

IPN REQUEST RQ07/04

August 2, 2007

NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

**Re: Request for Inspection**  
**Albania: Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Clean-Up Project**  
**(ICZMCP)**  
**(IDA Credit No. 4083-ALB)**

On July 30, 2007, the Inspection Panel (the "Panel") received a Request for Inspection (the "Request"), dated July 25, 2007, related to the Albania: Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Clean-Up Project (ICZMCP) (the "Project") financed by the International Development Association (IDA) (Credit No. 4083-ALB).

The local representatives of a number of families who are part of a community situated in the area known as Jal,<sup>1</sup> which is part of the larger village of Vuno, Himare in Albania, submitted the Request.

The Project's objective is *"to establish an integrated approach to coastal zone management by carrying out policy reform, institutional development and investments to protect coastal resources and promote sustainable development and management of the Borrower's southern coast."* The Request refers in particular to the Project's Part A which aims at providing technical assistance for developing a legal and policy framework and a financial and economic incentive framework for integrated coastal zone management. Part A also provides equipment, training and technical assistance, *inter alia*, *"to develop a Southern Coast Development Plan"* (SCDP). According to the Project Credit Agreement, the Southern Coast Development Plan is *"a land use development and zoning plan to be prepared under Part A.2 (f) of the Project and to be adopted by the National Council of Territorial Adjustment of the Borrower, establishing a framework for sustainable tourism development in line with environmental assessment concepts and social safeguard requirements to guide future investments in the Southern coastal zone."* The Requesters claim that they have suffered as a result of the World Bank's failures and oversights with respect specifically to the SCDP implemented in the village of Jal in Albania.

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<sup>1</sup> Jal and Jali are used interchangeably in the Request for Inspection.

The Requesters state that between April 17-21, 2007, the Construction Police of the Municipality of Vlore, under the supervision of the Ministry of Public Works and “*in line with the Southern Coastal Development Plan of the World Bank*,” demolished either totally or partially their permanent residences. The Requesters were told, they did not possess building permits. In this regard, the Requesters point out that “approximately 100% of construction” in coastal Albania lacks these permits and that a summer resorts and other houses were left intact.

The Requesters claim that they requested building permits in the past, but were told that permits are not available in areas lacking an urban plan. They add that both the building permit and the urban plan are approved by the same authority, the Council of Territorial Adjustment. The Requesters claim that the lack of an urban plan is not unique to the village of Jal but rather is common to much of Albania. They also state that they had lost confidence that an urban plan could be approved for Jal because the village is a small and isolated one, lacking even basic services such as fresh water. Nevertheless, they state that in 2006 the Government finally passed a law (Law 9482 “On the legalization, urbanization and integration of buildings without permits”) that allowed the Requesters and other families of Jal to apply for building permits. They did so and received confirmation of their applications by local authorities. (Their applications and registration documents are attached to the Request.)

In spite of the pending permit applications, the Requesters claim that they received a notice on April 3, 2007, from the Construction Police informing them that their houses were slated for demolition. They add that they later “*learned from the media and onsite managers of the project that the demolition was a result of executing the Southern Coastal Development Plan of the World Bank for the area.*” The Requesters filed a compliant with local authorities against the demolition notice. The houses were demolished, however, on April 17, 2007. According to the Requesters, “*all court dates were scheduled for after April 17, 2007.*” The house demolitions, the Requesters report, were carried out in an “*unexplained urgency*” at 4.00am in the morning of April 17, and one house resident was also “*hit while inside her house in an attempt to take out her cellular phone.*”

The Requesters claim that the Project implementation has resulted in displacement of a small number of families, “*human rights violations*”, “*inhumane actions*” including violence by the police and a “*complete lack of information and transparency regarding any projects or future plans for the area.*” The Requesters argue that the village of Jal was destroyed as a result of the Bank’s failures and oversights “*to take into consideration legal rights as well as the well being*” of the community. They claim that the Bank also violated the policies requiring supervision of project activities and those mandating that risks of impoverishment for the community be mitigated.

The Requesters state that after the demolitions, World Bank officials visited the site at least twice. The first time they talked with the families and asked about the size of the damage but did not provide any information. The second time they did not talk to the community at all.

The Requesters argue that Law 9482 mentioned above includes a provision according to which construction without permits in priority areas for development of

tourism must be classified as residential areas or informal territories within three months after the law was passed. The Requesters also cite Project documents, which, they claim, state that the Project will include capacity building for government institutions and the judiciary, *inter alia*, to “develop criteria and procedures for the classification of illegal buildings and ensure transparency during demolition activities.” According to the Request, the village of Jal, which is in a tourist area, was not yet classified as a residential area at the time of the demolitions. The Requesters claim that Government representatives indicated that the demolitions “were based on the law and were part of a bigger plan drafted by the World Bank for the Coastal Region of Albania.” The Requesters also claim that to date they have not received any “sound explanation” of why their village was “targeted” by the Project.

According to the Request, the Project provides also for increasing access to basic services and improving the quality of life and attractiveness of the coastal area of Albania. The Requesters claim that the demolitions not only destroyed their houses, but they also destroyed existing sewage structures, roads and other constructions, and centuries-old trees in the area. In addition, following the demolitions, waste covered the valley of Jal for weeks, making the place dangerous, especially for children.

The Requesters claim that the Project is aimed at enhancing community-driven tourism development along the coastal areas. However, they state that “by overnight destroying all of the community assets, the project provides no insights on how it intends to support community-driven tourism activities, or which channels would the community follow to support itself during the project implementation phase.”

According to the Request, the Project Information Document indicates that the Project is to prepare a “SEA [Strategic Environmental Assessment] for the Southern Coastal Area both as a planning tool at local level and as a vehicle for community involvement in decision-making process.” However, the Requesters emphasizes that their community was not provided with any information regarding Project works, and was “never consulted, asked or informed about any components of the Project.”

The Requesters ask the Inspection Panel to recommend to the Board of Executive Directors that an investigation of the issues they raise in the Request be carried out.

The above claims may, *inter alia*, constitute non-compliance by the Bank with various provisions of the following operational Policies and Procedures:

OP 1.00	Poverty Reduction
OMS 2.20	Project Appraisal
OP/BP 4.01	Environmental Assessment
OP/BP 4.12	Involuntary Resettlement
OP/BP 13.05	Project Supervision

Until further notice, all communications with the Requesters in connection with the Request will be sent to Mr. Andon Koka, as the representative of the Requesters.

Pursuant to paragraph 17 of the Panel's Operating Procedures (the 'Operating Procedures'), I am notifying you that I have, on August 2, 2007, registered this Request in the Inspection Panel Register.

In accordance with paragraph 18 of the IDA Resolution that established the Panel ('Resolution'), paragraphs 2 and 8 of the "*Conclusions of the Board's Second Review of the Inspection Panel*" (the '1999 Clarifications'), and paragraph 18 (d) of the Operating Procedures, Bank Management must provide the Panel, no later than August 31, 2007, with written evidence that it has complied, or intends to comply, with the Bank's relevant policies and procedures in relation to the above-referenced Project. The subject matter that Management must deal with in a response to the Request is set out in paragraphs 3 and 4 of the 1999 Clarifications.

After receiving the Management response, the Panel will, as outlined in the 1999 Clarifications and as provided by paragraph 19 of the Resolution, "*determine whether the Request meets the eligibility criteria set out in paragraphs 12 to 14 of the Resolution and shall make a recommendation to the Executive Directors as to whether the matter should be investigated.*"

The Request has been assigned IPN Request Number RQ07/04

Yours sincerely,



Edith Brown Weiss  
Chairperson

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