

# Returning to Albania



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This guide has been funded by the Education and Training Foundation and designed and developed by the charity Hibiscus Initiatives.

We provide advocacy, support and specialist services to marginalised and vulnerable migrants affected by the criminal justice and immigration systems to enable informed choices and positive change. We promote justice and respect to reduce inequalities

### **The charity's work falls within four broad categories:**

- Welfare and Advocacy in Prisons
- International Resettlement
- Combatting Trafficking
- Volunteering and Community Resettlement

The international resettlement programme provides a case management service to clients to facilitate their reconnection within their communities in their country of origin.

Through providing resettlement related support and practical assistance we aim to ensure the smoothest possible transition for our clients returning to their home countries. Often this could mean providing help with finding accommodation, assistance in getting identification and passports back, helping with internal travel, liaison with families and providing resettlement grants to aid small business start-up.

Our work is particularly important to clients that have exhausted their rights to be in the UK, or those who are being deported at the end of serving a sentence for a criminal offence.

## Contact us

If you would like to know more about Hibiscus Initiatives, receive support, or know a friend or family member who could do with our assistance, please contact:

### **Hibiscus Initiatives**

Resource for London

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London N7 6PA

T: 44 (0) 20 7697 4120

F: 44 (0) 20 7697 4272



E: [info@hibiscus.org.uk](mailto:info@hibiscus.org.uk)



W: [www.hibiscusinitiatives.org.uk](http://www.hibiscusinitiatives.org.uk)

## Introduction

This booklet has been designed to provide you with information that will help ease your return to Albania. Inside you will find useful general information about your return, what to expect and a list of contact details of organisations that may be able to help with any resettlement related issues you may encounter.



The following pages provide some basic information which is designed to help you resettle back into Albanian society.

## Planning for your return

The more you plan for your return to Albania, the easier life will be for you when you arrive. There are number of things to think about before you arrive. For example; Who will meet you at the airport? Where will you stay? If you have friends or family living in Albania you should try to take their contact details (name, address, phone number) with you to the airport so that you can contact them on arrival or get in touch with them before you leave.

When you are reading this booklet, you will find the names of organisations that might be able to help you. Contact details for all organisations mentioned are listed in the booklet \*see useful contacts.

If you need any help or if you just want to talk to someone before you leave the UK you can call Hibiscus Initiatives.

Before your departure, you may want to consider the following:

- Medication

It is important to talk to your doctor before leaving for Albania. If you are currently taking medication, your doctor should be able to advise you on how to source further medication. It might be beneficial for you to request a letter from your GP or doctor, detailing your condition. The more information you have about your medical condition, the easier it will be to continue treatment after your arrival.

- Friends and Family

If you have family and friends living in Albania you may wish to inform them of your arrival as they may be able to provide help with finding accommodation or making transport arrangements.

### Restoring Family Links

The British Red Cross provides a free service aimed at restoring contact between families that have been separated. You may access this programme by directly contacting them at;

British Red Cross, UK Office

44 Moorfields, London EC2Y 9AL

Phone 344 871 1111 (+44 2071 3879 00 from abroad)

Website [www.redcross.org.uk](http://www.redcross.org.uk)

## What to expect on arrival

- **Arrival at the airport**

Once you have disembarked from the aircraft you will be taken to the airport where administrative services will be carried out for your re-entry into Albania.

Now that you are in Albania, you may want to start thinking about being reunited with family and friends, finding a job, getting a new ID etc.



## Transport

Transport in Albania has progressed significantly over the last decade with the improvement of the infrastructure in the country. Most people in Albania travel by public or private minibus called (furgon) that depart quite frequently to destinations around Albania. Furgons have no timetable and depart when they are full. They cost a little bit more but go a bit faster than buses.

Albania has few bus companies and usually buses are not very fast but can cheaply transport you around the city of Tirana. Cabs (taxis) are also available from the airport and offer fixed fees.

