence about changes in objective security (i.e. not being in danger) that might be attributable to the SALWC project. However, it does shed light on perceptions of security amongst Albanians, and perceptions of the SALWC project.

³⁰ RMDs 02.10 defines SALW Survey as: 'a systematic and logical process to determine the nature and extent of SALW proliferation and impact within a region, nation or community in order to provide accurate data and information for a safe, effective and efficient intervention by an appropriate organisation'.



Of the respondents in all seven prefectures, 37 percent considered the security in their rural commune or urban municipality very good or good, while 41 percent found it moderate, and 20 rated it as bad or very bad (Table 21).³¹ Many respondents qualified their score that saying that what they consider acceptable in Albania would not be regarded as acceptable “in a normal state and normal security conditions” (Page 17, Footnote 2).

There were big variations from one region to the next. While 61 percent of the respondents in the Tirana area rated their security as very good or good, with Gjirokaster scoring 49 percent, Shkoder 39 percent and Durres 33 percent, in Lezhe only two respondents (4 percent) gave the security in their prefecture a thumbs-up, and in Kukes only a single person (2 percent) (Table 22).

Similarly, the respondents in Durres, Gjirokaster, Shkoder and Tirana rated the rate of crime in their area lowest, with 81 percent calling it “low” or “very low” in Durres, while in Lezhe only 40 percent considered their local crime rate to be low or very low, and in Kukes only 3 people (8) answered “low”, and no one said “very low.” The share of all respondents in the survey answering “low” or “very low” was 58 percent (Table 25).

When asked with what type of armed crime they or members of their family have been confronted or involved, the only response given, with very few exceptions, was “armed threats” (Table 26).

The researchers gave the respondents a list of social and economic activities and asked them whether these were much, slightly or not affected by the presence of weapons. In all cases, a majority of the respondents said they were much affected. The ones they thought were most affected were relations between families and generations, followed by the feeling of security in the neighbourhood and social cohesion in their village or city (Table 28).

Asked whether they thought the work of the police was efficient, 38 percent of all respondents answered “efficient” or “very efficient.” Here the regional differences are remarkable. In Gjirokaster, Tirana and Durres the score was considerably higher. In Shkoder, the score was a bit lower, which suggests that the people there do not think police efficiency is the main reason for their good security and low crime rate (see above). In Lezhe only 14 percent gave police efficiency a good score. In Kukes, nobody did (Table 30).

Then respondents were asked to identify two main factors leading to a reduction of weapons in their commune or town. There were three clear winners, “police” with 29 percent, closely followed by “family” and “SALWC project.” “Laws” scored only 7 percent (Table 32). In Vlora, Durres and Shkoder, the influence of the police rated higher than in the sample as a whole. In Kukes it rated much lower, and in Gjirokaster lowest of all. The respondents in Kukes rated the influence of the SALWC project much higher than the entire group, and the people in Gjirokaster singled out the family as the most important influence leading to a reduction of weapons in their area (Table 33).

When they were asked whether they or members of their family had weapons, several or none in their home, the vast majority said “none.” Exceptionally, 36 percent of the respondents in Lezhe said they had a single weapon (Table 35). 83 percent of the respondents in the entire group who said they had one or more arms said they had obtained them from relatives, family members or friends (Table 36).

Of those who said they had once had more weapons than they do today, over 68 percent (but only 55 percent in Kukes) said the missing weapons had been taken by the police. Nearly 13 percent said they had surrendered them to the SALWC project. In Gjirokaster, the share of people giving this answer was over twice as high (Table 37). This is interesting, because the project only came to this prefecture later, at the specific request of a local community.³²

“Protecting myself and my family” was by far the reason most frequently mentioned for keeping a weapon. In Kukes, 22 percent said they did not know why they kept a weapon, and in Durres, 22 percent said “it comforts me” (Table 38).

³¹ The figures are rounded to whole numbers here.

³² Personal communication to the evaluators by the Project Manager, 01 September 2003.



Respondents were also asked how many weapons they had voluntarily surrendered since 1997. The data for 2002 is until 04 August 2002, and in that period, the entire group said they handed in many more guns than in any of the preceding years. However, Kukës peaked in 1997-1998, Vlora in 1998-1999 and Gjirokastër in 1999-2000 (Table 40).

They usually handed in the weapons at a police station (56 percent) or to the SALWC project (28 percent) (p. 23). While the project staff tell us they never took delivery of weapons, they add that they were in many cases present when arms were handed over to the police.³³ The two reasons that respondents gave most often for giving up weapons were that they no longer needed them, or “a campaign against arms.” However, in Lezhë and even more so in Kukës, the reason most frequently given was fear of the police. No one mentioned this reason in Gjirokastër and Vlora (Table 42).

“Nobody should have arms” was a statement that 77 percent of the respondents agreed with. In Kukës, the rate was 95 percent. In Lezhë over 30 percent of the respondents said that each family may have a weapon, but overall only 11 percent agreed with this statement. In Kukës, only 5 percent supported it. Less than 1 percent of the entire group thought that everyone might have a weapon (Table 44).

64 percent of the group said that all weapons should be collected. In Lezhë, however, there was stronger support for allowing each family a registered weapon than for collecting all arms (Table 46).

Few respondents were unaware of the expiration of the firearms amnesty on 04 August 2002 (Table 48), and by far most of the respondents had learned about this deadline from television (Table 50). Nearly 60 percent of the entire group were aware of the competition for development projects, but only 50 percent in Lezhë and 32 percent in Durres (Table 51). Opinions about the development projects of the SALWC campaign were overwhelmingly positive (Table 53).

Asked what they thought a society without arms was, 61 percent answered “a quiet society,” 21 percent said a society that offers more possibilities for investments, and 17 said “a condition for association to the European Community.” In Kukës, all respondents but one said “a quiet society” (Table 57).

2.3.2 SALWC’s initiatives at raising SALW Awareness

From the outset, SALWC project staff have placed particular emphasis on raising awareness about (a) the dangers of having arms and ammunition in private hands, and (b) the project’s activities in reducing the number of arms in circulation and the development incentives offered to successful communities in the competition. As discussed before, this element of the project, which is often overlooked by superficial analysis focusing exclusively on the number (and quality) of weapons collected, is in our view the single most important aspect of voluntary SALW collection programmes. The effectiveness of this particular component of a SALW intervention should be measured both qualitatively and quantitatively using SALW survey methodology.

This view is shared by almost all Albanian and international observers interviewed in the context of this study. Across the social spectrum from villager to prefect and police chief, people agreed that SALWC had a major impact it changing the “mentality” of the Albanian population towards firearm ownership and has thereby contributed towards an increase in public safety. For the purpose of this research, it would have been positive if we could contrast those interview results with surveys of people’s attitudes in the project’s target areas (and preferably a similar number polled outside of the project’s target areas) both before the start of collection activities and a few months after the end of those activities.



³³ Sina to evaluators, 05 September 2003.

Unfortunately, the opinion poll cited in the previous section provides only a momentary glimpse on how people felt about the project and small arms at a specific point in time, as a follow-up study will only be commissioned at the end of the current project period. Only when the results of the sequel become available, will it be possible to see with a degree of scientific justification whether there are marked changes in the perception of safety and security, which can at least partially be attributed to the project's work.

In the absence of these results, we had to rely on interviews with project staff, local dignitaries, police officers, teachers, journalists and ordinary people to get an impression on how effective the project was in terms of awareness raising. Almost without exception, the people interviewed claimed that SALWC had made a major impression in this regard.

SALWC staff relied both on the media and on public meetings to spread the message in the target areas. In this context it is important to realise that Albania's private media industry depends on advertising revenue and is focused on the urban areas. This is particularly true for the print media, with most newspapers being published and printed in Tirana. As a result of this urban bias, the periphery is rarely covered and more remote areas tend to rely on local television stations for their news. Despite the surprisingly large number of those stations, which exist in most administrative districts, there are border areas which are not at all reached by Albanian news organizations and even local TV stations face logistic constraints (access to vehicles, fuel) in covering the more remote parts of their broadcasting area.

