



## **42th Regular Session of the Human Rights Council (9 September - 27 September 2019)**

Oral statement delivered by Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII (APG23)

### **ITEM 6: UPR ALBANIA**

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Mr President,

APG23 welcomes the engagement of Albania in the third UPR Cycle. We are glad to note that some member States have recognized the problem of blood feuds that we have denounced thanks to the activity of the APG23 Nonviolent Peace Corps Operazione Colomba, in the field, since 2010 in Shkodra and in the Tropoja area. Operazione Colomba's volunteers are present in these environments with the aim of protecting human rights and civilians, preventing conflict escalation and creating nonviolent solutions to disputes.

In the north of Albania, in fact, the Kanun, an ancient code, is still alive and over the years is manifesting itself in a degenerate form. This code states that offended honour, can be restored in two ways: by forgiving the murderer or by committing a murder in revenge. To date, the most widely used option is still the latter. As a result, entire families are involved in endless feuds.

In addition to this phenomenon, there are also a number of critical aspects of Albanian society, such as domestic violence, discrimination against minorities and failure to respect children's rights.

In this regard, we welcome the concrete Albania's commitment in taking measures to improve its national legal framework on gender equality and the empowerment of women and the support services for victims of domestic violence.

We are also pleased to highlight the strong involvement of the General Directorate of State Police to building a database of all families affected by blood feud and in adopting an action plan on the prevention, detection, documentation and fight against criminal acts committed for motives of blood feud and vengeance.

We would also like to recommend the Government of Albania:

- Proceeding to take further measures to prevent and tackle domestic violence, forced marriage of children and any extrajudicial executions committed for blood feuds.
- Supporting mediation between families who are the victims of this phenomenon and the creation of a national reconciliation process through restorative justice and mediation counselling.
- Ensuring full implementation of the Action Plan on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, thus guaranteeing the right to inclusive education for all children with disabilities.

Thank you!