



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)  
LEGAL AID BOARD

## **Albania - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Friday 9 November 2012**

### **Current human rights situation**

A report issued in October 2012 by the *European Commission* states:

“Albania made progress in acceding to international human rights instruments by signing the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence in December 2011. Its ratification, and that of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, signed in December 2009, is pending. Delays in application and non-compliance with judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), particularly in relation to property rights and the right to a fair trial, continue to be an issue of concern” (European Commission (10 October 2012) *Albania 2012 Progress Report*, Section 2.2. Human rights and the protection of minorities/Observance of international human rights law).

This publication also notes:

“As regards promotion and enforcement of human rights, the new Ombudsman has taken on a proactive role since his appointment. However, the Ombudsman's Office still has difficulties in securing sufficient funding to fulfil its legal obligations, notably for monitoring visits” (Ibid, Section 2.2. Human rights and the protection of minorities/Observance of international human rights law).

It is also pointed out in this publication that:

“There has been progress in the prevention of torture and ill-treatment and the fight against impunity, which is part of a key priority of the Opinion” (ibid, Section 2.2. Human rights and the protection of minorities/Civil and political rights).

A publication by the *Bertelsmann Transformation Index* in 2012 points out that:

“During the period under review, the country has shown considerable regress in most measures of political participation, the stability of democratic institutions and political and social integration” (Bertelsmann Transformation Index (2012) *Albania Country Report*, p.2).

Commenting on events of 2011, a report published by the *United States Department of State* notes:

“On May 8, the country held nationwide local elections, which the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) characterized as competitive and transparent, but nevertheless highly polarized, due to mistrust between political parties in government and in the opposition. Security forces reported to civilian authorities. Corruption in all branches of government, and particularly within the court system, remained a serious problem. A highly polarized electoral environment characterized by incidents of fraud and controversial ballot counting undermined the right of citizens to change their government freely. Police beating and other mistreatment of suspects during detention and interrogation, sometimes to elicit

confessions, were also significant problems. Other human rights problems included some cases of physical mistreatment in police detention centers, domestic violence and discrimination against women, child abuse, and discrimination on the basis of ethnic minority status and sexual orientation and gender identity. Cases of trafficking in persons continued to be reported. The government did not always take steps to prosecute officials who committed abuses. Many government officials enjoyed immunity from prosecution, and those with powerful business interests often were able to avoid prosecution. Some lower-level officials were punished for abuses, but police impunity for physical abuse persisted” (United States Department of State (24 May 2012) *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2011, Albania*, Executive Summary).

## References

Bertelsmann Transformation Index (2012) *Albania Country Report*

<http://www.bti-project.org/fileadmin/Inhalte/reports/2012/pdf/BTI%202012%20Albania.pdf>

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European Commission (10 October 2012) *Albania 2012 Progress Report*

<http://www.ein.org.uk/members/country-report/albania-2012-progress-report>

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United States Department of State (24 May 2012) *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2011, Albania*

<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm#wrapper>

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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

Amnesty International

BBC News

Electronic Immigration Network

European Country of Origin Information Network

Freedom House

Google

Human Rights Watch

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

International Crisis Group

IRIN News

Lexis Nexis

Minority Rights Group International

Online Newspapers

Refugee Documentation Centre E-Library  
Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database  
Refugees International  
Reliefweb  
Reuters  
United Kingdom Home Office  
United States Department of State  
UNHCR Refworld