Furthermore, there is a tendency in the Albanian private media to focus on "scandals, sex and crime", an attitude that was summed up by one interviewed journalist as "good news is no news", which worked against the project. SALWC countered these constraints by employing a strategy that encouraged (free-of-charge) media coverage of collection events by providing transport for journalists to remote sites, as well as paid-programming. In the latter case, the project bought airtime at selected local TV stations to broadcast roundtable discussions on the need for arms collection. The staff of TV Vlora mentioned to us a price of US\$ 100-150 per hour, while the SALWC project staff said the figure was more like US\$ 800-1000.³⁴

In addition to working with media organizations, SALWC successfully enlisted the assistance of local government structures in passing the disarmament message. This process was usually initiated by meetings of the project coordinator, with the local prefect and the head of the regional council, which then passed on the project idea via their respective channels down to the village level. Here, communities interested in participating in the competition would form their own "disarmament working groups", usually consisting of representatives of the local administration, the local "intellectuals" (school teachers, medical doctors) as well as other influential people. Members of the working group would then start to inform the general population about the disarmament competition, using both town hall meetings and door-to-door canvassing to convince citizens to surrender their weapons. School teachers would use the classroom to discuss the illegal possession of firearms with their students, while a pilot programme organized by SALWC targeted women as multipliers. While it is difficult to measure the impact of these steps scientifically, there is little doubt that in the close-knit communities of rural Albania these initiatives carried great weight, a view confirmed time and again by the local citizens interviewed in the collection areas for this report.



³⁴ Interview with TV Vlora staff, 08 September 2003.



2.4 Support small arms policy development

From 1998 to 2003, UNDP was the main supporter of Albania's efforts to remove the tools of war from the population. Its programmes led some people to surrender illegal ordnance, carried out public works in underprivileged regions, made the population more aware of the dangers of keeping military arms and explosives, and encouraged communities to work together for a better future.

These programmes were costly in terms of the weaponry collected, but we suspect that as a whole, the benefits they brought to the population were worth the resources used. In the interviews we conducted for the evaluation of the GPP and the SALWC project, we learned that the local communities highly appreciate this assistance. Mistaking us for representatives of UNDP, a man in Barballush, south of Shkodra, said on 04 September 2003: *"You have removed the devil from our door"*.

As the expiry of the amnesty approached, UNDP could have decided to stop collecting weapons. After all, the government had announced that it would now enforce the provisions of the penal code on the unauthorised possession of SALW. However, it was not clear how strong the government's resolve to do this was. Besides, a lot of dangerous arms and explosives remained in the hands of the Albanian population.

UNDP decided to push the Albanian government to prosecute the illegal possession of SALW and use local amnesties of brief duration to mop up weapons in areas where there was an interest in weapons surrender. We believe this approach made sense. It seemed the necessary and logical next step. After four years of general amnesty, it was important for the government to demonstrate it was serious about enforcing the prohibition on illegal weapons possession. But it could not put all offenders in prison, as UNDP/SALWC pointed out in its letter of 27 June 2002, so there was indeed a need to provide windows of opportunity for the surrender of arms and explosives. This, we would think, addressed the needs of communities concerned about the dangers of illegal ordnance.

The SALWC staff admit that their project at this stage became highly donor-driven, or rather agency-driven (Doczy, 01 September 2003). Some would argue that they went too far in telling the Albanian authorities what to do and how to do it, even drafting laws for consideration by the Albanian parliament. However, we would argue that at this stage, they did so in a good cause, and with sound arguments. We do not believe they handled the subsequent crisis equally well.

Once it became clear that the Albanian government was not going to take UNDP's sensible advice to 'prosecute and mop up', UNDP/SALWC pursued what it saw as the next best solution. It advocated and drafted a general amnesty bill. *"As indicated by government officials, this was the only thing we could get through parliament,"* the project manager Lawrence Doczy told us.

However, we doubt whether the laws, developed in conjunction with UNDP Albania, that the Albanian government adopted in January and March 2003 were a step forward. They proclaimed another two-year amnesty and announced the establishment of a new structure for SALW collection, despite the fact that the government had clearly lost interest in collecting weapons. By early 2003, UNDP and all other parties directly concerned must have suspected this. Subsequent events have confirmed it. Without serious political commitment, the amnesty and the new administrative structure for SALW collection, if it is ever established, will achieve very little.

Worse, the amnesty and the pretence of SALW collection will make it very difficult for the government to consistently apprehend and prosecute illegal possessors of weapons and ammunition, if it should make up its mind to do so in the next two years, or even after the expiry of the current amnesty in the Spring of 2005. Eight years will then have passed since the theft of half a million military weapons, and the people still holding stolen government SALW will have come to regard their impunity as normal and legitimate. The fact that the government is allowing this to happen strongly suggests it has no intention of seriously fighting the illegal possession of firearms at any time in the foreseeable future. Arms traffickers must have noted this with great satisfaction.

Why did UNDP advocate these unhelpful measures? And what other course of action could it have taken?

When it became clear in early 2003 that the political support for voluntary SALW collection had vanished, we believe it would have been better for UNDP to stop pursuing the issue. The Swedish and Dutch governments and other potential donors had clearly conveyed this message to UNDP a few months earlier, when they rejected a UNDP request to fund a new SALW collection project. Instead, we believe that at that stage UNDP should have focused on a different way of furthering human security in Albania, like security sector reform. Indeed, to their credit, that is exactly what happened a few months later.

So why did UNDP first push through a package of laws that made things worse, rather than better? The only credible explanation we can think of is that they were trying against better knowledge to keep an effort alive that had been important to them and useful to Albania, but was now in terminal decline due to the evaporation of political will. At some stage, they must have realised that this attempt would fail, but they only decided to phase it out when they had developed a new security-related project, focusing on something other than SALW collection. This may have served the interests of the organisation and the project staff, but we doubt whether it was in the best interest of Albania.

2.5 Promote collection and control of small arms

2.5.1 The use of incentives

The SALWC project staff believe that “the only tangible motivation to the population to surrender weapons is the availability of (the) development projects”³⁶ that the project offers. It is true that no other tangible incentives are on offer. However, that should not be taken to mean that Albanians only give up arms and ammunition when UNDP offers them development projects.

There are other reasons that we believe are more fundamental;

- a) they do not think they need the ordnance;
- b) they do not think they can make money out of it;
- c) they realise the dangers of keeping it; and
- d) family members, friends, neighbours and persons of authority encourage them to give up the weapons and explosives, and they see other people doing so.

No poor farmer is going to give up a gun that he believes he needs for the protection of his family, or that he expects will fetch him US\$ 250, just because UNDP is offering to build a school for his village. He could not afford to do so. The UNDP approach can only attract items that people are nearly ready to give up anyway.

We find support for this notion in the respectable amounts of ammunition and explosives that people handed in during the SALWC project, even though they had been told that these would not be counted in the competition for development projects.³⁷

Finally, throughout the amnesty that was in place between 1998 and 2002, people voluntarily handed in arms and explosives to the police without expecting or receiving any kind of reward or compensation.

Of course, the SALWC project and its predecessors promoted some of the factors we just described, especially by their SALW Awareness and information campaigns at the local, regional and national level.

³⁶ SALWC Monthly Report 4, July 2002, Page 7.

³⁷ Actually, they were counted when there was a tie, as the weapons expert of the project told us (Sina, 5/9/03).



And of course offering rewards to communities that showed a willingness to disarm was an important inducement. Not only did it provide a tangible and desirable reward for compliance with the call to give up illegal ordnance, it also underscored the basic message that good things begin to happen when you improve public security.

It must have also had some unfavourable side effects, though we were not able to verify them. Any kind of reward for giving up some objectionable action is a prize for bad behaviour. It conveys an unfortunate message to the recipient, and to others who did not break the law and therefore did not qualify for a reward. For this reason, it can encourage bad behaviour and cause resentment among law-abiding citizens. These undesirable side-effects are reduced if the rewards are collective, which was the case in all three UNDP small arms projects in Albania, and if they are modest, which applies more to the SALWC project than to its predecessors.

By offering costly development projects to communities that surrendered some weaponry, the GPP and WED projects probably led some people in other communities to hold on to their illegal ordnance. Rather than hand it in to the police and receive nothing in return, these people, one supposes, waited for some donor to come and offer them a handsome reward for it. We imagine that in the case of the SALWC project, this negative effect was smaller. Although it offered development projects as a reward for SALW collection from Kukes in the northeast to Vlora in the southwest, these prizes were smaller, and communities had to compete for them.

2.5.2 The competition in practice

Let us now see how the offer of development projects as prizes in a SALW collection competition worked in practice. The use of a competition appealed to the project's national weapons advisor, Shkelqim Sina³⁸, who felt that the projects in Gramsh and Elbasan-Dibra had not required a serious commitment to weapons collection from the local population. He recounted an episode in a Dibra village that had not voluntarily surrendered anything at all, but was nonetheless rewarded by the construction of a road. The weapons counted there had in fact been confiscated by the police.

Mr Sina's conclusion from such experiences is that you need to set communities a clear condition and make sure they fulfil it before providing a reward. However, he is not in favour of bargaining about such rewards. It is for this reason that he believes in the competitive approach adopted by the SALWC project. In his opinion, a large part of the public still does not realise how dangerous it is to keep military ordnance in or near one's house. These people will not surrender their illegal possessions without some incentive, either the desire for a reward or the fear of punishment, he says.

