Albania's October Protests:

Accountability Gaps, Expanding State Powers and Fundamental Rights

The escalation of student-led protests in Albania from 13 October 2026 and the authorities' response have exposed serious weaknesses in the protection of fundamental rights and democratic participation. Courts have declared arrests unlawful in specific cases; the People's Advocate and the Albanian Helsinki Committee have identified deficiencies in detention conditions and safeguards for children; and SCiDEV, the SafeJournalists Network, the Association of Journalists of Albania and other media-freedom organisations have documented repeated violence and obstruction affecting journalists and public watchdogs. Taken together, these findings raise questions about how police powers have been exercised, how citizens can safely challenge public decisions and whether legal remedies can prevent violations rather than merely respond to them afterwards.

SCiDEV is particularly concerned that these findings have emerged alongside an expansion of government powers over assemblies, public communication, personal information, movement and financial liability. On 28 October, the Council of Ministers adopted **Normative Act No. 5/2026** amending Law No. 8773/2001 on Assemblies, **Normative Act No. 6/2026** on compensation for damage during assemblies, and a separate decision establishing a **special electronic register** of persons referred to prosecutors or under investigation for specified violent offences connected with demonstrations. Each responds to legitimate public-safety or compensation objectives, yet their combined operation may expose peaceful participants, organisers and other citizens to substantial restrictions on the basis of police or administrative assessments before responsibility is determined. **The central issue is the adequacy of the legal safeguards when courts and independent monitors have already identified significant problems with decisions taken under existing powers.**

1 From the Flamingo Revolution to the October student-led mobilisation

The student-led mobilisation followed several months of civic protest. On 31 May 2026, demonstrations associated with the protection of the Vjosa–Narta area and opposition to contested development plans developed into the wider civic mobilisation known as the Flamingo Revolution. Over the following four months—approximately 135 days before the October escalation—the movement remained largely peaceful while broadening its demands beyond the original environmental dispute. Participants criticised the concentration of political and economic influence, the handling of public assets and the responsiveness of institutions; called for the Prime Minister's resignation and a change in the political system and established political elite. The mobilisation was heterogeneous, with different participants and approaches, and cannot be equated with a single party or organisation. SCiDEV's analysis documented this wider

civic contestation alongside smear campaigns, online attacks and pressures affecting people speaking publicly.

On 13 October, student-led protests escalated in Tirana around university conditions, educational costs, employment opportunities and wider demands for institutional accountability. Serious confrontations followed during the next weeks, including attacks against police officers, the use of incendiary materials and damage to public and private property, as well as reports of disproportionate force and unlawful detention. The events of 31 October again demonstrated the diversity of the mobilisation: separate student-led and opposition gatherings took place, and some students opposed attempts by the main opposition to join their protest. The evolving movement's demands, political relationships and the conduct of individual participants should be distinguished when assessing the response of public authorities.

Violence against citizens, journalists and police officers, as well as the destruction of property, must be unequivocally condemned and independently investigated, regardless of who is responsible. This position has been consistently articulated by SCiDEV alongside European and regional media freedom, human rights and civil society organisations, calling for accountability for all acts of violence, protection of the right to peaceful protest, respect for fundamental rights and safeguards against the excessive or arbitrary use of force by public authorities, as reflected in their joint appeals and public statements.

Accountability for violence must rest on credible evidence, individualised responsibility, due process, effective investigations and access to remedies, regardless of the perpetrator. **Acts of violence by particular participants must not be attributed to peaceful protesters or, in themselves, used to justify blanket restrictions on an entire assembly.** At the same time, public authorities have a duty to protect police officers, bystanders and property, and to respond to violence through lawful, necessary and proportionate measures. Under Article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights, the State has a positive obligation to take reasonable measures to facilitate and protect peaceful assemblies, while any restrictions must meet the requirements of legality, legitimate aim, necessity and proportionality under Article 11(2).

