



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

Albania - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Tuesday 26 June 2018

Information on domestic violence from August 2017 to June 2018 including: state/police protection; & available refuge/protection for youths at risk from parental domestic violence

A report issued in September 2017 by the *Child Rights Centre Albania* notes that:

“Vulnerable children and young people, who may be victims of discrimination, exclusion or violence, and who do not have access to justice, beginning from today will be supported with free legal aid” (Child Rights Centre Albania (1 September 2017) *Free Legal Protection For Children And Vulnerable Youth In Albania*).

In October 2017 the *Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons* states that:

“The Albanian authorities have only a limited number of facilities for victims of domestic violence” (Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons (13 October 2017) *Huiselijk geweld (Albania: Domestic violence)*,p.2).

In November 2017 the *Tirana Times* states that:

“Faced with a rising number of domestic violence victims, including the killing of a female judge few months ago, the Albanian government has proposed some changes to the current law in a bid to offer better protection to victims by speeding up the issue of protection orders and providing them with free legal assistance” (Tirana Times (14 November 2017) *Legal changes to offer better protection to Albania domestic violence victims*).

A report published in November 2017 by the *Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence* notes that:

“The inclination to preserve the unity of family at all costs may also explain disturbing failures in the procedure for issuing protection orders for children” (Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (24 November 2017) *Evaluation Report on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence: Albania*, p.15).

Amnesty International released a report in February 2018 reviewing events of 2017 including stating that:

“Reports of domestic violence increased...” (Amnesty International (22 February 2018) *Amnesty International Report 2017/2018 – Albania*)

A document issued in April 2018 by the *United States Department of State* reviewing events of 2017 notes that:

“Domestic violence against women remained a serious problem. Police often did not have the training or capacity to deal effectively with domestic violence cases. The government operated three shelters to protect survivors of domestic violence, and NGOs operated six others” (United States Department of State (20 April 2018) *2017 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Albania*, p.14).

In May 2018 *Freedom House* reviewing events of 2017, states in a report that:

“Domestic violence is widespread, and while the parliament has adopted some measures to combat the problem in recent years, few cases are prosecuted. Police are poorly equipped to handle cases of domestic violence or spousal rape, which is often not understood to be a crime” (Freedom House (28 May 2018) *Freedom in the World 2018 – Albania*, p.6).

In January 2018 *Bertelsmann Stiftung* points out in a report that:

“...serious offenses and domestic violence against women have surfaced in the period under review, and no significant progress has been made in eliminating this phenomenon” (Bertelsmann Stiftung (2 January 2018) *Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index (BTI) 2018 Country Report – Albania*, p.22).

A report issued by the *United Nations Human Rights Council* in January 2018 notes:

“...high rates of domestic abuse or violence against women...” (United Nations Human Rights Council (16 January 2018) *Report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief on his mission to Albania*, p.16).

In April 2018 the *European Commission* states in a report that:

“Domestic violence remains a serious concern. During 2017, 3 243 cases were reported (against 3 700 in 2016) and 2 593 protection orders were issued (against 2 207 in 2016). For 2017, 129 of these protection orders were not respected (against 119 in 2016). Furthermore, 1 950 cases of domestic violence against women and children were registered as criminal offences in 2016. While the number of local mechanisms for reporting gender-based violence has increased, efforts should be stepped up to establish them in all municipalities. The Ministry of Justice established a new office to coordinate efforts against domestic violence. There is also a need to ensure cross-sectoral coordination with child protection and anti-trafficking mechanisms at local and regional level. Since December 2016, a donor-funded national emergency number for victims of domestic violence has been operational. Overall, more work is needed to ensure that women have access to justice” (European Commission (17 April 2018) *Albania 2018 Report*, p.29).

In April 2018 *Women Against Violence Europe* states in a report that:

“There are currently 10 women's shelters in Albania which provide approximately 167 beds. Women's shelters only exist in major cities – in Tirana, the capital, and other main cities such as Elbasan or Vlorë, hence there is still limited geographical coverage and difficulties can be encountered when accessing services. All women's shelters provide 24/7 support and immediate and direct access in emergency situations, as well as are free of charge. The last women's shelters were opened in 2017 in the municipalities of Lushnjë and Pogradec. The accommodation period in the existing shelters dedicated to women and girl victims of violence differs per shelter. In some shelters it is one week, in others it is up to three months, or 3–6

months” (Women Against Violence Europe (26 April 2018) *Women Against Violence Europe (WAVE) Country Report 2017: The Situation of Women's Specialist Support Services in Europe [Albania excerpt]*, p.3).

A publication issued in June 2018 by *United Nations Albania* states that:

“Violence against Women (VAW) remains one of the most pervasive forms of violence in Albania” (United Nations Albania (1 June 2018) *Progress Report 2017*, p.84).

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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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