



Albania - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Tuesday 5 & Wednesday 6 March 2019

Information on the June 2017 general elections including results and conflict beforehand between the PS/Socialist Party and the LSI/SMI/Socialist Movement for Integration party; &

A report issued in April 2018 by the *European Commission* states that:

“The 2017 parliamentary elections were held in an orderly manner and its results were accepted by all parties” (European Commission (17 April 2018) *Albania 2018 Report*, p.7).

This document also states that:

“The 2017 parliamentary election gave the Socialist Party 74 seats and the mandate to govern alone. The Democratic Party and Socialist Movement for Integration became the two largest opposition parties, with respectively 43 and 19 seats” (ibid, p.8).

A report issued in 2018 by *Freedom House* reviewing events of the preceding year notes that:

“Events preceding the elections of June 2017 reflected ongoing distrust between the PD—the main opposition grouping—and the ruling PS. In December 2016, the president called parliamentary election for June. In response, the PD began boycotting the parliament in February, claiming that the PS would commit massive electoral fraud. A standoff ensued, with tensions escalating in May, when the PD held a large opposition protest in Tirana. However, international mediators from the US and EU facilitated an agreement between the two parties later in May, under which the PD was guaranteed several positions in the government, including one deputy prime minister, six ministers, the chairperson of the Central Election Commission (CEC), and directors of several public agencies. Elections were held in June, a week later than initially scheduled. The PS won 74 of the 140 seats, enough to govern without the support of other parties. Voter turnout was 46.8 percent” (Freedom House (2018) *Freedom in the World 2018, Albania*, pp.2-3).

A publication in September 2017 by the *Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe* states that:

“Freedom of assembly was respected...Parties and candidates were free to express their views, with the most active campaigns being conducted by the DP, SMI, and SP” (Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (28 September 2017) *Albania, Parliamentary elections, 25 June 2017: Final Report*, p.12).

This document also states that:

“The SP mostly campaigned on a platform of stability and emphasized the need to continue administrative and judicial reform. The DP emphasized economic development and claimed that the SP-led government had caused poverty, mass

emigration, and widespread crime and corruption, in particular in relation to cannabis cultivation. The SMI accused the DP and SP of collusion at the expense of other contestants, claiming the existence of undisclosed parts of the 18 May political agreement” (ibid, p.13).

A table in this report contains the election results (ibid, p.28).

A publication by the *Council of Europe* in September 2017 points out that:

“Following the political agreement of 18 May, the election campaign officially started on 26 May. The amendments adopted on 22 May to the Law on Political Parties were on the whole well received by the majority of those with whom the delegation spoke, insofar as massive campaign expenditure reductions could be made as a result. The clause prohibiting the display of election posters more than five metres from campaign offices significantly limited the normally massive use of giant posters, flags and other campaign material. The campaign was dynamic throughout the country and fundamental rights such as freedom of assembly and freedom of expression were upheld...In the course of the campaign, the political parties made little reference to their programmes on topics such as the economy, employment, the fight against crime, security matters, education, social issues and accession to the European Union which would have enabled voters to compare the programmes so as to be able to make an informed choice on election day. The main parties stuck to very general statements, promising better living conditions and stepping up the fight against drug trafficking and organised crime. In contrast, the political parties focused significantly on vote buying and selling, pressure exerted on voters and especially civil servants, and the misuse of administrative resources, all of which further undermined voters’ confidence... These mutual accusations, often highly personalised, were regularly fuelled by the leaders of the main parties who also voiced their concerns over the involvement in the electoral process of criminal networks, particularly those linked to drug trafficking, and the role they could play following the elections...” (Council of Europe (4 September 2017) *Observation of the parliamentary elections in Albania (25 June 2017)*, p.7).

A report issued in June 2017 by the *Albanian Helsinki Committee* states that:

“Despite irregularities regarding some electoral standards and some isolated incidents, the parliamentary election process of 25 June 2017, did guarantee the will of the voters at all the stages, and increased their trust in the election administration” (Albanian Helsinki Committee (June 2017) *Final Report, On The Findings And Conclusions Of The Monitoring Of The 25 June Parliamentary Elections*, p.7).

This document also points out that:

“Overall, the election campaign was conducted peacefully, although allegations of violence against members of several electoral contestants were reported by the media. In these cases, the AHC suggested that¹⁹ the electoral contestants and, particularly, their representatives conduct a legitimate propaganda in accordance with Article 78 of the Electoral Code, and avoid the use of hate speech” (ibid, p.12).

Information on treatment of the Socialist Movement for Integration by the Socialist Party

No information on this issue could be found among sources available to the RDC.

References

Albanian Helsinki Committee (June 2017) *Final Report, On The Findings And Conclusions Of The Monitoring Of The 25 June Parliamentary Elections*
<http://www.ahc.org.al/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Raport-on-Parliamentary-Elections-25-June-2017.pdf>

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

Sources Consulted

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European Country of Origin Information Network
Freedom House
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Human Rights Watch
Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada
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