



Legal Analysis of Organized Crime and Patterns of Criminal Behavior

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Received: 17 January 2026 / Revised: 24 February 2026 / Accepted: 7 March 2026 / Published: 25 March 2026
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Doi: 10.56345/ijrdv13n130

Abstract

The phenomenon of organized crime poses significant challenges for societies around the world, and Albania is no exception. Following the collapse of communism in the early 1990s, the country experienced a rise in organized crime, driven by economic turmoil, high unemployment rates, and widespread corruption. This paper offers a legal examination of organized crime in Albania, highlighting the newly created frameworks aimed at tackling such criminal activities and the illegal assets produced within the larger framework of money laundering. The European Union's view of Albania has prompted the government to undertake comprehensive reforms, as well as to adopt a variety of measures, strategies, and legal tools. The paper investigates the individual motivations for engaging in organized crime, such as financial gain, the desire for power and status, and certain psychological characteristics. These elements are essential in understanding "organized crime" according to both domestic and international legal standards. Corruption within political and law enforcement institutions obstructs efforts to combat organized crime, while social attitudes that condone criminal conduct perpetuate these behaviors within communities. Ultimately, the authors present several policy recommendations and preventive strategies aimed at reducing organized crime and its impact on society.

Keywords: Organized crime, criminal behavior, SPAK, corruption, law enforcement

1. Introduction

Organized crime pertains to illegal activities that are carefully planned and carried out by structured groups, frequently operating across national borders. These entities are involved in various illicit operations, such as drug trafficking, human trafficking, arms dealing, money laundering, and extortion. The realm of organized crime is marked by its ability to adapt and evolve, consistently responding to shifts in law enforcement strategies, advancements in technology, and changes in market demands. The European Union has outlined a definition of organized crime in the Council Framework Decision 2008/841/JHA "On the fight against organized crime." This document characterizes a "criminal organization" as a structured group made up of at least two individuals who collaborate over time to commit offenses that carry a punishment of imprisonment or a detention order of four years or more. The main driving force behind these activities is the pursuit of financial or other material gains. This definition highlights several essential features of organized crime: firstly, a structured cooperation between two or more individuals functioning as a single unit; secondly, a prolonged timeframe indicating ongoing activity rather than isolated events; thirdly, the aim to engage in illegal acts for monetary benefit; and finally, the seriousness of punishment, which includes incarceration of four years or longer. Furthermore, the document specifies the criminal liability of legal entities, holding accountable the individuals who act on their behalf and in

their interests. Additionally, there is another perspective on the definition of organized crime, which typically describes it based on its organized structure; most definitions refer to organized crime as a collective of individuals that has some form of organization, possesses leadership, and employs systematic methods of operation (Zabyelina, 2023).

Criminal organizations often demonstrate a specific hierarchy, revealing a distinct chain of authority. This organization enables the coordination of unlawful activities and helps uphold order within the group. These entities take advantage of various illegal markets, including drugs, human trafficking, and cybercrime, which tend to be highly lucrative. There is frequently a link between organized crime and corruption, as these groups aim to penetrate law enforcement and political systems. Violence is often utilized as a strategy to establish dominance and eliminate rivals. The growth of trade and technology has permitted organized crime groups to flourish. Criminal organizations now function on a global level, often partnering across nations. The rise of cybercrime has brought about new difficulties, as organized crime groups increasingly partake in online fraud, identity theft, and ransomware schemes. (Europol, 2020) The understanding of organized crime has changed in recent times. International bodies are recognizing and implementing preventive strategies against what they refer to as "Transnational organized crime." The United Nations emphasizes: "Human trafficking. Drugs. Arms. Corruption. These components exemplify transnational organized crime a multi-billion-dollar industry that crosses borders, taking advantage of vulnerable populations and threatening global security." (Nations, 2020) The term "transnational" indicates a lack of borders, no distinctions among countries, communities, or governments.

