



## **Albania - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Thursday 21 November 2019**

### **Information on current human rights abuses**

A publication in March 2019 by the *Albania Helsinki Committee* states that:

“During 2018, the Albanian Helsinki Committee (AHC) has focused its activities on important domains such as the implementation of justice reform, access to justice for vulnerable groups, respect for human rights in penitentiary institutions, police commissariats, psychiatric hospitals, border crossing points and asylum seekers centers, prevention and fight against violent extremism and discrimination, promotion of free media, transparency and good governance by state institutions, environmental protection, etc” (Albania Helsinki Committee (March 2019) *For Human Rights And Freedoms In Albania For 2018*, p.6).

In March 2019 the *United States Department of State* points out that:

“Human rights issues included pervasive corruption in all branches of government. Impunity remained a problem. Prosecution, and especially conviction, of officials who committed abuses was sporadic and inconsistent. Officials, politicians, judges, and persons with powerful business interests often were able to avoid prosecution. In response, authorities have undertaken an internationally monitored vetting of judges and prosecutors, and have dismissed a significant number of officials for unexplained wealth or ties to organized crime. Authorities also undertook technical measures, such as allowing electronic payment of traffic fines and use of body cameras, to improve police accountability and punished some lower-level officials for abuses” (United States Department of State (13 March 2019) *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2018 – Albania*).

In May 2019 *United Nations Albania* states that:

“The most significant reforms that the Government of Albania has undertaken since 2016 re-late to the reorganisation of the justice system and the functionality of the rule of law...” (United Nations Albania (29 May 2019) *2018 Progress Report*, p.44).

In February 2019 the *United Nations Human Rights Council* states that:

“The United Nations country team noted that the approval of constitutional amendments in July 2016 had paved the way to a legal reform, aimed at bringing national human rights guarantees into full compliance with international standards...” (United Nations Human Rights Council (22 February 2019) *Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*, p.1).

A document issued in May 2019 by the *European Commission* notes that:

“On fundamental rights, Albania complies overall with international human rights instruments and developed its legal framework in line with European standards” (European Commission (29 May 2019) *Albania 2019 Report*, p.4).

In September 2019 the *Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe* states that the:

“...30 June local elections were held with little regard for the interests of the electorate. The opposition decided not to participate, and the government determined to hold the elections without it. In the climate of a political standoff and polarisation, voters did not have a meaningful choice between political options...The elections took place against a background of a political and institutional crisis...” (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (5 September 2019) *Albania, Local Elections, 30 June 2019: Final Report*, p.2).

The *Council of Europe* in October 2019 states that:

“Against the background of a current impeachment procedure against Albanian President Ilir Meta, for having postponed local elections beyond the electoral mandate of local authorities, Council of Europe constitutional experts of the Venice Commission conclude that while the President may have acted beyond his constitutional powers, there are indications that his acts may not have been of a nature justifying impeachment” (Council of Europe (11 October 2019) *Albania: Even if the President may have overstepped bounds in postponing local elections, impeachment may not be justified, and a bill on property rights lacks clarity and precision, says Venice Commission*).

The *Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly* states in October 2019 that:

“...co-rapporteurs of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe...will make a fact-finding visit to Tirana...[and] will mainly focus on the current political crisis, the reform of the judiciary, the follow-up to local elections, the fight against corruption and media freedom” (Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (24 October 2019) *Albania: monitoring visit by PACE rapporteurs*).

Commenting on Albania, the *Council of Europe* in November 2019 states that:

“One of the main obstacles for an effective implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights obligations at the national level is the absence of a harmonised interpretation of the Strasbourg’s Court case law by national courts” (Council of Europe (8 November 2019) *Assessment of Albanian courts’ practice in light of the European Convention on Human Right*).

## References

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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.

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