



Home Office

Country Information and Guidance

Albania: Female victims of trafficking

Version 5.0

July 2016

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Preface

This document provides country of origin information (COI) and guidance to Home Office decision makers on handling particular types of protection and human rights claims. This includes whether claims are likely to justify the granting of asylum, humanitarian protection or discretionary leave and whether – in the event of a claim being refused – it is likely to be certifiable as ‘clearly unfounded’ under s94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

Decision makers must consider claims on an individual basis, taking into account the case specific facts and all relevant evidence, including: the guidance contained with this document; the available COI; any applicable caselaw; and the Home Office casework guidance in relation to relevant policies.

Country Information

The COI within this document has been compiled from a wide range of external information sources (usually) published in English. Consideration has been given to the relevance, reliability, accuracy, objectivity, currency, transparency and traceability of the information and wherever possible attempts have been made to corroborate the information used across independent sources, to ensure accuracy. All sources cited have been referenced in footnotes. It has been researched and presented with reference to the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), dated April 2008, and the [European Asylum Support Office’s research guidelines, Country of Origin Information report methodology](#), dated July 2012.

Feedback

Our goal is to continuously improve the guidance and information we provide. Therefore, if you would like to comment on this document, please email [the Country Policy and Information Team](#).

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

The Independent Advisory Group on Country Information (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to make recommendations to him about the content of the Home Office’s COI material. The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office’s COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy. IAGCI may be contacted at:

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Information about the IAGCI’s work and a list of the COI documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector’s website at <http://icinspector.independent.gov.uk/country-information-reviews/>

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Guidance

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1. Introduction

1.1 Basis of claim

- 1.1.1 Fear of persecution or serious harm by traffickers or other non-state actors because the person is a (potential) female victim of trafficking for sexual exploitation.

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1.2 Other points to note

- 1.2.1 Only trained specialists in the UK's designated competent authorities can decide whether or not there are reasonable grounds to accept the person as a victim of trafficking for the purpose of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. However, both Home Office decision makers and the court are able to take factual matters into account when making their findings in an asylum claim. If it has not already been done, decision makers dealing with the asylum claim must make an appropriate referral to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). The case will then be routed to a 'competent authority' (see [Victims of human trafficking: competent authority guidance](#)).
- 1.2.2 Where someone claims asylum and their case has been considered by a Competent Authority and a positive conclusive grounds decision issued, this should be afforded appropriate weight when considering future risk of persecution. Further, where there has been a negative finding by a Competent Authority, considerable weight can be placed on this. In this scenario, because the Competent Authority's findings are subject to a higher standard of proof and are findings as to past treatment, it remains open to asylum decision makers to make different findings for the purpose of the asylum claim and future risk.
- 1.2.3 Information for Home Office staff who are trained specialists to help them decide whether a person referred under the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is a victim of trafficking is available in [Victims of modern slavery - competent authority guidance](#).
- 1.2.4 Where a claim falls to be refused, it must be considered for certification under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 as Albania is listed as a designated state.

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2. Consideration of Issues

2.1 Credibility

- 2.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).
- 2.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas

should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).

- 2.1.3 Decision makers should also consider the need to conduct language analysis testing (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).
- 2.1.4 Decision makers must also note that the British Embassy in Tirana is in a position to respond to queries from UK asylum decision makers via a referral process. In cases where a person is not subject to state persecution (as would be the case in trafficking claims), local checks can verify details of the person and all Albanian court judgements can be verified through the Prosecutor General's office in Tirana (see [Identity checking and family tracing via the Albanian Authorities](#)).

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2.2 Particular social group

- 2.2.1 Albanian women who have been trafficked form a particular social group (PSG) within the meaning of the 1951 UN Refugee Convention because they share a common characteristic that cannot be changed and have a distinct identity which is perceived as being different by the surrounding society.
- 2.2.2 Although Albanian women who have been trafficked form a PSG, this does not mean that establishing such membership will be sufficient to be recognised as a refugee. The question to be addressed in each case is whether the particular person will face a real risk of persecution on account of their membership of such a group.
- 2.2.3 For further guidance on particular social groups, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.3 Assessment of risk

- 2.3.1 In the country guidance case of [TD and AD \(Trafficked women\) CG \[2016\] UKUT 00092 \(IAC\)](#) (9 February 2016) the Upper Tribunal held that 'it is not possible to create a typical profile of a trafficked woman from Albania; trafficked women come from all areas of the country and from varied social backgrounds' (paragraph 119(a) of determination).
- 2.3.2 The Upper Tribunal further noted that whereas 'some women are lured to leave Albania with false promises of relationships or work,... others may seek out traffickers in order to facilitate their departure from Albania and their work in prostitution abroad. Although such women cannot be said to have left Albania against their will, where they have fallen under the control of traffickers for the purpose of exploitation there is likely to be a considerable degree of violence within the relationships and a lack of freedom, meaning that such women are victims of trafficking' (paragraph 119(c) of determination).
- 2.3.3 The Tribunal stated that 'Re-trafficking is a reality. Whether it is a risk for an individual claimant will turn in part on the factors that led to the initial trafficking and on her personal circumstances, including her background and age and her willingness and ability to seek help from the authorities. For a

proportion of victims of trafficking, their circumstances may mean that they are especially vulnerable to re-trafficking, or being forced into other exploitative situations' (paragraph 119(g) of determination).

- 2.3.4 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.4 Protection

2.4.1 The Upper Tribunal in [TD and AD](#) held that the Albanian government had 'made significant efforts to improve its response to trafficking in recent years. This includes widening the scope of legislation, publishing the Standard Operating Procedures, implementing an effective National Referral Mechanism, appointing a new Anti-Trafficking Co-ordinator, and providing training to law enforcement officials.' The Upper Tribunal concluded that although there is in general a Horvath-standard sufficiency of protection, this will not be effective in every case. Decision makers must therefore consider the individual circumstances of each case before deciding whether there is sufficiency of protection for each victim of trafficking (paragraph 119(d) of determination). (See also [Law enforcement](#).)

2.4.2 The Upper Tribunal found that whether a person is at risk of persecution and whether they will be able to access sufficiency of protection from the authorities will depend upon their 'individual circumstances, including but not limited to the following:'

- The social status and economic standing of her family
- The level of education of the victim of trafficking or her family
- The victim of trafficking's state of health, particularly her mental health
- The presence of an illegitimate child
- The area of origin
- Age
- What support network will be available (paragraph 119(h) of determination).

2.4.3 The Tribunal added that there is a reception and reintegration programme for victims of trafficking in Albania. 'Returning victims of trafficking are able to stay in a shelter on arrival, and in "heavy cases" may be able to stay there for up to 2 years. During this initial period after return victims of trafficking are supported and protected. Unless the individual has particular vulnerabilities such as physical or mental health issues, this option cannot generally be said to be unreasonable; whether it is must be determined on a case by case basis' (paragraph 119(e) of determination). (See also [Assistance for victims of trafficking](#)).

