OPEN LETTER TO PRIME MINISTER EDI RAMA

November 17, 2026

Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania, Edi Rama,

We, the undersigned Albanian American organizations, stand united in support of peaceful protests, the constitutional rights of protesters and their calls for an end to corruption, greater transparency, political accountability and reform.

For more than four months, Albanians protested without major incident, expressing their demands peacefully and democratically. Had you responded with timely engagement and meaningful dialogue, the international community would have witnessed a young democracy at its finest, with citizens exercising their rights and a government acting on their concerns. Instead, it is witnessing a crisis.

Since October 13, 2026, tensions have escalated into clashes, injuries to protesters and police, and damage to property. Disturbingly, instead of showing restraint, de-escalating the situation and addressing the concerns of protesters, you responded with disproportionate force, widespread arrests, threats and intimidation. Your government then imposed heavy fines and restrictive new laws. These actions have infringed on civil rights, instilled fear, deepened public distrust and fueled further unrest.

Every government has a duty to keep its people safe and maintain public order. It must do so within the law. Albania's Constitution makes the law the basis and the boundary of all state activity. It bans torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. It guarantees equality before the law, freedom of assembly, expression and movement, freedom of the press, the rights of detainees and of the accused, free legal defense for those without means, due process, the presumption of innocence, the protection of personal data, the right to strike, academic freedom, special protection for children and compensation for victims of unlawful state action. It also requires that any restriction on these rights be set by law, be proportionate and not exceed the limits of the European Convention on Human Rights.

In the interest of peace, justice and Albania's future, we call on you to:

1. **End excessive force and intimidation.** Immediately halt the indiscriminate and disproportionate use of rubber bullets, water cannon and tear gas against protesters and journalists. Scale back the heavy show of force at peaceful protests, which the UN warns can escalate tensions. Stop using administrative measures to pressure and intimidate peaceful protesters, including heavy fines and travel bans without court orders. (Articles 17, 22, 25, 38, 42, 47)
2. **Unmask the police.** Officers must display clear markings and identification at all times, the same standard now demanded of citizens. (Articles 4, 15)
3. **End arbitrary arrests.** Release anyone detained solely for participating in peaceful protests. Ensure every detainee is immediately informed, in a language they understand, of the reasons for their arrest and has prompt access to a lawyer. Provide a free lawyer to anyone who cannot afford one. (Articles 27, 28, 31, 42)
4. **Protect minors.** Ensure that alleged police brutality against minors is independently investigated and that no child is questioned by authorities without a parent or guardian, a lawyer and a psychologist present, as Albanian law and international child-protection standards require. (Article 54)
5. **Suspend the new protest legislation.** Adopted by emergency decree on October 28, 2026, without parliamentary debate, it imposes broad restrictions on assembly, expression and travel, backed by heavy fines. It should not be enforced until it has been reviewed by the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the Venice Commission and debated in Parliament. (Articles 17, 22, 38, 47, 101)

6. **End punishment without trial.** Do not place citizens on a register of “violent individuals” or deny them access to transport, airports and hotels without a court conviction. Citizens deserve the same presumption of innocence your government has demanded for its own officials. (Articles 18, 30, 35, 38, 42)
7. **Make the record public.** Within 30 days, publish a full account of the police response since October 13, 2026, in line with the UN Human Rights Guidance on Less-Lethal Weapons in Law Enforcement (2020) and the OSCE/Venice Commission Guidelines on Freedom of Peaceful Assembly, including the orders authorizing force, a detailed report on every incident and use of force, the weapons and munitions used, the number of stops, identity checks and searches, all arrests, detentions and injuries, and any disciplinary action taken. Preserve all related records and evidence, including video footage and all official communications, on any device, whether by radio, phone, text, email or messaging app, for independent review. (Articles 23, 35)
8. **Allow international scrutiny.** Grant international investigators full access. Give citizens a safe and independent way to report abuse. Ensure every complaint is documented and impartially investigated. Hold those responsible for violations accountable, including the officials and commanders who ordered, encouraged or tolerated them. (Articles 15, 122)
9. **Compensate and care for the victims.** Provide restitution to everyone subjected to unlawful police force or detention, or other violations of their civil rights. Offer them free legal, medical and psychological assistance from independent providers. (Articles 44, 55)
10. **Accept political responsibility.** Put Albania’s interests before your own and restore public trust by resigning. Facilitate a peaceful transition that creates the conditions for institutional and electoral reforms that strengthen fundamental rights and guarantee free and fair elections.

