

Albania



Population: 3,639,453 (July 2010 est.)
Population Growth Rate: 0.546% (2010 est.)
Birth Rate: 15.29 births/1,000 population (2010 est.)
Life Expectancy: total population: 77.96 years; male: 75.28 years; female: 80.89 years (2010 est.)
Literacy Rate: total population: 98.7%; male: 99.2%; female: 98.3% (2001)
Net Migration Rate: -4.28 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2010 est.)
Unemployment Rate: 12.8% (2008 est.)
Gross Domestic Product per Capita: \$6,400 (2009 est.)
Religions: Muslim 70%, Albanian Orthodox 20%, Roman Catholic 10%
Note: Percentages are estimates; there are no available current statistics on religious affiliation; all mosques and churches were closed in 1967 and religious observances prohibited; in November 1990, Albania began allowing private religious practice
Languages: Albanian (official), Greek, Vlach, Romani, Slavic dialects
Ethnic Groups: Albanian 95%, Greek 3%, other 2% (1989)
Capital: Tirana¹

Trafficking Routes

Albania is a country of origin of trafficking victims, mainly to Greece, Italy, Belgium, United Kingdom, as well as within Albania.² In the last few years, Albania has increasingly become a transit country for men, women, and children, recruited into the trafficking chain, coming from Eastern Europe.³ In 2007, Greece was reported as the main destination for trafficked victims transited, from or through, Albania.⁴ The traffickers primarily use land routes and falsified documents to transfer their victims across borders.⁵ Kidnapping and deception of young women and girls for commercial sexual exploitation remains the main “recruiting” method used by traffickers. Once transported to the destination country, they are forced into prostitution and are brutally abused.⁶ The trafficking in children to Greece can be divided in trafficking for sexual exploitation and begging related forms of labor.⁷

¹ CIA, THE WORLD FACTBOOK (2009), <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/al.html> (last visited Sept. 21, 2010).

² IOM, THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA MIGRATION PROFILE (2007), available at: <http://www.iom.hu/PDFs/Albania-Migration%20Profile.pdf> (last visited Oct. 5, 2010).

³ UNHCR, COUNTRY OPERATIONS PLAN for 2003 ALBANIA (2003), available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/3d941f438.pdf> (last visited Sept. 22, 2010).

⁴ *Id.* at 18.

⁵ *Id.* at 18.

⁶ NEW CRACKDOWN ON SEX TRAFFICKING, BBC NEWS UK, Mar. 26, 2007, available at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/7024646.stm.

⁷ *Id.* at 19.

Factors That Contribute to Trafficking Infrastructure

Albania is located at a crossroads between North Eastern and Western Europe.⁸ Due to its vicinity to Western Europe, especially Greece and Italy, and its proximity to North Eastern bordering countries, Albania has been used as a main trafficking route and hub for traffickers.⁹ In 2002, however, Italy and Albania entered into an agreement in which they increased the police patrol on the Italian and Albanian coasts, removing a major water route for traffickers.¹⁰ The tightened security discouraged traffickers from using this water route leading them to find other routes and decreasing the trafficking.¹¹

Other common factors contributing to trafficking in persons in Albania are economic disparity, inadequate border control, widespread corruption, and lack of opportunities and education for young people, particularly women.¹² The poverty—especially in rural areas—has created a sense of desperation and hopelessness among young women and girls, making them vulnerable to the false promises and deception used by traffickers.¹³ In many cases, they are told that abroad they will work in restaurants and hotels. Once arrived in the destination country, they are forced into trafficking and coercion and deception leaves them stuck in the trafficking chain.¹⁴

Forms of Trafficking

The majority of victims are trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation. In addition, there have been reports of trafficking for the purpose of forced labor and begging. Cases of illegal adoption, especially in Greece, have been reported on a limited basis.¹⁵ Most of the women are trafficked for sexual exploitation, while children under 12 years of age are trafficked primarily for forced labor and begging.¹⁶

In 2005, Save the Children released a report stating that the number of children trafficked in Albania has grown. The report also mentioned that other trends of trafficking in Albania are developing, including the increase in internal trafficking and trafficking to Albania as a destination.¹⁷

⁸ SILVANA MJEDA, RESEARCH REPORT ON TRAFFICKING SITUATION IN ALBANIA (2008), *available at*: www.cies.it/aeneas/attachments/068_Survey%20Albania.doc

⁹ *Id.* at 13.

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *Id.* at 14.

¹² *Id.* at 19.

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ UNICEF, TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS IN SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE (2005), *available at*: http://www.unicef.org/media/files/2004Focus_on_Prevention_in_SEE.pdf.

