



COUNTRY OF ORIGIN INFORMATION KEY DOCUMENTS

ALBANIA

12 MAY 2008

Contents

	Page
1. PREFACE	3
2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON ALBANIA	5
Geography	5
Recent history	5
Recent events and political developments	6
Economy	6
Human Rights	7
3. INDEX TO KEY SOURCE DOCUMENTS	8
Key facts and geography.....	8
Map	8
History	8
Politics and recent developments	9
Human Rights – general	10
Human Rights – specific issues	10
Arrest and detention – legal rights	10
Blood feuds	10
Children	11
Citizenship and Nationality	11
Corruption	11
Death Penalty	12
Disability	12
Employment rights	12
Ethnic groups.....	12
Foreign refugees.....	12
Freedom of movement.....	13
Freedom of religion	13
Freedom of speech and media	13
Human Rights institutions, organisations and activists	13
Judiciary.....	13
Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons	14
Medical issues	14
Military service	14
Political affiliation	15
Prison conditions	15
Security forces	15
Trafficking	16
Women	16
4. REFERENCES TO SOURCE MATERIAL	17

Preface

- i This Country of Origin Information Key Documents (COI Key Documents) on Albania has been produced by COI Service, UK Border Agency (UKBA), for use by officials involved in the asylum/human rights determination process. It provides general background information about the issues most commonly raised in asylum/human rights claims made in the United Kingdom. The COI Key Documents includes information available up to 12 May 2008.
- ii The COI Key Documents is an indexed list of key reports, papers and articles produced by a wide range of recognised external information sources. It does not contain any UKBA opinion or policy.
- iii For UK Border Agency users, the COI Key Documents provides direct electronic access to each source referred to in the document, via a link on the source numbers in the index and list of sources. For the benefit of external users, the relevant web link has also been included, together with the date that the link was accessed.
- iv As noted above, the documents identified concentrate mainly on human rights issues. By way of introduction, brief background information on Albania is also provided. Please note, this background material is not intended to provide a summary of the material contained in the documents listed.
- v This COI Key Documents and the documents listed are publicly disclosable.
- vi Any comments regarding this COI Key Documents or suggestions for additional source material are very welcome and should be submitted to COI Service as below.

Country of Origin Information Service

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

ADVISORY PANEL ON COUNTRY INFORMATION

- vii The independent Advisory Panel on Country Information (APCI) was established in 2003 to make recommendations to the Home Secretary about the content of the UK Border Agency's country of origin information material. The APCI welcomes all feedback on UKBA's COI Key Documents, COI Reports and other country of origin information material. Information about the Panel's work can be found on its website at www.apci.org.uk
- viii In the course of its work, the APCI reviews the content of selected UKBA COI documents and makes recommendations specific to those documents and of

a more general nature. The APCI may or may not have reviewed this particular document. At the following link is a list of the COI Key Documents, COI Reports and other documents which have, to date, been reviewed by the APCI: www.apci.org.uk/reviewed-documents.html

- ix Please note: It is not the function of the APCI to endorse any UKBA material or procedures. Some of the material examined by the Panel relates to countries designated or proposed for designation for the Non-Suspensive Appeals (NSA) list. In such cases, the Panel's work should not be taken to imply any endorsement of the decision or proposal to designate a particular country for NSA, nor of the NSA process itself.

Advisory Panel on Country Information:

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Website: www.apci.org.uk

2. Background information on Albania

Full Country Name: The Republic of Albania

Area: Total area approximately 27,748 sq. km

Population: 3.5 million (est)

Capital City: Tirana

People: Albanian 95%, Greeks 3% and others 2% (Vlachs, Roma, Egyptians, Montenegrins, Macedonians and Bulgarians (1989 est). Estimates of the minority populations vary widely between different interlocutors and there is a general absence of reliable statistics.

Languages: Albanian (Tosk is the official dialect), Greek, others.

Religion(s): Sunni Muslim (70%), Albanian Orthodox (20%), Roman Catholic (10%) (est)

Currency: Lek [ALL]

Major Political Parties: Socialist Party, Democratic Party, New Democrat Party, Social Democratic Party, Republican Party, Socialist Movement for Integration.

