



## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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Albania: Whether newspapers or journalists verify their stories before publication; whether newspapers or journalists print stories upon request by private citizens without first verifying whether the stories are true

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According to an official at the South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), a regional affiliate of the International Press Institute and regional network of editors, media executives and journalists (SEEMO n.d.), Albanian newspapers and journalists do not necessarily verify whether their stories are true prior to publication (SEEMO 4 Sept. 2008). The SEEMO Official stated that some journalists may print a story without double-checking the facts in order to publish a story quickly and to make the paper more interesting or "sensational" for readers (ibid.).

An official from the Canadian Embassy in Rome stated that the printing of stories without first verifying whether they are true is "very common and ... a serious problem" in Albania (15 Sept. 2008). The Canadian Embassy Official further stated that "[s]tories are planted for money to destroy other people's reputations or to make false accusations" (15 Sept. 2008).

According to the SEEMO Official, there have been cases of journalists being paid to write stories by individuals belonging to political parties or "big business" (SEEMO 4 Sept. 2008). The SEEMO Official stated, however, that it is unlikely for a journalist to write a story on behalf of a private citizen unless the journalist is "young and inexperienced" or the private citizen is wealthy, belongs to "big business" or has political power (ibid.). According to Freedom House, "the intermingling of powerful business, political and media interests inhibits the development of independent outlets" in Albania (2008; see also US 11 Mar. 2008, Sec. 2.a). In the 2007 Transparency International (TI) Global Corruption Barometer, the media sector in Albania received a score of 2.4 (6 Dec. 2007). A score of one signifies "not all corrupt" and a score of five signifies "extremely corrupt" (TI 6 Dec. 2007).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.