



Genocide Watch
The Alliance Against Genocide

Country Report: Albania December 2022

Modern Albania gained independence from the Ottoman Empire following the end of the First World War. During the lead-up to the Second World War, fascist Italy invaded Albania in 1939. [The Italian occupation](#), later with assistance from Nazi Germany, was marked by brutal suppression of Albanian resistance and the persecution of Albanian civilians. During the Second World War, Italy and Germany deported and exterminated many members of the [Jewish](#) and Romani communities.

Following the end of the Second World War, the leader of the communist resistance, [Enver Hoxha](#), took control of the country and ruled as a Stalinist dictator until his death in 1985. During Hoxha's rule, Albania was one of the most isolated countries in the world. Hoxha suppressed any dissent, banned all religion, and set up a personality cult centered around him. The ruling Party of Labor of Albania was comparable to the totalitarian domination of Kim Il Sung in North Korea or Saparmurat Niyazov in Turkmenistan. The regime maintained absolute control through a secret police organization known as [The Sigurimi](#).

[Political prisoners and ordinary civilians](#) were routinely executed or sent to concentration camps such as the Spaç Prison in Northern Albania. Many families never heard from their detained relatives again. Mass graves containing [bodies from the communist era](#) are still being found.

Enver Hoxha died of a heart attack in 1976, never answering for his crimes and leaving Albania isolated and economically underdeveloped. “Hoxhaist” Albanians [deny that Hoxha or his party](#) committed any crimes or ran concentration camps. This denial is similar to the denial of systematic crimes committed in Russia, China, and elsewhere in the former communist world.

Following the collapse of Albanian communism in 1992, Albania became a multi-party democracy. [Minority communities](#), particularly [the Romani people](#), still face discrimination. They face challenges in finding employment. They have almost no political representation.

Due to crimes against humanity committed by the Hoxha regime and the continuing denial of these crimes today, Genocide Watch considers Albania to be at **Stage 10: Denial**. Oppression of minority communities like the Romani also puts Albania at **Stage 3: Discrimination**.

Genocide Watch recommends:

- Human rights and genocide scholars should give increased attention to the crimes against humanity committed by Hoxha and his totalitarian communist regime.
- Albanian authorities and international organizations, particularly the European Union, should dedicate financial resources to documenting the missing victims of the Hoxha regime and memorializing those persecuted by it.
- Seats should be allocated in the Albanian Parliament for representatives of minority groups to improve their political representation.