¹⁵ NIKI KITSANTONIS & MATTHEW BRUNWASSER, *BABY TRAFFICKING IS THRIVING IN GREECE*, INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE, Dec. 18, 2006, *available at*: http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/18/world/europe/18iht-babies.3939121.html?_r=1.

¹⁶ SILVANA MJEDA *supra* note 6.

¹⁷ CHILD TRAFFICKING RESPONSE PROGRAMME SOUTHEAST EUROPE, SAVE THE CHILDREN, CHILDREN SPEAK OUT: TRAFFICKING RISK AND RESILIENCE IN SOUTHEAST EUROPE (2007), *available at*: http://www.childtrafficking.com/Docs/save_the_children_1007.pdf.

Government Responses

In 2005 Albania adopted the National Strategy for Combating Human Trafficking: Strategic Framework and National Action Plan 2005-2007. This plan contains a comprehensive range of activities, and commitments to be put undertaken by the authorities, eliminating, and preventing, trafficking in persons.¹⁸ This new plan further develops goals of earlier plans and establishes a policy framework, identifies partners from governmental and nongovernmental sectors, as well as partner international organizations.¹⁹ Also, the Coordinated Action Against Human Trafficking (CAAHT) was initiated in 2004 with the support of the USAID.²⁰ This group coordinates anti-trafficking activities and monitors coordination among the government and civil sectors.²¹

Cooperation and collaboration between the government and nongovernmental organizations have improved. The Regional Committees in the Fight Against Trafficking in Human Beings (RCs), which was enacted in 2006, recognizes the importance of international cooperation as a vital part of their anti-trafficking efforts.²² This RC's include "directors of police, education, employment, and social services, as well as mayors and representatives of NGOs".²³ The RCs are led by prefects, the most senior officials from the central government at the regional administration level, providing a liaison between central and local governmental offices, in cooperation with local NGOs.²⁴

The Criminal Code of the Republic of Albania, which was enacted in a consolidated version in 2004, recognizes trafficking in persons as a criminal offense.²⁵ Article 110/1 defines trafficking as "Recruitment, transport, transfer, hiding, or reception of persons through threat or the use of force or other forms of compulsion, kidnapping, fraud, abuse of office, or taking advantage of social, physical, or psychological condition or the giving or receipt of payments or benefits in order to get the consent of a person who controls another person, with the purpose of exploitation of prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced services or work, slavery or forms similar to slavery, putting to use or transplanting organs, as well as other forms of exploitation."²⁶ The punishment for this crime is imprisonment for 5 to 15 years, with a fine of 2 million to 5 million lek.²⁷ The organization, management, and financing of the

¹⁸ ALBANIAN NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR COMBATING TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS: *Strategic Framework and National Action Plan: 2005 – 2007* (2005), available at: http://www.caaht.com/resources/NationalStrategy_2005-7_ENGLISH.pdf

¹⁹ U.N. ECONOMIC & SOCIAL COUNCIL, COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on Rights of the Child*, U.N. Doc. E/CN.4/2006/67/Add.2 (Mar. 27, 2006), (prepared by Juan Miguel Petit) available at: <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G06/121/61/PDF/G0612161.pdf?OpenElement>

²⁰ USAID-CAAHT *supra* note 28.

²¹ *Id.*

²² REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA MINISTRY OF INTERIOR DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERIOR NATIONAL COORDINATOR ON THE FIGHT AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS, *Measures and Actions to be Taken to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings in Albania* (2007), available at: http://www.osce.org/documents/cthb/2007/05/24609_en.pdf

²³ USAID-CAAHT *supra* note 28

²⁴ USAID-Albania, *Success Story: Coordination Key to Anti-Trafficking*, Sept. 5, 2007, http://albania.usaid.gov/shfaqart/110/94/Success_Story.htm..

²⁵ U.N. ECONOMIC & SOCIAL COUNCIL, *supra* note 30.

²⁶ See Criminal Code of the Republic of Albania, Law No. 7895, dated 27 January 1995, as amended by the following laws: Law 8279, dated 15.01.1998; Law No. 8733, 24.01.2001; Law No 9188, dated 12.01.2004; Law No 9686, dated 26.02.2007.

