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OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE NOTE

ALBANIA

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1. Introduction

- 1.1** This document summarises the general, political and human rights situation in Albania and provides information on the nature and handling of claims frequently received from nationals/residents of that province. It must be read in conjunction with any COI Service Albania Country of Origin Information Bulletins at:

http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/country_reports.html

- 1.2** This document is intended to provide clear guidance on whether the main types of claim are or are not likely to justify the granting of asylum, Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave. Caseworkers should refer to the following Asylum Policy Instructions for further details of the policy on these areas:

API on Assessing the Claim
 API on Humanitarian Protection
 API on Discretionary Leave
 API on the European Convention on Human Rights

- 1.3** Claims should be considered on an individual basis, but taking full account of the information set out below, in particular Part 3 on main categories of claims.
- 1.4** With effect from 1 April 2003 Albania is a country listed in section 94 of the Nationality Immigration and Asylum Act 2002. Asylum and human rights claims must be considered on their individual merits. However if, following consideration, the claim from someone who is entitled to reside in Albania, made on or after 1 April 2003, is refused, caseworkers should certify the claim as clearly unfounded unless satisfied that it is not. A claim will be clearly unfounded if it is so clearly without substance that it is bound to fail. The information set out below contains relevant country information, the most common types of claim and guidance from the courts, including guidance on whether cases are likely to be clearly unfounded.

Source documents

- 1.5** A full list of source documents cited in footnotes is at the end of this note.

2. Country assessment

- 2.1** Albania is a republic with a multiparty Parliament, and a Prime Minister and a President both elected by Parliament. The Prime Minister heads the Government while the President has limited executive power.¹
- 2.2** In April 1991 the Communists won the first multi-party elections but resigned in June 1991. The Communists were replaced by a coalition Government of National Stability, which collapsed in December 1991 when opposition ministers withdrew support. Following a brief period of an interim technocratic government in March 1992 the Democratic Party won the parliamentary elections and those in May 1996. The 1996 elections were criticised by international observers for violations of electoral law and for Government-instigated intimidation. The Parliamentary general election which took place in June 2001 with further rounds in July 2001 was peaceful and produced a decisive victory for the ruling Socialist Party.²
- 2.3** The centre-right Democratic Party led by the former president Sali Berisha, emerged as the winner of general elections held in July 2005. Following wrangling over the count with re-runs demanded in a number of constituencies, the result was declared nearly 2 months later and the outgoing Prime Minister Fatos Nano of the Socialist party tendered his resignation on the 1 September 2005.³ At the invitation of the President of the Parliament of Albania the Bureau of the Assembly of the Council of Europe set up an ad hoc Committee to observe the elections in Albania. In a report on the elections the Committee concluded that the elections complied only partially with Council of Europe commitments and other international standards for democratic elections.⁴
- 2.4** The FCO Annual Human Rights report for 2005 notes that although Albania has introduced legislation to protect and improve human rights, particularly in policing and judicial standards, the country still faces major human rights challenges.⁵
- 2.5** The Government of Albania generally respects the human rights of its citizens, however there were serious problems in several areas. The police beat and abused suspects, detainees, and prisoners and occasionally arbitrarily arrested and detained persons. Prolonged pre-trial detention was also a problem as was official impunity. Individual vigilante action, mostly related to traditional blood feuds, resulted in some killings and an atmosphere of fear in some areas of the country. Societal violence and discrimination against women and children were serious problems and societal discrimination against Roma, the Egyptian community, and Gay men persisted. Although trafficking in persons remained a problem, the Government took some steps to address it.⁶
- 2.6** The Albanian constitution provides for an independent judiciary. However, because of widespread corruption, bribery, and limited resources, much of the judiciary was unable to function independently and efficiently.⁷ Freedom House reported that the judiciary along with law enforcement agencies, remains inefficient and prone to corruption, and judges are often inexperienced and untrained.⁸

¹ USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 Introduction

² FCO Country Profile 2005

³ BBC Country Profile 2005 & BBC 'Albania PM resigns' 2005

⁴ Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly Observation of the parliamentary elections in Albania 2005

⁵ FCO Human Rights Annual report 2005 p.112

⁶ USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 Introduction

⁷ USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 Introduction

⁸ Freedom House 2005 p22-25

- 2.7** The Constitution provides for freedom of speech and the press, and the media is active and largely unrestrained. Political interference in the media occurred less frequently in 2004 than in previous years however considerable harassment of journalists continued.⁹
- 2.8** During 2004 Albania continued to experience high levels of violent crime. Many killings continued to occur as the result of individual or clan vigilante actions connected to traditional 'blood feuds' or criminal gang conflicts. The Ministry of Public Order noted that at least 10 individuals were killed during 2004 in blood feuds based on the medieval Code of Lek Dukagjini (the kanun). The kanun is particularly practised by individuals in the north of the country.¹⁰
- 2.9** There are high levels of organised crime and corruption in Albania.¹¹ Considerable anti-corruption legislation is in place but little progress has been made. Petty corruption and corruption in businesses are reported to be rife. There are international concerns that some Albanian politicians are linked to organised crime.¹²
- 2.10** A number of domestic NGOs and international human rights groups generally operate without government restriction, investigating and publishing their findings on human rights cases. The Albanian Helsinki Committee (AHC) monitored human rights issues as they related to minorities, security forces, the judiciary, and elections. The Albanian Human Rights Group (AHRG) in addition to offering legal assistance ran a complaint centre and conducted police training.¹³
- 2.11** The trafficking of women and girls remained a serious problem during 2004, although with the help of advisers from abroad Albania has seriously reduced its role as a transit country.¹⁴ Amnesty International notes that poverty, lack of education, family breakdown and crime networks at home and abroad contributed to the continuing trafficking of women and children. A March 2004 law on witness protection could not be implemented through lack of supporting legislation and funding. However prosecutions for the trafficking of women and children for forced prostitution, cheap labour or use as beggars, doubled by comparison with 2003, and heavy sentences were imposed.¹⁵

