

Dates and events

2000 BC

Emergence of Illyrian culture in Balkan peninsula.

800-600 BC

Greeks establish colonies in peninsula.

4th century BC

Height of Illyrian kingdom. Invasions by Philip of Macedonia and Alexander the Great.

168 BC

Roman Empire controls Illyrian territory.

4th to 7th century AD

Former Illyrian territory becomes part of the Byzantine Empire. Invasions by Visigoths, Ostrogoths, Huns, Serbs and Croats.

1054

Christian church splits into Catholic and Orthodox denominations.

9th to 14th century

Albanian territory dominated by Bulgarians, Italians, Serbs, Turks.



△ A defaced fresco at Ardinicë monastery.

1430

Ottoman Empire establishes control.

1443-68

Skenderbeg defeats Ottoman army and unites Albanian rulers. After his death, the Ottoman Empire re-establishes rule.

1878

Albanian League founded; its goals include unification of Albanian territories and cultural emancipation.

1910-12

Armed struggle to achieve democratic reform and autonomy. Vlorë Congress declares independence after allied Greek, Serbian and Montenegrin forces declare war on Turkey.

1912

Balkan allies defeat Turkey. Western European 'great powers' accept Albanian independence but cede large territories to Serbia and Greece.

1914-18

Chaos as various Western European and Balkan armies invade Albania.

1920

National congress held in Lushnjë; progressive government under Fan Noli, opposed by conservative group led by Ahmet Bey Zogu.

1925-39

Zogu overthrows Noli's liberal government and rules as president and king.

1939-45

Albania occupied by Italian and German armies. Communist groups form resistance and gain control in 1944; their leader is Enver Hoxha.

1946

Albania declared the People's Republic of Albania, ruled by Hoxha's Party of Labour. Economic and diplomatic ties with Yugoslavia (until 1948), the Soviet Union (until 1960), and China (until 1978).

1967

Religious worship is banned and all mosques and churches closed.

1985

Enver Hoxha dies.

1990–91

Hoxha's successor Ramiz Alia allows independent political parties. Occupations of foreign embassies by about 5,000 people. Pro-democracy demonstrations in Tiranë.

1992

Democratic Party led by Sali Berisha wins elections.

1993–97

Increasing government authoritarianism and corruption.

1997

March: Widespread anarchy, rioting and looting of army weapons stores following collapse of pyramid investment schemes. Transitional government of Fatos Nano and his Socialist Party takes over from Berisha. April: Arrival of multinational peace-keeping force. May: Elections. Socialists gain power under President Medani and Prime Minister Nano. July–August: Departure of peace-keeping force.

1998

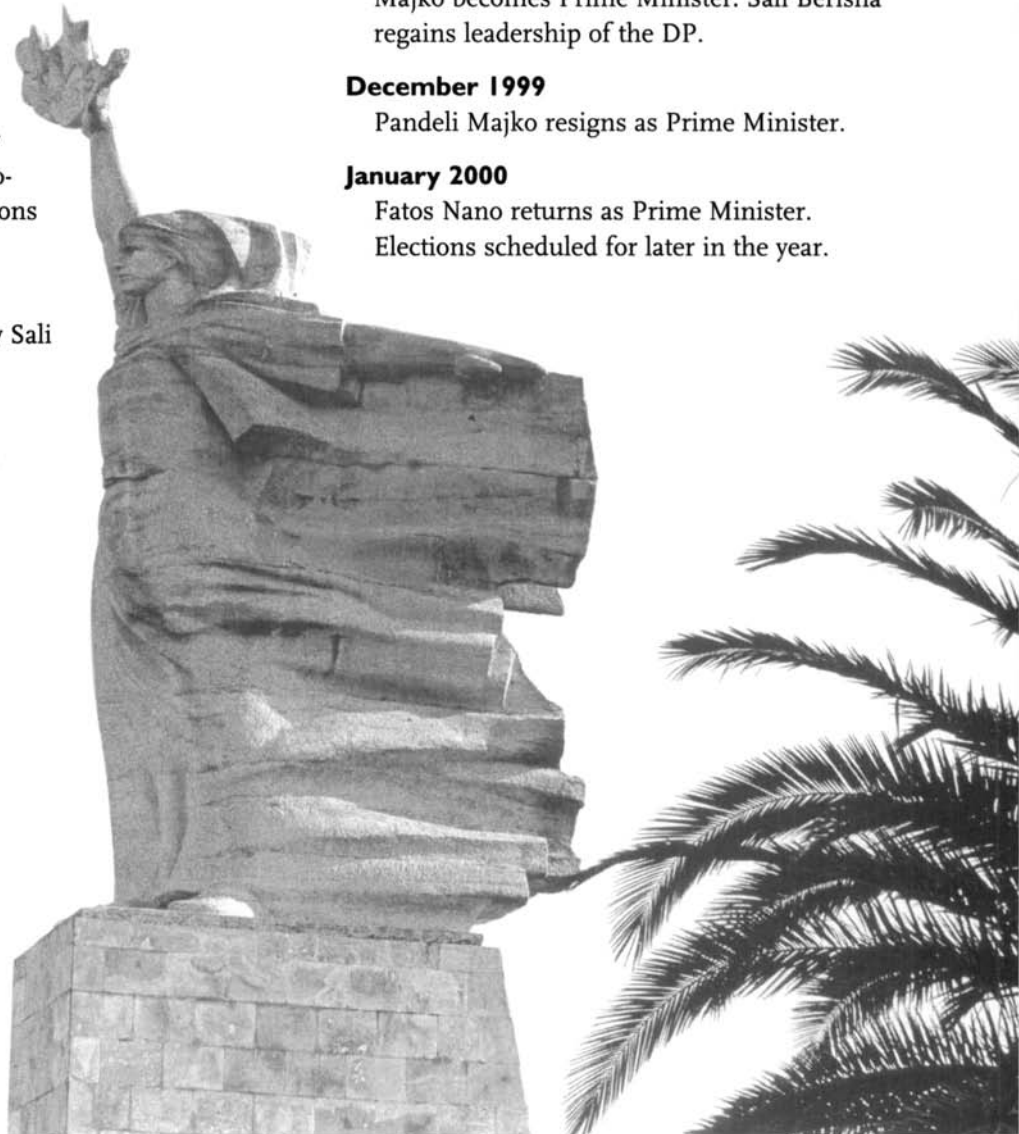
Nano resigns under pressure and Pandeli Majko becomes Prime Minister. Sali Berisha regains leadership of the DP.