As a NATO ally, an EU candidate and a UN member, your government has committed to democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law. We expect you to honor that commitment, uphold Albania’s Constitution and cooperate fully with the Special Structure against Corruption and Organized Crime (SPAK), even when its investigations involve members of your own government.

We also call on the United States, the European Union and international institutions to support and conduct independent investigations into alleged rights violations and corruption, and to protect SPAK from political interference. We urge them to provide the necessary resources and to use every diplomatic tool available, including the EU accession process. We invite international human rights monitors, lawyers and journalists to observe and document developments in Albania, and we call on your government to guarantee their safety and unhindered access.

We honor the courage of the students, educators, journalists and citizens who have taken to the streets for more than five months. Albanian Americans stand with them and will keep raising their voices with governments and international institutions until their rights are respected. We urge them to remain peaceful, steadfast and vigilant during this critical moment for Albania’s democracy.

This crisis demands a political resolution, and every political resolution demands sacrifice. That sacrifice can only come from those who lead.

Respectfully,

Signatory organizations, as of November 17, 2026:

AjkunBT
Albanian American Association Ana e Malit Inc
Albanian American Association Ulqini – Chicago
Albanian American Association, Inc.
Albanian American Bar Association of Illinois
Albanian American Cohesive Community
Albanian American Community Association of Long Island
Albanian American Council
Albanian American Cultural Foundation
Albanian American Dual Language & Culture Children of the Eagle
Albanian American Educators Association
Albanian American Humanitarian Foundation
Albanian American Humanitarian Fund Trojet Tona
Albanian American Muslim Community & Cultural Center
Albanian American Open Hand Association
Albanian American Organization Chameria
Albanian American Puka Community Association
Albanian Americans in Architecture, Construction & Engineering
Albanian Community Resource Center
Albanian Community TV Michigan
Albanian Cultural Association Shpresa
Albanian Culture TV
Albanian Women Foundation
Albanian Youth Center / Albanian Heritage
Bajraktari House
BashkeRi Initiative
Bashkimi Kombëtar
Bleta Foundation
Common Sense Club
Don Gjon Buzuku Association – Chicago
Don Gjon Buzuku Association – New York
Fondacioni Hoti i Kujit
Fondacioni Plavë Guci
Global Albanians Foundation
Grupi Rozafati
Illyrian Business Organization
Kosova Lindore Association
Malesia Association of California
New Life AACO
Nora e Kelmendit
Plava e Gucia Sot
Prek Cali Foundation of NY
Ringjalle Project
Shkodra Association Rozafa
Shoqata Atdhetare Kraja
Shoqata Autizmi
Shqipëria Tjetër
The Women’s Organization Hope & Peace
USA Albanian Society NYC
Vermoshi Foundation
Westchester Albanian American Merchant Association

This letter remains open for additional signatories; an updated list will be shared with all recipients.

Disclosure: This letter is a nonpartisan statement in support of human rights, the rule of law and democratic governance in Albania. It does not support or oppose any political party or candidate for public office. Its call for resignation is based on the government's conduct and its obligations under the Constitution. The letter was not requested, directed, controlled or funded by any foreign government, political party or other foreign principal, and no charitable funds were used in preparing or distributing it. Each organization is independent and signs on its own behalf.

