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Albania: Joint Statement by the United Against Torture Consortium on allegations of torture, ill-treatment and arbitrary detention in the context of civic mobilization

Geneva / Tirana, 30 October 2026

The United Against Torture Consortium (UATC) and the Albanian Rehabilitation Centre for Trauma and Torture (ARCT), a member centre of IRCT and OMCT network member, express grave concern at serious and consistent allegations of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, excessive use of force and arbitrary deprivation of liberty. These allegations have arisen during protests, demonstrating a strong civic mobilization that has continued in Albania for more than 140 days.

Allegations documented by ARCT

Since May 2026, protests have been going on in Tirana, Albania. They have intensified after the 13th of October. We express concern with regard to police brutality and excessive use of force to silence protesters, as well as ill-treatment during the transport of protesters and their placement in custody (incidents were reported in Police Stations No. 1 and No. 3, the Security Block and the Trauma Hospital). ARCT has received more than 100 requests for medical and legal assistance. It has collected testimonies from more than 75 people who participated in protests. These testimonies describe:

- At least 320 people were injured after participating in the demonstrations (numbers are not updated with October 24th figures). ARCT recorded the case of a 19 years old whose right lower leg was fractured by the police on October 13, with footage showing four officers carrying him by his limbs, with the injured leg unsupported;
- The use of rubber bullets during the protests of October 24th, injuring at least two victims, one of them suffered a serious eye injury (exact damage to be determined). Additionally, reports of the use of batons, shields, tear gas and water cannon by law enforcement officers were brought to ARCT's attention.
- Cases of hate speech: 20 cases of hate speech by police officers were reported on October 24.
- More than 32 people were held at Police Stations No. 1 and No. 3, recalling accounts of physical violence and people being left without food for more than 14 hours.
- The arrest of more than 50 people, among them 18 children without a court-imposed security measure, followed by detention on police premises beyond the 5 hours legally permitted before judicial review by Article 19(2) of Law No. 82/2024. At Police Station No. 1, five of eight children alleged physical and verbal violence, and monitors observed injuries on two. Neither their parents nor psychologists were contacted. Six children had also been entered in the adult register.
- 118 people were held in the Security Block, a detention facility whose normal capacity is 67 people. They were sleeping on the floor.



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- At least 2 injured protesters were receiving treatment at the hospital while restrained and watched by two police officers, although they were not presenting immediate danger on October 16 and 24;

If substantiated, these acts may amount to torture or other ill-treatment within the meaning of articles 1 and 16 of the UN Convention against Torture (UNCAT), and to arbitrary deprivation of liberty contrary to article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. They also engage articles 86-90, 110 and 250-251 of the Albanian Criminal Code. In addition, torture and other ill-treatment towards children is specifically prohibited by Article 37 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The allegations concerning children are particularly serious. Article 85 of the Code of Criminal Justice for Children requires judicial validation of a child's arrest or detention within 48 hours. Under Article 37 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, deprivation of liberty of a child may only be used as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period.

ARCT has joined the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture and other civil society organizations to monitor events and follow up on individual cases. Its observers have nevertheless faced obstacles in monitoring events and in following the situation of people in custody, essentially due to pressure from state institutions. The Tirana Prosecutor's Office confirmed proceeding No. 7806/2026 concerning the victim who suffered a serious eye injury after being shot with rubber bullets. It reported obtaining approximately 20 medical files concerning injured people.

A pattern examined by the UN Committee against Torture in 2025

In October 2025, ARCT and the IRCT submitted a joint alternative report to the Committee against Torture (CAT) for the third review of Albania. The report highlighted similar issues related to excessive use of force in the context of protests. It documented police beating and kicking protesters, leading to 34 protesters being hospitalized since 2024. In the report, ARCT noted with concern intimidation and arbitrary arrests of protesters, and detention beyond the 11-hour legal limit, in some cases lasting 17 to 24 hours. In addition, the report recorded systematic failures in fundamental legal safeguards, including the failure to communicate to people held in custody their right to have access to a lawyer and to a medical doctor, and to notify their person of contact.

The Committee's concluding observations of 28 November 2025 (CAT/C/ALB/CO/3) align with ARCT findings, as the membership expressed concerns about reports of excessive use of force and physical violence by police officers, intimidation against protesters, and accounts of arbitrary arrests and detention" (para. 22). The Committee identified ending **excessive use of force** and ensuring **prompt, independent investigations** as **priorities** for its follow-up procedure. The Committee also recommended that Albanian authorities train all officers deployed in demonstrations on the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms and the Model Protocol on peaceful protests. It further recommended that the detention of children be a measure of last resort, with access to legal, medical and psychological support (para. 31).



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Less than a year after the review, the situation documented by ARCT suggests that the concerns raised by the Committee have intensified. The coming weeks are a decisive moment for Albania to show its commitment to implementing these recommendations, as the deadline to provide information to the Committee against Torture within the follow-up procedure is set on 28 November 2026.

The UATC and ARCT call on the Albanian authorities to:

1. **End all torture and other ill-treatment immediately.** Authorities should state unequivocally that excessive use of force amounting to torture and ill-treatment will not be tolerated, and all policing of assemblies must comply with the principles of legality, necessity, proportionality and non-discrimination.
2. **Investigate promptly, independently and impartially** all allegations of torture, ill-treatment, excessive use of force and unlawful detention, as announced by the Prosecutor's Office. Officers suspected of involvement should be suspended during the investigation, and those responsible prosecuted and punished in proportion to the gravity of their acts, in line with articles 12 and 13 of UNCAT.
3. **Guarantee fundamental legal safeguards from the outset of deprivation of liberty.** These include access to a lawyer, an independent medical examination, notification of a family member, registration, and being brought before a judge without delay.
4. **Immediately review the lawfulness of the detention of every child**, release any child whose detention has not been judicially validated within the legal deadline, and provide legal, medical and psychological support.
5. **Ensure urgent and continuous medical care** for all injured and detained persons, including after release. Injuries should be documented by independent forensic medical examination in line with the Istanbul Protocol.
6. **Protect civic space.** Ensure full and unhindered access for the National Preventive Mechanism and civil society monitors, uphold the right of peaceful assembly, and refrain from any intimidation of human rights defenders, journalists, lawyers and health professionals assisting victims.
7. **Guarantee redress for all victims, including rehabilitation**, as required by article 14 of UNCAT.
8. **Submit a comprehensive and accurate follow-up report to the Committee against Torture by 28 November 2026** that accounts for the current events, prepared in meaningful consultation with civil society.

We further urge the European Union, the Council of Europe, the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture, the OSCE and UN mechanisms, including the Special Rapporteur on Torture, to follow the situation closely and raise these concerns with the Albanian authorities. We also call on donors and international partners to provide urgent support so that ARCT and other civil society organizations can continue to provide medical, legal and rehabilitation services and monitor human rights violations.





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About the Consortium

The United Against Torture Consortium pools the strengths and expertise of six leading anti-torture organisations (IRCT, OMCT, FIACAT, APT, Omega Research Foundation and REDRESS) in partnership with over 400 civil society organisations and partners in more than 120 countries, to strengthen and expand the anti-torture movement. The European Union funds this project.

The present statement was issued by IRCT, OMCT, Omega Research Foundation and REDRESS, as well as the Albanian Rehabilitation Center for Trauma and Torture (ARCT).



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