2.4.4 The Upper Tribunal further noted that once asked to leave the shelter, a victim of trafficking may live on her own. The challenges she will face will be significant, and will include, but won't be limited to, stigma, isolation, financial hardship and uncertainty, a sense of physical insecurity and the subjective

fear of being found either by their families or their former traffickers. The Tribunal stated that some women would have the capacity to deal with these challenges without undue hardship, but some victims of trafficking, with difficulties such as mental illness or psychological scarring, for example, cannot reasonably be expected to live alone in such circumstances. Therefore each person's circumstances must be carefully assessed (paragraph 119(f) of determination). (See also [Assistance for victims of trafficking](#).)

- 2.4.5 For further guidance on assessing the availability or otherwise of state protection, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.5 Internal relocation

- 2.5.1 In the country guidance case of [TD and AD](#), the Upper Tribunal noted that 'much of Albanian society is governed by a strict code of honour, which not only means that trafficked women would have very considerable difficulty in reintegrating into their home areas on return but also will affect their ability to relocate internally. Those who have children outside marriage are particularly vulnerable. In extreme cases the close relatives of the trafficked woman may refuse to have the trafficked woman's child return with her and could force her to abandon the child' (paragraph 119(b) of determination). (See also [Services for adult victims of trafficking](#).)

- 2.5.2 The onus is on the person to demonstrate why they believe they would be unable to relocate to a specific town/city to mitigate any risk. Tirana, for example, is a city of some 400,000 inhabitants and there are services available there specifically tailored to ensure the safety and re-integration of victims of trafficking.

- 2.5.3 For further guidance on internal relocation, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.6 Certification

- 2.6.1 Where a claim falls to be refused, it must be considered for certification under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

- 2.6.2 An application is likely to be certifiable, as sufficiency of protection is available in general, but this will not be the case for everyone. Each case must be considered on its facts.

- 2.6.3 For further guidance on certification, see the [Appeals Instruction on Certification of Protection and Human Rights claims under Section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 \(clearly unfounded claims\)](#).

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3. Policy summary

- 3.1.1 Albanian women who have been trafficked form a particular social group within the terms of the 1951 Refugee Convention. Whether they are at risk of persecution will depend upon their individual circumstances.
- 3.1.2 Albania has made great efforts to improve its response to trafficking in recent years, and there is, in general, a sufficient standard of protection available. However, this protection will nevertheless not be sufficient in every case, and each case must therefore be considered on an individual basis.
- 3.1.3 Much of Albanian society is governed by a strict code of honour, which means that trafficked women would have great difficulty in reintegrating into their home area and this would also affect their ability to relocate internally.
- 3.1.4 Re-trafficking does occur, and some women may be particularly vulnerable owing to their personal circumstances or the factors which led them to be trafficked in the first place.
- 3.1.5 Where a claim falls to be refused, it is likely to be certifiable under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act, but this will not be the case for everyone, and each case must be considered on its facts.

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The country of origin information considered by the Upper Tribunal in the country guidance case of [TD and AD](#) is listed in Appendix B in the determination.

4. Law enforcement

4.1 The law and its implementation

4.1.1 The US Department of State's Trafficking in Persons Report 2016 stated: 'The government increased anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts. Articles 110(a) and 128(b) of the criminal code prohibit sex and labor trafficking and prescribe penalties of eight to 15 years' imprisonment; these are sufficiently stringent and exceed those prescribed for other serious crimes, such as rape.'¹

4.1.2 A UNICEF report dated July 2015 stated:

'The Criminal Code criminalises child trafficking for sexual and/or labour exploitation (article 128(b)) and 'prostitution exploitation' (article 114). In 2013, the Criminal Code was amended to raise the minimum sentence for child trafficking adults from between seven to 15 years, up to between 10 and 20 years, imprisonment. Additionally the amendment criminalised internal trafficking as well as the facilitation of trafficking through forging, removing, damaging, or manipulating identity documents; and benefiting from, or using, the services of a trafficked person.'²

4.1.3 The European Commission noted the following in a report dated November 2015:

'In November, the 2014-17 strategy for combating trafficking in human beings and its action plan were adopted. Albania has updated and continued to implement the strategy and action plan on the fight against organised crime and trafficking. A cyber security policy document has been prepared and is pending governmental approval. In April, the General Prosecutor's Office approved the 2015-17 mid-term strategy and action plan to raise the standard of investigation and increase the professionalism and integrity of prosecutors.'³

¹ US Department of State. 'Trafficking in Persons Report 2016,' Country Narratives: A-C; Albania, published 30 June 2016 <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/258878.pdf> Date accessed: 14 July 2016

² UNICEF The Netherlands; UNICEF Belgium; UNICEF Sweden: 'Child Notice Albania,' July 2015 Published by UNICEF, available at http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/90_1438754232_unicef-child-notice-albania-201507.pdf Date accessed: 15 June 2016.

³ European Commission. 'Albania 2015 Report,' dated 10 November 2015. Available at ECOI.NET: http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1226_1447156092_20151110-report-albania.pdf Date accessed: 15 June 2016.

4.1.4 UNICEF reported as follows in July 2015:

'The Ministry of Internal Affairs, Office of the National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator (NATC) and the Anti-Trafficking Unit are in ultimate charge of protecting trafficked children, responsible for coordinating and monitoring all activities of stakeholders engaged in combating human trafficking. A Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs acts as the NATC and directs the Anti-Trafficking Unit. The National Referral Mechanism for Identification and Improved Assistance for Victims of Trafficking is the coordination mechanism between government, civil society actors and international organisations concerned with victim identification, referral and assistance. Standard Operational Procedures (SOP) have been developed to support the identification and referral of trafficking victims.

'A National Responsible Authority was established in 2014 with a specific responsibility (among others) to manage the national database for trafficking victims. There are regional committees to combat trafficking chaired by the Prefecture (the regional chief). At local level, child protection units (CPUs) are tasked with the identification of children at risk and their referral to appropriate services.'⁴

4.1.5 GRETA (Group of Experts on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings) noted the following in June 2016:

'Since the introduction of Law No. 10347 of 2010 on the Protection of the Rights of the Child, several institutions have been tasked with protecting children's rights. At the central government level, the National Agency for the Protection of Children's Rights is responsible for monitoring and coordinating central and local institutions. At the regional level, children's rights units are present in each of the country's 12 regions. At the municipal level, child protection units are tasked with assessing and monitoring the families of vulnerable children and co-ordinating the work between local institutions and NGOs in respect of vulnerable children, including victims of trafficking. The existing 200 units do not cover the whole of the country's territory and the units' effectiveness is hampered by limited technical, financial and professional resources. GRETA was informed that the territorial reform, which involved merging municipalities, could result in units being closed down. The Albanian authorities have indicated that Law No. 10347 was being revised to strengthen the child protection system by establishing regular monitoring and control mechanisms for child protection units, and to ensure adequate budget allocation for them.'⁵

⁴ UNICEF The Netherlands; UNICEF Belgium; UNICEF Sweden: 'Child Notice Albania,' July 2015. Published by UNICEF, available at [ecoi.net](http://www.ecoi.net): http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/90_1438754232_unicef-child-notice-albania-201507.pdf Date accessed: 15 June 2016.

