To: The Honorable Members of the United States Congress
United States House of Representatives
United States Senate
United States Department of State
Washington, D.C.

Subject: Urgent Appeal for Bipartisan Action on Albania's Deterioration of Democratic Governance

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of United Diaspora for Albania (UDA), an independent and nonpartisan community network of the Albanian Diaspora, we respectfully request bipartisan congressional review of growing concerns regarding democratic governance, rule of law, corruption allegations, institutional accountability, and human rights protections in the Republic of Albania.

These concerns have generated significant public interest among citizens in Albania, the Albanian-American community, and civil society organizations, particularly regarding judicial independence, government transparency, environmental governance, protection of civil liberties, and public confidence in democratic institutions. Given the longstanding strategic partnership between the United States and Albania, we believe these matters warrant continued congressional attention and oversight.

Concerns Regarding Major Coastal Development Projects

Attention has been directed toward the proposed $4.4 billion coastal resort development involving Sazan Island and the Vjosa-Narta region. Public reporting and civil society organizations have raised questions regarding the approval process associated with the project, including concerns related to environmental safeguards, disputed land ownership claims, transparency in governmental decision-making, and the potential for preferential treatment of politically connected individuals.

An investigative report[1] by Channel 5, hosted by journalist Andrew Callaghan, examined allegations involving corruption, organized crime influence, and potential money laundering within Albania's development sector. The report discussed publicly reported connections involving Prime Minister Edi Rama, former White House Senior Advisor Jared Kushner, and Albanian-American businessman Artur Shehu.

According to publicly reported court records referenced by CBS News[2], Mr. Shehu has reportedly been the subject of investigations by Albanian authorities concerning allegations related to drug trafficking and money laundering tied to land transactions associated with the proposed development. We recognize that allegations do not constitute proof of wrongdoing and believe that independent review and due process are essential to ensuring public confidence and accountability.

Growing Public Demonstrations and Democratic Accountability

These concerns extend beyond any single investment project. Beginning in May 2026, peaceful demonstrations initially focused on environmental protection and opposition to development within the Vjosa-Narta protected area evolved into broader public demands for transparency, accountability, institutional integrity, and democratic reform.

Numerous participants have expressed concerns regarding public corruption, political influence over state institutions, and the perceived weakening of checks and balances necessary to sustain democratic governance.

Public confidence has been further challenged by corruption allegations involving senior government officials, including reports concerning National Intelligence Director Vlora Hyseni and former Deputy Prime Minister Belinda Balluku[4]. These allegations warrant impartial review through appropriate legal and institutional processes.

Existing Congressional Interest

We note that concerns regarding Albania's democratic trajectory have already received attention within the United States Congress.

A recent congressional letter to Secretary of State Marco Rubio[3], supported by Representatives Joe Wilson and Keith Self, called for review of issues concerning corruption, judicial independence, the effectiveness of anti-corruption investigations conducted by SPAK, and protections for journalists and peaceful demonstrators. The letter also requested consideration of accountability measures available under Section 7031(c) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, where supported by sufficient evidence and applicable legal standards.

The existence of these congressional inquiries demonstrates a growing interest in ensuring that democratic governance, rule of law, and human rights protections remain strong and credible in Albania.

Human Rights and Use of Force Concerns

Equally concerning are reports alleging excessive use of force against peaceful demonstrators and students during recent protests.

Reported incidents include:

- Eva Pango, who reportedly suffered a skull fracture after being struck by a police-deployed munition.
- Erjon Vishkulli, who reportedly lost vision in one eye after being struck by a projectile reportedly deployed by security forces.

If verified, such incidents would raise serious concerns regarding the protection of fundamental rights, adherence to proportional use-of-force standards[5], and Albania's obligations under international human rights commitments. We respectfully submit that these allegations warrant independent, transparent, and impartial investigation consistent with internationally recognized human rights standards.

Requests for Congressional Consideration

Considering the foregoing concerns and the importance of democratic governance, judicial independence, and accountability, UDA respectfully requests that Congress consider the following actions:

1. **Strengthen congressional oversight** regarding corruption, democratic governance, judicial independence, and institutional accountability in Albania.