December 1999

Pandeli Majko resigns as Prime Minister.

January 2000

Fatos Nano returns as Prime Minister. Elections scheduled for later in the year.



► *Mother Albania, one of the few statues from communist times that was left standing in 1990–91.*

Facts and figures

Land area

28,750 km²

Population

3.4m (1998)

Annual average growth rate: 2.01 per cent per annum (1996)

46 per cent (1997) of Albanians live in urban areas

Currency

Lek (1 Lek = 100 quintars)

141 Lek = US\$1 (January 2000)

Education

Compulsory school enrolment (8 grades): 100 per cent; boys 51.7 per cent, girls 48.3 per cent (1998)

Students going on to high school: 61 per cent (1997)

Adult literacy: 91.8 per cent (1989)

Spending on education as percentage of GNP: 11 per cent (1997)

Average life expectancy

68.5 years for men, 74.3 years for women (1995)

Health

Infant mortality rate: 43.3 per 1000 births (1997)

Maternal mortality rate:

25.2 per 100,000 live births (1992)

Health expenditure as percentage of GNP

6 per cent (1997)

Physicians per 10,000 people:

18.1 (1994)

Health units per 10,000 people:

85.3 (1994)

Access to safe water

56.4 per cent (1989)

Access to sanitation

96.6 per cent (1989)

Gross National Product

US\$3,407m (1998)

US\$1,002 US\$ per capita (1998)

Average annual growth (1998): 8 per cent

Average annual growth (1997): -7 per cent

Structure of Gross Domestic Product (1997)

Agriculture: 56.0 per cent

Industry: 12.4 per cent

Construction: 11.2 per cent

Transport: 2.7 per cent

Others: 17.6 per cent

Inflation

20.7 per cent (1998)

Current account balance

US\$ -65.1 million (1998)

US\$ -272.1 million (1997)

External debt

US\$ 270 million (1997)

Main foreign donors (1997)

EU: 35 per cent

Italy: 14 per cent

World Bank: 13 per cent

USA: 10 per cent

Germany: 10 per cent

Sources: UNDP Human Development Reports 1995, 1996, 1998, Economist Intelligence Unit

Sources and further reading

Balkan politics

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General interest

<http://reenic.utexas.edu/reenic/Countries/Albania/albania.html#Subjects>

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c/o Shinasi A. Rama, Department of Political Science, Columbia University, New York, NY 10027, USA

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Oxfam in Albania

Oxfam GB has been working in Albania since 1992, at first distributing winter clothing in the north of the country as well as providing initial support to a group of fledgling local NGOs.

In 1993 Oxfam established a permanent presence in Albania, in order to work on issues of rural poverty, gender equality, disability, and NGO development. A major rural development programme in the Commune of Shllak in Shkodër District, one of the country's poorest and most isolated areas, started in 1994. Self-help projects include water supply and income-generating activities. Despite the cultural difficulties in this very traditional area, Oxfam has also worked directly with women. A rural resource and training centre serving both lowland and highland farmers has been set up.

In 1994 Oxfam in Albania set up the country's first resource centre for people with disabilities. The project established the first production facility for wheelchairs: to date,

more than 200 individually designed wheelchairs have been produced and distributed. In addition, the project has provided active rehabilitation camps and independent living skills training. In 1997, the resource centre became independent from Oxfam and is now a well-established, high-profile local NGO, the Albanian Disability Rights Foundation (ADREF).

Oxfam has also played a significant role in supporting Albanian women's organisations like Reflexione. It helped in establishing the LINEA counselling centre in Shkodër, which offers assistance and support to women on issues of domestic violence.

Most recently, Oxfam in Albania has developed a public awareness campaign on arms control with the UNDP. Oxfam also remains very active in the area of emergency preparedness and worked with UNHCR in responding to the Kosovo refugee crisis in 1998 and 1999.



◀ At the ADREF workshop, which employs wheelchair users, each wheelchair is custom-made.

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