3. Main categories of claims

- 3.1** This Section sets out the main types of asylum claim, human rights claim and Humanitarian Protection claim (whether explicit or implied) made by those entitled to reside in Albania. It also contains any common claims that may raise issues covered by the API on Discretionary Leave. Where appropriate it provides guidance on whether or not an individual making a claim is likely to face a real risk of persecution, unlawful killing or torture or inhuman or degrading treatment/ punishment. It also provides guidance on whether or not sufficiency of protection is available in cases where the threat comes from a non-state actor; and whether or not internal relocation is an option. The law and policies on persecution, Humanitarian Protection, sufficiency of protection and internal relocation are set out in the relevant API's, but how these affect particular categories of claim are set out in the instructions below.
- 3.2** Each claim should be assessed to determine whether there are reasonable grounds for believing that the claimant would, if returned, face persecution for a Convention reason - i.e. due to their race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. The approach set out in *Karanakaran* should be followed when deciding how much

⁹ USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 section 2 & Freedom House 2005 p.22-25

¹⁰ USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 section 1

¹¹ FCO Country Profile 2005

¹² Freedom House 2005 p.22-25

¹³ USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 section 4

¹⁴ Freedom House 2005 p.22-25

¹⁵ AI Annual Report 2005

weight to be given to the material provided in support of the claim (see the API on Assessing the Claim).

- 3.3** If the claimant does not qualify for asylum, consideration should be given as to whether a grant of Humanitarian Protection is appropriate. If the claimant qualifies for neither asylum nor Humanitarian Protection, consideration should be given as to whether he/she qualifies for Discretionary Leave, either on the basis of the particular categories detailed in Section 4 or on their individual circumstances.
- 3.4** This guidance is **not** designed to cover issues of credibility. Caseworkers will need to consider credibility issues based on all the information available to them. (For guidance on credibility see para 11 of the API on Assessing the Claim)
- 3.5** Also, this guidance does not generally provide information on whether or not a person should be excluded from the Refugee Convention or from Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave. (See API on Humanitarian Protection and API on Exclusion under Article 1F or 33(2) and API on DL)

All APIs can be accessed via the IND website at:

http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/en/home/laws_policy/policy_instructions/apis.html

3.6 Blood feuds

- 3.6.1** Some claimants will apply for asylum based on ill treatment amounting to persecution as a result of a blood feud. Claimants may also claim that this ill-treatment will breach article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). The reasons often cited for involvement in a blood feud are disputes with neighbours over land, accidental death caused by traffic accidents or fights, or resurfaced pre-communist disputes.
- 3.6.2 *Treatment.*** Blood feuds are based on the medieval Code of Lek Dukagjini (the kanun) which is practiced mainly in the north of the country, according to the Ministry of Public Order at least 10 individuals were killed in 2004 during blood feuds. Under the kanun only adult males are acceptable targets for blood feuds. However women and children are often killed in attacks associated with blood feuds. As a result of blood feuds in 2004, 670 families were self-imprisoned, 650 families accepted legal procedures instead of personal vendettas for resolving the conflict, 54 families were living under protection outside the country and 160 children were prevented from attending school due to fear of revenge, of which 73 were considered to be in serious danger. These figures showed a decrease over 2003 when 1,370 families were reported to be self-imprisoned at home and 711 children prevented from attending school due to fear of revenge. Land property conflicts and issues related to human trafficking were the main reasons forcing families to enter into blood feuds.¹⁶
- 3.6.3** The Albanian government has taken steps to address the problem of blood feuds holding round table conferences in June 2003 and March 2004, and inaugurating a Serious Crimes Court on 1 August 2004. Following the conference in Shkoder in March 2004 it was announced that a special unit within the Shkoder police force had been set up with the aim of preventing blood feuds and introducing institutional reconciliation.¹⁷
- 3.6.4** Several agencies provide reconciliation services to families involved in blood feuds including The Association for Fraternisation and Reconciliation and the Albanian Peace Union.¹⁸ One domestic NGO the Albanian Foundation for Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation of Disputes (AFCR) undertakes mediation and reconciliation of conflicts and

¹⁶ USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 section 1

¹⁷ CIPU Country Report April 2004 para 5.150-5.152

¹⁸ CIPU Country Report April 2004 para 6.153

disputes arising among individuals and families.¹⁹ Aleksander Kola of the Foundation has successfully managed to negotiate the end of 10 blood feuds in the last 2 years.²⁰

3.6.5 Sufficiency of protection. The Ministry of Public Order stated that in 2004 there were 12,132 Albanian State Police (ASP) however only 40% of police officers received training beyond basic training. The restructuring of the ASP created two deputy directorates, one for operations and the other for administration. Operational Directorates include, Organised Crime and Witness Protection, Fight against Terrorist Acts and Cold cases, Public Order and Security, Territorial Control and Coordination, and Border Police and Migration. However in 2004 the overall performance of law enforcement remained weak, with unprofessional behaviour and corruption remaining major impediments to the development of an effective civilian police force. Low salaries and widespread corruption throughout society made the problem of corruption in the police difficult to combat.²¹

3.6.6 Blood feud cases are adjudicated in the Court of Serious Crimes and blood killings carry a sentence of 20 years or life imprisonment. Although blood feud prosecution rates are not available, estimates indicated that 60 to 65% of all cases were brought to court and nearly all of them ended up at the appellate level.²² There is no evidence to indicate that individual Albanians fearing the actions of those seeking to carry out a blood feud cannot access protection from the Albanian police and pursue these through the specific mechanisms that have been set up to deal with blood feuds.

3.6.7 Internal relocation. The constitution provides for freedom of movement within Albania and the Government generally respects this in practice. As a result of significant internal migration many no longer have local registration and status which can lead to the loss of access to services such as education and medical care.²³ Whilst there may be some difficulties accessing local services internal relocation to escape the localised threat of a blood feud will not generally be unduly harsh. Whether internal relocation would enable an individual to avoid a threat in an individual case will depend on the tenacity of those attempting to enforce the blood feud.

3.6.8 Caselaw.

KOCI [2003] EWCA Civ 1507 found that there was generally not a sufficiency of protection in blood feud cases.

