
STATEMENT OF THE JUDGES OF THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

On this critical day for Albanian justice, the judges of the Republic, united in one voice, express their profound sorrow, human consternation, and institutional indignation over the tragic event that claimed the life of our colleague, Judge Astrit Kalaja.

This is not merely the loss of a member of the judiciary — it is a wound to the entire system of justice, an assault on the rule of law, and a direct attack on the independence of the judiciary. The assassination of a judge within the courtroom marks the most egregious assault on the sanctity and dignity of justice.

In this moment of grief and reflection, we solemnly declare:

“Justice will not bow.”

No act of violence, intimidation, or campaign of hatred will deter the Albanian judge from fulfilling his or her constitutional duty. Judicial independence is not a privilege — it is a safeguard for every citizen seeking protection through the law.

This tragic event is the result of a toxic climate of insults and threats against judges, fueled by hate speech and irresponsible interference that have eroded public trust. Such a climate must end.

We, the judges of the Republic, shall no longer allow silence to be mistaken for weakness. We will respond with dignity and responsibility. We do not ask for privilege — we demand security, respect, and the conditions necessary to exercise our duties with integrity.

This event must serve as a call to institutional action. The judiciary today faces a lack of security, deteriorated court facilities, unmanageable workloads, and insufficient institutional support. Justice needs reinforcement — safe conditions, and institutions that respond with action, not with silence.

The High Judicial Council must act decisively: to condemn unequivocally, to uphold accountability, and to demonstrate institutional courage. This is not a call for confrontation — it is a call for accountability.

Likewise, the executive and legislative branches must assume their share of responsibility for the current state of the justice system. A State cannot demand an independent judiciary while failing to guarantee the minimum conditions for its functioning. Security in the courts is a prerequisite for the very existence of the rule of law.

In this spirit of unity and reflection, the Assembly of Judges of the Republic of Albania clearly affirms the following commitments:

Judicial Security

- The establishment of an Inter-Institutional Working Group composed of representatives from the High Judicial Council, the High Prosecutorial Council, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Interior, the State Police, and other law enforcement agencies, to organize a National Forum on Judicial Security.
- Drafting of a National Platform for the Security of Judges and Courts.
- Deployment of dedicated security forces within the courts and adoption of standard response protocols for critical incidents.
- Immediate approval and implementation of concrete measures ensuring physical safety within court premises and the secure exercise of judicial duties.
- Immediate legislative and regulatory amendments to guarantee the physical integrity, life, health, and property security of judges and court staff.
- Adoption of a National Strategy for the construction and modernization of court premises across the Republic of Albania.
- Nationwide inspection of all court facilities to assess safety, accessibility, and working conditions; standardization of security procedures and training for crisis management.
- Equipping all courts with scanners and metal detectors to guarantee safety in judicial premises.

Institutional Representation and Internal Organization

- The establishment of two permanent working groups within the High Judicial Council to initiate and draft proposals for amendments to legal and sublegal frameworks concerning the status of magistrates and the organization of the judiciary.
- Strengthening public awareness and fostering cooperation with the media.
- Promoting a culture of professional communication that refrains from denigrating language.
- Rejecting hate speech, insults, and threats as unacceptable norms in public or political discourse targeting judges.

Institutional Responsibility and Action

- Encouragement for the High Judicial Council to exercise its constitutional mandate with strength and determination.
- Request to Parliament and the Government to adopt tangible measures for improving working conditions in the courts.

Moral and Professional Commitments of Judges

- Commitment to timely adjudication, well-reasoned decisions, and consistency in jurisprudence.
- Acceptance of collective responsibility for strengthening the moral authority and integrity of the judicial system.

In Memory of Judge Astrit Kalaja

- Formal recognition of Judge Astrit Kalaja with the honorary title “**Martyr of the Homeland.**”
- Designation of the Meeting Hall of Judges at the High Judiciary Council building to bear the name of the late judge Astrit Kalaja.

The tragic event of 6 October must not endure solely as a moment of sorrow, but as a national call to conscience for Albanian justice.

We do not seek compassion — we demand action.

For when a judge stands unprotected, justice itself stands defenseless, and a defenseless justice leaves the citizen bereft of hope.

In the face of loss, we renew our solemn vow: to judge with impartiality, integrity, and courage.

Albanian justice will not bow — it will emerge stronger.

Justice shall not cease. It will endure and act with unwavering resolve to defend the liberty, rights, and dignity of every citizen of the Republic of Albania.

THE JUDGES OF THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

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