Reliable Taxi companies are:

Speed Taxi - <http://speedtaxi.al/offers/tirane-rinas-vetem-1500-leke>

Tel: +355 422 22555 or +355 69 64 22211

Mer Taxi - <http://merrtaxi.com/>

Tel: 0800 5555



## Essential information and important documents

- **ID cards**

The Albanian Identity Card (Letërnjoftim) is a national identity card issued by the Albanian authorities to their citizens. It is proof of identity, citizenship and residence. The letërnjoftim is compulsory for all citizens over 16 years old.



The current version is in ID1 format and biometric. The identity card can be obtained by requesting it at the local municipality, after paying the required fee (1,500 Lek or 10 Euros). A digital picture of the bearers face and fingerprints are taken. The card can be picked up in person after about 15 days, when you must identify yourself with fingerprints.

The letërnjoftim is accepted as proof of identity in some of the neighbouring countries and lasts for 10 years from date of issue.

- **Albanian driving licence**

A driving licence is required to drive on public roads in Albania. You must be over 18 years old to drive in Albania. Driving licences issued by the EU or EEA countries are accepted but you will also need an International Driving Permit, IDP 1949 to drive in Albania. Foreign licences can be used for up to 1 year but must be converted if living in Albania for over 12 months.

While driving in Albania, you are required by law to carry the following items. On-the spot fines can be issued for failing to carry specific items.

- Headlamp beam deflectors (depending on your car)
- First aid kits
- Safety helmets are compulsory for motorcycle drivers and passengers

- **Opening a bank account**

Documents required to open a bank account in Albania may differ from bank to bank.

However banks in Albania usually request proof of Identity, either your passport or ID card.

Please refer to the link below for more instructions.

[https://www.bankofalbania.org/web/Si\\_te\\_hapesh\\_nje\\_llogari\\_bankare\\_7425\\_1.php](https://www.bankofalbania.org/web/Si_te_hapesh_nje_llogari_bankare_7425_1.php)

## Accommodation



Social housing in Albania is very limited and most people rent privately. If you are unable to stay with friends and family you may be able to find temporary emergency accommodation.

*\*See list of Useful Contacts for help with emergency accommodation*

**Emergency Shelters** <http://kenedifoundation.org/>

**The Kenedi Foundation** has a two-room apartment available which is suitable for women experiencing domestic violence or dangerous situations. The women's safe house project was initially started through a partnership with the United Nations Development Program and the local government of Korçë.

Fondacioni Kennedy; Niko Dodona 6, Lagjia 12, Korce, Albania

Close to the Cathedral, near the large Television-antenna.

**Homeless shelter for LGBT:** The primary service offered by "STREHA" will be the housing of LGBTI people for a maximum period of 6 months, including medical assistance when needed. Based on individual plans the shelter will draft and implement a daily and periodic program for each beneficiary that will include vocational and life skill trainings, social and cultural activities, etc. The shelter will also negotiate with state and private institutions to provide employment for beneficiaries. With 12 professional staff members the shelter has a capacity of 8 beds (four for men and four for women) (to access the service please submit the online application form).

<http://strehalgbt.al/sq/pranimi-ne-qendren-streha/>

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**Child Evangelism Fellowship:** The national office is located in Durres. There is a living area for a family beside the office for those who want to spend a quiet time with believers or simply as a family in need of accommodation. The location shelters up to 22 persons and accepts applications online at:

<http://www.cef-central-europe.com/id-54-albania.html>

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There is further information on this flyer online, as well:

[http://www.cef-central-europe.com/data/files/shtepia\\_pritjes\\_bufsh\\_0Q1KvG.pdf](http://www.cef-central-europe.com/data/files/shtepia_pritjes_bufsh_0Q1KvG.pdf)

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For contact information regarding accommodation please contact:

Phone: 0696058641: 0696013431

Email : [bufshdurres@gmail.com](mailto:bufshdurres@gmail.com)