TB [2004] UKIAT 00158 The tribunal found that a number of factors will be relevant in determining the nature of the risk on return:

- (a) whether the dispute can be characterised as a “blood feud” at all;
- (b) even if it can, then the extent to which its origins and development (if any) are to be regarded by Albanian society as falling within the classic principles of the Kanun;
- (c) the history of the feud, including the notoriety of the original killings and the numbers killed;
- (d) the past and likely future attitude of the police and other authorities;
- (e) the degree of commitment shown by the opposing family;
- (f) the time that has elapsed since the killing;
- (g) the ability of the opposing family to locate the alleged victim anywhere in Albania
- (h) that person’s profile as a potential target for the blood feud; and
- (i) the prospects for eliminating the feud, whether by recourse to the payment of money, a reconciliation organisation or otherwise.

The tribunal noted that whilst it is plainly too early to say that any potential victim of a blood feud of the “classic type” can now look to the authorities for a sufficiency of protection....the governments initiatives are particularly likely to make themselves felt, in terms of institutional attitudes within Tirana itself.

¹⁹ Peacewomen organisation. NGO contacts Albania

²⁰ BBC Blood feuds

²¹ USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 section 1

²² USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 section 1

²³ USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 section 2

Skenderaj [C/2001/1336 promulgated 26 April 2002] the Supreme Court of Judicature held that families involved in the Blood Feud were not a distinct social group and that the threat to Skenderaj was “a private matter.” The critical factor in cases where a victim of non-state persecution is unwilling to seek state protection is not necessarily whether the state is able and willing to provide a sufficiency of protection to the *Horvath* standard, though in many cases it may be highly relevant to the victim's well-founded fear of persecution. The test is whether the potential victim's unwillingness to seek it flows from that fear.

3.6.9 Conclusion. In general the Albanian Government is able and willing to offer effective protection for its citizens who are the victim of a blood feud; however, there may be individual cases where the level of protection offered is, in practice, insufficient. The level of protection should be assessed on a case by case basis taking into account what the claimant did to seek protection and what response was received. Internal relocation may be appropriate in some cases. As victims of a blood feud are not members of a particular social group a grant of asylum will not be appropriate and a grant of Humanitarian Protection will only be appropriate in some cases where there is no sufficiency of protection and no internal relocation alternative. Some claims may be certifiable where there is a strong internal relocation argument supported by a previous successful relocation. However, most cases are unlikely to be clearly unfounded.

3.7 Organised crime

3.7.1 Some claimants will apply for asylum based on ill treatment amounting to persecution at the hands of criminals involved in organised crime. Claimants may also claim that this ill-treatment will breach article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). Claimants will often cite a fear of harassment and violence from members of criminal gangs and may claim that law enforcement agencies, such as the police, are linked to criminal gangs and that as a result of corruption they have little faith in the police's ability to resolve their problems or provide them with protection. Some claimants will claim that they face unlawful arrest and detention where the police are linked to criminal gangs.

3.7.2 Treatment. There are high levels of organised crime, violent crime and corruption in Albania. During 2004 many killings continued to occur as a result of individual or clan vigilante actions connected to ‘blood feuds’ or criminal gang conflicts.²⁴ Organised crime particularly involves trafficking in drugs and people and Albanian criminals can be particularly ruthless in pursuing their objectives.²⁵ Organised criminal gangs operate in all regions of the country. The crime rate is high with instances of armed robberies, assaults and car jacking occurring. Armed crime is reported to be common in Shkoder and frequent in other towns in the north and northwest.²⁶

3.7.3 Sufficiency of protection. The Ministry of Public Order stated that in 2004 there were 12,132 Albanian State Police (ASP) however only 40% of police officers received training beyond basic training. The restructuring of the ASP created two deputy directorates, one for operations and the other for administration. Operational Directorates include, Organised Crime and Witness Protection, Fight against Terrorist Acts and Cold cases, Public Order and Security, Territorial Control and Coordination, and Border Police and Migration. However in 2004 the overall performance of law enforcement remained weak, with unprofessional behaviour and corruption remaining major impediments to the development of an effective civilian police force. Low salaries and widespread corruption throughout society made the problem of corruption in the police difficult to combat.²⁷

3.7.4 The State Police's Office of Internal Control is charged with the prevention, discovery and documentation of criminal activity committed by police. During 2004 it pursued

²⁴ USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 section 1 & FCO Country Profile 2005

²⁵ FCO Annual Human Rights Report 2005 p.112

²⁶ USSD Consular information sheet

²⁷ USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 section 1

investigations leading to the arrest of 52 police officials and the dismissal of 323 for various degrees of misconduct. With regard to corruption the Office of Internal Control reported 223 cases of corruption to the Prosecutors Office involving 230 police officers; 32 officers were arrested. The People's Advocate, a government ombudsman charged with investigating citizen's complaints of public officials' wrongdoing reported that it had handled 2,520 complaints, requests and notifications, related to all forms of public corruption and misconduct. Of those 19% were determined to be legitimate and were forwarded to the appropriate authorities for further investigation. Out of 2,520 complaints 25 were against police officers for excessive use of force or maltreatment of which 7 were determined to be valid.²⁸

