



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

Albania - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Monday 31 July & Tuesday 1 August 2017

Do blood feuds begin by death or injury upon a given victim

The *Irish Times* in June 2009 points out that:

“The kanun, or code, principally governs the revenge that must be exacted by one family when one of its members has been killed by another” (Irish Times (26 June 2009) *Albania's deadly tradition of blood feuds as pervasive as ever*).

In March 2011 the *United Nations Human Rights Council* comments in a report that:

“Blood feuds generally arise out of an argument, usually between two men whose families are neighbours or friends. The argument could have any cause, including an accident, a perceived insult, a property ownership disagreement or a conflict over access to electricity, water or fuel...The argument escalates into a physical fight, and one man kills the other. The victim's family then feels that it is “owed blood” by the killer's family. This blood debt carries a related loss of honour, which can only be satisfied by taking the life of a member of the killer's family” (United Nations Human Rights Council (14 March 2011) *Report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions*, p.4).

In June 2014 *Spiegel* states commenting on blood feuds and the kanun law that:

“...a killing can only be atoned through a retaliatory murder...” (Spiegel (6 June 2014) *An Albanian Boy's Life Ruined by Blood Feuds*).

Commenting on blood feuds, a report issued in October 2015 by the *European Scientific Journal* states that:

“...honor is cleansed by killing any male member of the family of the original offender...” (European Scientific Journal (29 October 2015) *Kanun of Leke Dukagjini Customary Law of Northern Albania*).

In April 2016 the *Financial Times* states that:

“According to a centuries-old custom, people in Albania have the right to revenge should a member of their family be killed. The custom stipulates that they can take the life of one of the killer's family members, barring women and children, and only outside the house” (Financial Times (8 April 2016) *'I help reconcile blood feuds in Albania'*).

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.

Sources Consulted

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