2 Police interventions, personal liberty and institutional accountability

2.1 Unlawful arrests and judicial scrutiny

Human-rights organisations and civic actors questioned the legality of arrests and the proportionality of police interventions from the first days of the student-led protests. Those concerns acquired a firmer evidentiary basis through judicial review. On 22 October, the Tirana court considered 27 arrests in three hearings and found **22 unlawful**, including the arrests of six minors. Five arrests were upheld, while other October proceedings also validated arrests or imposed security measures. The findings concern the specific cases before the court and do not establish criminal guilt on the part of officers. **They nevertheless show that the legal grounds advanced for depriving multiple people of liberty failed judicial scrutiny.**

The implications extend beyond the individual rulings. Police must establish whether the person arrested engaged in violence or other unlawful conduct, whether an order was lawful and communicated, and whether the intervention was necessary. An individual's presence near a confrontation or participation in an otherwise peaceful assembly is insufficient, on its own, to establish criminal responsibility. Articles 47 (freedom of assembly) and 42 (right to due process

and fair trial) of the Constitution and Articles 5 and 11 ECHR require lawful and reviewable intervention; the European Court of Human Rights has also distinguished peaceful participation from the unlawful acts of others. Courts provide an essential corrective safeguard, but unlawful deprivation of liberty cannot be fully reversed through subsequent release. The decisions therefore warrant substantive examination of deployment orders, arrest evidence, officer identification, supervisory practices and institutional follow-up.

2.2 Detention conditions and safeguards for children

Independent monitoring reinforces the judicial concern. On 16 October, the People's Advocate reported contact with **214 persons** deprived of liberty, documented physical signs or allegations of mistreatment concerning **26 individuals**, and observed overcrowding, inadequate basic conditions and instances of minors being questioned without parents, guardians or psychologists. After the 20 October demonstrations, the institution found **118 people** in a Security Block with a capacity of 67, including six minors without an identifiable separate room. Complaints also concerned access to lawyers, families and psychological assistance. The Albanian Helsinki Committee independently documented overcrowding and detention safeguards problems and condemned attacks against police and property. **The direct observations establish deficiencies in detention management; allegations about the cause of particular injuries require investigation.**

2.3 Use of force, less-lethal weapons and operational responsibility

Reported use of less-lethal weapons requires a related but distinct assessment of necessity and proportionality. The 29 October BIRN investigation identified **at least 16 people** reportedly injured by kinetic projectiles over 17–24 October, including reports involving journalists. The pattern, reported targeting and the nature of injuries raise questions about operational rules and compliance with international guidance; they do not establish the unlawfulness of each discharge. A further line of accountability developed when Res Publica, together with lawyers, civic organisations, students and citizens, submitted a complaint to SPAK requesting examination of **more than 180 alleged episodes** and potential supervisory responsibility. Olsi Nika, speaking for civic participants, and lawyer Dorian Matlija publicly explained the request for scrutiny of individual conduct and the command chain. The numbers refer to allegations submitted by complainants, and filing a complaint is distinct from the opening or conclusion of an investigation.

2.4 Investigations, remedies and institutional responsiveness

Institutional action has begun. On 26 October, the Tirana Prosecution Office confirmed **criminal case No. 7806/2026** concerning alleged disproportionate force and injuries sustained during the 24 October demonstration, including examination of footage and approximately 20 medical records in cooperation with the Police Oversight Agency (AMP). Police disciplinary steps and reported instructions on device searches, identification and protection of minors are also relevant, but their practical implementation has not been established. **The accountability issue is whether judicial findings and monitoring recommendations lead to investigation results, redress for individuals and demonstrable changes in the use and supervision of coercive powers.**

At the same time, institutional responsiveness remains a concern. SCiDEV and partner organisations have called on the State Police and the Police Oversight Agency (AMP) to ensure independent investigations, preserve evidence and publicly report on measures taken. **As of 31st October, no substantive response to the joint open letter had been received.** Separate

formal requests for information submitted by SCiDEV to the State Police and prosecution authorities also remained unanswered. Public announcements of investigations and disciplinary measures are important, but they do not substitute for transparent institutional communication, verifiable outcomes and effective accountability.

