

ALBANIA'S PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE, JUDICIAL REFORM, & THE ROLE OF US AMBASSADOR DONALD LU IN TIRANA

As the General Prosecutor of the Republic of Albania, I would like to introduce my personal and institutional perspective regarding developments in the justice system in our country, as well as the role of the US Ambassador in Tirana, Donald Lu and his cooperation with the Soros Foundation, in order to realize the Reform in the Justice System in Albania, according to their plan.

The General Prosecution Office of Albania is an independent constitutional institution. The General Prosecutor is appointed by the President of the Republic, with the consent of the Parliament of Albania. The mandate of the General Prosecutor is five years and, in the exercise of his functions, he is based only on the Constitution and the law. Letter-writer, General Prosecutor, Adriatik Llalla, received the mandate in December 2012.

The Albanian Prosecution Office has consistently relied on technical and legal assistance from the Department of State and the Department of Justice of the United States of America through USAID and OPDAT missions.

General presentation

Starting in 2010, on the political and public scene, the need for reforming the justice system was widely presented. After the collapse of the communist system in Albania in 1990 and onwards, the justice system was considered as one of the high-involvement powers in corruption, based on public opinion surveys of citizens.

The Democratic Party, the right-wing, which ruled the country in the period 2005-2013, aimed to undertake some reforms to improve quality in giving justice, but without results. The ruling majority did not have the necessary parliamentary votes to implement the Justice Reform. On the other hand, the leftist opposition did not join the initiative of the parliamentary majority, due to the great mistrust between the political parties in Albania.

In the parliamentary elections, held in June 2013, the winner was declared the Socialist Party and its main ally, the Socialist Movement for Integration, leftist political formations in Albania. The winning coalition secured the necessary votes for the adoption of qualified majority laws (84 votes). However, he could not provide the numbers in Parliament for the changes in the Constitution of the Republic of Albania.

In governing program, the left coalition adopted the project for realization of the Justice Reform. This project, unlike the right-wing period, was a real opportunity to be realized as a result of the powerful parliamentary majority created in the 2013 elections. However, it should be noted that the need for reforming the justice system was not a franchise of the majority. Other relevant factors, including key constitutional institutions and parliamentary opposition, had expressed agreement to improve the legal framework on which the Court and Prosecution Office functioned.

Efforts to Justice Reform

In October 2014, the President of the Republic organized a High Level Meeting, "Reforming the Justice System in Albania" with the presence of all the main political factor and interested institutions, in order to discuss the realization of the Justice Reform. In the meeting were invited as offices, the diplomatic representatives of the United States of America; The European Union; The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe, etc.

The General Prosecution Office of Albania was represented at that meeting by the General Prosecutor. In his referral, the General Prosecutor emphasized the need to reform the justice system, aiming at securing and strengthening the independence of judges and prosecutors. This attitude was similar, in general terms, to the presentations of other political, institutional and international officials.

Following this high-level meeting, the Albanian Parliament decided to establish a Special Parliamentary Commission for Reform in the Justice System, by Decision no. 96/2014, dated 27.11.2014. The Commission consisted of left and right lawmakers, where most of them were assigned to the parliamentary majority. Also,

the chairman of the commission was appointed by the Socialist Party (left), namely the parliamentary deputy Fatmir Xhafaj.

Appointment of Mr. Xhafaj, head of the Parliamentary Commission on Justice Reform, was not positively assessed by the right-wing opposition and some public opinion. A long-time lawyer, Mr. Xhafaj had exercised the investigator's functions in the last 5 years of the communist period (1985-1990). There were public accusations, from people who were alive, that they were persecuted by him because they did not accept the communist regime. These charges could not be confirmed with documents, because a considerable part of the communist-era archive was destroyed in the period 1990-1991.

However, the Parliamentary Commission started its work, summoning a group of about 20 lawyers, named High Level Experts. This group was composed by independent lawyers, representatives of Civil Society, as well as of justice institutions, including the General Prosecution Office.

Formal involvement of "Soros"

The High Level Expert Group was tasked with drafting constitutional and legal drafts, which would then be reviewed by lawmakers of the Parliamentary Commission on Reform in Justice.