The competitive approach made it possible for the project to demand a weapons collection effort with tangible results from the participating communities without setting an absolute target, like the 10,000 weapons that the GPP had hoped to collect. Such targets are very difficult to set appropriately, as the extent of illegal weapons possession is hard to assess.

The project made it very easy for communities to compete. They were asked to report their interest, but even if they did not, they were considered participants if they started handing in weapons to the police. They could compete at the level of the village or quarter, or that of the commune or municipality. They generally did so at the lower level.

It is clear from our conversations with all people concerned, even though it is not spelled out in the project document, that the main operational objective (though not the ultimate aim) of the project was to recover as many weapons as possible from the population. So the formula that would determine the winning communities was based on the number of weapons collected. Ammunition and explosives were only taken into account if there was a tie in the number of firearms surrendered. However, the project did not want to put small communities (like rural villages), at an undue disadvantage, so the number of weapons collected was weighted by a factor equal to the number of weapons collected per family in the community concerned:

³⁸ Interview: 05 September 2003.

**Number of weapons collected x Number of weapons collected
Number of families**

According to this formula, it was still easier for large communities to win, but their advantage was reduced (Sina, 05 September 2003).

The project staff claims that this formula was made clear from an early stage in the project. However, during the interviews we conducted, we found that many stakeholders were unaware of this formula. Representatives of local communities complained that the standards for weapons collection set by the project were too high (Bushtrica, 03 September 2003), while in reality, there probably were no formal targets for small projects for small projects, though project staff sometimes urged communities to make a bigger effort (*“if you give us two weapons, and your neighbours give us only one, don’t expect us to reward you for that”*). One project document we saw suggested that there was a threshold for the awarding of larger projects.

Here is another example of the uncertainty about the terms of the competition. A Kukes journalist closely involved in the programme complained that they had favoured larger communities by using the absolute number of arms collected as the decisive criterion (Perzhita, 02 September 2003). The regional coordinator for Kukes, trying to set her straight, said that the competition was actually based on the number of arms collected per family. If their words were interpreted to us correctly, then both speakers were wrong. It was the project’s weapons expert who gave us the ‘correct’ formula. Our analysis of the project’s weapons collection statistics confirm that the development projects were awarded³⁹ according to the formula reproduced above.

This confusion makes us doubt whether the competitors were fully aware of the terms on which they were competing. It also raises the question whether the formula was consistently applied at all stages and sites of the project. We cannot tell, but the definitive allocation of development projects is largely consistent with it.

The project was and is generous in what it is prepared to consider a weapon. It accepts hunting weapons and other civilian firearms, air guns, signal guns, broken guns, as well as heavily corroded and incomplete weapons, and in one case even accepted spare barrels for anti-aircraft guns, counting each as a weapon.

The national weapons advisor, Shkelqim Sina, told us he now regrets that the project had not decided to put much greater emphasis on the most dangerous types of ordnance, such as hand-grenades and other explosives. Previously, the project manager, Lawrence Doczy, had told us that he would have liked to do that, but the short time in which the project had to be launched had made it impossible to develop a satisfactory method for counting guns, bullets, grenades and other items of ordnance.

We believe this is an important lesson for future programmes. What you are ultimately trying to achieve must determine the kinds of items you focus on in the collection programme. If you are mostly concerned about political violence, such as terrorism, you may want to focus on automatic weapons, hand-grenades, mobile anti-aircraft missile launchers (MANPADs) and plastic explosives, all in good working order, of course.

If you want to combat gun crime, you may want to focus on pistols and their ammunition, but only functioning items. It is striking how few pistols are surrendered in most weapons collection programmes, including the SALWC project.

If your principal concern is avoiding accidents with military ordnance, you would choose the focus recommended by Sina, namely all kinds of explosives, and you would particularly hope to recover those that are unstable, or about to become so. You might also highlight automatic weapons.

³⁹ A few deviations from this rule, which may have been justified, are discussed in 2.6.



If you mainly want to recover stolen government property, then that would be the focus of your collection effort.

If you especially want to reduce the use of firearms in domestic quarrels, you would probably focus on the smaller types of arms and ammunition.

The focus chosen by the SALWC project only makes sense if you are not particularly interested in what you collect. If your main objective is to keep the idea, effort and machinery of weapons collection alive, despite adverse conditions, you will make things very easy for the competitors and count only weapons. In the SALWC project, this meant any kind of gun, even if it could never be fired again. Unfortunately, SALWC did not keep any statistics on the condition of the collected arms, however some people interviewed in Vlora and Tirana for this report estimated that up to one third of the weapons were either damaged or heavily corroded. If we add to these blank-firing guns, weapons components that were counted as arms and relatively harmless museum pieces and hunting guns, then we begin to suspect that up to half of the crop of weapons counted in the SALWC competition was largely irrelevant to public and domestic security.

The same holds for many other weapons collections around the world, whose impact lies mainly in their symbolism, their propaganda and their political lobbying. In our view, there is nothing illegitimate about this, as long as donors, the host country government and the public are aware of the main thrust of the project. We believe the SALWC project was fairly transparent in this respect, more than many other SALW collection projects. It never pretended it would disarm the whole population.

Another issue about weapons collection is the inclusion in the project's weapons collection statistics of 191 weapons (about 3 per cent of the total) confiscated by the police in the prefectures of operation during the period of SALWC weapons collection. It is not correct to suggest that these were voluntarily surrendered due to the encouragement of the project.

However, it is worth noting that the SALWC collected significant amounts of dangerous items that did not count towards the competition. People surrendered them even though they were not rewarded for doing so. In all, they gave up 1.2 million bullets and about 49,000 items of explosive ordnance in the five prefectures of operation during the months of weapons collection by the SALWC project, that is to say 194 bullets and eight items of explosive ordnance for each weapon they surrendered. This is a clear indication of a widely felt wish to get rid of these items, especially in the north, which provided the lion's share of the surrendered ammunition and explosives. The project collected nearly 6,500 weapons during its first phase of weapons collection, from April to early August 2002.

We also need to point out that in the seven prefectures that did not participate the SALWC project, similar amounts of weapons, ammunition and explosives were collected by the police. Here no rewards were offered. What does this say about the success of the project under review? It could be taken to mean that the project made very little difference, but that is probably not the correct interpretation. After all, the nation-wide publicity on the project, the messages of its SALW Awareness and information campaign, and the police effort galvanized by the project also affected areas in which the project was not operating. So it is probably fair to attribute some of the collection results in other parts of the country to the efforts of the SALWC project, although it is impossible to say how much. We find support for this interpretation in the fact that before and after the period of January-August 2002, weapons collection was much less successful throughout Albania than in those months.

As SALW collection progressed, it became much more effective. In July and the first week of August, the project collected 31 per cent more weapons, 214 per cent more explosives and 4 per cent fewer bullets than in the three previous months put together. This clearly indicates the cumulative effect of the SALW Awareness campaign and the expectation that after 04 August 2002, anyone holding illegal ordnance would be arrested and prosecuted. This threat was not carried out, but it boosted the result of weapons collection in the days and weeks before the deadline.

2.5.3 Selection of the areas of operation

The five prefectures in which the project was to operate were selected in the following way, described to us by the national weapons expert of the project⁴⁰. The SALWC project asked the Albanian government for a list of 'hotspots' (meaning places where they thought a lot of weapons could be recovered, not particularly dangerous places). Only the Ministry of Public Order (MOPO) responded. Repeated requests to other ministries elicited no response. So the project convened experts from the ministries concerned, who asked in how many prefectures the project could work. Off the cuff, UNDP/SALWC said six. So the representative of the MOPO came up with a list of six prefectures that served as a basis for the selection. The project assessed the situation in the various prefectures, taking into account the security situation (the most dangerous sites were avoided) and how much support could be expected from the local authorities, civil society, and international organizations like the OSCE.

The project did not use the criteria formulated in the 2000 evaluation report of the Gramsh Pilot Project, which suggested that the voluntary collection of weapons using community-based development projects as an incentive is most likely to work under three conditions. First, the people holding the ordnance do not think they need it. Second, they do not think they can make a lot of money by selling it. Third, people know each other well and will apply pressure on each other to discourage members of the community who might not co-operate, but nonetheless benefit from the collective reward. Today, we would add a fourth condition, namely that there is a perception of community shared ownership of the weapons.

The project approved five of the six prefectures suggested by the MoPO representative. It rejected the prefecture of Korca because according to government figures, 75 percent or more of the weapons looted in that area had already been recovered and the local police had on several occasions said there was nothing to collect. Indeed, they claimed they had imported weapons from other prefectures to fulfil the SALW collection quota set by the MoPO in the period before 04 August 2002. During the meeting, they suddenly realised there were development projects to be won and claimed they would find a way to collect weapons. All this led the project to believe, probably correctly, that it would not be a good idea to include the prefecture of Korca in the SALWC.