⁵ GRETA (Group of Experts on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings). 'Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe convention on action against trafficking in human beings by Albania,' Second Evaluation Round, adopted on 11 March 2016, published on 3 June 2016. <https://rm.coe.int/mwg->

4.1.6 The US Department of State noted the following in its Trafficking in Persons Report 2016, published in June 2016:

'Border police continued to screen irregular migrants at the southern border with Greece for trafficking indicators, and in September the government developed a contingency plan to handle the influx of a large number of migrants, which stipulated the screening of all migrants for trafficking indicators. In 2015, the government trained 240 judges, prosecutors, and police officers on investigation and prosecution of traffickers and victim identification and protection. High turnover rates and corruption hampered the efficacy of police training. The government did not report any investigations, prosecutions, or convictions of government employees complicit in trafficking offenses. Police participated in two multi-national law enforcement operations, which resulted in the arrest of 10 Albanian suspected traffickers.'⁶

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4.2 Prosecution

4.2.1 In November 2015 the European Commission published the following in a report which covered the period October 2014 to September 2015:

'The number of final convictions for organised crime is still very low and has only slightly increased in recent years. There are very few cases against trafficking in human beings, despite Albania being a source, transit and destination country for trafficked people.'⁷ The same report stated, 'There were very few cases brought for trafficking in human beings. Eleven new cases were tried before the Serious Crimes Court of First Instance compared to none in 2013, with only eight convictions (no convictions in 2013).'⁸

4.2.2 The US Department of State's Trafficking in Persons Report 2016 stated:

'The Government of Albania does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. The government improved law enforcement efforts by convicting more traffickers than in 2014, including some traffickers who forced children to beg; but the government and NGOs identified fewer victims, and the government prosecuted fewer suspected traffickers than in 2014.'⁹

<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/258878.pdf>
Date accessed: 16 June 2016.

⁶ US Department of State. 'Trafficking in Persons Report 2016,' Country Narratives: A-C; Albania, published 30 June 2016 <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/258878.pdf> Date accessed: 14 July 2016

⁷ European Commission. 'Albania 2015 Report,' covering the period October 2014 to September 2015, dated 10 November 2015. Available at ECOI.NET: http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1226_1447156092_2011110-report-albania.pdf Date accessed: 15 June 2016.

⁸ European Commission. 'Albania 2015 Report,' dated 10 November 2015. Available at ECOI.NET: http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1226_1447156092_20151110-report-albania.pdf Date accessed: 15 June 2016.

⁹ US Department of State. 'Trafficking in Persons Report 2016,' Country Narratives: A-C; Albania, published 30 June 2016 <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/258878.pdf> Date accessed: 14

4.2.3 The US Department of State's Trafficking in Persons Report 2016 stated:

'The Serious Crimes Prosecutor's Office investigated 25 suspected traffickers in 2015, a decrease from 39 suspects in 2014. The state police also investigated 90 suspected traffickers during the reporting period. The government did not disaggregate law enforcement data to demonstrate efforts against both sex trafficking and forced labor. The government prosecuted 15 defendants in 2015, a decrease from 18 prosecuted in 2014.

Courts convicted 11 traffickers, an increase from nine in 2014. All convicted traffickers received prison sentences ranging from six to 17 years, three of which fell below the prescribed minimum penalty of eight years' imprisonment. Authorities continued to prosecute some traffickers for the lesser crime of "exploitation of prostitution" rather than trafficking, because the two laws overlap in some areas. Exploitation of prostitution carries a punishment of two to five years' imprisonment, and up to 15 years' imprisonment under aggravated circumstances, and authorities often applied the lesser charge because it was easier to investigate and prosecute. Some officials also only recognized cases involving cross-border movement as trafficking.¹⁰

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4.3 Identification of victims of trafficking

4.3.1 A UNICEF report, published in July 2015, stated:

'...basic challenges remain in identifying child trafficking cases. They stem from failures to recognise and acknowledge that trafficking exists and poor understanding of the SOPs [standard operating procedures]. For better case identification three mobile units have been established in Tirana, Vlora and Elbasan, each consisting of police officers and two NGO social workers. These units search local communities for potential trafficking victims.'¹¹

4.3.2 The US Department of State reported the following in the Trafficking in Persons Report 2016, published in June 2016:

'Law enforcement and social worker child protection units had a direct role in identifying child victims and ensuring their protection, although they remained underfunded and understaffed. One NGO-operated mobile unit identified 13 potential trafficking victims in 2015, after receiving funding from the Czech government to continue service during the year.'¹²

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¹⁰ US Department of State. 'Trafficking in Persons Report 2016,' Country Narratives: A-C; Albania, published 30 June 2016 <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/258878.pdf> Date accessed: 14 July 2016

¹¹ UNICEF The Netherlands; UNICEF Belgium; UNICEF Sweden: 'Child Notice Albania,' July 2015 Published by UNICEF, available at ecoi.net: http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/90_1438754232_unicef-child-notice-albania-201507.pdf Date accessed: 15 June 2016.

¹² US Department of State. 'Trafficking in Persons Report 2016,' Country Narratives: A-C; Albania, published 30 June 2016 <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/258878.pdf> Date accessed: 14

4.3.3 The UNICEF report of July 2015 stated:

'Regional anti-trafficking committees are established in all 12 Albanian regions. They identify potential and actual trafficking victims, refer them on to protection services, and monitor the trafficking situation in their region. The National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator (with USAID and other support) launched the national helpline 116 006 and an associated phone app. This initiative offers a quick and simple way for the general public to report suspected trafficking cases. A recently signed agreement aims to improve the identification of forced labour cases and trafficking for labour exploitation cases, as part of the domestic trafficking.'¹³

4.3.4 Women Against Violence Europe (WAVE) noted that there is a national helpline for victims of trafficking in Albania.¹⁴ GRETA stated that 'Albania has had a hotline to report child abuse, ALO 116, since 2009. Callers to this free phone number can obtain advice and information, particularly on financial assistance and health care services. This line is said to receive around 400 calls a day. During the last four years ALO 116 has received 95 calls which concerned children at risk of trafficking.'¹⁵

4.3.5 See [Children](#) and [Services for child victims of trafficking](#) for further information on the situation for children.

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4.4 Legal protection and restitution for victims of trafficking

4.4.1 The US Department of State noted the following in its Trafficking in Persons Report 2016, published in June 2016:

'Victims who testified against traffickers had access to the witness protection program, but no trafficking victims participated in the program, and NGOs reported at least one case where law enforcement discouraged a victim from accessing these services after testifying. Forty-eight victims testified against traffickers... Victims could obtain restitution from the government or file civil suits against traffickers, but no victims received restitution in 2015. The law exempts victims from punishment for crimes committed as a result of their

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¹³ UNICEF The Netherlands; UNICEF Belgium; UNICEF Sweden: 'Child Notice Albania,' July 2015 Published by UNICEF, available at [ecoi.net](http://www.ecoi.net):

http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/90_1438754232_unicef-child-notice-albania-201507.pdf Date accessed: 15 June 2016.

¹⁴ Women Against Violence Europe (WAVE). 'WAVE Report 2015 on the role of specialist women's support services in Europe,' published January 2016. http://files.wave-network.org/researchreports/WAVE_Report_2015.pdf Date accessed: 15 June 2016.

¹⁵ GRETA (Group of Experts on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings). 'Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe convention on action against trafficking in human beings by Albania,' Second Evaluation Round, adopted on 11 March 2016, published on 3 June 2016.