- 3.7.5** During 2004 the Serious Crimes Court and the Serious Crime Court of Appeal became operational; these courts focus on increasing the effectiveness of the fight against organised crime and serious crimes and improving the quality of adjudication.²⁹ Changes to the Criminal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code in 2004 included the adoption of provisions to prevent and combat organised crime, corruption and activities of criminal organisations. In addition provisions of the Criminal Code on passive and active corruption, misuse of official position, counterfeiting official documents, and protection of witnesses of serious crimes were documented more accurately.³⁰
- 3.7.6** The Albanian Government has made attempts to deal with organised and serious crime and there are mechanisms in place to deal with police officers who are corrupt. However some links between rogue officials and organised crime have been found to remain and where there are links to serious organised crime or corruption the state may not always be able to provide sufficient protection to individuals.
- 3.7.7** ***Internal relocation.*** The constitution provides for freedom of movement within Albania and the Government generally respects this in practice. As a result of significant internal migration many no longer have local registration and status which can lead to the loss of access to services such as education and medical care.³¹ Whilst there may be some difficulties in accessing services, internal relocation to escape the attention of invariably-localised threats from organised criminals/gangs or the attention of provincial rogue police will not be unduly harsh.
- 3.7.8** ***Caselaw.***
- XM [2004] UKIAT 00178** The IAT concluded that on the facts of the case the Albanian authorities were able and willing to provide protection to the appellant. The authorities had acted on the appellants report helping to secure the release of his daughter and arrested one of the kidnappers. The IAT accepted that the Albanian authorities are making significant efforts to combat organised crime and corruption.
- 3.7.9** ***Conclusion.*** There are high levels of organised crime within Albania, however the Albanian authorities have undertaken various measures to combat organised crime and corruption and as a result are able to provide sufficient protection in some cases, but such protection may not be available in all cases particularly where the corruption of state officials is an issue. Internal relocation may be available to individuals seeking to escape a localised threat from members of organised criminal gangs. Taking into account sufficiency of protection or internal relocation which will be available in most cases a grant of asylum or Humanitarian Protection will not generally be appropriate, however cases should only be certified as clearly unfounded where it is clear that in the individual case there is a sufficiency of protection.

3.8 Membership of Democratic or Socialist Party

²⁸ USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 section 1

²⁹ USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 section 1

³⁰ Freedom House 2005 p.22-25

³¹ USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 section 2

- 3.8.1** Some claimants will apply for asylum based on ill treatment amounting to persecution at the hands of members of a rival political party. Claimants may also claim that this ill-treatment will breach article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). Members of the Democratic Party claim to face ill-treatment by members of the Socialist Party and members of the Socialist Party claim to face ill-treatment by members of the Democratic Party.
- 3.8.2 *Treatment.*** Two main highly polarised political parties, the Socialist Party, and the Democratic Party dominate Albanian politics. The Socialist Party won the July and August 2001 parliamentary elections³² but the centre-right Democratic Party emerged as winner of the July 2005 elections.³³ The 2001 elections were reported to be peaceful and were assessed by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights to mark progress over past elections in terms of conduct of the campaign, media, and electoral administration. International observers concluded that the Central Election Commission's conduct was more professional, objective transparent and pragmatic than earlier elections.³⁴
- 3.8.3** However, a report on the July 2005 elections by a committee set up by the Council of Europe Bureau of the Assembly noted that they only partially complied with Council of Europe Commitments and other international standards for democratic elections. While the elections were overall competitive, and the media provided voters with a diversity of electoral information, the major political parties have yet to demonstrate political will and responsibility to a level commensurate with the broad authority granted to them in the electoral process.³⁵
- 3.8.4** The Council of Europe report further noted that the electoral campaign was active and highly visible. Although turning more heated and rancorous during the final weeks of the campaign, overall most parties devoted more time than in previous elections in promoting their respective political platforms.³⁶
- 3.8.5 *Sufficiency of protection.*** The Ministry of Public Order stated that in 2004 there were 12,132 Albanian State Police (ASP) however only 40% of police officers received training beyond basic training. The restructuring of the ASP created two deputy directorates, one for operations and the other for admin. Operational Directorates include, Organised Crime and Witness Protection, Fight against Terrorist Acts and Cold cases, Public Order and Security, Territorial Control and Coordination, and Border Police and Migration. However in 2004 the overall performance of law enforcement remained weak, with unprofessional behaviour and corruption remaining major impediments to the development of an effective civilian police force. Low salaries and widespread corruption throughout society made the problem of corruption in the police difficult to combat.³⁷ Though the Democratic Party is currently in power in Albania, rogue elements of its local/regional membership in the context of this category of claim do not constitute the state authorities. There is therefore no evidence that individual members of the Democratic or Socialist Party would not be able to access protection from the authorities should they need it.
- 3.8.6 *Internal relocation.*** The constitution provides for freedom of movement within Albania and the Government generally respects this in practice. As a result of significant internal migration many no longer have local registration and status which can lead to the loss of access to services such as education and medical care.³⁸ Though the Democratic Party is currently in power in Albania, rogue elements of its local/regional membership in the context of this category of claim do not constitute the state authorities. Therefore, whilst there may be some difficulties accessing local services, internal relocation to escape the

³² CIPU Country Report April 2004 para 5.11

³³ BBC Country Profile 2005

³⁴ CIPU Country Report April 2004 para 4.21

³⁵ Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly Observation of the parliamentary elections in Albania 2005

³⁶ Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly Observation of the parliamentary elections in Albania 2005

³⁷ USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 section 1

³⁸ USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 section 2

invariably-localised threat from members of an opposing political party will not be unduly harsh.

3.8.7 Conclusion. The Democratic Party and the Socialist Party are both legal political parties within Albania who have taken a full part in recent elections. Whilst political campaigns in Albania can be heated and rancorous there is no evidence to suggest that the treatment meted out to members of opposing political parties amounts to persecution or a breach of article 3 of the ECHR. In addition those facing threats from political opponents should be able to seek protection from the authorities or internally relocate to escape a localised threat. Therefore a claim based on fear of members of opposing political parties is unlikely to qualify for a grant of asylum or Humanitarian Protection and is likely to be clearly unfounded.

3.9 Trafficking of women

3.9.1 Some claimants will claim asylum based on their fear of being trafficked or their fear of those who trafficked them if they return to Albania. Claimants may also claim that this ill-treatment will breach article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

3.9.2 Treatment. Albania is a source and a transit country primarily for women and children trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation. In 2004 both citizens and foreign women trafficked by domestic organised crime networks were abused, tortured, and raped. Traffickers also threatened many of the victims' family members. The main form of recruitment involved marriage under false pretences or false promises of marriage, with the trafficker luring the victims abroad as prostitutes. As a result of the poor economic situation men and women from organised criminal groups lured many women and young girls from all over the country by promising them jobs in Italy and Greece. To a lesser extent the selling of victims to traffickers by family members or neighbours or kidnapping, including from orphanages, also occurs.³⁹