2.5.4 Types of weapons collected

Hardly any pistols were surrendered in the UNDP SALW collection programmes. The reason may be that pistols are most useful for self-protection and crime. They are also easier to hide, transport and traffic than other weapons. Perhaps the possessors also consider them less dangerous than other weapons, which is not necessarily true. If children get hold of a pistol, they are more likely to hurt someone than if they lay their hands on a mortar.

Not surprisingly, a lot of old, rusty broken and otherwise useless rifles are surrendered in weapons collection programmes. These are neither useful nor do they fetch good prices. They may include the occasional collector's item, but it is unlikely that the person holding it would recognise its value. In the SALWC project, it was particularly attractive to hand in broken and otherwise useless weapons, because they were counted in the competition, while a box of hand-grenades in perfect working order was not.

Finally, large quantities of ammunition, often unstable because of its age and poor storage conditions, hand-grenades, mortar grenades, rocket-propelled grenades and other dangerous items were handed in. Except in warfare, this kind of ordnance is useless. It is also extremely dangerous and therefore difficult to move and sell. In the SALWC project, neither ammunition nor explosives were counted in the competition for development projects, although the project staff told us they were taken into account when communities surrendered the same number of weapons. But as we have seen, many people were nevertheless happy to surrender them because they wanted to be rid of them.



⁴⁰ Interview: Sina, 05 September 2003.



2.5.5 The role of the police in weapons collection

The SALWC project states that at no stage should project staff get directly involved in the handling of weapons, ammunition and explosives.⁴¹



The local police, working closely with the regional coordinators of the project and the local working groups, were asked to come and take delivery of surrendered ordnance on a certain day, usually in the morning. The people handing in the ordnance would typically take the items to the road or village square. There the police would record the amount, type and serial number of the items surrendered, as well as the name of the person handing them in, if the person gave permission for this. They also asked the person if he or she had any other items belonging to the government. However, they did not ask persons surrendering SALW to affirm in writing that they did not possess any more illegal SALW.

This question was asked when the police went from door to door, asking people if they had illegal weapons and ammunition. Sina told us he was concerned that some policemen may have avoided the trouble of recording, handling and transporting surrendered SALW, preferring instead to collect signed no-possession forms. He did not tell us whether he had seen or heard any evidence that it happened.

The surrendered weapons were typically picked up by police vehicles in the early afternoon and transported to the military, which directs or takes them to designated storage sites.

The collection, recording, removal and storage of surrendered ordnance by the police was not independently monitored, Sina told us. The project relied on the police to do the job professionally and honestly. Referring to rumours of fraud that we had heard, we asked him whether it would have been possible for dishonest policemen and other local authorities to move collected weapons from one commune to the next and have them counted more than once in the competition. He said that was possible, but it would have been difficult to do and easy for others to detect. He did not believe it had happened. The records were meticulous and transparent to all stakeholders, he said. We have no evidence that suggests otherwise. Sina also lamented the decline of professionalism and standards among the policemen dealing with SALW collection since 04 August 2002, when the weapons collection structure was disbanded, a view shared by other project staff.⁴²

We find it regrettable that there was no independent monitoring of police activities in SALW collection and military activities in SALW destruction or disposal. While we have no knowledge or evidence of any irregularities, there were various risks, such as:

- a) unsafe and insecure handling, storing and transport;
- b) irregularities in counting, such as accepting items as weapons that did not meet the definition, counting weapons more than once, or not counting them at all;
- c) the illegal diversion of weapons by policemen, as well as;
- d) the use of undue pressure to get people to surrender weapons.

⁴¹ This seems at odds with statements by respondents in the CRS Impact Assessment study that they had handed in ordnance to the SALWC project. However, we know that in many cases, people insisted on SALWC staff being present when they surrendered their ordnance, and the project staff made an effort to fulfil this wish. Perhaps that is the meaning of what is called surrendering items to the SALWC project.

⁴² Interviews in Vlora, 08 September 2003.



Perhaps none of this actually happened, but we cannot be sure, and neither can UNDP or indeed any independent authority. This could probably have been avoided by requesting OSCE field posts to monitor SALW collection operations. UNDP could also have monitored the SALW collection itself and recorded the results. Such monitoring would have discouraged irregularities, produced more reliable statistics and enhanced public confidence. Indeed, monitoring is regarded as a fundamental component of SALW interventions, and is specifically covered in the new regional Micro-Disarmament Standards (RMDS).⁴³

Due to the lack of independent monitoring, the SALWC project, its donors and its evaluators only have a vague idea of the kinds of weapons and explosives that were handed in, and in what condition. Precise and comprehensive information was not provided to UNDP by the police or the military. Nor, as far as we know, has it been requested. The basic micro-disarmament principles of transparency and control were not fully implemented.

2.5.6 Transfer of collected SALW and explosive ordnance to the military

The collected SALW are handed over to the armed forces, who then decide what to do with it. At the Ministry of Defence (MOD), the serial numbers of the weapons are registered. Major Sokrat Papadima of the MOD told us he has a full notebook with all the numbers, which were reported to the National Weapons Collection Commission until it was disbanded in August 2002. There were inaccuracies, he admitted, but fewer than in the past.⁴⁴

It is not clear what policy, if any, determines the disposition of the surrendered ordnance. Major Papadima says the government has made contradictory statements and signed contradictory agreements on keeping, selling or destroying the items. From what we know, we can confirm this. There is no doubt in Major Papadima's mind that unstable ammunition and explosives must be destroyed as soon as possible, but this is difficult because the process is slow and expensive. Besides, he added, there is no clear policy by which to determine what is surplus to requirements. He stressed the turbulence caused by the current process of reorganization under US leadership that is going in the Albanian military. Similar reforms are underway at the Ministry of Public Order.

We have the impression that the Ministry of Defence approaches the issue in an ad-hoc fashion, perhaps guided by the desire to make as much money as possible out of surplus equipment that is still usable before a transparent system of stockpile management is introduced. *"Maintaining the weapons is very expensive and if we cannot sell them off, we shall scrap them"*, Army Chief of Staff General Pellum Qazimi told the BBC.⁴⁶

Thus the de facto policy appears to be to try and sell whatever the armed forces do not need, and destroy the surplus stocks, including SALW, that do not find a buyer. For this purpose, the government uses a private but state-controlled company established in 1992 and called MEICO. MEICO is in charge of the import and export of military equipment for the Albanian government. It can sell export items as functioning products or scrap. Its instructions are to observe UN arms embargoes. The list of relevant 'forbidden' destinations is provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Otherwise it is free to export as it sees fit and is not required to obtain an export license for each international transaction. Instead, it has a general license for arms exports. A committee establishes the minimum price for the sale of surplus government equipment, and MEICO is allowed to keep 10 percent of the proceeds from sales. The rest goes to the government. Major Papadima told us that 150,000 SALW had been handed over to MEICO, as well as 3,000 artillery pieces, but he did not specify when. Scrapped weapons were also sold to a Greek company (Papadima, 1/9/03). The MEICO website can be found at www.mod.gov.al/eng/industria/meico.



Destroying surplus weapons is not popular in Albania. Police Colonel Todi Grazhdani, the former head of the

⁴³ www.seesac.org

⁴⁴ Interview, 01 September 2003.

⁴⁵ BBC News, 17 April 2002, 16:33 GMT, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/1935630.stm>.

⁴⁶ BBC News, 17 April 2002, 16:33 GMT, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/1935630.stm>.



weapons collection structure of the MOPO, now unemployed, told us that it is the easiest solution, and necessary for dangerous items. Yet most Albanians are against the destruction of national property that could bring money into the country. So now that the foreign demand to destroy arms has been removed, destruction has declined sharply. The Colonel was very appreciative about the project and the role played by Lawrence Doczy. *“We have had some disagreements, but he is the right person to get us on the right track, even under the most difficult conditions”.*

In Sina’s opinion, the government will not willingly destroy anything that it believes can be put to good use or sold for good money. It only does this under international pressure. Even garbage is not quickly destroyed. Sina is in favour of doing this but does not object to arms exports that are permitted by national and international law.

Areas that neither UNDP Albania nor the Albanian Government have not addressed in any detail are 1) the lack of any significant legitimate international market for the weapons and ammunition; and 2) the financial costs of long-term storage. The variable quality of Albanian weapons and ammunition makes it very unlikely that an ‘acceptable’ end user, (in accordance with the EU Code of Conduct, OSCE Guidelines and UN sanctions), can be found for the surplus stocks. The lack of sophistication in the financial systems within the Albanian Ministry of Defence means that they can not identify what the real costs⁴⁷ of storage are.