<https://rm.coe.int/mwg-internal/de5fs23hu73ds/progress?id=ncbyvXQO8ZX9GMXjMP47i7apPRMR0rIQgA0jkTIVvM0,&dl> Date accessed: 16 June 2016.

exploitation, but NGO-run shelters reported the government convicted three formally identified sex trafficking victims in prostitution.¹⁶

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4.5 Non-Albanian victims of trafficking

- 4.5.1 The US Department of State's Trafficking in Persons Report 2016, published in July 2015, stated that 'The law provided foreign victims a three-month reflection period with temporary residency status and authorization to work for up to two years, although the government had yet to grant this status to a victim.'¹⁷ The same report noted that 'Foreign victims had access to the same services as domestic victims, including legal assistance.'¹⁸

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4.6 Prevention of trafficking

- 4.6.1 The US Department of State's Trafficking in Persons Report 2016, published in June 2016, stated:

'The government continued efforts to prevent trafficking. The government had a 2014-2017 national strategy and action plan to combat trafficking; however, the plan's individual stakeholder ministries were underfunded for trafficking activities, and some diverted trafficking funds to other purposes.

'The government increased funding for the national anti-trafficking coordinator's office to 5.2 million lek (\$43,000) in 2015 from 4.7 million lek (\$39,000) in 2014. The national coordinator continued to publish regular activity reports on its website and regularly convened stakeholders belonging to the national referral mechanism. Twelve regional anti-trafficking committees comprising local officials and NGOs worked on prevention and victim assistance, but these committees' nation-wide effectiveness was limited. The national coordinator's office, the state police, and the general prosecutor's office signed a memorandum of understanding to monitor the performance of the criminal justice system in handling trafficking cases.

'The government co-ran and advertised a free hotline and a mobile application for citizens to report suspected trafficking cases. This hotline received 492 calls during 2015, 11 of which provided information on possible trafficking cases.

'The national coordinator's office ran two major anti-trafficking campaigns during 2015. The first, held from June to August, focused on child sex and labor trafficking and included awareness raising in schools and community

¹⁶ US Department of State. 'Trafficking in Persons Report 2016,' Country Narratives: A-C; Albania, published 30 June 2016 <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/258878.pdf> Date accessed: 14 July 2016

¹⁷ US Department of State. 'Trafficking in Persons Report 2016,' Country Narratives: A-C; Albania, published 30 June 2016 <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/258878.pdf> Date accessed: 14 July 2016

¹⁸ US Department of State. 'Trafficking in Persons Report 2016,' Country Narratives: A-C; Albania, published 30 June 2016 <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/258878.pdf> Date accessed: 14 July 2016

centers, discussions with high school students, conferences and seminars with state and border police and social services, and youth awareness meetings that explicitly targeted Roma populations. For the second campaign, the national coordinator's office designated October as Anti-Trafficking Month and organized a series of events with the financial support of NGOs.

'The government did not demonstrate efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex or forced labor. The government provided anti-trafficking guidance for its diplomatic personnel, and the national coordinator briefed Albanian diplomats stationed in nine cities on human trafficking regulations.'¹⁹

4.6.2 GRETA (Group of Experts on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings) noted in a report published in June 2016 that 'Several awareness-raising campaigns have focused on child trafficking in recent years.'²⁰

4.6.3 See [Children](#) and [Services for child victims of trafficking](#) for further information about the situation for children.

4.6.4 The US Department of State report made the following recommendations to the Albanian authorities:

'Do not punish victims for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being subjected to trafficking, particularly sex trafficking victims exploited in prostitution; increase funding to NGO-run shelters for trafficking victims and provide funding on a regular basis; improve services provided at the state-run shelter, particularly medical, psychological, and reintegration services; fund mobile units operated by civil society groups and law enforcement to identify victims and further train police, labor inspectors, and other front-line officials on proactive identification of victims; vigorously investigate,

prosecute, and convict traffickers, including complicit officials; encourage victims to assist in the prosecution of their traffickers by facilitating participation in the witness protection program and expanding training for prosecutors dealing with victim witnesses; improve the capacity of border and migration police to screen irregular migrants for trafficking indicators; and continue efforts to screen street children for signs of trafficking.'²¹

4.6.5 EU Observer explained the prevention work of the Belgian authorities in an article dated January 2016:

¹⁹ US Department of State. 'Trafficking in Persons Report 2016,' Country Narratives: A-C; Albania, published 30 June 2016 <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/258878.pdf> Date accessed: 14 July 2016

²⁰ GRETA (Group of Experts on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings). 'Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe convention on action against trafficking in human beings by Albania,' Second Evaluation Round, adopted on 11 March 2016, published on 3 June 2016. <https://rm.coe.int/mwg-internal/de5fs23hu73ds/progress?id=ncbyvXQO8ZX9GMXjMP47i7apPRMR0rIQgA0jkTIVvM0,&d> Date accessed: 16 June 2016.

²¹ US Department of State. 'Trafficking in Persons Report 2016,' Country Narratives: A-C; Albania, published 30 June 2016 <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/258878.pdf> Date accessed: 14 July 2016

'The Albanian government's national anti-trafficking strategy, approved in November 2014, named Belgium as one of the main destinations in Western Europe for Albanian women trafficked for prostitution.

'In Brussels, Didier Dochain, the deputy head of the federal police's anti-trafficking unit, told BIRN [Balkan Investigative Reporting Network] the Belgian authorities are focusing increasingly on trying to seize the assets of foreign traffickers.

"This is the motivation, of course, of all these criminal activities - it's to gain illegal profit and so if we can cut, seize, confiscate ... this profit, then it's a good thing," Dochain said. But, he added, traffickers generally send their profits back to their home countries so Belgian police needed cooperation from authorities there.

"They invest in land, houses, expensive cars and things like that and they live a good life back in their own country," he says. "They can live as barons or princes because they make a big profit and big money but the problem is first of all to trace this illegal money flow."

'Unfortunately, Dochain says, the response from foreign authorities in many cases is that they cannot find the money. Often this is because financial transactions were not recorded as thoroughly as they are in Belgium, he explains, but he cannot rule out that corruption also plays a role.'²²

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4.7 Corruption among officials

4.7.1 The US Department of State's Trafficking in Persons Report 2016, published in June 2016, stated that 'High turnover rates and corruption hampered the efficacy of police training. The government did not report any investigations, prosecutions, or convictions of government employees complicit in trafficking offenses. The government did not report any investigations, prosecutions, or convictions of government officials complicit in trafficking offenses.'²³

4.7.2 EU Observer stated the following in January 2016: 'Efforts to crack down on the gangs face serious obstacles. Complex international investigations are required and it is widely accepted that criminals can buy influence in the justice system of Albania, one of Europe's poorest countries.'²⁴

4.7.3 For further information about the Judiciary, see the [Background CIG](#) for Albania.

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²² EU Observer. 'Albanian women trafficked in EU: abused, rejected, abandoned,' dated 25 January 2016. <https://euobserver.com/investigations/131964> Date accessed: 20 June 2016.

²³ US Department of State. 'Trafficking in Persons Report 2016;' Country Narratives: A-C; Albania, published 30 June 2016 <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/258878.pdf> Date accessed: 14 July 2016

²⁴ EU Observer. 'Albanian women trafficked in EU: abused, rejected, abandoned,' dated 25 January 2016. <https://euobserver.com/investigations/131964> Date accessed: 20 June 2016.

