



**Albania - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Tuesday 22 August 2017**

**Information on domestic violence including: state/police protection; & available refuge/protection for youths at risk from parental domestic violence**

A report issued in July 2016 by *Woman Against Violence Europe* states that:

“Currently Albania has 5 domestic violence shelters. One is run by the state, 3 by NGOs and the remaining one is run by a faith-based organization. All shelters provide 24/7 access and immediate direct access in emergency situations. Most of these also have security precautions” (Woman Against Violence Europe (WAVE) (13 July 2016) *Compilation of Country Profiles [specialist support services for women and children survivors of violence - Albania excerpt]*).

In July 2016 the *United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women* includes in a report commentary on gender based violence stating that:

“The Committee remains concerned, however, that such violence remains prevalent in the State party. It is also concerned about:

- (a) The low rate of reporting of cases of gender-based violence against women owing to women’s limited access to legal aid services, especially in rural and remote areas, as well as the absence of hotline services for women who are victims of such violence;
- (b) The insufficient implementation of the national referral mechanism aimed at preventing and providing protection from gender-based violence, in particular at the local level, owing to the lack of coordination among responsible entities and the lack of the necessary skills and capacity among the responsible staff;
- (c) The insufficient number of shelters for women who are victims of gender-based violence and the restrictive criteria for admission to such shelters, as well as the lack of medical and psychological rehabilitation services for women;
- (d) The frequent failure to enforce protection orders and emergency protection orders” (United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (25 July 2016) *Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Albania\**, p.6).

In November 2016 the *European Commission* points out that:

“Services for victims of domestic violence should improve in quality, quantity, accessibility and geographical coverage” (European Commission (9 November 2016) *Albania 2016 Report*, p.66).

A report issued in December 2016 by *United Nations Women* states:

“Although a high government priority, domestic violence prevention, protection, prosecution and referral mechanisms remain weak, though improving” (United Nations Women (8 December 2016) *Sixteen Days of Activism against Gender Violence - "I choose to live without violence"*).

HJT Research in December 2016 states:

“The Tirana Times reported on November 11th that domestic violence has claimed between 20 to 30 lives a year in Albania in the past five years” (HJT (8 December 2016) *Domestic violence remains widely underreported in Albania, claims between 20 to 30 lives a year*).

A report issued in March 2017 by the *United States Department of State* reviewing events of 2016 states that:

“Domestic violence against women, including spousal abuse, remained a serious problem. Police often did not have the training or capacity to deal effectively with domestic violence cases” (United States Department of State (3 March 2017) *2016 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – Albania*).

In February 2017 the *Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency* states in a report that:

“To respond to the widespread violence, the Government in partnership with UNDP and funding from Sida has made rapid progress in criminalizing violence against women, expanding a multi-disciplinary response in several municipalities across the country, strengthening law enforcement and establishing shelter services. As of today, 27 out of 61 municipalities have established Coordinated Community Response mechanisms that extend multidisciplinary services to domestic and gender based violence victims. Actors involved include municipalities, local police, courts, prosecutor offices, bailiff offices, medical centres, educational and employment centres and civil society organisations specialized in providing adequate services to domestic violence survivors” (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (1 February 2017) *Making homes violence-free in Albania*).

A report released in April 2017 by the *Albanian Helsinki Committee* includes the following comment on domestic violence, stating that

“...there is a lack of preventive measures and effective protection mechanisms, with the phenomenon considered an ordinary one...” (Albanian Helsinki Committee (April 2017) *Report on the Situation of Respect for Human Rights and Freedoms in Albania during 2016*, p.22).

In May 2017 *United Nations Albania* issued a report which included stating:

“The establishment of six new multi-disciplinary Community Coordinated Response (CCR) mechanisms<sup>17</sup> in the country and the strengthening of existing CCRs<sup>18</sup> to prevent and respond to Gender-Based and Domestic Violence (GB–DV) cases is another key achievement, supported by UNDP. Now 50 percent of municipalities are covered, up from 44 percent. More than 155 police officers, CCR members and local GBV coordinators participated in learning how to provide coordinated assistance to victims and their children, including through the use of a new national online tracking system. Due to an increased level of awareness, victims of DV and their families reported 4,163 cases to the state police in 2016, compared to 3,866 cases in 2015 and 94 cases in 2005. Furthermore, more than 500 GB–DV cases were recorded in the national online tracking mechanism REVALB, under the auspices of the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, and handled by CCR members in 2016. In a similar vein, pursuant to the Istanbul Convention requirements, UNDP and UNICEF

supported the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth in the preparation and adoption of a regulatory framework and launching of a national telephone helpline for domestic violence victims. Likewise, UNICEF supported the capacity of the national ALO 116 Child Helpline to report and address cases of violence against children, with more than 27,000 calls received in 2016, representing a growing culture to acknowledge and report violence. UNICEF also supported general psycho-social counselling to 610 cases, while 127 cases were referred for specialist assistance. The state-run national shelter for GB-DV victims increased its attention to rehabilitation and reintegration programmes with both state and non-state service providers, resulting in nearly 55 percent of those in shelter being successfully integrated through employment, social housing and legal empowerment in 2016, compared to 38 percent in 2014” (United Nations Albania (30 May 2017) *2016 Progress Report*, p.26).

This report also states:

“More than half of Albanian women of age 15–49 years have experienced at least one form of domestic violence in their lifetime...” (ibid, p.43).

This document also states that:

“Traditional patriarchal attitudes are still prominent, with gender inequalities present in all spheres of social and economic life, and violence against women still widespread” (ibid, p.44).

It is also pointed out in this report that:

“Improvements in the tracking, reporting and addressing of violence against women and children were witnessed in 2016, with significant support from UNDP, through the expansion of Community Coordinated Response (CCR) mechanisms. Six new CCRs were established in the municipalities of Roskovec, Patos, Perrenjas, Gjirokaster, Bulqize and Diber, and existing CCRs strengthened in the municipalities of Kruja, Saranda, Kavaja, Erseka, Burrel and Permet. Nearly half of municipalities have functioning CCRs with real-case management installed at the local level. More than 155 police officers, CCR members and local GBV coordinators were trained in providing coordinated assistance to GBV victims and their children and in tracking cases through the national online tracking system. Due to an increased level of awareness, victims of domestic violence and their families reported 4,163 cases to the state police in 2016 compared to 3,866 cases in 2015 and 94 cases in 2005” (ibid, p.44).

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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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