BASHKIA
TIRANË

REPUBLIKA E SHQIPËRISË
**BASHKIA TIRANË**

Tiranë, 30.04.2026

To the International Community:

I write to call your attention to a significant legal challenge that is underway in Albania, and to request your support in actively monitoring the proceedings before the Administrative Court in Tirana overseeing this matter. At a hearing scheduled for Friday, May 8, 2026, the court is expected to address the question of whether Ols Dado, the lead prosecutor in my criminal case, was duly appointed under Albanian law to serve as a prosecutor. Given the profound impact of this case on rule-of-law and democracy issues in Albania, I urge you to attend the proceedings and – consistent with the practices of Albania's Constitutional Court – call on the Administrative Court to live-stream the May 8 hearing.

In February of this year, I initiated a legal action challenging the validity of Mr. Dado's appointment in 2008 to the Office of the Prosecutor. Under the law in Albania, a candidate for prosecutor is required to satisfy a set of basic, threshold requirements, including the completion of Magistracy School, unless he is exempted from doing so.[1] My legal challenge contends that Mr. Dado was unlawfully appointed as prosecutor because he neither completed Magistracy School nor was exempted from doing so. Having failed to meet these conditions, Mr. Dado was never qualified to be a prosecutor, and his appointment to such a position in 2008 was legally invalid. Consequently, Mr. Dado never had the authority to investigate, charge, and prosecute my criminal case, and his actions as prosecutor should be declared null and void *ab initio*.

Mr. Dado has responded to my challenge dismissively, telling the Administrative Court that I lack the appropriate "standing" to bring my claim because his appointment – however defective – did not violate or otherwise infringe upon my personal rights and interests. He does not dispute that under the law, he lacks the qualifications to be a prosecutor. But he is counting on the court to take a "no harm, no foul" approach by dismissing and brushing my claim under the rug – behind doors, in the secrecy of a sealed courtroom, without offering a fulsome rationale for its decision, and away from the scrutiny of the Albanian public and international community.

[1] Those requirements are enumerated in Article 17 of Law No. 8737. A candidate may be exempted from the Magistracy School requirement if he can demonstrate that he previously (i) held the office of judge or prosecutor; (ii) worked for at least three years as a lecturer at the School of Magistracy or as a Faculty of Law; (iii) served as a legal adviser, leader, or specialist in the legal-professional structures of the Assembly, the President of the Republic, the Council of Ministers, the Supreme Court, the Ministry of Justice, or the Office of the Ombudsman; or (iv) served as a judicial police officer. *See* Article 18 of Law No. 8737. Mr. Dado has done none of these things.

The role of a prosecutor is vast and powerful. A prosecutor has more control over the life, liberty, and reputation of the average citizen than virtually any other person in Albania. If a prosecutor wants to investigate someone, he has the power to determine the scope and extent of the issues to investigate and the private or public manner in which such an investigation is conducted. He has broad discretion over which crimes to charge someone with, and whether to detain that person pending a trial on the charges. Prosecutors who are ill-suited for the position are particularly susceptible to acting on base motives, abusing power, and bringing about a miscarriage of justice. Thus, the process of appointing qualified and responsible prosecutors is essential to a healthy and functioning democracy.

It is difficult to fathom how my rights and interests have not been harmed by Mr. Dado's unlawful appointment. It imbued him with vast power, which he then exercised in an unrestrained, arbitrary, and punitive manner. Based on reports submitted through fake names, Mr. Dado initiated a sprawling investigation that intruded on virtually every aspect of my life. My family members and I endured grueling interrogations, often about disparate and innocuous events pre-dating my public service by decades. Our personal belongings were seized through indiscriminate raids on our homes and offices.

Last year, at Mr. Dado's request, a court imposed a personal security measure of "arrest in prison" without a defined term even though I was never charged with any crimes. He then insisted that I remain detained through trial even though I had qualified for bail – and even though every single one of my 17 co-defendants were released on bail. For the past 14 months, I have been in prison awaiting trial while Mr. Dado has cut off access to evidence, prohibited my lawyers from meeting with me, and interfered with my ability to prepare an adequate defense. Since the day he began his investigation in 2023, Mr. Dado has dictated the terms of my freedom, my privacy, my personal relationships, and the duties I owe to my constituents. My case is a textbook example of how the misuse of power by an unqualified prosecutor can quickly result in the trampling of one's rights.

At its core, this case examines the source from which a prosecutor derives his vast authority to investigate, charge, and prosecute crime in Albania. Our system in Albania demands that prosecutors meet threshold qualifications because it recognizes that unqualified prosecutors can inflict serious harm on defendants and the overall rule of law. It is precisely for this reason why Albania's constitutional changes have included a procedure to vet prospective prosecutors and magistrates. This vetting process is intended to separate the qualified from the unqualified, and those who can be entrusted to exercise prosecutorial discretion responsibly from those who are likely to use it in misguided and arbitrary ways.

My legal challenge is not just about me or Mr. Dado. It is an effort to ensure that our republic follows the law governing the appointment of prosecutors, and to rectify any errors in the vetting process that result in the appointment of unqualified candidates. This case is no different than the challenges that defendants in other functioning democracies outside of Albania have brought to invalidate appointments of unqualified prosecutors and dismiss cases tainted by their involvement. Similarly here, Mr. Dado's failure to complete Magistracy School or otherwise

obtain an exemption reveals clear errors in a vetting process that ultimately resulted in a defective appointment.

The citizens of Albania have the right to know whether their prosecutors are qualified and will exercise their powers with sound discretion. My legal challenge seeks to bring accountability to those entrusted with power; to enhance transparency over secrecy; and to rectify the unlawful appointment of an unqualified prosecutor. Any attempt by Mr. Dado to dispose of this issue on purely technical grounds of "standing" should be forcefully rejected. For the sake of Albania's democracy, I exhort you to send representatives from your organization to attend the May 8 hearing before the Administrative Court, to monitor the proceedings, and to amplify this critical issue globally.

Sincerely,

**Erion Veliaj**
Mayor of Tirana

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