5. Current situation

5.1 Statistics

5.1.1 GRETA published the following in June 2016:

'According to statistical information provided by the Office of the National Anti-trafficking Co-ordinator (ONAC), the number of potential victims and victims of THB identified per year was as follows: 97 in 2010, including 14 children; 84 in 2011, including 39 children; 92 in 2012, including 26 children; 95 in 2013, including 43 children; 125 in 2014, including 62 children; and 109 in 2015, including 48 children. The vast majority of the victims were Albanian. There were 3 foreign nationals identified as victims in 2013, 2 in 2014, and 4 in 2015.'²⁵

5.1.2 The US Department of State's Trafficking in Persons Report 2016, published in June 2016, noted:

'The government identified and assisted victims but continued to provide inadequate funding for victim services. The government and NGOs identified 109 victims of trafficking and potential trafficking victims in 2015, a decrease from 125 in 2014. Of these, authorities granted 38 official victim status after they agreed to undergo a formal interview with law enforcement and social services representatives, which was required to obtain this status. The government identified 80 victims; NGOs identified 27; and two victims were self-identified. NGOs reported the lack of government funding for the NGO-led mobile units responsible for most victim identification led to fewer victims being identified. Of all identified victims, 48 were minors and 87 were female. NGOs reported the following trends among the victims assisted by NGO-run shelters: 67 percent of victims were subjected to sex trafficking, nine percent were victims of labor trafficking, and 16 percent were victims of forced begging; 86 percent of victims were exploited within Albania, 12 percent abroad, and two percent both domestically and abroad.'²⁶

5.1.3 GRETA reported that 'The number of men identified as victims of trafficking for the purpose of slavery, servitude or forced labour has risen, partly as a result of the informal economy and the job shortage in Albania. While in 2010 all identified victims were female, the number of identified male victims was 14 in 2013, 17 in 2014, and 22 in 2015.'²⁷

²⁵ GRETA (Group of Experts on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings). 'Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe convention on action against trafficking in human beings by Albania,' Second Evaluation Round, adopted on 11 March 2016, published on 3 June 2016.

<https://rm.coe.int/mwg-internal/de5fs23hu73ds/progress?id=ncbyvXQO8ZX9GMXjMP47i7apPRMR0rIQgA0jkTIVvM0,&dl>
Date accessed: 16 June 2016.

²⁶ US Department of State. 'Trafficking in Persons Report 2016,' Country Narratives: A-C; Albania, published 30 June 2016 <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/258878.pdf> Date accessed: 14 July 2016

²⁷ GRETA (Group of Experts on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings). 'Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe convention on action against trafficking in human beings by Albania,' Second Evaluation Round, adopted on 11 March 2016, published on 3 June 2016.
<https://rm.coe.int/mwg->

- 5.1.4 See [Children](#) and [Services for child victims of trafficking](#) for further information on these groups.

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5.2 Forms of trafficking

- 5.2.1 In January 2016, EU Observer stated:

'Thousands of women and girls have been trafficked from Albania alone to western Europe as sex slaves in the last two decades. Well-organised criminal gangs control the trafficking, sometimes with the complicity of the victims' own family members, and launder profits by buying property back in Albania, police and experts say.'²⁸

- 5.2.2 The US Department of State's Trafficking in Persons Report 2016 stated that 'Albania is a source and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor.'²⁹ GRETA stated that 'Albania remains primarily a country of origin for victims of trafficking in human beings.'³⁰ EU Observer noted that Belgium is one of the main destinations for Albanian women trafficked into prostitution.³¹

- 5.2.3 The Albanian Helsinki Committee noted in a report dated December 2015 that 'Trafficking of persons for prostitution, particularly domestic trafficking of women and children, has increased.'³²

- 5.2.4 GRETA stated the following in a report published in June 2016: 'Trafficking and exploitation for different purposes of women, men and children within Albania has been on the rise and there have been more identified victims of internal trafficking than of transnational trafficking. The risks of human trafficking increase during the tourist season, including for the purpose of sexual exploitation and forced begging...'³³

[internal/de5fs23hu73ds/progress?id=ncbyvXQO8ZX9GMXjMP47i7apPRMR0rIQgA0jkTIVvM0,&dl](https://www.eurojust.europa.eu/external/de5fs23hu73ds/progress?id=ncbyvXQO8ZX9GMXjMP47i7apPRMR0rIQgA0jkTIVvM0,&dl)

Date accessed: 16 June 2016.

²⁸ EU Observer. 'Albanian women trafficked in EU: abused, rejected, abandoned,' dated 25 January 2016. <https://euobserver.com/investigations/131964> Date accessed: 20 June 2016.

²⁹ US Department of State. 'Trafficking in Persons Report 2016,' Country Narratives: A-C; Albania, published 30 June 2016 <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/258878.pdf> Date accessed: 14 July 2016.

³⁰ GRETA (Group of Experts on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings). 'Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe convention on action against trafficking in human beings by Albania,' Second Evaluation Round, adopted on 11 March 2016, published on 3 June 2016.

<https://rm.coe.int/mwg-internal/de5fs23hu73ds/progress?id=ncbyvXQO8ZX9GMXjMP47i7apPRMR0rIQgA0jkTIVvM0,&dl>

Date accessed: 16 June 2016.

³¹ EU Observer. 'Albanian women trafficked in EU: abused, rejected, abandoned,' dated 25 January 2016. <https://euobserver.com/investigations/131964> Date accessed: 20 June 2016.

³² Albanian Helsinki Committee. 'Report on the situation of respect for human rights in Albania for 2015,' dated December 2015.

http://www.ahc.org.al/web/images/Raporte/AL/Report_on_the_human_rights.pdf Date accessed: 15 June 2016.

³³ GRETA (Group of Experts on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings). 'Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe convention on action against trafficking in human beings by Albania,' Second Evaluation Round, adopted on 11 March 2016, published on 3 June 2016.

5.2.5 GRETA further stated:

'Following legislative changes in 2013 that resulted in express reference being made to internal trafficking in the definition of trafficking in human beings in the Criminal Code (CC), the number of identified victims of internal trafficking (i.e. within Albania) has risen above that of Albanian victims trafficked abroad. Internal trafficking is said to be linked to the rural exodus, with a surge in the number of female victims of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation and child victims trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation and/or begging during the tourist season. As regards transnational trafficking, the main countries of destination of Albanian victims were Italy, Greece, Kosovo, Germany, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. The authorities acknowledge that Albania is also becoming a country of transit as the flow of asylum seekers and migrants, including unaccompanied minors, is increasing and there may well be victims of trafficking among this mixed migration flow...

'No breakdown into types of exploitation of the above figures is available, but GRETA was informed that the identified victims were mostly women and girls subjected to sexual exploitation. The authorities have referred to cases linked to the "lover-boy" phenomenon, where men seduce women and girls and then force them into prostitution. Other victims were initially offered jobs as waitresses, dancers or singers and were subsequently subjected to sexual exploitation.'³⁴

5.2.6 GRETA commented on the sectors most at risk of human trafficking:

'According to the Labour Inspectorate, the sectors most at risk of human trafficking and forced labour in Albania are agriculture, food processing, textiles, mining, construction, restaurants, hotels, entertainment, transport, domestic work as well as the informal economy. The Roma and Egyptian communities are groups which are particularly vulnerable to trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation as they are often employed in the informal economy.'³⁵

5.2.7 The US Department of State's Trafficking in Persons Report 2016 stated:

<https://rm.coe.int/mwg-internal/de5fs23hu73ds/progress?id=ncbyvXQO8ZX9GMXjMP47i7apPRMR0rIQgA0jkTIVvM0.&dl>

Date accessed: 16 June 2016.

