

## ALBANIA: HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION

### ISSUE:

As yet, we have very little information about the human rights situation in Albania. Although Albania has opened somewhat to the rest of the world in the last few years, human rights and political issues are mostly closed to discussion.

### BACKGROUND:

The human rights situation in Albania has not changed appreciably in recent years and remains poor. Information is difficult to verify, but it is known with certainty that Albanians are not allowed to travel abroad or emigrate, labour camps exist and freedoms of speech, of information, of association and of religion are not respected. No dissidents are known.

Its human rights record is considered poor by groups such as Amnesty International. Western complaints on human rights matters tend to be rejected as interference in Albania's internal affairs. When asked about human rights, Albanian diplomats often turn the discussion to the Yugoslav authorities' treatment of Albanians in that country.

Albania is a member of the United Nations, but its human rights performance has been criticized there. The Commission on Human Rights (CHR) mandated a confidential study in 1984 and appointed a Special Rapporteur on the implementation of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief. The Albanian authorities declined to cooperate with him. In 1989, the CHR and the Economic and Social Council passed a resolution calling upon the Albanian Government to cooperate and to respond to the specific allegations raised by the Special Rapporteur.