⁴⁷ Actual storage costs are determined by a wide range of factors, including manpower, capital depreciation of stocks, capital depreciation of infrastructure, maintenance of infrastructure, staff costs, security costs, internal transport etc.

3 Costs and benefits of the SALWC programme

3.1 Cost effectiveness of SALW collection

Table 1: Cost of UNDP SALW Collection Programmes in Albania in US\$

	GPP 1998-2000	WED 2000-2001	SALWC 2002-2004	TOTAL/ AVERAGE	SALWC 2002
COSTS (US\$)osts					
PERSONNEL	146,880	698,122	773,587	1,618,589	355,033
DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS	812,160	1,777,285	1,500,000	4,089,445	1,000,000
OPERATING EXPENSES	276,778	700,863	1,159,102	2,136,743	561,841
TOTAL	1,235,818	3,176,270	3,432,689	7,844,777	1,916,874
DURATION					
MONTHS OF SALW COLLECTION	7	20	6	34	4
OUTCOMES					
QUANTITY OF SALW RECOVERED	5,981	5,700	8,500	20,181	6,453
RATIOS					
DEVELOPMENT PROJECT COST PER WEAPON (\$)	136	312	176	203	155
TOTAL PROJECT COST PER WEAPON (\$)	207	557	404	389	297
AVERAGE SALW COLLECTED PER MONTH	854	285	1417	594	1,613

Source of data: UNDP Albania

Note: GPP = Gramsh Pilot Project; WED = Weapons in Exchange for Development Project; SALWC = Small Arms and Light Weapons Control Project

Note: As of September 2003, the weapons collection as part of SALW is not complete – 8,500 weapons is an estimate.

Note: The final, shaded column was supplied by the SALWC project staff, who believe it provides a better basis for comparison with previous programmes. It covers expenses incurred for components related to weapons collection from 1 February 2002 to 31 April 2003. Weapons collection activities of the SALWC project came to a standstill on 4 August 2002, while according to plan, they should have continued. The resulting implementation of the development projects awarded was completed by the end of April 2003. If the intention had been to stop weapons collection in August 2002, the remaining staff would have been reduced, and programme cost would have been lower. The figures in row A of the final column have been reduced to reflect this. Besides, the costs related to the procurement of new cars and metal detectors, and half of the cost of car operations, office stationery, cost of PAI materials, mission costs, duty travel and everything that is not related to weapons collection and development projects, have been left out.

Our table on the cost of UNDP SALW programmes in Albania gives us some insights into their cost, and their outcomes in terms of weapons collection. There are several caveats to consider before making inferences from this table.

All three programmes covered by the table were hybrid projects that aimed to do more than just recover weapons from the population. So it is not appropriate to measure their effectiveness only in terms of weapons collected. In the SALWC project, the components not directly related to SALW collection were larger than in the GPP and WED.

Besides, all three projects engaged in SALW collection for only part of their entire duration. In the case of the SALWC project, this was only six months if we look at the entire project, and only four if we look at 2002, when the bulk of the weapons were collected.



Furthermore, there are big and important differences between the scale of the three projects. The GPP operated in one district of a single prefecture, the WED project in two districts and the SALWC in five prefectures (15 districts), with a minor intervention in a sixth. Working in a larger area naturally makes a project more complex and costly.

Finally, the projects operated in different political and social conditions. The GPP took place in the aftermath of the 1997 riots, with an abundance of weapons and unprepared authorities. The WED operated at a time when the authorities had a structure with some training and experience in weapons collection. It also benefited from the lessons of the pioneer project. The SALWC project had two projects to learn from, and initially a good government structure to co-operate with. But in early August 2002, it was confronted with the complete breakdown of SALW collection activities on the part of the government, which brought UNDP's operations in SALW collection to a complete standstill. As a result, project funds and other resources put in place for these operations were wasted. Cost-effectiveness in terms of programme cost per weapon collected suffered. In our opinion, the responsibility for these problems lies with the Albanian government, not with UNDP, which tried hard to prevent them.⁴⁸

Bearing all this in mind, we make the following comments:

Programmes that pursue various objectives are more complex and costly than single-purpose projects. International experience suggests that a straightforward project to buy back illegal SALW from the Albanian population may have achieved the same crop as the SALWC project or its predecessors at lower cost, or a larger crop at the same cost.

In other words, a specific weapons buy-back programme would probably have been more cost-effective in terms of the number of weapons collected. This is not to say that it would have been better for security and development in Albania. Consider its negative effects. It would have personally and directly rewarded individuals who had broken the law and provided them with cash they could use for illegitimate purposes, like buying other weapons. Also consider the benefits it would have failed to produce: It would not have encouraged and helped underprivileged local communities to deal with problems and opportunities in a co-operative way. Nor would it have improved their development prospects by providing them with much-needed public works. In our opinion, wherever the Weapons in Exchange for Development approach is viable, it is preferable to a weapons buy-back.

Operating in an area that stretches from the northern to the southern border of the country and carrying out 42 development projects is much more complex and costly than working in a single district and carrying out 10 projects. So one would expect the SALWC project to cost much more than the GPP. Indeed it was more expensive, but the total cost of the development projects it actually carried out, as opposed to what the ones it had budgeted for, was only 25 per cent higher than the cost of the public works carried out by the GPP.

In view of the fact that the SALWC project made communities compete for development projects, rather than giving each participating community a prize, one would expect the cost of the development projects per weapon collected to be lower in the SALWC project than in the GPP, but it was not. Probably the money saved by the competitive approach was consumed by the additional cost of carrying out many small projects around the country instead of a few larger ones in a small area.

Considering the challenges that the SALWC took on, the results it obtained in a short period, and the crop it collected, we think that in terms of SALW collection it was more successful than the GPP and much more successful than the WED project. As we have argued, we cannot meaningfully compare the cost-effectiveness of hybrid programmes like GPP, WED and SALWC with that of straightforward SALW collection programmes, because their objectives, outcomes and impacts are so different.

⁴⁸ Seeking to filter out the effects of this breakdown, the SALWC project staff drew up figures on the cost of its activities related to weapons collection in 2002 (see the final, shaded column in our table).



3.2 The development impact of the SALWC project

For the current project phase (2002-2004) SALWC has a total budget of US\$ 1,500,000 available for collective rewards, two thirds of which were spent on projects awarded based on the competitions immediately before the end of the amnesty period in Spring - Summer 2002. In administering those funds, the project has to face a number of challenges: (a) covering a much larger area than previous programmes, individual rewards would be significantly smaller, (b) starting just a few months before the end of the amnesty period, the time for the planning and implementation was extremely short. In addition, Lawrence Doczy has argued that the international community in Albania faces a credibility problem in terms of delivering assistance, particularly as many Albanians still bitterly recall the unfulfilled promises of aid during the Kosovo refugee crisis in 1998-1999. Several Albanians interviewed in the context of



this report seconded this view. In order to address this issue, SALWC decided to start the implementation of the development projects as early as possible in the process. The ‘winning’ localities should see the fruits of their collection efforts quickly, and in fact in several cases ground was broken weeks after the end of the first collection phase, which had the added benefit of transmitting (with the assistance of the local media and by word of mouth) to other competing localities the message that “SALWC is for real”.

The ideas for the respective development projects came from local communities themselves. While SALWC presented the ground rules for the competition and defined the range of rewards possible in the context of this project, the local administration, ideally after consultation with the citizens of the municipality, had to come up with a detailed blueprint for the project. Given the necessity for quick action, most localities chose to put forward existing project proposals, that had already been filed with the Albanian authorities in the past, but not been implemented for lack of funding. The regional SALWC coordinator, usually a civil engineer by training, would then be in charge of assisting the localities in fine-tuning the project proposal, selecting contractors and overseeing the implementation of the project. Particularly in the months leading up to the 04 August 2002 deadline, this put an enormous strain on the coordinators, who had to deal both with the implementation of the first development projects and with overseeing the SALW collection efforts, which were then in their most hectic phase. It attests to the professionalism and dedication of these people, who basically worked on their own in the project’s field offices, that both SALW collection and the implementation of the development projects went smoothly. Both local officials and citizens interviewed for this project were full of praise for the work done by the regional coordinators, some of whom first had to overcome local resistance towards the appointment of an outsider for that role.

We analysed the SALW collection statistics of the SALWC project in the five prefectures of operation and compared this with the list of development projects appended to the second quarterly report of the SSSR project (Annex 3). The results are discussed in the annexes to this report. This analysis clearly suggests that in general the development projects were awarded according to the terms of the competition as explained to us by the project staff and described above. In several cases, instead of awarding the project to the winning village or quarter, the project awarded it to the higher administrative unit, that is to say the commune or municipality. We cannot tell if in those cases the winning community benefited appropriately.