³⁴ GRETA (Group of Experts on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings). 'Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe convention on action against trafficking in human beings by Albania,' Second Evaluation Round, adopted on 11 March 2016, published on 3 June 2016.

<https://rm.coe.int/mwg-internal/de5fs23hu73ds/progress?id=ncbyvXQO8ZX9GMXjMP47i7apPRMR0rIQgA0jkTIVvM0.&dl>

Date accessed: 16 June 2016.

³⁵ GRETA (Group of Experts on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings). 'Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe convention on action against trafficking in human beings by Albania,' Second Evaluation Round, adopted on 11 March 2016, published on 3 June 2016.

<https://rm.coe.int/mwg-internal/de5fs23hu73ds/progress?id=ncbyvXQO8ZX9GMXjMP47i7apPRMR0rIQgA0jkTIVvM0.&dl>

Date accessed: 16 June 2016.

'Albanian women and children are primarily subjected to sex trafficking within Albania; in bordering Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Greece; and in other European countries. Albanian and some foreign victims are subjected to forced labor in Albania, particularly in the tourism industry. Children, including those of Romani or Balkan Egyptian ethnicity, are subjected to forced begging and other forms of compelled labor in Albania and neighboring countries; girls are vulnerable to child sex trafficking. NGOs report an increase in the number of Albanian children subjected to forced labor in Kosovo and the United Kingdom. Albanian women and girls are subjected to sex trafficking or forced labor following arranged marriages in Albania and abroad. In past years, some foreign women from European countries were subjected to sex trafficking in Albania. Middle Eastern, Central Asian, and African migrants, particularly Syrians, transit Albania to reach Western Europe and are vulnerable to trafficking, although police have yet to identify any as trafficking victims.'³⁶

5.2.8 See [Children](#) for further information about this group.

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5.3 Children

5.3.1 A UNICEF report dated July 2015 stated:

'For child trafficking in particular, Albania is primarily a country of origin for children trafficked abroad to Greece, Macedonia, and Kosovo. In addition, children are trafficked within Albania to large cities, tourist sites, border points, and ports. Children from the Roma and Egyptian communities make up the majority of children living and/or working in the streets (90%) and trafficking victims.

'Child trafficking victims face:

- Sexual exploitation.
- Forced labour, including forced begging.
- Forced marriage.
- Being forced to commit illicit activities.

'Trafficked and exploited children in Albania are mostly subject to forced labour, including begging, and sex trafficking. They can be trafficked to large cities, tourist sites, and border points and ports within the country, or trafficked to other countries. The recruiter and the trafficker may be an individual, a small informal group, or a larger organisation. Whilst it is often parents who exploit children for begging and other forced labour other adults, too, may exploit children living and/or working in street situations. Children who have been exposed to violence and abuse at home, or who live in otherwise dysfunctional families (eg. those with alcoholic parents), are

³⁶ US Department of State. 'Trafficking in Persons Report 2016;' Country Narratives: A-C; Albania, published 30 June 2016 <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/258878.pdf> Date accessed: 14 July 2016

at special risk of trafficking by neighbours, relatives, or strangers abusing their vulnerable situation.³⁷

5.3.2 UNICEF noted:

'There are reports of parents and other family members arranging the marriage of girls for trafficking, or forcing their children to beg. A key reason that the family members may do so is to receive money. Thirty per cent of the children interviewed by ARSIS said they started living and/or working in street situations because their parents made them do so. Children may be sold to someone else, including for marriage in other countries (eg. Montenegro)... Amongst all sources consulted, there were no reports of child trafficking victims being placed in debt bondage.'³⁸

- 5.3.3 See [Identification of victims of trafficking](#) for information about a helpline to report suspected child abuse and other services. See [Forms of trafficking](#) for further information about how children may be affected by trafficking. See [Services for child victims of trafficking](#) for further information on assistance available for children. See [Statistics](#) for further information about the situation for children.

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6. Assistance for victims of trafficking

6.1 Services for adult victims of trafficking

6.1.1 UNICEF summarised some of the support available to victims of trafficking:

'...support from the state for trafficking victims and to prevent trafficking... exists:

- The Ministry of Health ensures free health services for all trafficking victims.
- The Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth ensures the physical, psychological and social rehabilitation of victims, the promotion and facilitation of their vocational training and involvement in the labour market, supports them in finding accommodation, and that all standards of care are followed.
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has the duty to facilitate the registration procedures for trafficking victims in cases where this is missing, registration of individuals, and to equip them with all necessary identification documents.

³⁷ UNICEF The Netherlands; UNICEF Belgium; UNICEF Sweden: 'Child Notice Albania,' July 2015 Published by UNICEF, available at [ecoi.net](http://www.ecoi.net): http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/90_1438754232_unicef-child-notice-albania-201507.pdf Date accessed: 15 June 2016.

³⁸ UNICEF The Netherlands; UNICEF Belgium; UNICEF Sweden: 'Child Notice Albania,' July 2015 Published by UNICEF, available at [ecoi.net](http://www.ecoi.net): http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/90_1438754232_unicef-child-notice-albania-201507.pdf Date accessed: 15 June 2016.

• The Ministry of Education ensures that children are enrolled in school, and offers anti-trafficking awareness and education through the compulsory curriculum.³⁹

6.1.2 See [Healthcare for victims of trafficking](#), [Children](#) and [Services for child victims of trafficking](#) for further information on these subjects.

6.1.3 In a report published in June 2016, GRETA stated:

‘The assistance provided to victims of THB comprises three phases: (i) emergency accommodation in a shelter (for three to six months, but if necessary longer, depending on the victim’s situation), medical care, counselling, a reintegration project, legal advice, therapeutic activities and vocational training; (ii) accommodation outside the shelter in rented flats under the supervision of NGO staff, usually after finding a job, with the shelter sometimes acting as a mediator with the family and community to which the victim may return; (iii) monitoring and support for reintegration, in conjunction with the social services.’⁴⁰

6.1.4 The US Department of State’s Trafficking in Persons Report 2016 stated:

‘Four shelters, three of which were operated by NGOs and one that was state-run, provided assistance to trafficking victims, including food, counselling, legal assistance, medical care, educational services, employment services, assistance to victims’ children, financial support, long-term accommodation, social activities, vocational training, and post-reintegration followup.

