



## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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Albania: Means by which reconciliation groups begin working on a case; records kept by such groups to document their work; steps normally taken by the groups to resolve a blood feud; threshold at which the groups would abandon their resolution efforts; information normally included in an attestation letter; whether it is possible to purchase such letters; status of the law on mediation, including its effectiveness in resolving blood feuds; whether any individuals have been prosecuted for blood feud-related crimes

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The sources consulted by the Research Directorate provided a range of opinions as to how reconciliation groups begin working on a case (Committee of Nationwide Reconciliation 24 Oct. 2004; Research associate 13 Oct. 2004; Professor 26 Oct. 2004; Post-doctoral fellow 28 Oct. 2004). According to the Chairman of the Tirana-based Committee of Nationwide Reconciliation, an organization founded in 1990 which aims to "establish a common and long-term strategy for the prevention of blood feud, reconciliation, cohabitation, equal gender and integration of Albanians in the community of the civilized nations" (Committee of Nationwide Reconciliation n.d.), close relatives normally make an initial attempt to resolve inter-family disputes that do not involve homicide, turning to mediators or village leaders if their attempt is unsuccessful (*ibid.* 24 Oct. 2004). However, mediators are informed immediately in cases where an individual has been killed (*ibid.*). In such instances, the mediators would hold preliminary, undocumented meetings with the parties to the conflict in an attempt to calm the situation (*ibid.*). One of the families would subsequently submit a formal request for mediation to the Chairman's organization, which would then monitor the conflict in cooperation with the police and local authorities and provide advice to the threatened family (*ibid.*).

Three academics consulted by the Research Directorate were in agreement that contact by family members was a means by which a reconciliation group would become involved in the mediation of a blood feud (Professor 26 Oct. 2004; Post-doctoral fellow 28 Oct. 2004; Research associate 13 Oct. 2004). A research associate at Colgate University's Department of Sociology and Anthropology who is also an honorary research fellow at the University of Bradford's Department of Peace Studies' Research Unit in South East European Studies added that family members would likely approach a reconciliation group in person or, more likely, through an intermediary, and it is doubtful that anything would be set in writing because of the lack of formal education of most blood feud participants (*ibid.*). A professor and Chairman of the Department of History at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne (IU-PUFW) who specializes in Albanian