3 Journalists and public watchdogs: violence, obstruction and political hostility

3.1 Documented attacks and interference with reporting

The safety of journalists and the ability to document policing are central to independent scrutiny of the October events. Following reported violence against media workers on 13 October, SCiDEV initiated and coordinated a joint open letter bringing together international, European, regional and Albanian media freedom and human rights organisations. The letter called for independent investigations, safe reporting access, preservation of evidence, identification of police officers and a parliamentary hearing. It also highlighted the cumulative pressures faced by journalists, human rights defenders and other public watchdogs documenting matters of public interest, including physical intimidation, online harassment and obstruction of access to information.

The SafeJournalists Network through its member Association of Journalists of Albania (AGSH) documented **at least 55 reported incidents** involving journalists and media workers between 13 and 31 October 2026, encompassing physical assaults, injuries from rubber bullets and other police projectiles, exposure to pepper spray, threats and intimidation, obstruction of reporting and movement, interference with recording, damage to equipment, and verbal attacks and hostile rhetoric, with incidents attributed to police officers, protesters and unidentified individuals.

The recurrent interference is particularly significant when journalists seek to record arrests, use of force or the treatment of children. Preventing access, threatening reporters or interfering with devices may affect both freedom of expression and the evidence available to courts, prosecutors and citizens. Albania's Law No. 8773/2001 "On Assemblies," as amended recognises media activity at public gatherings, and the State Police has journalist-safety guidelines dating from May 2025. The issue is implementation: whether identified and freelance journalists, camera operators and independent monitors can work safely near public-order operations; whether any limits are justified and reviewable; and whether recordings and confidential sources are protected. **The duty to protect reporting extends to abuse by protest participants and to intimidation by officials.**

3.2 Hostile political rhetoric and the delegitimisation of journalism

The Prime Minister's rhetoric towards journalists and media organisations warrants particular scrutiny, especially in the context of documented violence and obstruction against media workers covering the protests. In his 18 October public address, Edi Rama singled out News24 and its owner, making allegations concerning tax evasion, violations of employees' labour rights and preferential treatment by prosecutors, while accusing television outlets of encouraging unrest and seeking to undermine the government. During a 20 October meeting with school directors, he stated that "even worse than the assault with stones is the assault by the media," alleging that media outlets were acting in pursuit of financial and political interests and contributing to efforts to bring down the government through violence. On 23 October, he characterised evening television coverage as corrupt, accused media outlets of glorifying

violence and portrayed reporting on alleged police violence against students as a manipulation of events.

These statements raise concerns extending beyond criticism of particular media outlets or editorial practices. Associating journalism with violent attacks, portraying scrutiny of police conduct as political manipulation and questioning the legitimacy of reporting on alleged abuses can contribute to an environment in which hostility towards journalists becomes normalised. This is particularly concerning when journalists have themselves experienced physical violence, intimidation and obstruction while documenting police operations. The joint statement initiated and coordinated by SCiDEV, bringing together Albanian, regional, European and international organisations, raised interconnected concerns about attacks on journalists, threatening political rhetoric, unsupported accusations, interference with public-interest scrutiny and the chilling effect on democratic dissent. It called for respect for media freedom, judicial independence, individual accountability and restraint in political communication. Political leaders are entitled to challenge inaccurate reporting and raise legitimate concerns about media ownership, employment conditions or professional standards. However, allegations of wrongdoing require substantiation and examination through competent institutions. **When the head of government publicly delegitimises media scrutiny of police conduct, the risks extend to journalists' safety, the public's right to information and confidence in the impartial investigation of alleged abuses.**

Political disagreement also extends beyond the governing majority. Media freedom organisations have also criticised derogatory public statements about media organisations made by opposition leader Sali Berisha during October. This follows a documented pattern of attacks against journalists and newsrooms, previously analysed by SafeJournalists, involving allegations of criminal conduct, political manipulation and disloyalty without substantiating evidence. Scrutiny of media ownership, editorial practices and professional standards is legitimate and necessary, but unsupported accusations and personal attacks by political leaders can undermine the credibility of public-interest journalism and contribute to an environment of hostility and intimidation. This concern applies equally to government and opposition figures, particularly when journalists are already exposed to physical violence, threats and obstruction while reporting.

While hostile rhetoric from both government and opposition leaders can contribute to an environment of intimidation, their statements do not carry the same institutional weight. Remarks by the Prime Minister carry the authority of executive office and warrant particular scrutiny given the government's responsibility to protect journalists, safeguard media freedom and ensure that state institutions act lawfully and impartially.