## Cost of living

<b>Food</b>	<b>Price lek</b>
Milk 1 litre	120
Bread 500 g	60 - 90
Rice 1kg	130
Eggs (12)	150
Cheese 1 kg	150 - 200
Water 1.5 litre	55 - 80
Chicken boneless	435
Beef	785
<b>Transportation</b>	
1 way ticket (Bus in Tirana)	40
Monthly pass	1,200
Gasoline	163.80
Taxi start normal tariff	300.00
Taxi 1 km	250.00
Taxi 1 hour	1,428
<b>Clothing and shoes</b>	
1 pair jeans Levi of similar	5,500
Summer dress (Zara)	4,500
Nike running shoes	7,500
Business shoes	8,200
<b>Rent -</b>	
1 bed apartment (Tirana) (monthly)	25,600
1 bed apartment outside city centre (monthly)	15,500
3 bed apartment (Tirana) centre (monthly)	44,800
3 bed apartment outside city centre (monthly)	25,000
<b>Childcare</b>	
Preschool kindergarten private Monthly 1child	17,600
International Primary School Yearly 1 child	271,300
<b>Others</b>	
Cigarettes (Marlboro)	300.00
Basic (electricity, heating, water and garbage)	7,300
Mobile 1 minute prepaid data	24.27
Internet 10mbps (unlimited)	2,045

\*correct to March 2017

# Healthcare

- **Overview**

All citizens are entitled by law to equal access to healthcare. Healthcare is funded by the state and private practice is limited.

The state system is funded through insurance contributions from those employed by their employers and is divided into 3 tiers of service.

1. The first tier and entry level to the rest of the health service is the level dealing with primary care, which includes health and hygiene and health education centres, maternity and paediatric clinics, local emergency rooms and rural hospitals.
2. The second level secondary care and consists of medical and diagnostic services in hospitals and polyclinics.



Most hospitals are situated in urban areas.

- To access treatment you must present a medical card (*librezë mjeksore*) - although some doctors may treat you without one.
- You will need to register with a local health centre for services - Ambulanca e Lagjes
- The elderly and destitute are eligible for free medication.

Health Insurers Institute [www.isksh.com.al](http://www.isksh.com.al)

- **List of Hospitals**

**Spitali Hygeria Triane (Private)**

Address Mbikalimi i Kamezes, Mezez-Fushe 1051  
Albania  
Phone +355 4 239 0000  
Opened 24 hours

**Spitali Amerikan- American Hospital (Private)**

Address Prane S.U.T Rruga Lord Bajron,  
Tirane, Albania  
Phone +355 4 235 7535

**Spitali Rajonal Elbasan**

Address Rruga Alush Lleshanaku,  
Elbasan, Albania  
Phone +355 54 258 644

**Spitali Rajonal Fier**

Address Rr Cameria, Fier, Albania  
Phone +355 34 222 021

- **Sexual Health clinic**

The Family Planning Association of Albania (FPAA) runs family planning clinics in Tirana and Lezha, and has branches in 6 districts of the country.

<http://www.ippf.org/about-us/member-associations/albania>

## Education and Employment

Albanian citizens returning from abroad who have not been granted asylum, have the right to attend an Albanian school at any level.

Education in Albania starts with preschool (which is optional). Compulsory education begins at the age of 6 and lasts for 9 years.

Upon successful completion of primary education, students continue to secondary education (high school). Although this is optional in Albania, it prepares students for university education. At the end of secondary education, students must sit for State Matura exams. Students who pass this exam are eligible for higher/tertiary education. A maturity certificate (Deftese Pjekurie) is awarded to the students who complete secondary education. For those interested in continuing to university, there are private and public universities offered across the country.

<http://www.albaniaeducation.info/Education-System/Education-Structure.html>

## Employment and Training

Most jobs in Albania are gained through personal contacts; it is important to tell friends and family you are looking for work.

Website that provides job vacancies

Dua Pune [www.duapune.com](http://www.duapune.com)



Regional employment offices aim to provide assistance for returning migrants. You must be registered with your regional employment office to access their services. Vocational training is available in most cities and can be accessed through the regional employment office at a reduced rate for unemployed people.