Government: Parliamentary democracy

Head of State: President Bamir Topi

Prime Minister: Dr Sali Berisha (Democratic Party)

Foreign Minister: Lulzim Basha

Membership of International Groupings/Organisations: United Nations, South East Europe Cooperation Process, Organisation for Co-operation and Security in Europe (OSCE), Council of Europe (COE), World Trade Organisation (WTO) (FCO Country Profile: Albania, last updated 28 February 2008) [4a]

[Return to Contents](#)

GEOGRAPHY

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Country Profile on Albania, updated 28 February 2008, noted "Albania lies on the eastern Adriatic coastline, bordered by Montenegro to the north, Serbia/ Kosovo to the north east, Macedonia to the east, and Greece to the south and south-east." [4a]

[Return to Contents](#)

RECENT HISTORY

Europa World Online, accessed 20 March 2007, stated that:

"On 28 November 1912, after more than 400 years of Turkish rule, Albania declared its independence under a provisional Government. Although the country was occupied by Italy in 1914, its independence was re-established in 1920. Albania was declared a republic in 1925 and Ahmet Beg Zogu was elected President; proclaimed King Zog I in 1928, he reigned until he was forced into exile by the Italian occupation of Albania in April 1939. Albania was united with Italy for four years, before being occupied by German forces in 1943; the Germans withdrew one year later." [1a]

The BBC Country Profile on Albania, updated 5 March 2008, reported "After World War II, Albania became a Stalinist state under Enver Hoxha, and remained staunchly isolationist until its transition to democracy after 1990. The 1992 elections ended 47 years of communist rule, but the latter half of the decade saw a quick turnover of presidents and prime ministers." [7a]

[Return to Contents](#)

RECENT EVENTS AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

The FCO Country Profile on Albania, updated 28 February 2008, noted:

“In March 1992 the Democratic Party (DP) led by Sali Berisha won the parliamentary elections. Berisha became President and was re-elected in May 1996. The 1996 elections were criticised by international observers for violations of the electoral law and for Government-instigated intimidation. In January 1997, anti-government demonstrations erupted in the south of Albania following the collapse of a number of pyramid financial schemes. Riots spread across the country and insurgents gained control of many towns in the Southwest. Protesters called for the resignation of President Berisha and for the return of their money. Over 13,000 refugees fled to Italy during the crisis. The state armouries were attacked and an estimated 550,000 small arms looted: some were smuggled out of the country, but 120,000 had been collected and destroyed by 2001.

“The Parliamentary general election that took place on 24 June 2001 was followed by a further 3 rounds in July. Though long and drawn out, these elections were peaceful and produced a decisive victory for the ruling Socialist Party. On 21 August Ilir Meta was nominated for another term as Prime Minister. A report on the elections by the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), published in October, drew attention to a number of flaws and instances of manipulation in the elections, but concluded that such shortcomings were not sufficient to have affected the overall result. Berisha has continued to dispute the result, and a further Democratic Party boycott of Parliament lasted until 29 January.

“On 24 July 2002 President Alfred Moisiu, a consensus candidate, elected by parliament, was sworn in. On 25 July Pandeli Majko resigned as Prime Minister. A Presidential decree named Fatos Nano as his successor.

“The latest Parliamentary elections were held on 3 July 2005. After a lengthy appeals process and re-runs in three of the 100 constituencies, the results were announced on 1 September (in total, there are 140 seats in Parliament, the additional 40 are allocated on a party basis). The leader of the Democratic Party, former President Dr Sali Berisha, was then invited to form a new government. In early November 2005, the OSCE/ODIHR released their final report on the elections and noted that although Albania had enjoyed its first peaceful transfer of power since the end of single party politics, there were still shortcomings to be addressed.” [4a]

[Return to Contents](#)

ECONOMY

GDP: US\$ 7.5 billion (2004)

GDP per head: US\$ 2385 (2004)

Annual Growth: 5.9% (2004)

Inflation: 2.9% (2004)

Major Industries: Cement, Oil, Chromium, nickel, copper, hydroelectric power.

Major trading partners: Italy, Greece, Germany, Bulgaria, Turkey, Macedonia [4a]

Exchange rate: £1 = 155.159 ALL (XE.com, accessed 30 April 2008) [24]

On the economy of Albania, the FCO Country Profile, dated 28 February 2008, further stated:

“Albania is one the poorest countries in Europe. Since 1990, the economy has struggled to recover from the distortions of the communist regime, the impact of the move to a market economy and the 1997 crisis. Growth is strong albeit from a very low base. Energy provision remains a serious problem as a result of under investment and low water levels in the reservoirs on which hydroelectric production depends. The maintenance of law and order remains a major problem in Albania. There are high levels of organised crime and corruption.” [4a]

[Return to Contents](#)

HUMAN RIGHTS

The USSD 2007 Country Report on Human Rights in Albania stated:

“The government generally respected the human rights of its citizens; however, there were problems in some areas, including societal "blood feud" killings, security force abuse of prisoners and detainees, poor prison and pretrial detention conditions, police corruption and impunity, discrimination against women, children, and minorities, and human trafficking.” [2a]

In their 2007 Annual Report on Human Rights, the FCO noted in their overview of Albania that although it is party to several international agreements on human rights, Albania continued to have difficulty implementing legislation and reform in some areas. [4b] (p72)

Amnesty International's (AI) 2007 Annual Report expressed the following concerns in Albania:

- Torture and ill-treatment
- Police impunity
- Conditions of detention
- Violence against women
- People trafficking [11a]

[Return to Contents](#)

3. Index to key source documents

(KB users - click source number to access document directly)

KEY FACTS AND GEOGRAPHY	[1a]	Europa World Online, Location, Climate, Language, Religion, Flag, Capital (accessed on 20 March 2007) http://www.europaworld.com/pub/
	[1a]	Europa World Online, Country Statistics (accessed on 20 March 2007) http://www.europaworld.com/pub/
	[2a]	United States Department of State, Report on Human Rights Practices – 2007: Albania http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100544.htm
	[2c]	United States Department of State, Background Note: Albania, last updated January 2008 http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3235.htm
	[4a]	Country Profile: Albania, last updated 28 February 2008 http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029394365&a=KCountrypProfile&aid=1018696633488
	[7a]	BBC, Country Profile: Albania, last updated on 5 March 2008 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/country_profiles/1004234.stm
	[10a]	Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), The World Factbook Albania, last updated on 15 March 2008 https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/al.html
MAP	[6a]	UNHCR, Map of Albania http://www.unhcr.org/publ/PUBL/3dee189b4.pdf
HISTORY	[1a]	Europa World Online, Recent History (accessed on 20 March 2007) http://www.europaworld.com/pub/
	[2a]	United States Department of State, Report on Human Rights Practices – 2007: Albania http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100544.htm
	[2c]	United States Department of State, Background Note: Albania, last updated January 2008 http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3235.htm
	[4a]	Country Profile: Albania, last updated 28 February 2008 http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029394365&a=KCountrypProfile&aid=1018696633488
	[7a]	Country Profile: Albania, Last updated 5 March 2008 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/country_profiles/1004234.stm
	[7b]	BBC Timeline: Albania, last updated on 5 March 2008 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/country_profiles/1004234.stm
HISTORY		

CONT'D		<p>984.stm</p> <p>[22a] Freedom in the World 2007: Albania http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2007&country=7120</p>
POLITICS AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS	<p>[1a]</p> <p>[2a]</p> <p>[2c]</p> <p>[4a]</p> <p>[7a]</p> <p>[7b]</p> <p>[8a]</p> <p>[11a]</p> <p>[22a]</p> <p>[22c]</p>	<p>Europa World Online, Government and Politics (accessed on 20 March 2007) http://www.europaworld.com/pub/</p> <p>United States Department of State, Report on Human Rights Practices – 2007: Albania http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100544.htm</p> <p>United States Department of State, Background Note: Albania, last updated January 2008 http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3235.htm</p> <p>Country Profile: Albania, last updated 28 February 2008 http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029394365&a=KCountrypProfile&aid=1018696633488</p> <p>Country Profile: Albania, Last updated 5 March 2008 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/country_profiles/1004234.stm</p> <p>BBC Timeline: Albania, last updated on 5 March 2008 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/country_profiles/1004984.stm</p> <p>Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Response to Information Request – Albania National Front Party, 16 November 2006 http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/rir/index_e.htm?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=450659</p> <p>Amnesty International (AI) report 2007: Albania, covering events from January to December 2007 http://thereport.amnesty.org/document/15</p> <p>Freedom in the World 2007: Albania http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2007&country=7120</p> <p>Nations in Transit 2007: Albania http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh_galleries/NIT2007final/nit-albania-web.pdf</p>
HUMAN RIGHTS - GENERAL:	<p>[2a]</p> <p>[4a]</p> <p>[4b]</p>	<p>United States Department of State, Report on Human Rights Practices – 2007: Albania http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100544.htm</p> <p>Country Profile: Albania, last updated 28 February 2008 http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029394365&a=KCountrypProfile&aid=1018696633488</p> <p>Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Human Rights Annual Report 2007 http://www.fco.gov.uk/resources/en/pdf/human-rights-report-</p>