‘However, NGOs reported the government did not provide adequate financial support for the implementation of medical, psychological, and reintegration services. NGO shelters assisted 89 victims, and the state-run shelter assisted 20. The government provided 11,300,000 lek (\$93,000) to the state-run shelter in 2015, a significant decrease from 19,770,000 lek (\$163,000) in 2014. The government did not provide adequate funding to NGO shelters, allocating 3,000,000 lek (\$24,700) strictly for food expenses. However, the government also provided funding for 12 staff member salaries at two NGO shelters and provided funding for renovation of the state-run shelter. NGO shelters continued to operate under severe financial constraints throughout 2015 and relied on outside sources for day-to-day operating costs. Of the 25 million lek (\$206,000) in the government’s Special Fund for Crime Prevention, 5 million lek (\$41,000) was disbursed to NGOs to support victims

³⁹ UNICEF The Netherlands; UNICEF Belgium; UNICEF Sweden: ‘Child Notice Albania,’ July 2015 Published by UNICEF, available at http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/90_1438754232_unicef-child-notice-albania-201507.pdf Date accessed: 15 June 2016.

⁴⁰ GRETA (Group of Experts on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings). ‘Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe convention on action against trafficking in human beings by Albania,’ Second Evaluation Round, adopted on 11 March 2016, published on 3 June 2016. <https://rm.coe.int/mwg-internal/de5fs23hu73ds/progress?id=ncbyvXQO8ZX9GMXjMP47i7apPRMR0rIQgA0jkTIVvM0,&dl> Date accessed: 16 June 2016.

of crime; however, no funds went to support trafficking victim service providers.

'... Male victims were accommodated in apartments paid for by NGOs.'⁴¹

6.1.5 GRETA further stated:

'The number and location of shelters for victims of THB in Albania remain the same as at the time of the first evaluation: two are for women, in Tirana (run by the NGO Different and Equal) and Vlora (run by the NGO Vatra), and a third one accommodates child victims in Elbasan (run by the NGO Another Vision). In addition, there is the National Reception Centre for Victims of Trafficking in Tirana, under the Ministry of Social Affairs and Youth. Each shelter has a multidisciplinary supervision team, which includes social workers, a psychologist, a doctor, a teacher and a legal specialist. The three shelters and the reception centre form the National Coalition of Shelters for Victims of THB, which meets each month to co-ordinate their activities and agrees on a number of priorities each year. The coalition is a participant in the Responsible Authority of the NRM.'⁴²

6.1.6 UNICEF provided the following information in a report published in July 2015:

'Referral of victims can be to the National Reception Centre for Trafficking Victims (the only state run centre) supervised by MSWY [Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth]. It accommodates trafficked women and girls, those at risk of trafficking, unaccompanied at-risk children, other sexually exploited young women who have returned to Albania and witnesses. However it is mainly an emergency reception centre and does not offer specialist integration services for children.

'Victims may also receive NGO support (eg. from Tjeter Vision, Psycho Social Center Vatra, Different and Equal) including accommodation, legal, health, education, counselling and vocational training services. Only Tjeter Vision in Elbasan offers targeted services (accommodation, legal aid, education, health, psycho-social support, family mediation and counselling, long term monitoring of case and follow up). The NGO receives financial support from the MSWY, and is subject to monitoring and inspection of services based on the approved state regulations.'⁴³

⁴¹ US Department of State. 'Trafficking in Persons Report 2016,' Country Narratives: A-C; Albania, published 30 June 2016 <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/258878.pdf> Date accessed: 14 July 2016

⁴² GRETA (Group of Experts on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings). 'Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe convention on action against trafficking in human beings by Albania,' Second Evaluation Round, adopted on 11 March 2016, published on 3 June 2016. <https://rm.coe.int/mwg-internal/de5fs23hu73ds/progress?id=ncbyvXQO8ZX9GMXjMP47i7apPRMR0rIQgA0jkTIVvM0,&dl> Date accessed: 16 June 2016.

⁴³ UNICEF The Netherlands; UNICEF Belgium; UNICEF Sweden: 'Child Notice Albania,' July 2015 Published by UNICEF, available at [ecoi.net](http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/90_1438754232_unicef-child-notice-albania-201507.pdf): http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/90_1438754232_unicef-child-notice-albania-201507.pdf Date accessed: 15 June 2016.

6.1.7 GRETA described the shelters available, which the delegation visited:

'The shelters in Tirana and Vlora have respectively 15 and 20 places, and the National Reception Centre for Victims of Trafficking currently has 15 places. A building previously used to accommodate irregular migrants was in the process of being refurbished at the time of the visit and it would provide a further 90 places. The shelters are intended chiefly for women, sometimes accompanied by their children, but girls aged over 16 are also accommodated.

'The delegation visited the shelter run by the NGO Different and Equal in Tirana, which occupies an entire building at a secret address. During the visit, it housed nine women, two of them with a child. In addition, 30 victims were accommodated in flats rented by the NGO. The women assisted by the NGO Different and Equal are mostly victims of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation. In addition to therapeutic activities, victims are offered a range of vocational training possibilities and foreign language courses.

'The delegation also visited the shelter managed by the NGO Vatra, located in Vlora at a secret address. At the time of the visit, it accommodated nine female victims, seven of whom aged between 16 and 18. Another seven victims assisted by the NGO were accommodated outside the shelter and 25 others were in the reintegration phase. The vast majority of the victims had been sexually exploited abroad or in Albania. In addition to psycho-social support, victims are offered literacy classes, schooling and vocational training. The NGO Vatra supports victims in their integration into working life, by helping to fund their professional project...

'The delegation also visited the National Reception Centre for Victims of Trafficking. The shelter is located on the outskirts of Tirana and its security is ensured by the national police. Victims who have undergone formal identification and are assessed to be in a particularly dangerous situation are placed in this centre. It has two buildings, one of them currently undergoing works with a view to housing male victims. In the first six months of 2015, 10 people were accommodated in the centre. In addition to risk assessment, counselling, medical assistance and legal advice, the centre provides vocational training in partnership with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Youth, either within the shelter or outside it if the victim's safety is not compromised.'⁴⁴

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⁴⁴ GRETA (Group of Experts on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings). 'Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe convention on action against trafficking in human beings by Albania,' Second Evaluation Round, adopted on 11 March 2016, published on 3 June 2016.

<https://rm.coe.int/mwg-internal/de5fs23hu73ds/progress?id=ncbyvXQO8ZX9GMXjMP47i7apPRMR0rIQgA0jkTIVvM0,&dl>
Date accessed: 16 June 2016.

6.2 The situation on leaving a shelter

6.2.1 GRETA further described procedures in place for persons leaving a shelter:

'When a victim leaves the National Reception Centre for Victims of Trafficking, the regional welfare services draw up an individual reintegration plan. GRETA was informed that victims of THB enjoy priority access to jobs and are offered state-remunerated internships. Similarly, the NGO-run shelters seek the co-operation of employment agencies and potential employers to facilitate access to the labour market for victims of THB, which nevertheless remains difficult.'⁴⁵ The US Department of State noted that 'The government ran a program that incentivized companies to hire former trafficking victims, but observers reported some companies forced former victims to work without proper compensation.'⁴⁶

6.2.2 GRETA further explained the systems in place for a person leaving a shelter:

'The database ... is updated to enable the different entities making up the Responsible Authority to track victims' progress and contribute to their reintegration. Civil society representatives pointed out that social services monitoring of the reintegration phase was inadequate, chiefly as a result of understaffing. Moreover, trafficked victims do not have priority access to social housing.

'The number of victims of THB who received assistance was 74 in 2012, 95 in 2013, and 125 in 2014. The authorities believe that this increase is a result of the SOPs [standard operating procedures] being better applied as time goes on.

