



RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

[Search](#) | [About RIRs](#) | [Help](#)

ALB101496.E

14 September 2006

Albania: Treatment of members of the Democratic Party of Albania by police and government; protection available to members through government, police, judiciary and non-governmental organizations; whether relatives of members are at risk of ill-treatment (2005 - 2006)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

Information on the treatment of members of the Democratic Party of Albania by police and government was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

The Democratic Party of Albania (Partia Demokratike e Shqiperise, DPA) is a centre-right, pro-democracy and pro-market political party led by Sali Berisha (*The Europa World Year Book 2005* 2005, 470; BBC 14 May 2006), who is now the Prime Minister of Albania (ibid.). After the 3 July 2005 election, the DPA controlled 56 of 140 parliamentary seats, winning more seats than any other party (OSCE 7 Nov. 2005, 30; see also BBC 14 May 2006). This election marked a shift in power from the Socialist Party (SP) to the DPA (OSCE 7 Nov. 2005, 3). The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) noted that although the election process had improved in comparison with previous elections, the election process only partly adhered to OSCE commitments and "the process was again protracted and at times uncertain" (ibid., 1; see also Freedom House 2006, 6). However, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) noted that the elections were remarkable because they failed to spark the type of angry protests which had previously been common in Albanian politics (14 May 2006).

According to Freedom House, power was transferred peacefully after the 2005 election and the DPA and the SP were less confrontational during this election campaign than in the past (Freedom House 2006, 5-6). In what Freedom House described as a random event, the Head of the DPA for the Kukes region was killed during the election, although Freedom House did not explain the circumstances surrounding his or her death (ibid., 10) and further or corroborating information on this event could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

In a 14 June 2006 telephone interview with the Research Directorate, a professor of history at Indiana University, who is considered an expert witness in political asylum cases from the Balkans and who has authored several publications on twentieth-century Albanian history, stated that the treatment of DPA members and activists had recently improved. In the opinion of the Professor, card-carrying members of the DPA are not at