²⁷ *Id.* art. 110(1).

trafficking of persons are punishable by imprisonment of 7 to 15 years, with a fine of 4 to 6 million lek.²⁸

The exploitation of children for labor, begging, or other forced services are also criminalized under the 2004 Criminal Code. Exploiting a child to forced labor or similar occupation is a criminal act and is punished by imprisonment for a term up to one year and a fine ranging from 50 thousand to 1 million lek.²⁹ This article also criminalizes the sale of a child as means for organ donation, or illegal adoption, for purposes of profit.³⁰ The crime is punished by imprisonment of up to 7 years.³¹

Nongovernmental and International Organizations Responses

There are a number of NGOs and international organizations operating in antitrafficking efforts in Albania. Among these are Vatra Center, USAID, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Most groups are the most active, working at a local and regional level throughout Albania.³² Vatra Center has been assisting Albania in its efforts against Human Trafficking since 1999.³³ It is directly engaged in victim assistance and reintegration programs.³⁴

The establishment of the National Reception Centre for Victims of trafficking (NRCVT), by IOM in 2003, which provided assistance to trafficked victims, such as shelter, legal and medical assistance, and employment among others.³⁵

Albania is a member of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The OSCE mission to Albania supports and assists Albanian authorities coordinate their anti-trafficking efforts, through the promotion of democracy and humanitarian law.³⁶ The Anti-Trafficking Unit of the OSCE presence in Albania assists the government in implementing the National Anti-Trafficking Strategy and the action plan to combat human trafficking and protect victims, particularly children.³⁷ As part of the strategy, a legal review was drafted by Albanian and international lawyers commissioned by the unit.³⁸ In partnership with the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the Office of the Co-ordinator for OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, the unit is also implementing a program to promote economic empowerment and legal assistance as tools to help prevent human trafficking. OSCE also offers training related to trafficking issues to police officers and court officials.³⁹

²⁸ *Id.* art 110(1).

²⁹ *Id.* art. 128(c).

³⁰ *Id.*

³¹ *Id.*

³² UNICEF *supra* at 5.

³³ USAID, *The Albanian Initiative: Coordinated Action Against Human Trafficking 2008 Annual Conference Report* (2008), available at: http://www.caaht.com/resources/AC_2008/Ann_Conf_2008_Report_FIN_10SEP08.pdf

³⁴ *Id.* at 26

³⁵ SILVANA MJEDA *supra* note 6.

³⁶ STOP HUMAN TRAFFICKING, *Albanian Ministry of the Interior*, available at: http://www.cies.it/aeneas/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=61:albanian-ministry&catid=40:partners&Itemid=57

³⁷ OSCE, *Presence in Albania: Anti-trafficking 2009*, available at: <http://www.osce.org/albania/13138.html> (last visited Jan. 29, 2010).

³⁸ *Id.*

³⁹ Press Release, The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), OSCE Presence Helps Train Albanian Police, Court Officials and Civil Society Groups, Sept. 18, 2007, available at: <http://www.osce.org/item/26309.html>.

A Human Rights Report on Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children

Another NGO, Coordinated Action Against Human Trafficking, has been providing forums for sharing information and building skills of government and civil society actors to better coordinate antitrafficking activities.⁴⁰ USAID has been very active in antitrafficking campaigns in Albania. In 2007, USAID donated \$2 million for a campaign to improve awareness and provide shelter and services to trafficked victims. The grant was also used to change the way trafficking stories are reported by the media: Victims of trafficking are usually referred to as “prostitutes,” and their images, names, and locations are publicized. UNICEF, Save the Children, and Terre des Hommes are also involved in antitrafficking efforts in Albania.⁴¹

Multilateral Initiatives

On February 27, 2006, the Albanian government signed a bilateral agreement with Greece to address child trafficking issues, mainly assisting with the return of trafficked victims to Albania from Greece and enacting effective preventive anti-child trafficking measures.⁴²

On February 6, 2007, Albania ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings. The Convention, which entered into force on February 1, 2008, is the first European treaty in this field. To date, the Convention has been ratified/accessed by 30 countries.⁴³ These nations have committed to individual and collective action to criminalize trafficking as well as a range of other minimum steps necessary to respect and protect the rights of trafficked persons.⁴⁴

³⁰ USAID *supra* at 22.

⁴¹ UNICEF *supra* at 5.

⁴² PRESS RELEASE, USAID-EUROPE AND EURASIA, *Agreement between Albania and Greece Guarantees and Protects Rights of Child Trafficking Victims*, available at: http://www.usaid.gov/locations/europe_eurasia/press/success/2006-04-02.html.

⁴³ COUNCIL OF EUROPE, *Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings- signatories*, available at: <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/ChercheSig.asp?NT=197&CM=1&DF=&CL=ENG> (last updated Oct. 5, 2010).

⁴⁴ COUNCIL OF EUROPE, *Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings of May 16, 2005*, available at: <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/Html/197.htm>.