CC:

United States
– Brendan Hanrahan, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, U.S. Department of State
– Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (U.S. Helsinki Commission)
– Congressional Albanian Issues Caucus
– The Honorable Marco Rubio, Secretary of State
– National Security Council, The White House
– Representative Brian Mast, Chairman, House Foreign Affairs Committee
– Representative Chris Smith, Co-Chair, Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission
– Representative Gregory Meeks, Ranking Member, House Foreign Affairs Committee
– Representative Jim McGovern, Co-Chair, Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission
– Riley M. Barnes, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State
– Senator Jeanne Shaheen, Ranking Member, Senate Foreign Relations Committee
– Senator Jim Risch, Chairman, Senate Foreign Relations Committee
– Subcommittee on Europe, House Foreign Affairs Committee
– Subcommittee on Europe, Senate Foreign Relations Committee
– U.S. Embassy in Tirana, Ambassador Eric Wendt
– U.S. Mission to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)
– U.S. Mission to the United Nations

European Union
– Ambassador Sofia Moreira de Sousa, Head of the EU Delegation to Albania
– Andreas Schieder (MEP), European Parliament Standing Rapporteur on Albania
– António Costa, President of the European Council
– Arba Kokalari, Member of the European Parliament (MEP)
– Chiara Gemma, Member of the European Parliament (MEP), Vice-Chair, EU–Albania Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee
– Council of the European Union Presidency
– David McAllister (MEP), Chair, Committee on Foreign Affairs, European Parliament
– Directorate-General for Enlargement and Eastern Neighbourhood, European Commission
– EU Coordinator for the Rights of the Child, European Commission
– EU Special Representative for Human Rights
– European Parliament Intergroup on Children's Rights
– European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)
– Kaja Kallas, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
– Magnus Brunner, European Commissioner for Internal Affairs and Migration
– Marco Tarquinio, Member of the European Parliament (MEP), Chair, EU–Albania Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee
– Marta Kos, European Commissioner for Enlargement
– Michael McGrath, European Commissioner for Democracy, Justice and the Rule of Law
– Mounir Satouri (MEP), Chair, Subcommittee on Human Rights, European Parliament
– Roberta Metsola, President of the European Parliament
– Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission

Embassies of EU Member States
– Embassy of Austria, Tirana, Ambassador Monika Zach
– Embassy of Belgium, Tirana, Ambassador Olga Cogen
– Embassy of Bulgaria, Tirana, Ambassador Ivaylo Kirov
– Embassy of Croatia, Tirana, Ambassador Zlatko Kramarić
– Embassy of Cyprus (accredited from Athens), Ambassador Stavros Avgoustides
– Embassy of the Czech Republic, Tirana, Ambassador Pavel Vacek
– Embassy of Denmark (accredited from Vienna)
– Embassy of Estonia (accredited from Athens), Ambassador Karin Rannu
– Embassy of Finland (accredited from Athens), Ambassador Leena Pylvänäinen
– Embassy of France, Tirana, Ambassador Catherine Suard

– Embassy of Germany, Tirana, Ambassador Karl Bergner
– Embassy of Greece, Tirana, Ambassador Lambrini Komini
– Embassy of Hungary, Tirana, Ambassador Martina Kasnyik
– Embassy of Ireland (accredited from Athens), Ambassador Ciara O'Floinn
– Embassy of Italy, Tirana, Ambassador Marco Alberti
– Embassy of Latvia (accredited from Rome), Ambassador Elita Gavele
– Embassy of Lithuania (accredited from Athens), Ambassador Andrius Kalinda
– Embassy of Luxembourg (accredited from Luxembourg), Ambassador Marc Hübsch
– Embassy of Malta (accredited from Valletta), Ambassador Anthony Licari
– Embassy of the Netherlands, Tirana, Ambassador Marleen Monster
– Embassy of Poland, Tirana, Chargé d'Affaires a.i. Wojciech Unolt
– Embassy of Portugal (accredited from Rome)
– Embassy of Romania, Tirana, Ambassador Octavian Şerban
– Embassy of Slovakia, Tirana, Ambassador Albín Otruba
– Embassy of Slovenia, Tirana, Ambassador Jakob Štunf
– Embassy of Spain, Tirana, Ambassador Gabriel Cremades Ventura
– Embassy of Sweden, Tirana, Ambassador Niklas Ström