		<p><u>2007</u></p> <p>[5a] Human Rights Watch (HRW), Albania Country Page, accessed on 1 May 2008 http://www.hrw.org/doc?t=europe&c=albani</p> <p>[6c] UNHCR, Albanian Constitution, 21 October 1998 http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rsd/rsddocview.pdf?tbl=RSDLEGAL&id=3ae6b5dd0</p> <p>[11a] Amnesty International (AI) report 2007: Albania, covering events from January to December 2007 http://thereport.amnesty.org/document/15</p> <p>[22a] Freedom in the World 2007: Albania http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2007&country=7120</p> <p>[22c] Nations in Transit 2007: Albania http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh_galleries/NIT2007final/nit-albania-web.pdf</p>
<p>HUMAN RIGHTS – SPECIFIC ISSUES:</p> <p>(IN ADDITION TO GENERAL REPORTS ABOVE, INFORMATION ON THE FOLLOWING ISSUES IS PROVIDED IN THE DOCUMENTS LISTED BELOW)</p>		
ARREST AND DETENTION – LEGAL RIGHTS	[2a]	<p>United States Department of State, Report on Human Rights Practices – 2007: Albania http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100544.htm</p>
BLOOD FEUDS	[2a]	<p>United States Department of State, Report on Human Rights Practices – 2007: Albania http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100544.htm</p>
	[8b]	<p>Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Response to Information Requests – Protection available to persons targeted in blood feuds from government, police, 22 September 2006 http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/rir/index_e.htm?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=450550</p>
	[8e]	<p>Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Response to Information Requests – Possibility of those involved in blood feuds to relocate, 13 September 2006 http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/rir/index_e.htm?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=450536</p>
	[8p]	<p>Response to Information Requests, ALB102098.E National Association of the Blood Feud Reconciliation, 26 February 2007 http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/rir/index_e.htm?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=450916</p>
	[8q]	<p>Response to Information Requests, ALB102287.E Mission of Peace and Fraternity, 26 February 2007 http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/rir/index_e.htm?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=450917</p>

CHILDREN	[1a]	Europa World Online, Education (accessed on 20 March 2007) http://www.europaworld.com/pub/
	[2a]	United States Department of State, Report on Human Rights Practices – 2007: Albania http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100544.htm
	[2d]	United States Department of State, Trafficking in Persons Report, June 2007 http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/82902.pdf
	[11a]	Amnesty International (AI) report 2007: Albania, covering events from January to December 2007 http://thereport.amnesty.org/document/15
	[11g]	Albania: Respect the right of orphans to housing, 21 November 2007 http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/EUR11/008/2007/en/dom-EUR110082007en.html
	[15a]	Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, Global Report 2004: Albania http://www.child-soldiers.org/document_get.php?id=885
	[20a]	UNICEF, Albania Background (accessed on 9 May 2008) http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/albania_background.html
	[20b]	UNICEF Albania (accessed on 23 March 2007) http://www.unicef.org/albania/
	[22a]	Freedom in the World 2007: Albania http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2007&country=7120
	[26c]	USAID Albania, Shelter on Frontlines, 5 September 2007 http://albania.usaid.gov/shfaqart/110/94/Success_Story.htm
CITIZENSHIP AND NATIONALITY	[6d]	UNHCR, Law on Albanian Citizenship, September 1998 http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rsd/rsddocview.htm?tbl=RSDLEGAL&id=3ae6b5c10
	[6e]	UNHCR, On some changes in Law no. 8389, Dated 5 August 1998 “On Albanian Citizenship” http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rsd/rsddocview.pdf?tbl=RSDLEGAL&id=3f4e16744
	[8k]	Response to Information Requests, ALB102520.E Procedure to obtain a passport from outside the country, 10 October 2007 http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/rir/index_e.htm?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=451256
	[8m]	Response to Information Requests, ALB102599.E Identity documents required to obtain social services, 1 October 2007 http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/rir/index_e.htm?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=451478