4 Political stigmatisation of protesters and threatened sanctions

4.1 Public accusations, identification of individuals and the presumption of innocence

The government's response has included political communication with consequences for the public characterisation of the mobilisation. In speeches during 19–25 October, Prime Minister Edi Rama condemned attacks on police and property, defended the need for public-order enforcement and said that peaceful protests should be protected. He also questioned whether the demonstrations were genuinely student-led, linked some participants to opposition actors, extremism and foreign influence, and announced possible restrictions on scholarships, other

educational support and parental responsibility for violence. The government offered dialogue which was refused by students.

A concrete concern arose from the Prime Minister's 23 October public communication, which displayed photographs and identifying details of **45 individuals** and associated some with criminal records, organised crime or foreign-linked financing while disputing the student character of the protests. On 29 October, three people shown in the presentation filed criminal defamation complaints against him; the complaints are allegations, and no judicial finding on their merits is established by the available record. The publication of identifying information and untested allegations by a senior public official may have reputational and privacy consequences for individuals, while encouraging an inaccurate perception that all protesters share the alleged conduct of a subset. Criticism of violent acts and the publication of substantiated public-interest information remain legitimate; **institutional communication should preserve the presumption of innocence and distinguish political dissent from individual wrongdoing.**

4.2 Proposed educational, professional and parental consequences

The proposed educational and teacher-disciplinary consequences raise a separate legal problem. **Responsibility for violent conduct must be individualised, and restrictions affecting access to education, professional opportunities or family finances require specific legal authority, evidence and due process.** Proposals to prevent adults from exploiting minors are distinct from penalising children and young people for lawful political expression. The announced measures had not all been adopted by 31 October. Their actual content, legal basis and consultation process should be monitored before assigning legal effects to political statements.

5 Expanded executive powers: normative acts and the special electronic register

5.1 Normative Act No. 5/2026: assembly restrictions, fines and online expression

On 28 October 2026, the Council of Ministers adopted Normative Act No. 5/2026, *"Për disa shtesa dhe ndryshime në ligjin nr. 8773, datë 23.4.2001, 'Për tubimet'"* (On additions and amendments to Law No. 8773 of 23 April 2001 on Assemblies). This act changes the standing legal framework for public assembly. Its significance is that police decisions could affect demonstrations beyond the specific confrontations that prompted the amendment, including peaceful gatherings near institutions whose actions participants seek to challenge. The Cabinet's stated purpose is to prevent violence and major damage; the necessity of the wider legal powers requires a separate assessment.

Article 12/1 allows a police director, with prefect approval and on evidence of a real, serious and imminent risk, to restrict assemblies in defined perimeters near state, educational and healthcare institutions for up to 72 hours, renewable once. The cumulative period can therefore reach six days. **Article 12/2** allows an individual exclusion order for up to 48 hours in specified circumstances. The text provides reasons, exceptions and forms of judicial review, including protections against exclusion based solely on peaceful participation. These safeguards are relevant, but location and timing determine whether the right remains effective. **Restrictions around the institutions to which a protest is addressed can significantly diminish its communicative purpose; a court decision after a demonstration has ended may not restore the lost opportunity.** Review must therefore consider the evidence of risk, geographic limits,

duration and less restrictive alternatives, as well as the availability of genuinely timely judicial protection.

The act also increases administrative fines. In defined circumstances, a failure to comply with a lawful dispersal order combined with concealed identity can incur **up to 500,000 lek** (approximately €5,500); a separate provision concerns 5,000 lek (approximately €55) per participant for each day of road blockage. Other fines apply to specified offences and are subject to distinct conditions. A participant's liability depends on individual conduct, the lawfulness and communication of the order, and a genuine opportunity to comply. Temporary disruption inherent in an otherwise peaceful assembly requires different treatment from deliberate obstruction or violence. **The size of possible penalties may discourage lawful participation, particularly for students and people with limited income, even if the legislation does not impose a formal general ban.** Euro figures are approximate, calculated using the Bank of Albania's 30 October 2026 reference rate of 90.90 lek per euro.