Embassies of Key International Partners
– Embassy of Canada (accredited from Rome), Ambassador Elissa Ann Golberg
– Embassy of the Republic of Kosovo, Tirana, Ambassador Skënder Durmishi
– Embassy of Montenegro, Tirana, Chargé d'Affaires a.i. Vana Durašević
– Embassy of the Republic of North Macedonia, Tirana, Ambassador Vele Trpevski
– Embassy of Norway (accredited from Zagreb), Ambassador Arne Sannes Bjørnstad
– Embassy of Switzerland, Tirana, Ambassador Siri Walt
– Embassy of the Republic of Türkiye, Tirana, Ambassador Barış Ceyhun Erciyes
– Embassy of the United Kingdom, Tirana, Ambassador Nicholas Abbott

United Nations
– Ambassador Sidharto Reza Suryodipuro, President of the UN Human Rights Council
– António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations
– Committee on Freedom of Association, International Labour Organization (ILO)
– Gina Romero, UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association
– Ingrid Macdonald, UN Resident Coordinator in Albania
– IOM (International Organization for Migration) Albania
– Suela Janina, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Albania to the United Nations, New York
– UN Committee against Torture
– UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
– UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
– UN Human Rights Committee
– UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
– UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights
– UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression
– UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Right to a Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment
– UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers
– UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing
– UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education
– UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health
– UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Privacy
– UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders
– UN Special Rapporteur on Torture
– UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children
– UN Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture
– UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture
– UN Women Albania

– UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention
– UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights
– UN Youth Office
– UNDP Albania
– UNESCO, Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists
– UNFPA Albania
– UNICEF Albania
– Vasilika Hysi, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Albania to the UN Office at Geneva
– Volker Türk, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

International Institutions
– Alain Berset, Secretary General of the Council of Europe
– Ambassador Michel Tarran, Head of the OSCE Presence in Albania
– Council of Europe Children's Rights Division
– Council of Europe Platform for the Protection of Journalism and Safety of Journalists
– Director, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
– European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission)
– European Committee for the Prevention of Torture & Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT)
– Feridun Sinirlioğlu, Secretary General of the OSCE
– Giulia Re, Head of the Council of Europe Office in Tirana
– Group of States against Corruption (GRECO), Council of Europe
– Ignazio Cassis, OSCE Chairperson-in-Office (Swiss Chairpersonship 2026)
– International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA)
– Jan Braathu, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media
– Mark Rutte, Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)
– Michael O'Flaherty, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights
– Mykyta Poturaiev, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly
– OECD Anti-Corruption Network for Eastern Europe and Central Asia
– President, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Human Rights and Democracy Organizations
– American Bar Association Center for Global Programs
– Amnesty International
– ARTICLE 19: Global Campaign for Free Expression
– Association of Independent Creators and Activists "Geto" (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
– Association of Journalists of Kosovo
– Association of Journalists of Macedonia
– Balkan Civil Society Development Network (BCSDN)
– Centre for Development of Non-Governmental Organisations (CRNVO), Montenegro
– Centre for European Volunteering (CEV)
– Centre for Law and Democracy
– Centre for Promotion of Civil Society (CPCD), Bosnia and Herzegovina
– Child Rights International Network (CRIN)
– CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation
– Civil Rights Defenders
– Committee to Protect Journalists
– COSPE (Cooperation for the Development of Emerging Countries)
– Defence for Children International
– Democracy Reporting International
– Dignity Humanitarian NGO (Armenia)
– Don Bosko Centre (Montenegro)
– Education International
– European Center for Not-for-Profit Law
– European Centre for Press and Media Freedom (ECPMF)
– European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE)