When measuring the impact of WED or WCD programmes, it has been argued by proponents of this approach that the projects awarded as collective rewards in the target areas made a contribution to human security beyond the primary goal of disarmament by providing development incentives. This contrasts sharply with weapon buy-back programmes, where the individual reward goes to the weapon holder and therefore provides no sustainable stimulus to economic or social development. When measuring the cost of a WED or WCD programme versus the cost of a buy-back programme, this needs to be taken into account. However, not everybody is convinced that the projects awarded in the context of SALWC really live up to this promise. Among the critics of this aspect of the programme was the Netherlands' Ambassador Johan Blankenberg, who argued that *"no one would have embarked on such small, hit-and-run efforts without an overall development strategy to back them up, if there had not been the overriding goal of getting people to give up illegal weaponry. So I claim, the development projects were primarily a price paid to obtain illegal weaponry, and I therefore regard them primarily as costs"*.⁴⁹

As this evaluation was mostly concerned about the arms collection aspect of SALWC, we are not able to measure the objective impact of the development projects awarded by the programme. In development circles the discussion of best practices, as mentioned by the Netherlands' Ambassador, has long shifted away from advocating 'micro projects' such as the ones used by SALWC and towards promoting longer-term strategic development objectives, a trend very visible not least with UNDP's other development programmes in Albania and elsewhere. Therefore his claim that the projects should be seen as 'costs' rather than as an additional benefit has some credibility, when one takes a macro-economic approach. However, this must not distract from the fact that the project did have a major impact in the affected localities.

With public infrastructure crumbling after the end of socialism and the devastation of the 1997 riots, many Albanian municipalities have long been waiting for assistance from Tirana or elsewhere to rehabilitate their roads, schools, water-supply systems and health posts. The national government, itself constrained by lack of available funds and widespread corruption, has so far done comparatively little to address this issue. Furthermore, international assistance tends to focus on Tirana and the capital region, fostering a feeling of neglect at the periphery. Therefore, while the small grants (US\$ 20,000 – 50,000) offered by UNDP SALWC to the 'winners' may have been of very limited value in terms of national (or even regional) development, they did form a powerful incentive for many isolated villages and towns.

Most of them also directly and visibly benefited the local population – for example, in Bushtritsa commune SALWC founded a water supply system that piped water for domestic use some 1,500 meters higher into the village of Matrazh. This alleviated the need of people having to spend considerable amounts of time fetching the water on their backs and also improved the quality of the water available for washing, cooking and drinking. Clearly, people were highly appreciative and had shown their commitment to the project by contributing both labour and (modest amounts of) money, in addition to their successful participation in the SALW collection campaign, (Bushtritsa Commune Council, 03 September 2003).



In other cases, the development impact is less obvious to the outsider, for example in Kote municipality, the central square as well as the few hundred metres of road were rehabilitated at a cost of US\$ 50,000. While the town serves as a gateway and regional market for other communities, the direct development impact of having a few hundred metres of road sealed, which deteriorate into dirt and mud at the boundaries of the central settlement, is difficult to measure objectively. However, it is obvious from the interviews with local dignitaries and citizens that (a) the rehabilitation of the square was a major concern for the local population and (b) the swift and effective implementation of the project by SALWC has helped to instil a feeling of optimism in economic and social development, with people taking pride in the rehabilitated town centre. Therefore, the limited direct development impact of some projects is more than offset by the subjective feeling of "progress" among the citizens, (Kote Commune Council, 09 September 2003).

⁴⁹ Interview 05 September 2003.



This view is confirmed by interviews in other localities – the SALWC initiative has played an important role in galvanizing communities to act united both in terms of SALW collection and development planning. In some instances this has even brought community leaders representing Albania's two major parties together. While normally both parties are openly hostile towards each other, in the Tropoja region representatives of both parties approached SALWC together and were working together to make the project a success, (Kallabaku, 02 September 2003). The gratitude of the local population was very visible in all communities visited in the context of our research, and often found expression in spontaneous gestures of gratitude.

Another indirect benefit of collective incentives of the type offered by SALWC, particularly when compared with individual rewards offered in weapons buy-back programmes, is the fact that local dignitaries are much more likely to embrace such a programme as it helps them to improve their own standing within their community. They foster a mutually beneficial relationship with the SALWC team, as the latter needs to rely on local structures to implement the collection programme, while the former indirectly boost their own standing in their communities by helping to bring much needed development aid.

3.3 SALWC's impact on public safety and security

SALW collection programmes are not primarily motivated by the desire to collect as many weapons as possible and even less so by the need to implement development projects on the local level. SALW collection programmes aim to reduce firearms related accidents as well as violence and crime linked to weapons possession. In doing so, such collection programmes can contribute towards the improvement of public safety and security.

Unfortunately, this most important aspect of any collection programme is also the one where success is most difficult to measure. In this context, it is very important to point towards the difference between subjective ("whether people *feel* safe") and objective ("whether people *are* safe") security. In many cases there is a gap between the objective threat (by crime, violence etc.) level and the perception of it by the local population. Any thorough analysis of a weapons collection programme should therefore seek to analyze both the subjective and objective impact of the programme.

Ideally, this could be done by comparing objective indicators (crime statistics, hospital data etc.) and subjective indicators (media reports, opinion polls) both before, at various stages during and after the implementation of the programme. Unfortunately, this has proven very difficult for this evaluation, as there are very few available statistics on (firearms related) crime for SALWC's operation area and even less secondary (for example medical) data which could measure the impact of the programme in objective terms. As far as the perception of public safety and security by the general population is concerned, the study commissioned by SALWC and quoted in Section 2.3.1 of this report provides some valuable insights. However, as the study was undertaken while the project was already up and running, it offers only a snapshot of the situation at one point in time. In order to measure the impact with a greater degree of accuracy, one would have needed further studies in the same areas before and after the collection programme took place⁵⁰. Furthermore, it would have been advisable to have a larger 'control group' of respondents polled outside of the project areas, in order to identify whether an improvement of subjective security is indeed the result of the project, or rather the result of other factors.

However, under the prevailing conditions in Albania, it is very difficult to assess the cause-effect relationship between the SALWC programme and improvements in public safety and security. In the absence of reliable data we are forced to rely on interviews with local officials and international observers to get a picture of the situation. Most people interviewed for this study claimed that the situation in Albania was much improved in terms of crime and security. This view was also shared by organizations such as the OSCE and by embassy staff. After the turmoil of 1997 and the cross-border impact of ethnic violence in Kosovo and parts of Macedonia, politically motivated violence has largely disappeared. The reform attempts of international organizations working with the Albanian security apparatus finally seem to be bearing some fruit, while improved regional cooperation has done a lot in curbing organized crime and trafficking, particularly on the Adriatic Sea. Economically, socially and politically, the country seems to be experiencing modest improvements, which are likely to have a positive impact on public safety and security.

⁵⁰ A second study measuring public perceptions of safety and security, attitudes towards arms possession, as well as towards the SALWC programme and security providers is planned for late 2003 – early 2004.



As discussed before, many of the weapons collected by the three UNDP-run SALW collection programmes in Albania since 1998 were in a questionable condition and the fact that comparatively few hand guns or automatic rifles were turned in during the last stages of the current programme seems to indicate that the easily accessible supply of these weapons is already depleted. Meanwhile, those people who are motivated either by criminal interest or the need for self-protection, are holding onto their arms. This is to be expected as voluntary weapons collection initiatives always target those weapons which are surplus to requirement. In addition, SALWC deliberately targeted rural areas in the proximity of military depots, as these places were most likely to contain substantial numbers of weapons, whereas arms in urban areas were more likely to have been trafficked across the borders since 1997 due to a more active black market. While this strategy was sound in terms of collecting the highest arms crop possible, it raises some questions as to the real impact on public safety. While there are no conclusive statistics, all respondents in rural areas interviewed for this study said that there had been relatively few incidents where weapons caused damage in their areas since the restoration of public order in 1998. These incidents were either people hurting themselves or family members in accidents caused by unsafe storage or handling of guns, or – more rarely – people hurting each other after alcohol abuse. Violent crimes committed intentionally with firearms were rare or even non-existent.

Meanwhile fewer weapons were collected in urban settings, which are more likely to witness organized crime and the use of firearms for criminal purposes. On several occasions, local SALWC staff in interviews therefore questioned the implicit strategy of focusing on high-yield, low crime areas and argued that the programme should have put a particular emphasis on the most dangerous weapons (handguns, automatic weapons, hand grenades etc.) rather than lumping together all weapons in the same category, without even registering the operational status. It is remarkable that the achievement of the programme in terms of real improvement of safety and security were probably in the area that received least recognition for the competition. That is the large amount of ammunition and explosives that was handed in by the population and which seems to be the main cause of household accidents involving firearms in Albania.

