



## **Torture Prevention: Strengthening the Rule of Law and Human Rights Protections**

### **Albanian Rehabilitation Center for Trauma and Torture**

is a non-profit organization that has been registered and operating in Albania since 1994. ARCT represents the only organization under the domain of the torture in Albania, co-founder of the Balkan Network Against Torture, co-founder of the Kosova Rehabilitation Center for Trauma and Torture. ARCT is dedicated to designing and implementing programs that contribute to building a democratic society free from torture and ill-treatment.

ARCT's work is focused on three main areas:

1. **Rehabilitation Services for Torture Survivors.**
2. **Torture Prevention Programs.**
3. **Social Justice Advocacy.**

Over the years, ARCT has lobbied on behalf of more than 100,000 individuals, demonstrating its profound impact in the field of human rights. The organization's efforts have been recognized at the highest levels, with ARCT being honored with three Medals of Honor by two different Presidents of the Republic of Albania. After the first President of the Republic award in 2010, It was obvious that the work performed by ARCT was filling the Government' gap to such services.

### **Current Situation of Torture Victims in Albania**

The situation of torture victims in Albania remains concerning even that big steps towards prevention and implementing European standards are done. Despite some progress and OPCAT ratification, issues such as police brutality, particularly during protests, and inadequate investigation into deaths in prisons or other detentions persist. Over the past year alone, there have been reports of several deaths in prisons, which were met with insufficient investigation.

Moreover, the former political prisoners, former detainees whom are not part of social industries in Albania.

Survivors of human trafficking are still grappling with severe psychological consequences, including Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), insomnia, depression, stigmatization. Unfortunately, the support systems currently in place to address these mental health challenges are not sufficient.



DECORATED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE  
REUBLIC OF ALBANIA WITH  
THE MEDAL OF HONOR



The budget allocated for mental health services is often insufficient, limiting the availability and quality of care.

Secondly, there is a lack of qualified staff. Professional medical doctors who are trained to handle trauma and severe psychological conditions, are often in short supply.

Mental health services, particularly within detention centers, are often lacking, which exacerbates the already vulnerable conditions of these individuals. In many prisons, the absence of a dedicated medical team further complicates the situation, leaving victims without the necessary care and attention they require.

However, despite these challenges, there has been a notable shift in recent years towards greater engagement between state institutions and civil society organizations. Numerous recommendations and consultative meetings have been increasingly welcomed by state representatives. These developments represent a positive step forward in enhancing the quality of services provided to torture victims, although work still remains to be done.

#### ARCT Recommendations:

- 1- One of the first key recommendations is that Police Officers should and must provide the human rights card to all the individuals upon their arrest, often it doesn't come realized by the criminal investigators at the police stations.
- 2- The interviews between arrested individuals and police officers should be conducted not in the private offices of the officers but in monitored areas where audiovisual systems are in place. These measures are crucial for ensuring transparency and accountability enforcement procedures.
- 3- There is a need for a Comprehensive Legal and Strategic Framework updates regarding the former political prisoners and/or their relatives. The existing legal provisions, including those established in 1999 and the resolution of the 2006 we call for comprehensive revisions and expansions to effectively address contemporary challenges and ensure robust protection and support for the affected individuals and or their relatives. This includes enhancing provisions for victim rehabilitation, protection, and compensation.
- 4- Establish mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the revised laws and national strategies regarding torture prevention. This includes regular assessments of their impact on victim protection and the effectiveness of prevention and rehabilitation efforts.
- 5- Enhancing mental health support in prisons and training sessions regarding psychological support.



DECORATED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA WITH  
THE MEDAL OF HONOR



Albanian Rehabilitation  
Centre for Trauma and Torture

### **Conclusion Remarks.**

While the situation for torture victims in Albania has seen some improvements, significant challenges remain. We call upon the international community to support these endeavors and to hold Albania accountable for fulfilling its human rights obligations.

- 1) adhere to global standards on torture rehabilitation.
- 2) Provide comprehensive training programs to the Academy of Security and other relevant institutions to enhance their understanding and capacity to address these issues effectively.
- 3) Adhere to global standards for torture rehabilitation is crucial and must be communicated to state institutions. Additionally, training programs should be provided to security academies and other relevant institutions to enhance their knowledge and capabilities.



DECORATED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE  
REUBLIC OF ALBANIA WITH  
THE MEDAL OF HONOR