

Albania

Journalists were subjected to hate speech, physical assaults and a gun attack. Domestic violence against women continued, with 12 women killed by partners and family members. Albania and Italy agreed on the construction of two detention centres in Albania for migrants attempting to reach Italy. The CEDAW Committee reported a lack of progress on LGBTI people's rights. The spreading of infectious disease by negligence was abolished as a criminal offence. The reduced numbers of courts raised concerns about access to justice for citizens.

Background

Local elections were held in May, with the ruling Socialist Party winning the majority of the municipalities.

Freedom of expression

In March, a gun attack on the headquarters of the national television broadcaster Top Channel resulted in the death of a security guard.

In January, a journalist and his wife were physically attacked in Lezhë by two businessmen following the publication of an article he had written about a court case. Journalists were also attacked by political figures. Erion Veliaj, the mayor of Tirana, referred to an investigative journalist known as "O.X." as a "contract killer" in response to an article she had written highlighting the role the mayor had played in the incinerator project for public waste management in Tirana.

Violence against women and girls

Domestic violence against women was rife. According to police data, during the first three months of the year there were more than 1,000 reported cases of violence against women, resulting in 510 protection orders. Of the 5,210 cases of domestic violence recorded by the police in 2022, in March the public prosecutor's office reported only 1,880 cases; men were responsible for 92.8% of the attacks. Between January and September, 12 women had been killed by their partners or other family members.

Refugees' and migrants' rights

In November, Albania and Italy signed an agreement establishing that Italy would build two detention centres in Albania to detain people intercepted by Italian authorities at sea while trying to reach Italian shores. Human rights organizations and others expressed concern about the impact this could have on the human rights of refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants, including automatic and therefore arbitrary detention.

LGBTI people's rights

In October, a report by the CEDAW Committee noted that Albania's 2016-2020 national action plan for LGBTI people had not succeeded in eliminating discrimination against lesbian, bisexual,

transgender and intersex women, and expressed concern about the increasingly hostile environment they faced in the country.

Right to health

The Constitutional Court abolished Article 89(b) of the criminal code as disproportionate. The Article, which came into force during the Covid-19 pandemic, provided for a sentence of up to eight years' imprisonment for the unintentional spreading of infectious diseases that had serious consequences for or endangered people's lives.

Right to a fair trial

On 1 February, a new judicial structure entered into force, reducing the number of courts in Albania from 34 to 16. There were concerns that this would make access to justice more expensive and more difficult.

Right to life

In December, a prisoner at Peqin high-security prison shot and killed one inmate and injured another, raising concerns about the security measures in place at the prison.