

OPEN LETTER

TO THE CO-CHAIRS OF THE CONGRESSIONAL ALBANIAN ISSUES CAUCUS
AND MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS

Subject: Request for Bipartisan Congressional Engagement and Oversight Concerning
Albania: Section 7031(c), Democratic Accountability, and Vjosa-Narta

Date: July 30, 2026

Dear Co-Chairs and Members of Congress,

We, the undersigned Albanian-American citizens and Albanians residing in the United States, respectfully request that bipartisan congressional consideration of concerns regarding democratic accountability in Albania.

Many of us maintain close family, civic and professional ties to Albania. This submission seeks a formal channel through which concerns raised by citizens, independent journalists, civic organisations, and communities affected by public decisions may be conveyed to the Department of State and, where appropriate, considered by the relevant congressional committees.

We deeply value the longstanding relationship between the United States and Albania. Albania's position as a NATO ally and its important progress toward European Union membership reflect its place within the wider Euro-Atlantic community¹; it is in that spirit that we raise the concerns set out below. This submission is nonpartisan as it does not seek to weaken bilateral relations or advance the interests of any Albanian political party, but to support the consistent application of U.S. anti-corruption policy and the democratic standards that underpin the U.S.-Albania partnership.

¹ NATO, [NATO Member Countries](#); European Commission, [Albania and the EU Provisionally Close Negotiations on Three Chapters](#), 14 July 2026.

BACKGROUND AND MATTERS FOR CONGRESSIONAL CONSIDERATION

- I. **The 2021 Section 7031(c) designation and reported change:** On May 19, 2021, the Department of State designated former Prime Minister Sali Berisha and members of his immediate family under Section 7031(c), citing credible information of his involvement in significant corruption.²

On June 12, 2026, Reuters reported Mr. Berisha's statement that the restrictions no longer applied to him or his family; the Department confirmed that it had granted compelling-national-interest waivers in several Section 7031(c) cases but did not identify the individuals covered.³ It therefore remains unclear whether any waiver or other action affects the 2021 ineligibility and, if so, its legal basis, scope, and justification.

Section 7031(c) permits the Secretary of State to waive an ineligibility where doing so would serve a compelling national interest or where the underlying circumstances have changed sufficiently. It also requires the Department to report waivers and their justifications to the appropriate congressional committees and the House and Senate Judiciary Committees and to publish any unclassified portion.⁴ These requirements provide a direct basis for congressional review.

- II. **Consistent application of U.S anti-corruption standards:** Section 7031(c) applies where the Secretary of State has credible information that a foreign official has been involved, directly or indirectly, in significant corruption.⁴ The signatories request that this evidentiary threshold be applied consistently, irrespective of political affiliation or incumbency.

The signatories do not ask Congress to determine individual culpability or direct a predetermined outcome. They ask Congress to request an impartial Department of State assessment of credible, documented information concerning current and former Albanian officials, including Prime Minister Edi Rama, under the applicable statutory and evidentiary standards and without prejudging any individual outcome.

- III. **Democratic institutions and civic participation:** The European Commission's 2025 Albania Report recorded progress in judicial reform but found that democratic institutions remained partly constrained by limited parliamentary oversight and insufficient public consultation. It also identified continuing concerns regarding media independence and the operating environment for civil society.⁵

These findings provide independent evidence relevant to Congress's oversight of U.S. policy toward Albania⁶; they support requesting a Department of State briefing on how the United States, through its diplomacy, reporting, and assistance, assesses and addresses corruption, judicial independence, media freedom, civil-society participation, public consultation, and the treatment of peaceful protest.

² U.S. Department of State, [Public Designation of Albanian Sali Berisha Due to Involvement in Significant Corruption](#), May 19, 2021.

³ Reuters, [Albania Opposition Leader Berisha Says U.S. Lifts Entry Ban on Him](#), June 12, 2026.

⁴ [Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2026](#), Pub. L. No. 119-75, div. F, § 7031(c)(1), (3)-(5), 140 Stat. 566 (2026).

⁵ European Commission, [Albania 2025 Report](#), SWD(2025) 750 final, November 4, 2025, particularly pp. 21-24 and 27-38.

⁶ *Rules of the House of Representatives*, 119th Cong., Rule X, cl. 1(i)(1), (10); U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs, "[Europe Subcommittee—119th Congress](#)"; U.S. Department of State, [Integrated Country Strategy: Albania](#), Mission Goal 1 (2022).

- IV. **Proposed development affecting Vjosa-Narta:** On July 14, 2026, the European Parliament's Committee on the Environment, Climate and Food Safety held an exchange of views with the European Commission concerning possible projects affecting the Vjosa-Narta protected area in the context of Albania's Chapter 27 accession negotiations.⁷ Reuters has separately reported that the proposed resort development is linked to Jared Kushner.⁸

Because the proposed developer is U.S.-linked, the signatories seek clarification limited to any financial, diplomatic, or other support provided or considered by U.S. agencies or diplomatic missions; the ethics and conflict-of-interest safeguards governing any such engagement; and U.S. support for transparency in the environmental, permitting, land, property, and public-consultation processes.

REQUESTED CONGRESSIONAL ACTION:

1. Represent Albanian-American concerns

Give careful consideration to our open letter and lead or join a bipartisan congressional letter requesting a substantive written response from the Department of State.

2. Seek Review of the Reported Section 7031(c) Action

Ask the Department of State to confirm whether any waiver or other action affects the 2021 Section 7031(c) ineligibility of former Prime Minister Sali Berisha or any member of his immediate family. Ask the committees entitled to receive Section 7031(c)(4) reports to review any relevant waiver and supporting justification and to seek an unclassified explanation of its legal basis, scope, and stated justification to the fullest extent permitted by law.

3. Examine democratic accountability in Albania

Seek a bipartisan Department of State briefing for interested Members and staff on corruption, judicial independence, press freedom, civil society, public participation, and the treatment of peaceful protest in Albania. Interested congressional offices should also consult independent journalists, civic organisations, legal and environmental experts, and affected communities.

If the resulting record warrants further examination, ask the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, including its Europe Subcommittee, to consider a formal committee briefing or hearing. The Department briefing should also address how it evaluates credible information concerning current and former Albanian officials, including Prime Minister Edi Rama, under consistent statutory and evidentiary standards and without prejudging any individual outcome.

⁷ European Parliament, Committee on the Environment, Climate and Food Safety, [Meetings of July 6 and 14, 2026](#), exchange of views concerning Chapter 27 and possible projects in the Vjosa-Narta protected area.

⁸ Reuters, [Brussels Presses Albania as Kushner Resort Threatens to Flout EU Environmental Law](#), June 9, 2026.

4. Seek clarification concerning Vjosa-Narta

Ask the Department of State and other relevant U.S. agencies to clarify:

- (a) whether any U.S. agency or diplomatic mission has provided or considered financial, diplomatic, or other support for the proposed development;
- (b) what ethics and conflict-of-interest safeguards govern any U.S. engagement related to the development; and
- (c) whether the United States will support publication of the relevant environmental assessments, permits, administrative decisions, land and property decisions, and consultation records, together with meaningful public consultation and safeguards against irreversible harm.

We respectfully request a meeting and a written response within 30 days of receipt - or an indication of the anticipated response timetable - identifying any action taken or referral made. We can provide a concise supporting dossier and facilitate engagement with independent journalists, civic organisations, legal and environmental experts, and affected communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

United Diaspora for Albania (UDA)

United Diaspora for Albania Civic Network (UDACN)

On behalf of the verified Albanian-American citizens and residents listed in the attached signatory record.