



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

Albania - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Tuesday 12 March 2019

Treatment of LGBT including: general rights; state protection; societal attitude; & internal relocation options

In November 2017 the *United Nations Development Programme* states in a report that:

“Non-conformity with mainstream gender norms by LGBTI people can provoke verbal abuse, physical attacks and harassment from family members and in public places. There is no safe place where LGBTI people know that they can be free from fear of violence and abuse, except for in each other's company and when receiving support from LGBTI people's organizations. Homophobic speech prevails in all parts of society, ranging from the derogatory and coercive language of young people in schools to degrading comments made by politicians in the media” (United Nations Development Programme (28 November 2017) *Being Lgbti In Eastern Europe: Albania Country Report, Reducing Inequalities & Exclusion And Combating Homophobia & Transphobia Experienced By Lgbti People In Albania*, p.33).

In November 2017 the *Tirana Times* states that:

“Lack of protection by the police and the justice system as a whole from systemic and widespread violence is one of the most pressing issues facing the gay community in Albania, considered one of Europe's homophobic countries, a survey has found” (Tirana Times (30 November 2017) *LGBT people, one of Albania's most victimized in access to justice*).

The *United States Department of State* issued a report in April 2018 commenting on events of 2017 including noting that:

“Sexual orientation and gender identity are among the classes protected by the country's hatecrime law. Despite the law and the government's formal support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) rights public officials sometimes made homophobic statements” (United States Department of State (20 April 2018) *2017 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Albania*, p.17).

A publication issued in May 2018 by *Freedom House* reviewing events of 2017 states that:

“...bias against LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) people remains strong in practice” (Freedom House (28 May 2018) *Freedom in the World 2018 – Albania*, p.6).

A report published in April 2018 by *Freedom House* states that:

“The LGBT community...suffering from high levels of homophobia in Albanian society...Despite widespread social disapproval, the LGBT community organized its annual pride parade in Tirana on May 13, which took place peacefully...Participation in this parade has grown from nine people in 2012, when it first began, to scores of

people in 2017, which reflected the growing strength of the still fragile LGBT community in Albania...” (Freedom House (11 April 2018) *Nations in Transit 2018 – Albania*, p.7).

In April 2018 the *European Commission* states that:

“Despite the fact that the Constitution does not include references to sexual orientation and gender identity, Albania's anti-discrimination legislation prohibits discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons. However, more efforts are needed to protect LGBTI persons from discrimination. An inter-ministerial team responsible for the monitoring of the 2016-2020 National Action Plan for LGBTI Persons in Albania is functional. Police officers, prosecutors and gender focal points of line ministries have been given training on preventing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. According to LGBTI organisations, the attitude and awareness of the police has improved significantly in recent years. The donor-funded shelter for LGBTI persons has continued to provide care, support and advocacy to homeless LGBTI individuals. During the reporting period, no court rulings in cases related to sexual orientation and gender identity have been made. In addition, public awareness and acceptance of LGBTI persons remain low, particularly in rural areas. Hate speech and discriminatory language continue to be a problem in the media, especially online media” (European Commission (17 April 2018) *Albania 2018 Report*, p.30).

In February 2019 the *International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association* states that:

“During 2018, Aleanca documented 45 cases of hate crimes against LGBT people. None of these cases were prosecuted by the police” (International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (26 February 2019) *Annual Review of the Human Rights Situation of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex People in Europe 2019*, p.19).

No further information on this issue could be found among sources available to the RDC.

References

European Commission (17 April 2018) *Albania 2018 Report*
https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1455673/1226_1546252533_20180417-albania-report.pdf

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Accessed Tuesday 12 March 2019

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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European Country of Origin Information Network
Freedom House
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Human Rights Watch
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