Since the beginning of the work of the High Level Experts, it was found that the opinions presented by the majority of experienced lawyers and representatives of the institutions in this group, were not evaluated by a smaller core in the group. In fact, in spite of the considerable number of experts, decision-making regarding the opinions to be submitted to the Parliamentary Committee was prepared by only five experts. This small group, which had full support of the chairman of the Parliamentary Commission, consisted of:

- ***Kristaq Traja***, attached to the Commission as a **Soros-Albania Foundation expert**
- ***Aurela Anastasi***, Executive Director of the Center for Legal Civic Initiatives, **supported by the Soros Foundation**
- ***Sokol Sadushi***, a member of some organs of several non-profit organizations, including the **Soros Foundation**. Close relative of the

chairman of the Parliamentary Commission on Justice Reform, Fatmir Xhafaj

- **Genti Ibrahimi**, lawyer, publisher of legal publications, supported in all cases by the **Soros Foundation**. Spouse of an important official in the OPDAT mission and also close family member with the Albanian Defense Minister, who is also an important figure in the Socialist Party. (It is important to emphasize family ties by the fact that, in a country with a resident population of about 2 million people, these ties have a strong impact)
- **Rainer Deville**, German lawyer, chief of the EURALIUS mission of the European Union, in Tirana. To create a clear profile on Mr. Deville, can be cited a public statement, presented in November 2015: (cit.: "*The spread of corruption in justice in Albania is very big. The first solution would be to unleash all current judges and prosecutors and to deploy young people in the whole system, but we cannot do this. There is no more tolerance for corruption. Anyone who has been involved in corruption before, it is best to leave the office now before the Justice Reform ...* ")

The engagement of this small group of experts, in the absence of full transparency, triggered the negative reaction of other members of the High Level Expert Group, who boycotted the work meetings. Also, the parliamentary opposition publicly voiced its disapproval of this behavior by experts, considered "favorites by the majority of experts.

An important diplomatic figure appeared in public in support of the "small group" - US Ambassador, Donald Lu.

Taking advantage of this diplomatic support, the Chairman of the Parliamentary Commission, Xhafaj, requested official assistance from the Open Society Foundation Soros for Albania. The Commission, with the proposal of SP parliamentary deputy Xhafaj and only with the votes of the left-wing legislators in its composition, approved the decision of the Commission no. 5, dated 22.12.2014, "On the preparatory actions for supporting the activity of the Special Commission from the Foundation 'Open Society Foundation for Albania ('Soros')." By this decision, the Special Commission decided to address by official letter to the

"Soros" Foundation, where it was required cooperation on the basis of interest expressed by the heads of the Foundation to support the activity of the Commission. In this way, the Soros Foundation s formally involved in drafting of the Justice Reform.

"Soros" and Ambassador Lu

The formal involvement of the Soros Foundation in the activity of the Justice Reform Commission began to have public effects. A series of surveys by non-governmental organizations under Soros's addiction, an awareness-raising campaign aimed at denigrating the whole body of judges and prosecutors, appeared intense in the Albanian public space. Ambassadors Lu was present in almost every activity of non-governmental organizations operating under the Soros umbrella.

The media and public campaigns organized by the Soros Foundation, with the presence of diplomat Lu, were also oriented towards the creation of the image that the right-wing opposition and a part of the left coalition were opposed to Justice Reform. The aim of these arrangements was to create the perception that the main driving force for realizing the Justice Reform was the Prime Minister Edi Rama and the Socialist Party he led. These campaigns with strong financial resources also aimed to create the perception that one of the opponents of the Justice Reform was the Speaker of the Parliament, Mr. Ilir Meta, at the same time chairman of the Socialist Movement for Integration party, the main governing ally of the Socialist Party.

In April 2015, while the work at the Special Justice Reform Commission was followed by a lack of transparency, US Ambassador, Mr. Lu was present at a meeting with judges and prosecutors to discuss changes in the justice system. Mr. Lu did not spare open criticism against the justice system, but, under the justification of having a busy agenda, left the meeting after judges and prosecutors openly expressed their queries about this non-transparent initiative.

Also, the prosecutors included on the High Level Expert Group, as well as others at various consultative meetings, have requested from Mr. Lu to support transparency during the discussions on reforming the justice system. These requests were not appreciated by Ambassador Lu.