– European Federation of Journalists
– European Fund for the Balkans
– European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI)
– European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC)
– European Students' Union (ESU)
– Fair Trials
– Free Press for Eastern Europe (FPEE)
– Free Press Unlimited
– Freedom House
– Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
– Front Line Defenders
– Heinrich Böll Stiftung
– Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights
– Human Rights First
– Human Rights House Foundation
– Human Rights Watch
– Index on Censorship
– International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI)
– International Center for Not-for-Profit Law
– International Commission of Jurists
– International Crisis Group
– International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
– International Federation of Journalists
– International Partnership for Human Rights (IPHR)
– International Press Institute
– International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT)
– International Republican Institute
– Konrad Adenauer Stiftung
– Kosovar Civil Society Foundation (KCSF)
– Kosovo Law Institute (KLI)
– Lawyers for Lawyers
– Legal Aid Society of Moldova
– Legal Centre (Pravni centar), Montenegro
– Local Democracy Agency Montenegro
– Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC)
– Media Freedom Rapid Response (MFRR)
– National Democratic Institute
– National Endowment for Democracy
– Netherlands Helsinki Committee
– NGO Active Zone (Montenegro)
– NGO Our Action (Naša akcija), Montenegro
– Norwegian Helsinki Committee
– Open Society Foundations
– Penal Reform International
– Physicians for Human Rights
– REDRESS
– Reporters Without Borders (RSF)
– Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights
– SafeJournalists Network
– Save the Children
– Scholars at Risk
– South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO)
– Terre des hommes
– Transparency International
– Transparency International Bosnia and Herzegovina
– Westminster Foundation for Democracy
– World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)

Albania – Institutions
– Altin Dumani, Head, Special Structure against Corruption and Organized Crime (SPAK)
– Bajram Begaj, President of the Republic of Albania
– Besnik Dervishi, Commissioner for the Right to Information and Protection of Personal Data
– Consulate General of the Republic of Albania in New York
– Endrit Shabani, People's Advocate (Ombudsman) of Albania
– Ermonela Xhafa, Executive Director, National Diaspora Agency (Agjencia Kombëtare e Diasporës – AKD)
– Ervin Bushati, Ambassador, Embassy of the Republic of Albania in Washington, D.C.
– Ervin Demo, Minister of Internal Affairs
– Ferit Hoxha, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs
– Genta Tafa (Bungo), Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination
– Klevis Qose, General Director, Police Oversight Agency (Agjencia e Mbikëqyrjes së Policisë)
– Lazim Destani, Chairman, Diaspora Coordinating Council (Këshilli Koordinues i Diasporës – KKD)
– Maksim Haxhia, Chair, National Chamber of Advocacy (Dhoma Kombëtare e Avokatisë)
– Niko Peleshi, Speaker of the Parliament of Albania
– Olsian Çela, Prosecutor General of the Republic of Albania
– Skender Hita, General Director of the State Police
– Tirana District Prosecutor's Office

Albania – Civil Society
– Active Durrës Centre (Qendra "Durrësi Aktiv")
– Albanian Center for Economic Research (ACER)
– Albanian Helsinki Committee
– Albanian Human Rights Group
– Albanian Ornithological Society (AOS)
– Albanian Rehabilitation Centre for Trauma and Torture
– All Green Centre
– ALTRI Center (Qendra ALTRI)
– Association of Journalists of Albania (AGSH)
– CRCA/ECPAT Albania (Children's Human Rights Centre of Albania)
– EcoAlbania
– ESD Albania
– European Movement in Albania
– Gender Alliance for Development Center (GADC)
– Institute for Democracy and Mediation
– Institute for Political Studies (ISP)
– Partners Albania for Change and Development
– Qendra për Drejtësi Gjinore në Shqipëri (Center for Gender Justice in Albania)
– Qëndresa Qytetare
– Res Publica Center (Qendra "Res Publica")
– Rrjeti Erasmus Tirana
– Rrjeti "Barazi në Vendimmarrje" (Equality in Decision-Making Network)
– Science and Innovation for Development Center (SCiDEV)

Contact
Albanians Without Borders
Email: info@albanianswithoutborders.com
Phone: 646-235-2211
Website: albanianswithoutborders.com