Article 19/1 permits State Police notifications requesting deletion and non-repetition of communications assessed as calls for violence linked to assemblies, including communications made through social media, email or telephone. The provision does not itself create a separate criminal offence of refusing a deletion request; further action depends on existing legislation. The problem is the potential treatment of protected political criticism, protest speech, satire, quotation and journalism as unlawful incitement, coupled with uncertainty about obtaining subscriber details or access to private communications. The police should be able to respond to credible calls for violence, but clear grounds, reasoned notices, preservation of evidence, source protection and accessible independent review are essential under Articles 8 and 10 ECHR and domestic data-protection law.

5.2 The special electronic register: privacy, movement and consequences before conviction

A separate Council of Ministers decision adopted on 28 October 2026, *"Për krijimin dhe funksionimin e regjistrit të posaçëm elektronik të personave të referuar ose nën hetim për vepra penale kundër rendit dhe sigurisë publike, të kryera me dhunë gjatë grumbullimeve dhe manifestimeve publike, shkëmbimin e të dhënave dhe verifikimet kufitare"* (On the establishment and operation of a special electronic register of persons referred to prosecutors or under investigation for violent offences against public order and safety during public gatherings, data exchange and border checks), provides for a police-managed register. Its serial number requires confirmation against the Official Gazette. The decision concerns people referred to prosecutors or under investigation for specified allegedly violent conduct; it does not cover everyone who attended a protest.

The concern is the range of consequences potentially arising before a judicial determination of wrongdoing. Point 5 provides for administrative refusal of exit after an individual border verification even without a court order prohibiting travel, relying on Law No. 39/2025; where travel proceeds, the decision contemplates notification of destination-country authorities. Point 6 also permits notifications to private accommodation providers. The text contains limits on access, a review of retention needs within 30 days and deletion following certain prosecutorial outcomes. **Yet a police referral does not establish guilt, and disclosure to external authorities or private businesses can affect mobility, privacy, reputation and equal treatment before an allegation is resolved.** A 30-day review does not itself establish a maximum retention period or prevent irreversible harm after disclosure. Independent assessment is needed of the enabling

statutory basis, the necessity of each disclosure, notice, correction and deletion rights, and effective judicial review.

5.3 Normative Act No. 6/2026: compensation and potential liability for organisers

The Council of Ministers also adopted Normative Act No. 6/2026, *"Për shpërblimin e dëmit civil të shkaktuar ndaj subjekteve të prekura nga aktet e dhunshme gjatë tubimeve dhe rregullimin e pasojave"* (On compensation for civil damage suffered by entities affected by violent acts during assemblies and the regulation of resulting consequences). It establishes state compensation for qualifying businesses with annual turnover of up to 14 million lek (approximately €154,000) for qualifying damage occurring between 13 and 22 October. Prompt relief to businesses and people affected by violence is a legitimate objective. The procedural and legal implications arise from how compensation is verified and how the state subsequently seeks recovery.

The act gives State Police an evidentiary role in determining whether damage was caused during violent protest activity. It permits recourse against responsible persons and, in defined circumstances, joint liability involving the organisation that organised a violent demonstration. It also contains a provision connecting certain administrative fines with arrests found lawful. These matters require independent scrutiny because the legality of an arrest does not establish an administrative offence, and the act of convening an assembly does not, without further findings, establish an organisation's fault for the conduct of another person. The risk of substantial financial exposure matters particularly to small CSOs and informal, decentralised civic movements that may lack the capacity to control every participant or defend extensive litigation. **Liability should rest on evidence of wrongful conduct, causation, fault and effective access to a court.** The eligibility threshold and exclusion of other dates also require transparent, objective justification.

5.4 Cumulative rights implications and parliamentary scrutiny under Article 101

The broader significance of these three instruments lies in their combined operation. Police assessments can now affect assembly locations, speech, border checks, external disclosure of personal data and financial claims. The exercise of existing police powers is already under scrutiny following unlawful-arrest judgments and monitoring findings. **Greater reliance on preliminary police assessments therefore makes clear thresholds and timely independent remedies particularly important.** Under Article 101 of the Constitution, the two normative acts having the force of law also require separate, concrete justifications of necessity and urgency; the lasting amendment of general assembly rules raises a different constitutional question from immediate compensation for damage. The Assembly of Albania has a distinct responsibility to scrutinise those justifications within the 45-day period, including whether ordinary or expedited parliamentary legislation could have addressed the legitimate objectives.