Given these constraints, which formed the basis of the occasional scepticism of some international observers in Tirana, it is surprising that all Albanians interviewed for this study agreed that public safety and security had improved tremendously since the start of the programme *because* of the SALWC programme. This view was shared both by local citizens in the target areas but also professional observers such as policemen, local administrators and journalists, who could have been more critical of this link based on their superior information about the situation. Many persons interviewed for this study stressed that SALWC made an important contribution for public safety and security by changing the ‘mentality’ of the people. We believe that this means that citizens in the project areas understand that the real impact of the weapons collection programme lies less in the number of arms collected but rather in motivating people to re-think whether they truly need weapons in homes.

In a country which suffered both from the traumatic experience of the 1997 riots and from a deeply rooted tradition of a personal gun ownership, changing the ‘mentality’ of people is a major task. Here, the SALWC programme has been remarkably successful by combining a savvy media strategy with the mobilization of the local population through local working groups, which organized their own awareness-raising initiatives. Clearly the symbolic value of local SALW collection far outstrips the contribution to objective security made by removing a limited number of guns from circulation. However, if the SALWC programme has helped people to re-think their attitude towards gun ownership and improved their subjective feeling of security, as indeed it seems to have, this is a major step towards overcoming the legacy of the 1997 riots.

4. Conclusions

The SALWC programme has been a remarkable success in collecting a sizeable number of weapons during a comparatively short time window prior to the 04 August 2002 deadline for the expiration of the amnesty period. Since then, progress has been much slower largely because of a long period of legal uncertainty and the disbanding of the dedicated SALW collection structure in the Albanian police service. Obviously, these factors were beyond the control of the SALWC team.

Whether the success of the pre-August 2002 project period could have been continued if the political climate had not taken a turn for the worse remains open to debate. The programme team seems convinced that similar results could have been achieved in the five targeted prefectures, however most local officials interviewed agreed that the vast majority of weapons in civilian hands had been handed in before the August deadline, both in the context of SALWC and earlier on directly to the police. This seems to suggest that further competitions in the same target areas are likely to yield an ever-diminishing crop of arms, while the collection costs per weapon are likely to rise.

Given the generally unfavourable political environment at the national level, these thoughts are a moot point. In the absence of a credible commitment by national government towards arms collection (which would at a minimum require the re-instatement of the dedicated police teams as a minimum requirement), organized SALW collection in the context of international assistance has run its course in Albania. Realizing this, UNDP has changed the focus of the next project phase from SALW collection to security sector reform, in an attempt to use the established network of local contacts for a new purpose.

In the context of this programme component, UNDP aims to introduce community based policing activities at the grass-roots level in five pilot communities. The transition from assistance to SALW collection to the support of security sector reform will be made during the course of 2003, with the establishment of Community Problem Solving Groups (CPSG) as a new requirement for eligibility for the competition. These CPSGs are supposed to ultimately act as the community counterpart for the police. Furthermore, UNDP is currently assisting the MoPO in setting up a pilot weapons registration and control system that will facilitate the issuing of licenses for gun ownership. This system, which should be operational by the end of 2003, represents another important step from SALW collection to SALW control.

Whether this new strategy of moving towards security sector reform is feasible, is a question that lies beyond the scope of this study. However it seems to be a bold and prudent move to continue the excellent rapport established between the SALWC team and local authorities, as well as with the police force, to adapt the primary focus of the programme in line with the changed political circumstances in Albania.

The most important contribution of the SALWC programme does not lie in the number of weapons, ammunition and explosives collected during the implementation period, even though the numbers are impressive by international standards. Nor is it the modest contribution to economic development affected by the micro-development projects awarded as collective incentives to winning communities. In a country that went through a tumultuous and sometimes violent decade of transformation, the most valuable contribution lies in convincing individual citizens to trust the state to enforce the rule of the law and to hand in weapons and ammunition, once hoarded during a period of political anarchy. Given Albania's history of repressive, corrupt and ignorant governments both during socialist times and in more recent history, this is a major success.

Another important achievement of the SALWC programme is the pioneering role in developing the novel Weapons in Competition for Development approach, which despite being born out of resource and time constraints, and being burdened with an unfortunate name, adds a new dimension to the menu of interventions available to international organisations and national authorities in combating the proliferation of illegal SALW.





Annex A (Informative) Terms and Definitions

A.1.1

explosive ordnance

all munitions containing explosives, nuclear fission or fusion materials and biological and chemical agents. This includes bombs and warheads; guided and ballistic missiles; artillery, mortar, rocket and small arms ammunition; all mines, torpedoes and depth charges; pyrotechnics; clusters and dispensers; cartridge and propellant actuated devices; electro-explosive devices; clandestine and improvised explosive devices; and all similar or related items or components explosive in nature. [AAP-6]

A.1.2

Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD)

the detection, identification, evaluation, render safe, recovery and final disposal of unexploded explosive ordnance. It may also include the rendering-safe and/or disposal of such explosive ordnance, which have become hazardous by damage or deterioration, when the disposal of such explosive ordnance is beyond the capabilities of those personnel normally assigned the responsibility for routine disposal.⁵¹

Note: The presence of ammunition and explosives during micro-disarmament operations will inevitably require some degree of EOD response. The level of this response will be dictated by the condition of the ammunition, its level of deterioration and the way that it is handled by the local community.

A.1.3

micro-disarmament

the collection, control and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives, light and heavy weapons of combatants and often also of the civilian population. It includes the development of responsible weapons and ammunition management programmes.

A.1.4

OSCE

(Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe)

A.1.5

SALW

(small arms and light weapons)

all lethal conventional munitions that can be carried by an individual combatant or a light vehicle, that also do not require a substantial logistic and maintenance capability.⁵²

A.1.6

SALW Awareness

A programme of activities undertaken with the overall goal of minimising, and where possible eliminating, the negative consequences of inadequate SALW Control by undertaking an appropriate combination of SALW Advocacy, SALW Risk Education and media operations/public information campaigns which together work to change behaviours and facilitate appropriate alternative solutions over the long term.

Note: Wherever it exists, the operational objectives of a national SALW Control initiative will dictate the appropriate type of SALW Awareness activities.

Note: SALW Awareness is a mass mobilisation approach that delivers information on the SALW threat. It may take the form of formal or non-formal education and may use mass media techniques.

⁵¹ UN Guidelines for Stockpile Destruction, June 2000.

⁵² www.undp.org.yu/seesac Draft RMDS 02.10 - SALW Standards/ SALW definitions.



Note: In an emergency situation, due to time constraints and the lack of available data, it is the most practical means of communicating safety information. In other situations it can support community liaison.

A.1.7

SALW Advocacy

a programme of activities that aim to raise SALW problems and issues with the general public, the authorities, the media, governments and their institutions to achieve changes at both institutional and/or individual levels.

Note: These types of activities also include campaigns highlighting the SALW problems and issues with the aim of encouraging people to surrender weapons. This is generally conducted as a support to weapons collection programmes.

A.1.8

SALW Risk Education

a process that promotes the adoption of safer behaviours by at-risk groups and by SALW holders, and which provides the links between affected communities, other SALW components and other sectors.

Note: SALW Risk Education can be implemented as a stand-alone activity, in contexts where no weapons collection is taking place. If an amnesty is to be set up at a later stage, risk education activities will permit an information campaign to take place efficiently, using the networks, systems and methods in place as part of the risk education programme and adapting the content accordingly.

Note: SALW Risk Education is an essential component of SALW Control. There are two related and mutually reinforcing components: a) Community Involvement; and b) Public education

Note: Generally, SALW Risk Education programmes can use both approaches, as they are mutually reinforcing. They are not however alternative to each other, nor are they alternative to eradicating the SALW threat by weapons collection and destruction. The use of those approaches will also depend on whether a weapon collection programme is taking place or not.

A.1.9

Small Arms Capacity Survey (SACS)

the component of SALW survey that collects data on the indigenous resources available to respond to the SALW problem.

A.1.10

Small Arms Distribution Survey (SADS)

the component of SALW survey that collects data on the type, quantity, ownership, distribution and movement of SALW within the country or region.

A.1.11

Small Arms Impact Survey (SAIS)

the component of SALW survey that collects data on the impact of SALW on the community and social and economic development.

A.1.12

Small Arms Perception Survey (SAPS)

the component of SALW survey that collects qualitative and quantitative information, via focus groups, interviews, and household surveys, on the attitudes of the local community to SALW and possible interventions.

A.1.13

SEESAC

(South Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons).

A.1.14

SPSEE

(Stability Pact for South East Europe).



A.1.15

survey (SALW Survey)

a systematic and logical process to determine the nature and extent of SALW proliferation and impact within a region, nation or community in order to provide accurate data and information for a safe, effective and efficient intervention by an appropriate organisation.