3.9.3 Victims of trafficking often face significant stigmatisation from their families and society. According to the Vatra Hearth Shelter, there have been many cases where victims of trafficking, minors included have been threatened with death by their families because of their past. Re-trafficking is also a significant problem, with 141 out of 291 victims sheltered at the Vatra Hearth Shelter during 2004 reporting that they had been trafficked at least twice previously.⁴⁰

3.9.4 Sufficiency of protection. The Ministry of Public Order stated that in 2004 there were 12,132 Albanian State Police (ASP) however only 40% of police officers received training beyond basic training. The restructuring of the ASP created two deputy directorates, one for operations and the other for administration. Operational Directorates include, Organised Crime and Witness Protection, Fight against Terrorist Acts and Cold cases, Public Order and Security, Territorial Control and Coordination, and Border Police and Migration. However in 2004 the overall performance of law enforcement remained weak, with unprofessional behaviour and corruption remaining major impediments to the development of an effective civilian police force. Low salaries and widespread corruption throughout society made the problem of corruption in the police difficult to combat.⁴¹

3.9.5 The law criminalises trafficking in persons and provides penalties for traffickers. The Criminal Code provides for a penalty of 5 to 15 years in prison for trafficking a person, 7 to 15 years for trafficking a woman for prostitution and 15 to 20 years for trafficking a minor. Aggravating circumstances such as kidnapping or death can increase the penalty to a maximum term of life imprisonment. In February 2004 Parliament approved the addition of fines to the existing penalties. The amended Penal Code states that government officials or

³⁹ USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 & USSD Trafficking in Person Report 2005

⁴⁰ USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 section 5

⁴¹ USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 section 1

public servants convicted of exploitation for prostitution face 125% of the standard penalties. In October 2004, Parliament approved a new law that mandates the sequestration and confiscation of assets if their source comes from organised crime.⁴²

- 3.9.6** Throughout 2004, the Government of Albania arrested, prosecuted, and convicted traffickers.⁴³ According to the Public Prosecutors office during 2004 there were 234 trafficking in persons cases ongoing and 362 individuals were convicted of trafficking in persons.⁴⁴ Over half of the sentences during 2004 were over five years in length and 30 traffickers were sentenced to more than ten years' imprisonment.⁴⁵ For example, two pimps, who mistreated a girl from Tirana and trafficked her to Italy to work as a prostitute, were sentenced to 17 and 19 years imprisonment.⁴⁶
- 3.9.7** In 2003, police arrested several servicemen on suspicion of raping and trafficking a 16-year-old girl; the girl was smuggled onto the Bishti i Palles naval base to have sex with conscripted sailors and held in a semi-abandoned building on the base for two months and repeatedly raped before she was trafficked to Kosovo. A total of 11 officers and non-commissioned officers--including the 7 participants--were suspended or reassigned. Prosecutors dropped charges against one of the girl's alleged traffickers in August, and the trial of eight sailors and two civilians began in October 2004.⁴⁷
- 3.9.8** In August 2004, a regional anti-trafficking sweep organised through the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative Centre called Mirage III, resulted in 125 arrests for various forms of trafficking, prostitution, and smuggling. At end of 2004, 65 suspects remained in detention.⁴⁸
- 3.9.9** In September 2004, the government adopted legislation that includes broad civil asset forfeiture provisions, requiring the accused trafficker to prove the legitimacy of sources of wealth. However by the end of 2004 prosecutors had not used the forfeiture provisions. Serious resource constraints and corruption among government officials continued during 2004 to hamper anti-trafficking efforts. The government continued to investigate police involvement in trafficking; in 2004, four police officers were investigated for offences related to trafficking. The government did not prosecute or convict any officials for trafficking complicity during 2004.⁴⁹
- 3.9.10** In March 2004 a law on witness protection was adopted, although a lack of supporting legislation and funding meant it could not be implemented.⁵⁰ This impeded the Government's ability to build strong cases against traffickers, although international cooperation led to the relocation and protection of three witnesses outside of the country during 2004.⁵¹ Most victims of trafficking do not report their traffickers for fear of reprisal. In 2004 prosecutions for trafficking women and children for forced prostitution, cheap labour or use as beggars, doubled by comparison with the previous year, and heavy sentences were imposed.⁵²
- 3.9.11** During 2004 the government provided some facilities and personnel to assist trafficking victims, and operated its own National Reception Centre; NGOs operated two additional shelters. The government has also begun work on a national referral mechanism involving law enforcement, social services, and NGO partners to improve the initial identification, reception, protection, and reintegration procedures for returnee victims. In 2004 police

⁴² USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 section 5

⁴³ USSD Trafficking in Persons Report 2005

⁴⁴ USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 section 5

⁴⁵ USSD Trafficking in Persons Report 2005

⁴⁶ USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 section 5

⁴⁷ USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 section 5

⁴⁸ USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 section 5

⁴⁹ USSD Trafficking in Persons Report 2005

⁵⁰ AI Annual Report 2005

⁵¹ USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 section 5

⁵² AI Annual Report 2005

slightly increased the number of ad hoc referrals made to shelters in Albania via IOM and NGOs. Police referred 274 victims to the Vatra Centre and, a number of police directorates opened their own temporary shelters to accommodate trafficking victims.⁵³

3.9.12 Whilst trafficking and re-trafficking of persons and especially women is clearly a problem in Albania the government has taken steps to curb this, introducing increasingly stringent laws and safeguards for those who may face trafficking. Taking these into account and the caselaw quoted below there is in general a sufficiency of protection for victims or potential victims of traffickers.

3.9.13 *Internal relocation.* The constitution provides for freedom of movement within Albania and the Government generally respects this in practice. As a result of significant internal migration many people no longer have local registration and status which can lead to the loss of access to services such as education and medical care.⁵⁴ Whilst there may be some difficulties accessing local services internal relocation to escape a threat from invariably-localised traffickers will not be unduly harsh.