6 Parallel legislative reforms affecting journalism and civic participation

The October developments occurred while several other legislative processes were reshaping conditions for public-interest reporting and participation. On 28 October, SCiDEV submitted comments on a draft package of amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code, including proposed **Article 103(14)** requiring **prior judicial authorisation** to publish certain information already held by journalists; restrictions affecting publication of detention decisions and

intercepted material; limitations on access to information concerning criminal justice; and gaps in the protection of confidential journalistic sources during device searches or seizures. The stated aims of protecting investigative integrity, privacy and the presumption of innocence are legitimate. Prior authorisation and broad publication restrictions nevertheless raise questions under Article 22(3) of the Constitution, Article 10 ECHR and the public's ability to scrutinise law-enforcement and judicial decisions. These were proposed CPC amendments and had not been enacted as part of the assembly-law changes.

The revised anti-SLAPP draft circulated on 12 October represents progress in incorporating Council of Europe expert recommendations, including broader recognition of abusive litigation, early-dismissal procedures, recoverable costs and transparency. Remaining questions concern procedural workability, legal support and how civil safeguards interact with criminal defamation and insult proceedings. Consultation should include judges and relevant legal professionals and proceed through a transparent public process; implementation will be decisive. SCiDEV and media-freedom partners welcomed the reform while calling for strengthened safeguards, alignment with EU Directive 2024/1069 and Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2024)2, and attention to the continued criminalisation of defamation and insult.

The separate Digital Services Act approximation and additional Criminal Code and teacher-ethics proposals announced during October also require scrutiny of legal certainty, proportionality, institutional competence and public consultation. The DSA provides an EU approximation benchmark for transparency and remedies, but its provisions should not be described as directly binding on Albania as an EU Member State. Taken together, these processes could provide useful safeguards for journalism and civic actors, while poorly defined duties and new sanctions in other areas could reduce their effectiveness. **Their interaction, consultation quality and practical enforceability merit greater attention than formal declarations of alignment alone.**

7 EU accession and the Fundamentals test: implementation, accountability and rights protection

On 13 October 2026, the EU and Albania provisionally closed negotiations on Chapter 20, enterprise and industrial policy, bringing the number provisionally closed to four of 33 chapters. All 33 chapters have been opened, but 29 remain without provisional closure, and none is final until an overall accession agreement is reached. Crucially, **Cluster 1—Fundamentals**, covering the rule of law, fundamental rights, democratic institutions and related reforms, is the first cluster opened and the last to be closed; progress under it determines the wider pace of accession. The EU recognised that Albania had met interim Fundamentals benchmarks in May 2026 and set closing benchmarks, which require demonstrable implementation. **Closing chapters concerned with other policy fields therefore does not establish that the practical protection of assembly, expression, personal liberty and judicial remedies is satisfactory.**

SCiDEV has previously described the risk of "**acceleration without democratisation**": measurable progress in accession procedures and legislative approximation may coexist with weak consultation, ineffective safeguards and insufficient accountability in domestic practice. The October record provides a concrete basis for testing that concern. Judicial findings, detention monitoring, threats to journalists and the expansion of administrative powers show why the quality of implementation matters alongside the number of chapters closed. The European Commission's 18 October statement condemned violence, welcomed assurances about protection of peaceful protest, and required lawful and proportionate enforcement and

dialogue. The 2026 Enlargement Package scheduled for 4 November, including an anticipated assessment and indicative roadmap for Albania, should enable a substantive examination of how the October events and subsequent legislative decisions bear on Fundamentals and **Chapter 23** obligations.