A.1.16

Unexploded Ordnance (UXO)

explosive ordnance which has been primed, fuzed, armed or otherwise prepared for action, and which has been dropped, fired, launched, projected, or placed in such a manner as to constitute a hazard to operations, installations, personnel or material and remains unexploded either by malfunction or design or for any other cause.⁵³

A.1.17

Voluntary Surrender

the physical return by an individual(s) or community of small arms and light weapons to the legal government or an authorised international organisation with no further penalty.

A.1.18

weapon

any thing used, designed or used or intended for use.⁵⁴

- a) in causing death or injury to any person; or
- b) for the purposes of threatening or intimidating any person and without restricting the generality of the foregoing, includes a firearm.

A.1.19

Weapons Collection Point (WCP)

a temporary, or semi-permanent, location laid out in accordance with the principles of explosive and weapons safety, which is designed to act as a focal point for the surrender of SALW by the civil community.

A.1.20

Weapons in Competition for Development (WCD)

the direct linkage between the voluntary surrender of small arms and light weapons by competing communities in exchange for an agreed proportion of small-scale infrastructure development by the legal government, an international organisation or NGO.

A.1.21

Weapons in Exchange for Development (WED) (WFD)

the indirect linkage between the voluntary surrender of small arms and light weapons by the community as a whole in exchange for the provision of sustainable infrastructure development by the legal government, an international organisation or NGO.

A.1.22

Weapons in Exchange for Incentives (WEI)

the direct linkage between the voluntary surrender of small arms and light weapons by individuals in exchange for the provision of appropriate materials by the legal government, an international organisation or NGO.

⁵³ NATO Definition.

⁵⁴ Criminal Code of Canada (CCoC) Section (S) 2 "Interpretation" Paragraph 2.





**Annex B
(Informative)
Albanian SALW Laws**

LAW

NR. 9017, 6 March 2003

FOR AN ALTERATION IN LAW NR.7895, DATE 27.1.1995

“PENAL CODE OF REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA”

In compliance with articles 81/2 “d” and 83/1 of constitution, referring to a parliamentary member group proposal,

PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

DECISION



Article 1

In the law no.7895, dated 27 January 1995 of the Penal Code of the Albanian Republic is hereby altered as follows:

After Article 334 is added article 334/1 as below:

Independently of Article 278, exemption from criminal prosecution for weapon and munitions possession until 31 May 2005, is granted to those persons who, in compliance with legislation in power, surrender the weapons voluntarily.

In any case no exemption from criminal prosecution for illegal weapon possession is given to those persons who have committed criminal actions, using weapons and munitions.

No exemption from criminal prosecution is given to those persons who do not declare possession of weapons and munitions after this law comes in force and during controls performed according to provisions of the Penal Code Procedures, are captured in possession of hidden weapons and munitions.

Article 2

This law will come into force 15 days after it is published in the Official Book.

Declared upon decree no. 3750, dated 27.03.2003 of the President of the Republic of Albania, Alfred Moisiu.



LAW

NR. 9018, 6 March 2003

**FOR COLLECTION OF WEAPONS, AMMUNITION AND
OTHER MILITARY MATERIALS**



SECTION I

GENERAL SUBJECTS

Article 1

Subject of the law

This Law has a subject of voluntary surrender, registration and collection of weapons, ammunition and other military materials that are kept without permission and necessary measures, which should be taken for enforcement of this law.

Article 2

Principles of weapons collection

Weapons collection process will be done in compliance with legislation and which aim that in cooperation with civilian society, donors and other international organizations the sensitisation of public opinion for creation of society without weapons and violence.

SECTION II

GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES FOR WEAPONS COLLECTION AND THEIR DUTIES

Article 3

Inter Ministerial Commission for Weapons Collection

1. In order to accomplish the weapons collection process in the Republic of Albania, the Inter Ministerial Commission of weapons collection is established and is composed as follows:

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| - Deputy Prime Minister | - chairmen |
| - Minister of Public Order | - deputy chairmen |
| - Minister of Defence | - member |
| - Minister of Justice | - member |
| - Minister of Local Govt and Decentralization | - member |
| - Head of National Intelligence Service | - member |

2. Minister of Public Order is appointed as a secretariat of Inter Ministerial Commission for Weapons Collection and provides to this commission all the infrastructure and professional support. Inter ministerial commission for weapons collection could ask for assistance the specialists form ministries foreseen in this law.



Article 4

Inter- Ministerial Commission Duties for Weapons Collection

1. The Inter- ministerial commission for weapons collection follows the weapons collection process based on information provided by Ministry of Public Order, Ministry of Defence and General Prosecutor, and not less than once per month analysis the work done and report to Council of Ministers.
2. The Inter- ministerial commission for weapons collection, in conjunction with bodies of local government, structures of Armed Forces, non-governmental organizations and international organizations, organizes national and local campaigns to sensitise the public or other activities to voluntary collect weapons, ammunition and other military materials.
3. The commission issues decisions for the making progress on weapons collection by structures recognized by this law.

Article 5

Local Commissions Duties for Weapons Collection

1. The local commission for weapons collection are established at each region, with the following composition:

- Prefect	chairmen
- Head of Regional Council	deputy Chairmen
- Director of Police in Region	member
- Commander of Military bases	member
2. The regional commission follows continuously the collection process of weapons, ammunitions and other military materials and not less than once per month, reports to Interinter- ministerial commission for weapons collection.
3. The regional commission in cooperation with all international organizations or civilian society, engaged in weapons collection process authorized by Inter ministerial commission for weapons collection.
4. Regional commission in cooperation with local commissions and police, determines the graphic of the terrain for the police structure for weapons collection.

Article 6

Local Commissions for Weapons Collection

1. Regional commissions for weapons collection, considering the wide-spread problems that have to be addressed in the process of weapons collection, local commissions for weapons collection in districts, municipalities and communes, under the jurisdiction of the region, which covers them.
2. Local commissions cooperate with all international organizations or civilian society, engaged in the process of weapons collection and authorized by Inter ministerial commission for weapons collection.



Article 7

Police Structures for weapons collection

1. The police structures for weapons collection are established for collecting weapons and depend on the General Director of State Police at the Ministry of Public Order.
2. The Minister of Public Order approves structures for collection and registration of weapons, ammunition and other military materials, according to different level of organization of the State Police.
3. The police structure for weapons collection is part of the State Police and has the same rights and duties that comes from the Law No. 8553, date 25.11.1999 °For the State Police°.
4. This structure has the duty to collect weapons, ammunition and other military equipment, that are voluntary surrendered and registering them as well.
5. For collecting weapons, ammunition and other military materials, the police structures for weapons collection cooperate and with other sectors of State Police, despite the functions of this structure.

CHAPTER II

VOLUNTARY DELIVERY

Article 8

Voluntary delivery

1. The voluntary delivery of weapons and ammunitions refers to the expression of free will, written or oral, to the bodies of local police or bodies of local government, for the delivery of weapons, ammunitions and other military materials, carried without permission.
2. Police structures for weapons collection, after receiving information on weapons placement, withdraw them according to proper procedures.
3. The person who expresses his willing to deliver the weapon and desire to remain anonym, could surrender it in public area, or established by police, without making declaration.

Article 9

Cooperation with Ministry of Defence

Ministry of Public Order deliver the weapons, ammunitions and other military materials, collected by State Police, associated with proper documentations to military units determine prior by Ministry of Defence.



CHAPTER IV

FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 10

The Inter ministerial commission for weapons collection in cooperation with all state bodies, which are part of this commission, within a year from the date when this law will be in power, design national strategy for small arms and light weapons control, which will be discussed and approved by Council of Ministers.

Council of Ministers has to approve all sub actions regarding to this law.

Article 11

Approval of Normative Acts

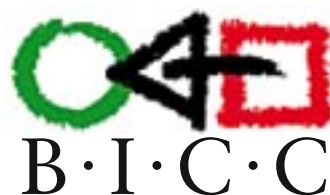
The Council of Ministers, according the article 7 and 10 of this law, develops the necessary legal acts and, within 30 days from the entry of this law into force must allocate the necessary funds for the performance of the obligations deriving from this law.

Article 12

This law will be into force 15 days after it is published in Official Book.

Declared upon decree no. 3763, dated 27.03.2003 of the President of the Republic of Albania, Alfred Moisiu.





The *Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC)* is an independent non-profit organization dedicated to promoting and facilitating the processes whereby people, skills, technology, equipment, and financial and economic resources can be shifted away from the defense sector and applied to alternative civilian uses. Through research and analysis, technical assistance and advice, retraining programs, publications, and conferences, BICC supports governmental and non-governmental initiatives as well as public and private sector organizations by finding ways to reduce costs and enhance effectiveness in the drawdown of military-related activities. As a result, BICC contributes to disarmament, demilitarization, peace building, post-conflict rehabilitation and human development.

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