However, faced with prosecutors at various meetings, in May 2015, Ambassador Lu asked for an appointment with the General Prosecutor. At this meeting, Ambassador Lu requested the General Prosecutor's intervention to influence prosecutors not to oppose his Justice Reform project. Likewise, in a non-diplomatic manner and against any norm provided by the Vienna Convention, Ambassador Lu suggested to the General Prosecutor that he should arrest the President of the Assembly and also the Speaker of the Socialist Movement for Integration, Ilir Meta. In the assessment of Mr. Lu, the Parliament Speaker Meta was corrupt and was hindering the Justice Reform. His possible arrest would help Albania to integrate as quickly as possible in the European Union. Such a request, completely irresponsible, forced the General Prosecutor to interrupt the meeting, explaining that the arrest of any person, including officials, is only carried out on the basis of evidence.

The General Prosecutor expressed his stance that if the request was illogical unwarranted, and in the total lack of evidence to accuse high officials of corruption, they would risk causing severe political and social instability in Albania. In the subsequent positions of diplomat Lu the impression was that the potential danger of instability was not a matter of priority for him.

In the coming months, the Justice Reform discussion was creating a strong political polarization. In November 2015, the "small" group of High Level Experts completed the draft on constitutional and legal changes. This draft was opposed by the opposition, which described it as totally non-transparent and aimed at empowering Prime Minister Edi Rama's positions.

Also, the interest groups, including prosecutors, expressed their many reservations on constitutional and legal drafts presented by experts supported by the Soros Foundation.

The right-wing opposition addressed questions about the proposals to the Venice Commission in order to receive a more specialized opinion on the drafts. In December 2015, the Venice Commission forwarded its opinion to the Albanian authorities, which noted significant issues related to human rights and regular legal proceedings.

Following the opinion of the Venice Commission, the political opposition, as well as the interest groups, demanded their greatest involvement in the discussions, with a view to realize a Justice Reform to be accepted by all. However, this request again did not find support from the head of the Parliamentary Justice Reform Commission, which continued to rely on the small core of the High Level Experts. In March 2016, the revised legal drafts were presented, which allegedly reflected the Venice Commission Opinion.

Again, the right-wing opposition sought a second Opinion from the Venice Commission after finding that the majority at the Special Parliamentary Commission and the Soros-backed experts had not reflected the suggestions of the first Opinion of the Venice Commission.

In a second Opinion, the Venice Commission again found problems and suggested necessary changes to the Albanian authorities. Despite this, the second draft that was overthrown by the Venice Commission had the absolute public support of Ambassador Lu who began to exert pressure on MPs and institutional heads to support the publicly-funded project.

Diplomat Lu, debate with the General Prosecutor

In some e-mail communications in May-June 2016, Ambassador Donald Lu asked the General Prosecutor to publicly state his position in favor of the Justice Reform draft for which the diplomat had expressed in favor. In these communications, Mr. Lu has presented to the General Prosecutor the position that *"if he did not speak publicly in favor of the Justice Reform Project, it would have negative personal consequences to the General Prosecutor and the Prosecution Office."*

In July 2016, when the constitutional changes that would enable the realization of the Justice Reform were expected to be voted on in the Albanian Parliament, the climate between the political parties was extremely polarized. On the one hand, Prime Minister Edi Rama and, in the same line, Ambassadors Lu, as well as the Soros foundations, sought approval of the Justice Reform draft, which was twice rejected by the Venice Commission. On the other hand, the right opposition, but also the interest groups, judges and prosecutors, found serious deviations from the general norms of law in the presented projects.

Constitutional amendments required a majority of 93 votes out of 140 in total in the Albanian Parliament. The left coalition of Government did not have these votes and it was necessarily required the achievement of consensus with the parliamentary opposition.

In an attempt to create the idea in public that the Albanian people sought the approval of the Justice Reform Draft supported by, Ambassador Lu participated in a protest organized by "Civil Society," but which in reality was organized by the Soros Foundation. In a nonsense show, the diplomat Lu led a group of about 30-40 people, all members of the Soros Foundation or public administration.

