

Freedom of the press in Albania

Fact Sheet



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The Albanian constitution protects freedom of expression and freedom of media, while it prohibits censorship of the media. Yet, the law may require the granting of authorisation for operating a radio or a television station. Since the end of the communist era, Albania has developed a tradition of robust self-regulation within the print press, leading to a relatively limited legal framework governing print media. The Press Law, in particular, comprises just two provisions: "The press is free. Freedom of the press is protected by law" (Ibrahimi et al.). As a consequence of this broadly defined regulation, newspapers and print publications, in general, are not required to undergo registration. This extremely lenient policy adds complexity in accurately determining the total number of publications at any given time (Londo). In contrast to broadcasting, print media are exclusively subject to self-regulation.

Overall, the audience reach of the politically affiliated media owners ranges from **65,18%** to **75,86%**. Under the influence of media proprietors with political and economic motives, numerous Albanian journalists opt for self-censorship. **80%** of journalists in Albania perceive their job security as fragile, explicitly connecting their working environment to the prevalent practice of self-censorship as a protective measure.

According to Albania's ethical code, journalists "have the right to obtain information, to publish, and to criticise. Information should be truthful, balanced and verified". The job market for media professionals in Albania is characterised by instability, with journalists frequently operating without formal contracts, offering unpaid overtime work, and encountering delays in salary disbursement. These challenges compromise their professional motivation and job security. The absence of a robust and dynamic journalistic union tradition, coupled with the relatively inactive or inefficient nature of existing journalistic organisations, contributes to a lack of effective advocacy for the rights of journalists.

Empirical Evidence

- In July 2022, Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama decided to ban journalists from press conferences.
- In April 2022, Edmond Hoxhaj, a journalist at the *BIRN Network Albania* and *Reporter.al* who had been covering the vetting process of Imeraj, discovered a suspicious breach of his personal data on the e-Albania portal. This process was being conducted as part of a judicial reform initiative in Albania with the goal of eliminating corrupt judges and prosecutors.
- In March-April 2022, Isa Myzyraj, a journalist from *Ora News*, experienced intimidation from various individuals who insisted that he cease commenting on and reporting about the appeals process for the vetting of Imeraj.
- In August 2020, TV channels *Ora News TV* and *Channel One*, which have often criticised Prime Minister Edi Rama and the mayor of Tirana Erion Velia, were ordered seizure by a special court at the request of the special prosecutor's office for corruption and organised crime.
- In July 2019, The Albanian parliament approved a series of media regulations referred to as the "anti-defamation package," aiming to significantly enhance governmental oversight of online media platforms.
- In May 2019, Besfort Kryeziu, a cameraman with privately owned *Top Channel TV*, was hospitalised after a Molotov cocktail struck his head during protests
- In May 2019, Eno Xhaja, a journalist of *Top Channel TV* and Mateo Brahja of *ABC News* were assaulted by protesters who prevented them from filming and smashed their equipment.

- In May 2019, Arsen Rusta, a journalist of *Report TV*, was reported of being the target of serious threats.
- In May 2019, Ola Xama, a reporter of *TV Klan*, said she was attacked verbally and physically by a member of the Republican National Guard at the Albanian parliament.
- In May 2019, Enkelejda Mema, a journalist with *TV Klan*, said she was subjected to serious sexist insults by Academy of Sciences director Skender Gjinushi.
- In April 2019, journalist Eliza Gjediku and freelancer Arben Dajçi of *TV Tema* sustained serious injuries during opposition demonstrations in Tirana.
- In February 2019, Isa Myzyraj, a journalist of *Ora News TV* and Marsela Karapanço, a journalist of *A2 News CNN Albania*, had to be hospitalised after inhaling teargas during protests.
- In September 2018, Julian Shota, a reporter for the commercial TV channel *Report TV*, visited the town of Laç to report on an explosion that had recently taken place in a bar. Upon reaching the bar, the owner promptly instructed the reporter to leave and threatened to shoot him.
- In August 2018, unknown suspects fired shots with a Kalashnikov-style automatic weapon at the house of Klodiana Lala, an investigative journalist who specialises in covering crime.
- In March 2017, Elvi Fundo, a journalist who specialises in covering corruption, was violently attacked near Tirana's main railway.

Resources

- [A Family Affair – The myth of media pluralism in Albania Media Ownership Monitor presented by RSF and BIRN Albania](#), Reporters without Borders
- [Albania urged to protect journalists from protest violence](#), Reporters without Borders
- [Albania: Government should withdraw “anti-defamation” legislative package introducing state regulation of online media outlets](#), Reporters without Borders
- [Albania: Journalist who covers corruption hospitalized after attack](#), Reporters without Borders
- [Albania: Preliminary findings of joint freedom of expression mission](#), Reporters without Borders
- [Albania: RSF and other press freedom organizations protest against Prime Minister’s decision to ban journalists from press conferences](#), Reporters without Borders
- [Albania: RSF asks for effective investigations following the intimidation of journalists reporting on prosecutor’s vetting](#), Reporters without Borders
- [Albania: Seizure threatens independence of two Albanian TV channels](#), Reporters without Borders
- [Albanian journalists repeatedly threatened, attacked](#), Reporters without Borders
- [Albanian media legislation threatens to restrict online news outlets](#), Committee to Protect Journalists
- [Freedom of Media in the Western Balkans](#), European Parliament
- Media Landscape of Albania: Legal Framework. Media online (2001), Gent Ibrahimi and Agron Loci
- Media Research. Media Legislation (2013), Albanian Media Institute, Ilda Londo
- [Open letter: Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama bans journalists from press conferences](#), European Federation of Journalists