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Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families – 41st Session (December 2025): Informal Briefing on Albania.

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Thank you for this opportunity to address the Committee about the treatment of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in Albania, which has become an important target for efforts by key destination countries to externalize immigration enforcement measures despite evidence of the country's harmful border practices, inaccessible asylum procedures, and arbitrary immigration detention practices.

Our submission highlights the following three areas of concern:

1. Albania has increasingly become a transit state for thousands of people seeking safety or opportunity. This shift has coincided with a sharp expansion of Frontex operations, including broader powers granted under the 2023 revised Status Agreement. But instead of strengthening protection, the presence of external actors has contributed to serious rights violations. Testimonies gathered by the Border Violence Monitoring Network describe people asking for asylum and being ignored, beaten with batons, kicked by officers, and pushed back to Greece, left trapped between borders with no legal recourse.
2. Albania's legal framework emphasises that detention must be a last resort, used only after all alternatives have been exhausted. Instead, the State routinely places people in Karreç Detention Centre, where conditions fall far short of the protections promised in domestic law. The Ombudsman found individuals detained for two years, double the legal maximum. Albania has a law that prioritises alternative measures, but a system that defaults to detention, with inadequate safeguards and no meaningful oversight.
3. Albania's agreement with Italy to accept third-country nationals interdicted by at sea by Italy and allow for an Italian-managed migrant detention centres on its territory raises serious concerns regarding its compliance with obligations under the Convention as well as with respect to accountability and responsibility vis-à-vis the treatment of detainees.

We urge the Committee to pressure Albania to:

1. Undertake reforms highlighted by human rights monitoring bodies concerning conditions in its immigration detention centres.
2. Heed the advice provided by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants, who, in a recent important report, called on states to end their cooperation in externalization schemes that shift the burden of responsibility for properly treating vulnerable non-citizens from wealthy countries.
3. Implement policy reforms to ensure that immigration detention is only used as a measure of last resort and only after a full assessment of the efficacy of non-custodial alternatives to detention is weighed before imposing detention measures, thereby eliminating the possibility of arbitrary detention.
4. Amend national legislation to ensure that vulnerable groups like children, trafficking victims, the elderly, and torture survivors are protected from detention.
5. Immediately cease the pushbacks and ensure that any removal of a person from the country is subject to judicial order and review.