Likewise, Ambassador Lu, in a recent effort, began exercising open and public pressure on some MPs of the Albanian Parliament to approve the draft supported by him. Several phone messages were published in the Albanian media, in which Ambassador Lu told MPs that if they did not approve the draft Constitution, it would take measures against them. According to these messages, Ambassador Lu informed them that if these MPs did not vote for the draft, they should be present at the US Embassy in Tirana on a certain schedule to get acquainted with the penalties. The existence of these threatening messages was publicly confirmed by some lawmakers and was not denied by Ambassador Lu.

On the basis of this "pressure" was the fact that Ambassador Lu claimed that he possessed compromising information on these deputies. The message was clear that if they adopted the draft Constitution backed by him, the compromising information on MPs would not be published.

In addition, the blackmail of Ambassador Lu relied on a law of the Albanian Parliament "On Decriminalization", adopted in April 2015. Under this law, officials' mandate automatically ends, including MPs who had criminal past inside or outside the territory of the Republic of Albania. The Prosecution Office has an essential role in the implementation of this law.

By using blackmail through telephone messages, Ambassador Lu made the impression to the lawmakers that if they did not approve the draft backed by him, he would publish details of their criminal past. Automatically, if such data existed and was published, lawmakers would be forced to leave political life.

According to the law "On Decriminalization", based on the engagement of the Albanian Prosecution Office, 4 MPs have so far lost their mandates, as have elected officials of local government and a considerable number of public officials.

Returning to the situation with the Political Reform, in July 2016. Due to the partial engagement of Ambassador Lu, he lost the opportunity to play the role of 'arbitrator' with political parties. To calm the political situation and to enable the Reform of Justice in Tirana, on July 10, 2016, US Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland and EU Enlargement Commissioner Johannes Hahn arrived. The two senior diplomats from Washington and Brussels proposed a concrete variant to resolve the situation, which was wholly different from the 18-month-long version of Ambassador Lu. The Nuland-Hahn variant was supported by the entire political parliamentary factor. On July 22, 2016, the Albanian Parliament unanimously adopted the amendments to the Constitution, which enabled the adoption of the legal package on Justice Reform.

The consensus reached on 22 July 2016 did not last long. Political parties were unable to secure understanding for the joint adoption of the most important Law on Justice Reform, "Vetting", which aims to clear the justice system of judges and prosecutors involved in corrupt actions.

Approval of this law required 84 parliamentary votes and the left coalition had enough to approve it without the presence of the opposition. On August 6, 2016, the "Vetting" law was adopted, while the opposition appealed the law to the Constitutional Court.

The US ambassador in Tirana returned to the political scene, urging the opposition not to obstruct the implementation of the law of "Vetting". In September 2016, at a public meeting, Lu declared that "... *I know the people who hinder justice reform. They are corrupt politicians, senior judges and prosecutors who do not want to reform the system ...*" In this expression it was clearly stated that Ambassador Lu referred to the General Prosecutor, who had not previously supported his overturned version of the Justice Reform.

On September 5, 2016, Ambassador Lu, in an interview with the Albanian media, categorically denied that the Soros Foundation was involved in the process of drafting the Justice Reform.

But only a few weeks later, on October 8, 2016, the documents known as "DcLeak" were published. Among other things, these documents reveal the fact that the Open Society Foundation for Albania (financed by George Soros), had begun drafting the platform for the realization of Justice Reform in Albania since 2013, when Prime Minister Edi Rama took power. Analysts and researchers found that the document compiled by Soros in 2013, was strictly implemented throughout the process of drafting the Justice Reform in Albania.

Also, at the end of 2016, in a closing ceremony for Justice Reform, the Chairman of the Special Commission, Fatmir Xhafaj, especially thanked the Soros Foundation for providing assistance to the Justice Reform.

Also, the Executive Director of Soros-Albania, Mr. Andy Dobrushy, publicly stated that *"... he was proud that the experts of the Soros Foundation have contributed to the realization of the Justice Reform in Albania ..."*

In addition to engaging in drafting of the Justice Reform drafts, Mr. Dobrushy is currently chairing the Committee for the Verification of Candidate Members of the High Judicial Council (HRC) and the High Prosecution Council (PJC). The Commission, which is led by Mr. Dobrushy, at the same time Executive Director of Soros-Albania Foundation, works with the Ombudsman Institution and verifies the fulfillment of the criteria by the CJP and CJC candidates. These two new structures (HJC/HCPO) are the bodies that will govern the justice system and will have the task of appointing / promoting / dismissing judges and prosecutors. So it is clear that the Soros Foundation, through its mechanisms in public institutions, now has a crucial role in controlling the justice system in Albania.