	[8n]	Response to Information Requests, ALB102602.E Whether Albanians who work in Albania are required to have employment booklets that record their hours, wages and other employment data, 9 October 2007 http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/rir/index_e.htm?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=451496 Date accessed 1 May 2008
	[8o]	Response to Information Requests, ALB102600.E Description of valid birth and marriage certificates, 3 October 2007 http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/rir/index_e.htm?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=451477
CORRUPTION	[2a]	United States Department of State, Report on Human Rights Practices – 2007: Albania http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100544.htm
	[8l]	Response to Information Requests, ALB102601.E Procedures for registering a complaint against the police; effectiveness of such procedures; statistics on police abuse of authority, 5 October 2007 http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/rir/index_e.htm?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=451495
CORRUPTION CONT'D	[22a]	Freedom in the World 2007: Albania http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2007&country=7120
	[22c]	Nations in Transit 2007: Albania http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh_galleries/NIT2007/final/nit-albania-web.pdf
	[23a]	Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2007 http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2007
DEATH PENALTY	[11f]	The Death Penalty: Worldwide developments in 2007, 15 April 2008 http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/ACT50/002/2008/en/f23d3808-fff9-11dc-b092-bdb020617d3d/act500022008eng.pdf
DISABILITY	[2a]	United States Department of State, Report on Human Rights Practices – 2007: Albania http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100544.htm
	[11d]	Amnesty International, Albania: Disability and the right to marry, 11 November 2004 http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engur110052004
EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS	[2a]	United States Department of State, Report on Human Rights Practices – 2007: Albania http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100544.htm
ETHNIC GROUPS	[2a]	United States Department of State, Report on Human Rights Practices – 2007: Albania http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100544.htm
	[2c]	United States Department of State, Background Note:

		Albania, last updated January 2008 http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3235.htm
	[3a]	European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), Threats to Roma Housing Rights in Albania, accessed on 26 March 2007 http://www.errc.org/cikk.php?cikk=2662&archiv=1
	[19a]	The State of the World's Minorities 2008, Events of 2007 www.minorityrights.org/download.php?id=459
	[22a]	Freedom in the World 2007: Albania http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2007&country=7120
FOREIGN REFUGEES	[2a]	United States Department of State, Report on Human Rights Practices – 2007: Albania http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100544.htm
	[6b]	UNHCR, Law on Asylum in the Republic of Albania, December 1998 http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rsd/rsddocview.html?tbl=RSDLEGAL&id=3ae6b5c07
	[22a]	Freedom in the World 2007: Albania http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2007&country=7120
FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT	[2a]	United States Department of State, Report on Human Rights Practices – 2007: Albania http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100544.htm
FREEDOM OF RELIGION	[2a]	United States Department of State, Report on Human Rights Practices – 2007: Albania http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100544.htm
	[2b]	United States Department of State, International Religious Freedom Report 2007 Albania http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2007/90160.htm
FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND MEDIA	[2a]	United States Department of State, Report on Human Rights Practices – 2007: Albania http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100544.htm
	[5a]	Human Rights Watch (HRW), Albania Country Page http://www.hrw.org/doc?t=europe&c=albani
	[9a]	Reporters sans Frontieres (Reporters without Borders) Albania 2006 Annual Report http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=17334&Valider=OK
	[22a]	Freedom in the World 2007: Albania http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2007&country=7120
	[22b]	Freedom of the Press 2007: Albania http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=251&year=2007

HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS, ORGANISATIONS AND ACTIVISTS	[2a]	United States Department of State, Report on Human Rights Practices – 2007: Albania http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100544.htm
	[22a]	Freedom in the World 2007: Albania http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2007&country=7120
JUDICIARY	[1a]	Europa World Online, Judicial System (accessed on 20 March 2007) http://www.europaworld.com/pub/
	[2a]	United States Department of State, Report on Human Rights Practices – 2007: Albania http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100544.htm
	[2c]	United States Department of State, Background Note: Albania, last updated January 2008 http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3235.htm
	[6f]	UNHCR, Criminal Procedure Code of The Republic of Albania, 1 August 1995, amended 1999 http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rsd/rsddocview.pdf?tbl=RSDLEGAL&id=3ae6b5870
JUDICIARY CONT'D	[11a]	Amnesty International (AI) report 2007: Albania, covering events from January to December 2007 http://thereport.amnesty.org/document/15
	[11e]	Amnesty International (AI), Albania – Obligations under the UN Convention against Torture – a gap between law and practice, 1 February 2005 http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engneur110012005
	[22a]	Freedom in the World 2007: Albania http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2007&country=7120
LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER PERSONS	[8d]	Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Response to Information Requests, Treatment of homosexuals – legislation, 8 September 2006 http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/rir/index_e.htm?action=record.viewwrec&gotorec=450467
MEDICAL ISSUES	[12a]	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), Country Profile: Albania (accessed 23 March 2007) http://www.unaids.org/en/Regions_Countries/Countries/albania.asp
	[12b]	Albania Country Progress Report 2007 http://data.unaids.org/pub/Report/2008/albania_2008_country_progress_report_en.pdf
	[16a]	The Global Fund Country Profile – Albania (accessed 9 May

		2008) http://www.theglobalfund.org/programs/countrysite.aspx?countryid=ALB&lang=en
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