What to watch in the coming weeks

- **Parliamentary review and any constitutional challenge.** The Assembly's examination of **Normative Acts Nos. 5/2026 and 6/2026** within Article 101's 45-day period, including publication of the government's necessity-and-urgency justification, substantive committee hearings and consideration of less restrictive alternatives.
- **Use of the newly authorised powers.** Any Article 12/1 perimeter restriction or Article 12/2 individual exclusion, Article 19/1 deletion request, administrative fine, register-based border refusal, third-party disclosure or civil-recovery action; the original Gazette citation and implementation rules for the register should be made available.
- **Independent investigations and practical correction.** Progress in prosecution case **7806/2026**, the SPAK complaint filed by civic actors, Police Oversight Agency inquiries, follow-up to unlawful-arrest rulings, People's Advocate recommendations and incidents affecting journalists and children.
- **EU and legislative milestones.** The Commission's **4 November Enlargement Package** and subsequent Fundamentals dialogue; responses to the CPC consultation; publication of the revised anti-SLAPP text for broad consultation; and any formally submitted Criminal Code, teacher-disciplinary or DSA-related provisions.

Institutional recommendations

Assembly of Albania	The Assembly's review of Normative Acts Nos. 5/2026 and 6/2026 should examine the evidence supporting constitutional necessity and urgency for each act, the expected duration of the provisions and their proportionality under Articles 17, 47 and 101 of the Constitution. Public committee scrutiny, with input from independent institutions, affected communities, legal practitioners and civil society, would allow Parliament to assess whether the provisions should be approved, revised or allowed to lapse. Particular attention is warranted to restrictions around public institutions, sanctions that may deter peaceful participation and potential liability for organisers.

Council of Ministers	The government should make public the explanatory memoranda, rights-impact assessments and the specific justification for adopting lasting restrictions through exceptional normative acts. It should clarify the status and legal basis of educational and teacher-disciplinary proposals and ensure that the separate register decision complies with constitutional guarantees on movement, privacy and individual responsibility. The state's legitimate response to violence would be strengthened by a transparent account of how the new powers are necessary in addition to existing law and operational safeguards.
Ministry of the Interior and State Police	The repeated court and monitoring findings warrant an institutional account of the decisions taken during the protests, the rules applied to arrests and crowd control, and the practical changes adopted after identified deficiencies. Areas requiring demonstrable follow-up include officer identification, operational supervision, use of kinetic projectiles, treatment of minors, access to lawyers and medical care, and the implementation of existing journalist-safety guidelines. Clarity on police notices, data-access arrangements and the safeguards surrounding the new assembly restrictions would help prevent inconsistent application.
Prosecution authorities and Police Oversight Agency	Effective and independent investigation is essential for reported disproportionate force, ill-treatment, unlawful interference with journalists and other alleged offences. The existing proceedings, including case No. 7806/2026 and any admissible evidence concerning supervisory responsibility, merit appropriate institutional follow-up. Public information about procedural progress and eventual outcomes can be provided within the limits of investigative confidentiality and the presumption of innocence, while preserving evidence and the safety of affected individuals.
People's Advocate	The monitoring findings on detention conditions, personal liberty and protection of minors warrant sustained follow-up with the authorities concerned. Public reporting on compliance and available remedies, and consideration of constitutionally available review mechanisms where justified, would strengthen the independence and effectiveness of safeguards already provided by Albanian law.
Information and Data Protection Commissioner	The legal basis and proportionality of the electronic-register decision require assessment of border-related data use, notifications to foreign authorities and accommodation providers, retention, individual notice and available mechanisms for correction, deletion and review. The lawfulness of collecting identifying information under Article 19/1 of the amended Assembly Law also warrants examination, including protection for journalistic sources and political expression.

Ministry of Justice	Further examination of the draft Criminal Procedure Code should prioritise the prior-publication-authorisation requirement, journalistic-source confidentiality, access to information on judicial decisions and the relationship between investigative secrecy and public-interest reporting. The revised anti-SLAPP draft deserves broad consultation, including with judges, alongside consideration of remaining criminal-defamation safeguards. DSA and future Criminal Code reforms should be assessed for their interaction with these protections.
European Union, Council of Europe and OSCE institutions	The October evidence raises concrete implementation questions relevant to their respective monitoring and cooperation mandates. Continued dialogue with domestic institutions should examine responses to judicial and inspection findings, parliamentary review of the normative acts, protection of journalism and civic oversight, and the operation of administrative powers affecting assembly, communication and movement. These questions are directly relevant to the credibility of Albania's progress under the Fundamentals cluster and Chapter 23.