Revocation of US Visas for Prosecutors and Judges

On December 31, 2016, through a non-normal act, Ambassador Lu notifies the General Prosecutor of the Republic of Albania by e-mail that the US diplomatic visa has been revoked. The cause of this action, according to Ambassador Lu, had served a non-protocol trip of the General Prosecutor's wife to the US. The General

Prosecutor's Lady, in pregnancy, had faced health problems that required deep treatment in a specialized clinic. For this reason, the lady had traveled to the United States to receive the necessary treatment and then to return to Albania. The General Prosecutor's Lady gives birth to the third child of the couple on December 31, 2016. A few hours after the child's birth, Ambassador Lu personally took care to notify the General Prosecutor of the revocation of the diplomatic visa because, according to him, "it was abused the Diplomatic visa".

The General Prosecutor did not seek further clarification from Ambassador Lu for this action contrary to the spirit of cooperation. Ambassador Lu had made it clear months ago that if he did not publicly declare in favor of the draft of Justice Reform, supported by the diplomat, he (the General Prosecutor), "... would have negative personal consequences ...".

On January 26, 2017, through a media announcement, the United States Embassy announced that has annulled visas for some judges and prosecutors and *"has taken this action before the expected process of Vetting, which will assess the relations of certain officials with corruption, as well as in response to a case involving flagrant abuse of a formal visa by a senior prosecutor and his wife, which led to the revocation of their visas."* No concrete names were mentioned in the announcement, but it was learned that, along with the General Prosecutor, it was also revoked to other officials of the General Prosecution Office, the Constitutional Court, the High Court, and some other officials at the lower levels—approximately 70 people in all.

As it turned out later, visas were revoked from some of the top judges and prosecutors who were just elected members of the Council of Appointments to Justice (KED) a new structure created within the Reform of Justice. The fact that visas were revoked for some of the members of this structure created the impression that Ambassador Lu had acted against judges and prosecutors who did not support his Justice Reform project. With the annulment of the travel and publication visa, in an "informal" manner, judges and prosecutors, members of the KED were targeted for removal from this structure.

Also, judges and prosecutors, who "were penalized" by having visas revoked, are mainly those who have investigated or judged political people or businessmen

linked to the ruling left. Also, some prosecutors have been "penalized" who have had ongoing investigations left-wing lawmakers who are suspected of collaborating with organized crime.

On February 2, 2017, Ambassador Lu, in a meeting with non-governmental organizations, again organized by the Soros Foundation, openly declared against the General Prosecutor. Mr. Lu pointing out, inter alia, that "... *the General Prosecutor for 18 months has spoken against the Reform in Justice. He has violated the spirit of the Constitution ...* ".

The General Prosecutor, who until then had not publicly made any statements regarding Ambassador Lu, disclosed these problems through a media conference. In this public emission, for the first time it was mentioned that Ambassador Lu, in an undiplomatic way and, possibly, for his own personal gains, has intervened to close ongoing investigations against some private companies.

The most flagrant case is an investigation of "Bankers Petroleum". This Canadian-owned oil company operates in the Fier area, in the central part of Albania. On April 1, 2015, in the area where the company was operating, some powerful explosions occurred that destroyed over 200 families' houses. Fier's District Prosecution Office launched the investigation, suspecting that the explosions resulted from oil company activity by "Bankers Petroleum".

In July 2015, initially during a meeting and following an official letter, Ambassador Lu urged the General Prosecutor to suspend and not investigate "Bankers Petroleum". This claim, even formal, was meaningless, because the US ambassador has no standing to defend the interests of the company, "Bankers Petroleum", which had no share of American capital.

This fact, which occurred in 2015, but was publicly revealed in February 2017, has not been denied by the US ambassador in Tirana, Donald Lu.

The problem with narcotics

Over the last few years, Albania has faced a major problem of narcotics cultivation and trafficking towards European Union countries. The geographic position, as a way of transition between East and West, poor border security, and widespread

corruption among law enforcement officials, has facilitated the activity of criminal groups.