3.9.14 *Caselaw.*

VD (Trafficking) Albania CG [2004] UKIAT00115 The IAT considered whether in general it is likely that an individual would be trafficked, and found that it is not reasonably likely that an individual Albanian girl or woman would be at risk of being trafficked even if the individual falls within the 14 to 17 year old age group. The tribunal also considered whether there is in general a sufficiency of protection for women who may be at risk of being trafficked and held that in the totality of evidence before them that there is in general a sufficiency of protection against trafficking in Albania. The Tribunal noted the 2003 case of **UKIAT 00023 K** (see below) but found that this turned on the particular facts of that case and should not be relied upon in support of the proposition that, in general terms, there is a real risk that a particular individual would become a victim of trafficking or that there is in general insufficient protection for trafficked victims.

K [2003] UKIAT 00023 the IAT found that women from the north east of Albania who claim to have been or to be at risk of being trafficked for prostitution do form a particular social group.

3.9.15 *Conclusion.* Trafficking continues to be a significant problem in Albania; however the Government have taken steps to curb the activities of traffickers and to ensure that victims or potential victims can obtain protection from the authorities. As defined in the caselaw noted above, some but not all trafficking victims from Albania will be members of a particular social group. Generally there is a sufficiency of protection for individuals in this category and most applicants will be able to relocate to escape localised threats from traffickers therefore in most cases a grant of asylum or Humanitarian Protection will not be appropriate however taking into account potential difficulties accessing sufficiency of protection or internal relocation cases will only be clearly unfounded where the access to these is clear.

3.10. Victims of domestic violence

3.10.1 Some women claimants will apply for asylum based on ill treatment amounting to persecution at the hands of members of their family due to domestic violence and that the authorities are not willing or able to offer sufficiency of protection. Claimants may also claim that this ill-treatment will breach article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

3.10.2 *Treatment* Societal violence and discrimination against women and children were serious problems in 2004.⁵⁵ In the country's traditionally male-dominated society, cultural acceptance and lax police response resulted in most abuse going unreported. Rape is

⁵³ Peacewomen Organisation NGO contacts Albania

⁵⁴ USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 section 2

⁵⁵ USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 introduction

punishable by law, as is spousal rape; however, in practice, spousal rape was often not reported or prosecuted. The concepts of spousal rape and sexual harassment were not well established, and, consequently, such acts often were not considered crimes by authorities or the public.⁵⁶

- 3.10.3** Amnesty International reported that domestic violence was common in Albania in 2004. The law did not adequately protect victims, for whom there were limited support services provided by non-governmental organizations. Although the Criminal Code did not specifically criminalize domestic violence, under the Family Code, adopted in 2003, a spouse who has been subjected to domestic violence may ask a court to ban the perpetrator from the home, but this measure could not be applied by courts for lack of supporting legislation.⁵⁷
- 3.10.4** Many men, particularly those from the north-eastern part of the country, still followed the traditional unwritten code--the kanun--in which, according to some interpretations, women are considered to be, and were treated as, chattel. Under the kanun, some interpretations dictate that a woman's duty is to serve her husband and to be subordinate to him in all matters.⁵⁸ In February 2004 a 21-year old young woman was killed by her father for alleged tardiness. The father's subsequent sentence of fewer than 2 years' imprisonment received much attention from the media and the NGO community; however, the case was not appealed.⁵⁹
- 3.10.5** In July 2004, Parliament approved a new Law on Gender Equality which guarantees equal rights for men and women, promotes equal opportunities in order to eliminate direct and indirect discrimination, and defines responsibilities for drafting of governmental policies promoting gender equality. However, some NGOs criticized the new law as poorly written and inadequately financed. Under the law, the Government's State Committee on Equal Opportunity was tasked with drafting, promoting and monitoring gender equality programs for the entire country. However, the Committee was under-funded and lacked political influence. The new law also created an advisory body, the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Gender Equality.⁶⁰
- 3.10.6** Women were not excluded, by law or in practice, from any occupation; however, they were not well represented at the highest levels of their fields. The Labour Code mandates equal pay for equal work; however, this provision was not fully implemented, although women continued gradually to gain economic power. Women enjoyed equal access to higher education, but they were not accorded full and equal opportunity in their careers, and well-educated women were often under-employed or worked outside their field of training.⁶¹
- 3.10.7** Various NGOs worked to promote women's rights. Some of these groups successfully promoted public awareness regarding domestic violence and implemented programs to empower women; however, their ability to lobby the Government and other prominent individuals to institute actual change in government policies and practices regarding women's issues remained limited.⁶² In October 2004 an initiative was launched by 10 Albanian non-governmental organizations to draft legislation against domestic violence.⁶³
- 3.10.8** One NGO maintained a shelter in Tirana for abused women, although the facility only had the capacity to house a few victims at a time. The same NGO also operated a hotline that provided advice and counselling to women and girls.⁶⁴

⁵⁶ USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 section 5

⁵⁷ AI Annual Report 2005

⁵⁸ USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 section 5 & Freedom House 2005

⁵⁹ USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 section 5

⁶⁰ USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 section 5

⁶¹ USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 section 5

⁶² USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 section 5

⁶³ AI Annual Report 2005

⁶⁴ USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 section 5

3.10.9 Some NGOs offered free legal defence to limited target groups such as women or juveniles, and the AHC offered free legal counseling to all individuals who claimed that human rights had been violated but it did not represent them before the courts.⁶⁵

3.10.10 Sufficiency of protection The July 2004 Law on Gender Equality guarantees equal rights for men and women and promotes equal opportunities in order to eliminate direct and indirect discrimination and in general the authorities are willing to offer sufficiency of protection to women in Albania. However, discrimination and violence against women persist especially in the north of the country⁶⁶ and individuals may not be able to access sufficiency of protection due to cultural constraints. In some cases the actions of individual police officers may not be appropriate and therefore may not amount to sufficient protection.

3.10.11 Internal relocation The constitution provides for freedom of movement within Albania and the Government generally respects this in practice. As a result of significant internal migration many people no longer have local registration and status which can lead to the loss of access to services such as education and medical care.⁶⁷ Whilst there may be some difficulties accessing local services internal relocation to escape an invariably localised threat from a husband or other members of a family will not be unduly harsh.

