



PRESS RELEASE

Statement by the Albanian People's Advocate Mr. Igli Totozani concerning the unfolding situation of migrants in the territory of the Greek state

Tirana, 26 February 2016

The Albanian People's Advocate is closely following the emergent situation of migrants in the territory of the Greek state, also in view of the recent statement issued by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein.

In light of the unfolding dynamics of the migration crisis, the People's Advocate calls on state authorities in Albania to take all necessary measures to ensure the safeguarding and respect of fundamental human rights in keeping with the European and international standards, while devoting due attention and sensitivity to the vulnerable categories at risk such as persons with disabilities, LGBTs, women, children and the elderly – in the event of a rerouting towards the Albanian territory of the current "Balkans Itinerary" that migrants follow in their endeavors to reach European Union countries.

The People's Advocate Mr. Igli Totozani underlined that the State Police ought to uphold its critical role as a defender and guarantor of security and human rights vis-à-vis potential migratory influxes across Albania. In this connection, it is of paramount importance that State Police structures take all due measures to deter and fight against any attempts at human trafficking exploiting the plight of migrants transiting the region.

Furthermore, the People's Advocate emphasized that it is indispensable that the Albanian Government step up its efforts to inform the general public and raise awareness with a view to preventing the emergence of stereotypes and taboos, as well as circumventing any actions of a discriminatory, racist or xenophobic nature.

"This is precisely one of those situations when the stance of societies as a whole and individuals as well are put under the test – insofar as the values and principles of solidarity and humanism are concerned", asserted the People's Advocate Mr. Totozani. At the same time, Mr. Totozani affirmed that "Albania is a civilized and democratic society that is open to stand for and support people fleeing from suffering and anguish".