By 2014, the symbol of cultivation of narcotic cannabis sativa was a village in South Albania, Lazarat. Located in a difficult geographic area, as well as with the support of local administrative and police leaders, narcotics growers in this village had created frequent obstacles to police operations.

In June 2014, a national left-wing national plan carried out a strong police intervention, destroying cannabis plantations and destroying the myth of inviolability created for this area. The police operation was praiseworthy and the Albanian government was praised by international partners.

But two years later, in 2016, it was found that the cultivation of narcotic cannabis sativa was spread in almost all regions of Albania. The spread, though in tragic dimension, was denied by the government and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The right-wing opposition accused the government of allowing giant narcotics cultivation, supporting the traffickers. According to the opposition, the traffickers would then support the Socialist Party in order to hold power in the parliamentary elections held in 2017.

A series of Prosecution Office's investigations concluded that the traffickers had the support of local police structures. Some investigations have proved successful, but most of them have failed due to investigations being undermined by police officers implicated in trafficking. In some cases, prosecutors have been forced not to conduct investigative actions on the ground, as they have faced armed traffickers.

Despite this significant problem, which was also highlighted by international partners, mainly of Italy and Greece, neighboring countries with Albania, the Ministry of Internal Affairs denied the reports, calling them "political war".

The Foundation Soros offered help to the left-wing government for the narcotics problem. Some surveys conducted by non-governmental organizations under the Soros umbrella indicate that *"Police were the most trusted public institution"*. These surveys, for the most part, have been published in the presence of US Ambassador Donald Lu. In this way, certified the (mistaken) ratings for the Police,

while the on-the-ground situation was far from the reality presented in public surveys and activities organized under the "Soros" logo.

Throughout 2016 and in the first months of 2017, Ambassador Lu failed to mention the problem with narcotics in any case. Moreover, Ambassador Lu has expressed more than once in non-public meetings that "Drugs are not the problem of the United States of America".

Meanwhile, investigations by the Albanian Prosecutor's Office, as well as the operations of the Italian Anti-Mafia Directory, discovered in the period from December 2016 to March 2017 trafficking cases of several cannabis tons from Albania to Italy. Also, Greek authorities uncovered several other cases with significant amounts of narcotic drugs with starting point, Albania.

In February 2017, the Director of Italian Anti-mafia, Mr. Franko Roberti, expressed during a public press conference with the General Prosecutor in Tirana that "narcotics traffic from Albania to Italy has increased exponentially." This designation referred to the Italian anti-mafia investigations over the last 3 years (2014-2016).

In May 2017, a State Department report referred to "... *the cultivation of narcotics in Albania during 2016 increased by 5 times ...*".

The State Department report was rated by a public commentator in Albania as a "*heavy blow, not only for the Government, but also for Ambassador Lu, who never said about the narcotics cultivation phenomenon.*"

Meanwhile, data on narcotics in the field are considered extremely worrying. Financial benefits of criminal groups amount to several billion euros. These figures are reported by international agencies, partners with the Albanian Prosecution Office. Moreover, the data provided by international agencies speaks of a relation between organized crime and terrorism.

The Albanian authorities do not have, until now, concrete data on the relations between Albanian narcotics and the financing of terrorism. However, this opportunity is realistic, assessing that terrorist groups have their own connections in the Balkan region.

A confidential report of the mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Tirana, published in the media in February 2017, talked about 2 billion euros, generated by cultivating and trafficking cannabis in Albania.

The "Financial Times" newspaper, in an analysis on Albania titled "EU cannot ignore Albania's descent into disorder", published on May 13, 2017, writes inter alia that "... The country [Albania has long acted as the main gateway for heroin and cocaine entering Europe. Recently, Albania has become the largest producer on the cannabis continent and many large areas of the villages deal with its cultivation. Cannabis production increased five times last year, according to the US Department of State. Withdrawal from drug trafficking is obvious.... "

The drug-related criminality spreading across Albania, with a potential link to terrorism, represents a very real destabilizing factor in Albania now and in the near future. The General Prosecutor's Office would welcome assistance from the U.S. Government on this real issue of significance to both of our countries. What we reject is meddling by the U.S. Ambassador in Albania's internal affairs.

Thank you for your attention!