Access to Albania's social security depends on payment to insurance contributions, either through employment or voluntarily. A person who has not paid sufficient contributions will not be able to access welfare. Benefits are administered by the social insurance institute [www.iss.gov.al](http://www.iss.gov.al)

## Useful information

### • Public Holidays in Albania

Date	Holiday
1 <sup>st</sup> January	New Year's Day
2 <sup>nd</sup> January	Day after New Year's
14 <sup>th</sup> March	Summer Day
21 <sup>st</sup> March	Nevruz
16 <sup>th</sup> April	Easter (Catholic)
16 <sup>th</sup> April	Orthodox Easter Day
1 <sup>st</sup> May	Labour Day
25 <sup>th</sup> June	Eid Al Fitr
1 <sup>st</sup> September	Eid Al-Adha
19 <sup>th</sup> October	Mother Teresa Day
28 <sup>th</sup> November	Independence Day
29 <sup>th</sup> November	Liberation Day
08 <sup>th</sup> December	National Youth Day
25 <sup>th</sup> December	Christmas Day

(Dates subject to change)

### • Emergency Services

Road Police	126
Ambulance	127
Fire Brigade	128
Police	129
General Emergency	112
Emergency at Sea	125

## Dialling codes

For domestic calls (within Albania) 0 must be dialled before the user number

Albania phone code 355

Major cities and their area codes

Tirana	+4	Kukës	+242
Berat	+32	Shkodra	+224
Sarande	+852	Burrel	+217
Tropojë	+213		
Peshkopi	+218		

When making telephone calls dial dialling code following area code, making a call from Tirana +355 4 (then telephone number).



## Useful Contacts

### The Albanian Red Cross

Address	Sheshi Rilindja. Rr. Muhamet Gjolllesha PO Box: 1511 Tirana, Albania
Email	<a href="mailto:tracing@kksh.org.al">tracing@kksh.org.al</a>
Phone	+355 42 257 532 +355 42 225855
Notes	The Red Cross is the biggest humanitarian organisation in Albania and provides emergency medical care and social welfare assistance.

### Service of Love-Soup Kitchen (open Tuesday and Thursday)

Address	Qemal Stefa Street/ near Shkolla e Kuqe
Email	<a href="mailto:info@theorthodoxchurch.info">info@theorthodoxchurch.info</a>
Phone	067 408 0729
Notes	This organisation provides meals for the needy. They are open Tuesdays and Thursdays.

### Albanian Rehabilitation Centre for Trauma and Torture (ARCT)

Address	Rr. Knot Urani No 10, Tirana Albania
Email	<a href="mailto:arct@albmail.com">arct@albmail.com</a>
Phone	+4 2 256 522
Notes	This organisation offers counselling and support services for victims of torture.

### **Association for the Prevention and Rehabilitation from AIDS and Drugs (APRAD)**

Address Rruga “Qemal Stafa” Nr 258 Tirana  
Email [aprad\\_al@hotmail.com](mailto:aprad_al@hotmail.com)  
Phone +355 4 234 4195  
Notes This organisation provides harm reduction strategies to reduce the risk of HIV transmission; needle exchange and drop in centres.

### **Caritas Albania**

Address Rruga “Don Bosko” Nr.4 Tirane  
Email [caritasalbania@caritasalbania.org](mailto:caritasalbania@caritasalbania.org)  
Phone +355 422 300 88  
+355 682 024 598  
Notes This organisation helps with short term accommodation and assesses all referral on a case by case basis.

### **Different and Equal**

Address Rr. Milto Tutulani, P. Alb. Milenium Shk.6. Ap. 39  
Titana, Albania  
Email [different&equal@icc-al.org](mailto:different&equal@icc-al.org)  
Phone +355 (4) 222 18 92

Notes This organisation provides reintegration assistance for girls, women and males of trafficking or at risk of being trafficked.

### **Heart Beat**

Address Rruga e Drilonit, Pogradec Albania

Email [kalb@mm-heartbeat.org](mailto:kalb@mm-heartbeat.org)

Phone 0696058079

Notes This organisation provides assistance for children with disabilities and support for their families. They also offer help for people in need.

### **Islamic Relief**

Address Rruga Dritan Hoxha, "Blloku Gintash" Laprake e re, 1000 Tirana

Email [www.islamicrelief.al](http://www.islamicrelief.al)

Notes This organisation exemplifies their Islamic views and provides help with poor people accessing basic services including education, water sanitation as well as healthcare. This organisation operates in the rural areas of Albania and has offices in Shkoder.



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Version 1



HM Prison &  
Probation Service

*This booklet was produced in partnership with HMP Prisons Service  
and The Education and Training Foundation*