3.10.12 Caselaw.

[2004] UKIAT 00059 M (Albania) CG. Heard on 15/03/04, promulgated on the 01/04/04

The appellant fled Albania because her ex-boyfriend threatened to kill her. The police considered the threats. The IAT found that the Adjudicator was wrong to construe the judgments in **Shah & Islam v. Secretary of State for the Home Department** [1999] Imm AR 283 as providing any broad basis for saying that women generally are to be regarded as capable of forming a particular social group for Refugee Convention purposes. **Shah & Islam** dealt with very specific circumstances under which it can be held that there is lack of sufficiency of protection for women generally in Pakistan. The situation in Albania is entirely different from that in Pakistan and there is no evidence to suggest that the position of women is actively undermined by the provision of law. The Tribunal found that there is sufficiency of protection for women in general and that their position in society is not actively undermined by the provision of law.

As regards sufficiency of protection the IAT referred to **Osman v UK [2000] 29 EHRR245** – and concluded that in connection with Article 2 one has to bear in mind the difficulties involved in policing modern society, the unpredictability of human conduct, and the operational choices which have to be made in terms of priorities and resources. An obligation to provide protection had to be interpreted in a way which does not impose an impossible or disproportionate burden on the authorities.

3.10.13 Conclusion. There is social discrimination and violence against women in Albania particularly in the north of the country and although in general the authorities are able and willing to offer sufficiency of protection there may be individual cases when the attitude of individual police officers may limit the protection offered. However, the government has passed legislation that outlaws discrimination against women and women are not excluded from any employment or occupation. In addition there are also a number of NGOs who work to promote women's rights and campaign against discrimination and violence. In addition most claimants will be able to internally relocate to escape localised threats from members of their family. Therefore in most cases a grant of asylum or Humanitarian Protection will not be appropriate and cases are likely to be clearly unfounded.

3.11 Gay men

3.11.1 Some claimants will apply for asylum based on ill treatment amounting to persecution at the hands of the Albanian authorities or ordinary Albanian citizens due to their sexual

⁶⁵ International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights 2005

⁶⁶ USSD Report on Human Rights practices 2004 section 5

⁶⁷ USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 section 2

orientation. Claimants may also claim that this ill-treatment will breach article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

- 3.11.2 Treatment.** Before 1995 homosexuality in Albania was illegal with Article 137 of the Penal Code reading simply: 'Homosexuality is punishable by: up to ten years of imprisonment'. However on the 20 January 1995 after a campaign by the Gay Albania Society within Albania, and international pressure orchestrated by the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA) and the Council of Europe consensual homosexual acts between adults became legal. Under Article 116 of the Criminal Code, the age of consent for same-sex sexual acts is set at 18, with a maximum penalty for infringement of five years imprisonment.⁶⁸ However, despite this law change the US State Department reported that societal discrimination against gay men persisted during 2004.⁶⁹
- 3.11.3** In 2003 the Albanian Human Rights Group (AHRG) claimed that police targeted the country's gay community. According to the General Secretary of Gay Albania, the police often arbitrarily arrested gay men and then physically and verbally abused them while they were in detention. However, the police denied these charges and stated that when gay men were arrested, it was for violating the law--such as disturbing the peace--not for their sexual preference.⁷⁰
- 3.11.4** In June 1995 in line with the new penal code the NGO Gay-Albania became officially recognised and registered as the first time gay association in Albanian history.⁷¹ In October 2004, the General Secretary of Gay Albania claimed that he was refused citizenship because he was gay.⁷²
- 3.11.5 Sufficiency of protection.** Despite continuing societal discrimination against gay men, homosexuality is legal in Albania and in general the authorities are willing to offer sufficiency of protection. However, in some circumstances the attitude of individual police officers may limit the protection offered.
- 3.11.6 Internal relocation.** The constitution provides for freedom of movement within Albania and the Government generally respects this in practice. As a result of significant internal migration many no longer have local registration and status which can lead to the loss of access to services such as education and medical care.⁷³ Whilst there may be some difficulties accessing local services internal relocation to escape an invariably localised threat from a rogue local police or ordinary members of the Albanian population will not be unduly harsh.
- 3.11.7 Caselaw.**

[2003] UKIAT 00067 IM (Albania) CG. Heard 15 July 2003, promulgated 8 September 2003.

After a review of the available, albeit limited, objective evidence the Tribunal had regard to the decriminalisation of homosexuality, the presence of an officially registered gay rights group and the almost entire absence of any reported ill-treatment of homosexuals in Albania since 1994. The IAT concluded that there was also no evidence to show that the police or the Albanian authorities ill-treat Gay men.

- 3.11.8 Conclusion.** There is societal discrimination against gay men in Albania and the police may not be able to offer sufficient protection in all cases. However, this discrimination will generally not amount to persecution. The IAT found in **UKIAT 00067** that there was no evidence to support the view that gay men would subject to any actions from either the authorities or the populace that would amount to persecution or breach article 3 of the ECHR. However, there cannot be said to be an openly gay and lesbian community in

⁶⁸ International Lesbian Gay Association world survey

⁶⁹ USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 introduction

⁷⁰ USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 section 5

⁷¹ International Lesbian Gay Association world survey

⁷² USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 section 1

⁷³ USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 section 2

Albania and there is no evidence of national protection specifically in relation to gay men and lesbians. In the circumstances, where such a claim is refused it will not normally be appropriate to certify as clearly unfounded.

3.12 Prison conditions

3.12.1 Claimants may claim that they cannot return to Albania due to the fact that there is a serious risk that they will be imprisoned on return and that prison conditions in Albania are so poor as to amount to torture or inhuman treatment or punishment.