2. **Consider appropriate accountability measures**, including the application of Section 7031(c) visa restrictions, supported by credible evidence and consistent with applicable United States law.

3. **Encourage diplomatic engagement** with Albanian authorities concerning allegations of corruption, political interference, and failures of governmental oversight.

4. **Support independent investigations and human rights monitoring efforts**, particularly regarding the treatment of peaceful protesters, journalists, civil society representatives, and political dissenters.

5. **Promote transparency, due process, and public accountability** concerning major development projects involving protected environmental areas, disputed property claims, and politically influential individuals.

Supporting Documentation

UDA respectfully submits the following materials for congressional review and independent evaluation:

1. Channel 5 investigative report by Andrew Callaghan examining allegations of corruption, money laundering, and the proposed $4.4 billion coastal development involving Edi Rama, Jared Kushner, and Artur Shehu:

1 https://youtu.be/MM7QGccszUU?is=7okvl7CotNSO7b_V

2 https://www.cbsnews.com/news/jared-kushner-albania-development-land-artur-shehu-money-laundering-drug-trafficking/

2. Congressional oversight request concerning Section 7031(c) considerations, democratic accountability, and protections related to the Vjosa-Narta region. (attachment follows)

3. Correspondence to Secretary Marco Rubio, supported by Representatives Joe Wilson and Keith Self, requesting review of potential Section 7031(c) visa restrictions.

3 https://static.foxnews.com/foxnews.com/content/uploads/2026/10/congressional-letter-to-rubio-on-albania-1.pdf

4. Congressional review request submitted by Albanian attorney Josiba Osmani concerning allegations involving Edi Rama and Belinda Balluku, supported by audit findings, court records, and procurement documentation.

4 https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ghQ9Zqxo-SgazJaODwZz233GhYHnBzIk/view?usp=drive_link

5. Independent legal assessment prepared by Albanian attorney Dea Nini documenting alleged human rights violations during the October 2026 student protests.

5 https://lnkd.in/p/dHux23HH

Closing

United Diaspora for Albania is an independent and nonpartisan community network committed to transparency, accountability, and democratic governance.

Our request is not directed against foreign investment or any political party, but rather reflects concerns regarding the rule of law, institutional integrity, and the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms. We respectfully urge Congress and the Department of State to support independent review of the issues outlined herein and to encourage adherence to democratic principles, human rights standards, and government accountability.

The Albanian people deserve transparent institutions, equal protection under the law, and the full enjoyment of their democratic freedoms.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Respectfully submitted,
United Diaspora for Albania (UDA)
Independent and Nonpartisan Community Network

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 bipartisan congressional consideration of the concerns set out below 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 community[1]; 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.

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 ask the Department of State to explain how it applies the relevant statutory and evidentiary standards consistently to current and former Albanian officials, irrespective of political affiliation or incumbency 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 Albania[6]; 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.

IV. Proposed development affecting Vjosa-Narta: On 14 July 2026, the European Parliament's environment committee considered possible projects affecting Vjosa-Narta in the context of Albania's Chapter 27 accession negotiations.[7] Reuters has reported that the proposed resort is linked to Jared Kushner and involves land whose ownership is disputed[8].

On 12 June 2026, SPAK announced detention orders and asset seizures in an investigation into suspected international cocaine trafficking and money laundering, referring by initials to A.Sh. and related property-sale contracts[9]. Reuters identified A.Sh. as businessman Artur Shehu and reported that the transaction involved land sold to Albania Land Development. Mr Shehu disputes the allegations. Reuters reported that no wrongdoing is alleged against Mr Kushner or the project investors, and that there is no indication they knew of the alleged irregularities when the land was acquired[10]. The allegations remain unproven and the presumption of innocence applies.

Separately, on 19 March 2026, Senator Ron Wyden and Representative Robert Garcia announced a congressional oversight inquiry into Affinity Partners' foreign-government funding and safeguards concerning Mr Kushner's public and private roles, including earlier scrutiny of prospective investments in Albania and Serbia[11]. This is separate from the SPAK proceeding and is not a criminal investigation. The signatories seek lawful clarification of any U.S. agency involvement and applicable safeguards, without asking Congress to prejudge either matter or interfere with pending proceedings.

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

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. 565-66 (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).