With respect

GENERAL PROSECUTOR

ADRIATIK LLALLA

SUMMARY

Ambassador Lu, Soros, and Justice Reform in Albania

Justice Reform in Albania, strongly supported by the US Ambassador in Tirana, Donald Lu, has actually resulted in a real chaos for the justice system in our country. Constitutional amendments, as well as the laws adopted so far, have created a serious institutional vacuum, which directly affect the quality of justice provided to the public.

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- Justice Reform, discussed in Albania in the period 2014-2016, and partially endorsed in July 2016, was implemented on the basis of a project drafted by the Soros Foundation. US Ambassador to Tirana, Donald Lu, has been one of the most important public figures in favor of the proposals drafted by Soros.
- US Ambassador to Tirana, Donald Lu, denied the involvement of the Soros Foundation in drafting the Justice Reform proposal. In an interview for the Albanian press ("MAPO" magazine, September 5, 2016), Ambassador Lu said that *"reports on Soros's inclusion are not accurate ..."*.
- Documents published in the so-called "Dc Leaks" in October 2016 confirmed that the Soros Foundation had adopted a strategy for drafting and adopting a Justice Reform package in Albania in 2013. Soros's drafting and strategy, according to DC Leaks documents, proved to have been implemented with precision.
- "DC Leaks" confirmed what was known in Albania. The Speaker of the Special Parliamentary Commission on Justice Reform, the left-wing lawmaker, Mr. Fatmir Xhafaj, approved the decision no. 5, dated 22.12.2014, *"On the preparatory actions for supporting the activity of the Special Commission from the Foundation Open Society for Albania('Soros')"*
- The Soros Foundation, directly or through its umbrella organizations, conducted a series of media campaigns, including denigrating ones, against judges and prosecutors. In almost all activities organized or funded by Soros, Ambassador Lu was present.

- Key experts who drafted the Justice Reform draft are members of, or have direct links, with the Soros Foundation –Albania
- They also have strong family / relationships, with senior officials of the former communist regime in Albania.
- The draft drawn up by Soros's experts and backed by Ambassador Lu was twice rejected by the Venice Commission as completely inadequate and seriously violating fundamental human rights principles.
- At the conclusion of the adoption of constitutional changes, the Chairman of the Special Reform Justice Commission, Mr. Fatmir Xhafaj, publicly thanked Soros Foundation-Albania for the great contribution it has offered for the realization of the Justice Reform.
- The Executive leaders of the Soros-Albania Foundation publicly admitted that they were key contributors to the realization of the Justice Reform and were therefore "proud."

Currently, executive of "Soros-Albania" are on the commissions that will verify/select Albania's justice system leaders. The Soros Foundation, through its control of new justice system appointees will fully control the entire justice system and its decision-making.

Ambassador Lu and narcotics problems

- Albania is considered to be the major country of cannabis production in Europe in 2016.
- The General Prosecutor's Office, based on its investigations, has proved that the cultivation and trafficking of narcotics in almost all of its territory is based on cooperation between traffickers and police directors.
- Prosecution Office's investigations have been prevented and undermined in most cases by police officers. However, on the basis of the General Prosecutor's Office investigations, in cooperation with the neighboring authorities of Italy and Greece several dozen tons of cannabis have been found, trafficked from Albania, which were not evidenced by the Police.
- Antimafia Directory of Italy reports exponential growth of narcotics traffic from Albania to Italy.

- A confidential report of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Tirana speaks for about 2 billion euros circulating from the criminal activity of cannabis traffic. This figure is about 4 times higher than the public debt that Albania has.
- The State Department, in its annual report for 2016, notes that "*cannabis cultivation in Albania has increased by 5 times*"
- The main police leaders have publicly denied the serious reality of cannabis. The US Ambassador in Tirana, Donald Lu, in the same wavelength with the Albanian police, never expressed the existence of this criminal phenomenon. Ambassador Lu has stated that "*drugs are not a concern of the United States of America*".
- The Prime Minister has similarly discounted the importance of this criminal phenomena, possibly to preserve the loyalty of police leaders, who are close to drug traffickers.
- International partners have raised concerns that the money earned by criminal narcotics trafficking groups can be used to finance terrorism.
- This money circulation between drug traffickers and terrorism, we believe it is a concern for the United States. For this reason, Ambassador Lu's view is entirely inappropriate, that "*Drugs are not a US problem*".