'Under Law No. 2039 of 17 March 2011, every victim leaving a shelter must in principle receive ALL 3 000 (21.50 euros) a month until they are able to find work. In 2015, a total of ALL 1 008 080 (7 250 euros) was spent on welfare benefits paid to 28 victims of THB. However, the authorities acknowledge that this amount is not enough to enable victims to lead independent lives. Only victims who have been accommodated in the shelters receive such benefits and according to NGOs, victims are reluctant to collect the benefits from the relevant local authorities departments because of the stigma attached to victims of THB.'⁴⁷

⁴⁵ GRETA (Group of Experts on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings). 'Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe convention on action against trafficking in human beings by Albania,' Second Evaluation Round, adopted on 11 March 2016, published on 3 June 2016.

<https://rm.coe.int/mwg-internal/de5fs23hu73ds/progress?id=ncbyvXQO8ZX9GMXjMP47i7apPRMR0rIQgA0jkTIVvM0,&dl>
Date accessed: 16 June 2016.

⁴⁶ US Department of State. 'Trafficking in Persons Report 2016,' Country Narratives: A-C; Albania, published 30 June 2016 <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/258878.pdf> Date accessed: 14 July 2016

⁴⁷ GRETA (Group of Experts on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings). 'Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe convention on action against trafficking in human beings by Albania,' Second Evaluation Round, adopted on 11 March 2016, published on 3 June 2016.

<https://rm.coe.int/mwg-internal/de5fs23hu73ds/progress?id=ncbyvXQO8ZX9GMXjMP47i7apPRMR0rIQgA0jkTIVvM0,&dl>

6.2.3 In January 2016, EU Observer stated: 'many victims who escape from the gangs end up back in the sex trade after being shunned by their own families and communities and after receiving only modest help from the Albanian state to build a new life...' We've had only one case of employment in a state institution and this was due to our mediation," says Enkelejda Avdylaj, the coordinator at the Vatra centre in Vlora. "We talk to businesses, but when we tell them the profile of the employee they refuse to hire them."

'If trafficking victims are able to find a job, even a poorly paid one, they still suffer the stigma attached to their former lives. Diana Kaso, executive director of the Another Vision centre in Elbasan, says that 80% of the women who go through its rehabilitation programmes aim to rebuild their lives away from their home towns.

'Maria, the woman who was forced into prostitution in Greece, is following that path. She lives in a city far from her birthplace with her 12-year-old son, whom she says is the only source of joy in her life... "Many people have tried to exploit my misfortune rather than help," she says. When she goes to a government office to claim a small payment for trafficking victims, officials ask for sex, Maria says. "It's scary to enter an office."

'Kaso says that few women have the strength Maria has shown to build a new life. Of all the cases she has handled, about 100 women have ended up back in prostitution. "Sometimes they don't have the necessary support or they think that because of the stigma they have no other options," Kaso explains.⁴⁸

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6.3 Services for child victims of trafficking

6.3.1 GRETA explained the services available for children in the report of June 2016:

'With regard to the accommodation of child victims of trafficking... the shelters run by the NGOs Different and Equal and Vatra and the National Reception Centre for Victims of Trafficking can accommodate child victims of trafficking over 16 years of age. Younger children are assisted by the NGO Another Vision, which runs the only shelter specialising in the reception of child victims of THB, in Elbasan. The shelter can accommodate 34 children, divided between two residences.

'Assistance is provided in the shelter by a multidisciplinary team and children are enrolled in the local school as quickly as possible, even for short periods of time, and receive tailored support from teachers. Vocational training is organised for older children in conjunction with the authorities. The municipal child protection units are also involved in the reintegration process.⁴⁹

Date accessed: 16 June 2016.

⁴⁸ EU Observer. 'Albanian women trafficked in EU: abused, rejected, abandoned,' dated 25 January 2016. <https://euobserver.com/investigations/131964> Date accessed: 20 June 2016.

⁴⁹ GRETA (Group of Experts on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings). 'Report concerning the

6.3.2 In the 'Trafficking in Persons Report 2016,' published in June 2016, the US Department of State noted, 'Only one NGO-run shelter provided specialized services for child trafficking victims, and it continued to operate without adequate funding.'⁵⁰

6.3.3 See [Children](#) for further information about the trafficking of children.

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6.4 Healthcare for victims of trafficking

6.4.1 GRETA also described medical care available for victims of trafficking:

'At the end of 2014, Law No. 141/2014 amended Law No. 10383/2001 on Compulsory Health Insurance, entitling victims of THB to free access to health care. Victims must be issued with a card entitling them to free access to medical care provided outside shelters. This will, inter alia, enable victims suffering from psychiatric problems who cannot be cared for by the shelters to receive care and, if necessary, be hospitalised. The Ministry of the Interior is to draw up lists of beneficiaries to be forwarded to the Directorate General of Social Security, which will then contact the competent regional authorities. This legislative development has yet to be fully put into practice. The need to train medical staff coming into contact with victims of THB is acknowledged by the authorities, which have already launched a number of initiatives... In this context, NGOs have stressed the importance of guaranteeing the confidentiality of personal data of victims accessing public health care.'⁵¹

6.4.2 The US Department of State noted: 'NGOs reported the government did not provide adequate financial support for the implementation of medical, psychological, and reintegration services... The government issued trafficking victims health cards that provide free access to health care.'⁵²

implementation of the Council of Europe convention on action against trafficking in human beings by Albania,' Second Evaluation Round, adopted on 11 March 2016, published on 3 June 2016.

<https://rm.coe.int/mwg-internal/de5fs23hu73ds/progress?id=ncbyvXQO8ZX9GMXjMP47i7apPRMR0rIQgA0jkTIVvM0.&dl>
Date accessed: 16 June 2016.

⁵⁰ US Department of State. 'Trafficking in Persons Report 2016,' Country Narratives: A-C; Albania, published 30 June 2016 <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/258878.pdf> Date accessed: 14 July 2016

⁵¹ GRETA (Group of Experts on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings). 'Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe convention on action against trafficking in human beings by Albania,' Second Evaluation Round, adopted on 11 March 2016, published on 3 June 2016.

<https://rm.coe.int/mwg-internal/de5fs23hu73ds/progress?id=ncbyvXQO8ZX9GMXjMP47i7apPRMR0rIQgA0jkTIVvM0.&dl>
Date accessed: 16 June 2016.

⁵² US Department of State. 'Trafficking in Persons Report 2016,' Country Narratives: A-C; Albania, published 30 June 2016 <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/258878.pdf> Date accessed: 14 July 2016

Version Control and Contacts

Contacts

If you have any questions about the guidance and your line manager or senior caseworker cannot help you or you think that the guidance has factual errors then email [the Country Policy and Information Team](#).

If you notice any formatting errors in this guidance (broken links, spelling mistakes and so on) or have any comments about the layout or navigability of the guidance then you can email [the Guidance, Rules and Forms Team](#).

Clearance

Below is information on when this version of the guidance was cleared:

- version **5.0**
- valid from **28 July 2016**

Changes from last version of this guidance

Updated country information.

Guidance amended to reflect the country guidance case of [TD and AD \(Trafficked women\) CG \[2016\] UKUT 00092 \(IAC\)](#).

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REPORT NOW UPDATED