3.12.2 *Consideration.* Conditions in prisons and detention centres remained poor during 2004, despite government efforts to address problems such as poor facilities and overcrowding as well as efforts to transfer convicted inmates from detention centres to prisons. Prison staff were reported to be poorly trained and during 2004 there were riots and hunger strikes in some prisons and detention centres to protest against the poor conditions. Overcrowding was reported to be a serious problem leading to substandard living conditions and security problems. Men and women were separated in prisons and detention centres, however pre-trial detainees were not separated from convicted prisoners and juvenile detainees were not separated from adults due to overcrowding.⁷⁴

3.12.3 The government of Albania permits international human rights observers to visit both pre-trial detention centres and prisons and during 2004 there were no reports of refusals to permit access for inspections by domestic independent human rights monitors. The Government co-operated with the International Committee of the Red Cross and with other NGOs.⁷⁵

3.12.4 *Conclusion.* Whilst prison conditions in Albania are poor, with overcrowding, poor facilities and those convicted not being separated from pre-trial detainees being particular problems, conditions are unlikely to reach the Article 3 threshold. Therefore even where claimants can demonstrate a real risk of imprisonment on return to Albania a grant of Humanitarian Protection will not generally be appropriate. However, the individual factors of each case should be considered to determine whether detention will cause a particular individual in his particular circumstances to suffer treatment contrary to Article 3, relevant factors being the likely length of detention the likely type of detention facility and the individual's age and state of health.

4. Discretionary Leave

4.1 Where an application for asylum and Humanitarian Protection falls to be refused there may be compelling reasons for granting Discretionary Leave (DL) to the individual concerned. (See API on Discretionary Leave)

4.2 With particular reference to Albania the types of claim which may raise the issue of whether or not it will be appropriate to grant DL are likely to fall within the following categories. Each case must be considered on its individual merits and membership of one of these groups should *not* imply an automatic grant of DL. There may be other specific circumstances not covered by the categories below which warrant a grant of DL - see the API on Discretionary Leave.

4.3 Minors claiming in their own right

4.3.1 Minors claiming in their own right who have not been granted asylum or Humanitarian Protection can only be returned where they have family to return to or there are adequate

⁷⁴ USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 section 1 & International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights 2005

⁷⁵ USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2004 section 1

reception, care or support arrangements. At the moment we do not have sufficient information to be satisfied that there are adequate reception, care or support arrangements in place.

- 4.3.2** Minors claiming in their own right without a family to return to, or where there are no adequate reception, care or support arrangements, should if they do not qualify for leave on any more favourable grounds be granted Discretionary Leave for a period of twelve months or until their 18th birthday, whichever is the shorter period.

4.4 Medical treatment

- 4.4.1** Claimants may claim they cannot return to Albania due to a lack of specific medical treatment. See the IDI on Medical Treatment which sets out in detail the requirements for Article 3 and/or 8 to be engaged.
- 4.4.2** A 2002 report by the European Observatory on Health Care Systems notes that Albanian health care services are delivered in poor facilities with inadequate equipment. Eligibility for health care is based on citizenship and payment of insurance contributions, and access to free primary care and pharmaceuticals is in theory restricted to individuals who have paid their insurance contributions. Access to health care services remains restricted by the country's inability to afford a full range of services and to replace facilities and services damaged during civil unrest. The 2002 report concludes that Albania's health care system is facing huge challenges, yet the basic infrastructure for health care delivery is being maintained, despite the difficulties, and rationalised.⁷⁶ A 2005 WHO report on hospital reforms notes that hospitals in Albania are at the present time not able to provide high quality services due to a limited budget, poor condition of buildings, lack of infrastructures, inadequate training of health personnel, and lack of managerial skill and competencies.⁷⁷
- 4.4.3** A 2005 WHO report on pharmaceuticals notes that the domestic pharmaceutical industry produces a number of essential drugs, other drugs are imported but are more expensive for consumers. There are over 500 private pharmacies which are well stocked and better managed than government pharmacies. There is no shortage of essential drugs, but the lack of a good regulatory framework allows poor practices, even in private pharmacies, such as poor quality drugs, selling after expiry dates and the sale of unregistered drugs.⁷⁸

HIV/AIDS

- 4.4.4** In December 2004 Albania had just 141 confirmed cases of HIV/AIDS with 22 new cases being reported during 2004. In March 2004 the Government allocated \$150,000 to purchasing anti-retroviral drugs and signed an agreement to purchase them through UNICEF. An infectious diseases specialist at Tirana Hospital said that in Albania HIV treatment was a multi-disciplinary intervention including home care of the patient, psychosocial support, nursing care, and end-of-life care.⁷⁹

4.4.5 Caselaw.

[2002] UKIAT 00060 C (Albania) Heard 10 March 2003, Promulgated 4 September 2003 The case centres on the question of whether the psychological condition of the father and his eldest son is such that it would breach their rights under Articles 3 & 8 of the ECHR if they were to be returned to Albania. The IAT considered the harm that return would cause and whether there was any direct responsibility of the contracting state for the infliction of harm and found in this case that there was none. The Tribunal found that there was appropriate medical treatment available in Albania for appellant and his son and there would not be breach of Article 3. The IAT also considered Article 8 following the case of **Devaseelan** and **Ullah**. On the basis of the ratio in **Ullah**, which binds the IAT, the Article 8 claim must fail, even though the IAT do not consider that there would be the flagrant denial or gross violation necessary under the ratio of **Devaseelan**.

⁷⁶ WHO Health Care Systems in Transition Albania 2002

⁷⁷ WHO Europe Hospital Management 2005

⁷⁸ WHO Pharmaceuticals 2005

⁷⁹ UNICEF Real Lives Stories 2005

- 4.4.6** Where a caseworker considers that the circumstances of the individual claimant and the situation in the country reach the threshold detailed in the IDI on Medical Treatment making removal contrary to Article 3 or 8 a grant of discretionary leave to remain will be appropriate. Such cases should always be referred to a Senior Caseworker for consideration prior to a grant of Discretionary Leave.

5. Returns

- 5.1** Factors that affect the practicality of return such as the difficulty or otherwise of obtaining a travel document should not be taken into account when considering the merits of an asylum or human rights claim.
- 5.2** Albanian nationals may return voluntarily to any region of Albania at any time by way of the Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Programme run by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and co-funded by the European Refugee Fund. IOM will provide advice and help with obtaining travel documents and booking flights, as well as organising reintegration assistance in Albania. The programme was established in 2001, and is open to those awaiting an asylum decision or the outcome of an appeal, as well as failed asylum seekers. Albanian nationals wishing to avail themselves of this opportunity for assisted return to Albania should be put in contact with the IOM offices in London on 020 7233 0001 or www.iomlondon.org.

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