7 European Parliament, Committee on the Environment, Climate and Food Safety, "Exchange of Views with the Commission on Environmental Protection in Albania," July 14, 2026.

8 Reuters, "Kushner Project Being Developed on Disputed Land, Albanian Villagers Say," June 13, 2026.

9 Special Structure Against Corruption and Organised Crime (SPAK), "Press Release," June 12, 2026.

10 Reuters, "Businessman Who Sold Land for Kushner Resort in Albania Suspected of Faking the Deeds," July 11, 2026.

11 U.S. Senate Committee on Finance, "Wyden, Garcia Investigate Kushner Raising Billions from Middle East Governments While Negotiating U.S. Foreign Policy," March 19, 2026.

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, under consistent statutory and evidentiary standards and without prejudging any individual outcome.

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

Individual Signatories

No.	Full name / typed signature	U.S. state/district or country	Profession / field
1	Agron Shehaj	United States	Finance
2	Albert Mena	Pennsylvania	Environmental engineer
3	Alma Telushi	Pennsylvania	Real Estate Agent
4	Ameen Altermathy	IL	Operation manager
5	Ana Mile		
6	Ana MX	PA/Philadelphia	Human Resources Specialist
7	Andi Sinani	Abington, MA	Architect
8	Andon Barhani	Wolcott, Connecticut	Enterprise Solution Architect
9	Anisela Zhupani	United States	Management
10	Anxhela Ferko	Pennsylvania	Insurance agent
11	Ardian Cani	Pennsylvania	Violin Teacher
12	Arjola Uku	United States	Caregiver
13	Besa Cani-Dunda	PA	Teacher assistant
14	Bleron Grajçevci	WI	University student
15	Dita Arbri	New York	Teacher
16	Doina elezi	New Jersey	Aesthetic
17	Donika Cani	Pennsylavania	Dental Assistant
18	Dorina Nazif	Philadelphia	Student
19	Elda Topci	Pennsylvania	Insurance agent
20	Elona Canaj	Pennsylvania	Educational Tech
21	Elton Lala	United States	Baristas
22	Erald Pelari	MA	Lead Data Analyst
23	Ergest Beshaj	Massachusetts	Engineer
24	Erinda Petriti	New Jersey	Senior account
25	Sara Troshani		
26	Ermal Alia		Taxi rideshare
27	Fatbardha Doci		Professor
28	Fausta Vjerdha	CA	Teacher
29	Flavia Kola	vic	Journalist
30	Florian Shpata	Florida	IT Consultant
31	Sonila Cura	PA	
32	Flutura Bara	Pennsylvania	Teacher
33	Frensis Dule	Paramus, New Jersey	Events
34	Genta Jed	Philadelphia PA	Interior Designer
35	Gledis Guri	WA	Postdoctoral Reseacher

No.	Full name / typed signature	U.S. state/district or country	Profession / field
36	Gramos Mejdolli	CT	Healthcare
37	Imelda Ngofo	Massachusetts	Dental Billing Manager
38	Iris Kuqi	PA	Retired
39	Safigje Canaj	MA	Project manager
40	Jens At-Stathi	New york	Teacher
41	Jessica B	Pennsylvania	Tech
42	Jon Pasha	NJ	Construction
43	Jona Mustafaraj	Massachusetts	Biochem
44	Julian Llapushi	PA	
45	Klesti Ranci	Saugus	Marketing
46	Lura Haxhistasa	Pennsylvania, United States	Healthcare
47	Marilo Meta	Washington DC	Software Architecture
48			Home Loans
49	Met Picoka	New Jersey	Contractor
50	Migena Kukli	PA/Philadelphia	Environmental Engineer
51	Mimoza Cakolli	New york	IT Analyst
52	Monika Karanxha	Georgia	Registered Nurse
53	Nikoleta Lisi	New York	Medicine
54	Oltiana Muharremi	MA	Associate Professor of Accounting
55	Ramazan Doci	Pennsylvania	Vet Doctor
56	Reiner Atstathi	New York	Finance
57	Safigje Canaj	Pennsylvania	Retired
	Stela Goga		

Submission and verification record

Final number of individual signatories	56 signatures
Verified by / date	11/10/2026
Date submitted to Congress	11/10/2026