The Global Organized Crime Index defines "organized crime" as illegal activities carried out by groups or networks that collaborate, using violence, corruption, or similar tactics to obtain financial or material benefits, directly or indirectly. In the Western Balkans, the depiction of organized crime and its participants is profoundly affected by the turbulent experiences of the conflicts that ravaged the region in the 1990s. These wars not only resulted in significant social disruption but also established a complicated criminal environment. Furthermore, the ongoing shift of local economies and societies from a communist system to a form of liberal democracy has continued to shape this perception, as communities deal with the enduring effects of political transformation and economic change. (Web, 2022)

2. Literature Review

2.1 Organised crime in Albania

The historical roots of organized crime in Albania can be traced back to the country's tumultuous political and social changes. Following the fall of communism in the early 1990s, Albania experienced significant instability, which paved the way for the emergence of organized crime groups.

Key Characteristics of Organized Crime in Albania:

- Drug Trafficking: Albania has become a prominent producer and transit point for cannabis, with evidence suggesting that a substantial portion of cannabis in Europe originates from this country. (UNODC, 2019)
- Human Trafficking: Albania acts as a source country for human trafficking, particularly concerning women and children, who are often exploited in sex trafficking networks.
- Political Influence and Corruption: In Albania, organized crime groups have been reported to affect political and law enforcement institutions, obstructing efforts to combat criminal activities. (International, 2020)

2.2 Historical Context of Organised Crime in Albania Post-Communism

The conclusion of communist dominance in Albania in 1991 marked the beginning of a significant era in the country's history, representing a departure from years of authoritarian rule. The shift towards a market economy faced numerous hurdles, as the nation battled severe poverty and rising unemployment, leading to civil unrest. This turbulent environment, characterized by instability and hopelessness, created a perfect scenario for the rise and growth of organized crime, transforming the fight for survival into a hub for illegal activities.

Transition after Communism (1991-1997): Following the collapse of the communist regime, Albania quickly shifted from a centrally planned economy to a market-oriented framework. This transition was poorly managed, leading to economic turmoil and the emergence of pyramid schemes that ultimately collapsed in 1997, sparking widespread civil disorder. (King, Russell and Jelena Vullnetari, 2003) During this period, many former political and military figures became involved in organized crime, leveraging their connections and knowledge of governmental structures.

The Significance of the Kosovo Conflict (1998-1999): Albania's situation deteriorated due to the conflict in Kosovo,

as many refugees arrived seeking safety, while organized crime groups took advantage of the chaos. The conflict further facilitated the smuggling of arms and drugs, resulting in an expansion of criminal enterprises. (Dyrii, 2014) The upheaval created a power vacuum, enabling organized crime to flourish as various factions vied for control over lucrative smuggling routes.

Recent Developments (2000-Present): In the 2000s, Albania implemented measures to combat organized crime through changes in legislation and partnerships with international organizations. However, challenges remain, as corruption persists within both law enforcement and government sectors. (European Commission, 2020) Albania has been acknowledged as a key player in the European drug market, particularly in relation to cannabis, and has seen an emergence of new criminal activities, including cybercrime. (UNODC, World Drug, 2021)

Researchers are looking into organized crimes connected to cultural property. In her article, Faraldo notes, "Cultural property crime was excluded from the offenses identified as matters of common concern for Member States or areas where the founding Treaties should establish baseline standards. The Treaty on European Union from 1992, which became effective in 1993, addresses subjects such as unauthorized migration, international fraud, terrorism, illegal drug trafficking, and 'other serious forms of international crime,' without providing additional specifics." (Faraldo Cabana, Patricia, 2024). The introduction of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime highlights its importance as a crucial instrument and foundational legal framework for international collaboration. It emphasizes the urgent need to tackle various criminal activities, including money laundering, corruption, illegal trade in endangered species, violations against cultural heritage, and the growing links between transnational organized crime and terrorism. (United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime And The Protocols Thereto) Moving from the general and fragmented definition of organized crime, researchers have begun to explore new classifications of organized crime, such as financial crimes or white-collar crimes, cultural organized crimes, environmental crimes, and cybercrimes, among others.

2.3 *The legal framework of organized crime in Albania*

Multiple factors led to the emergence of organized crime in Albania post-1990s, including low per capita income, high unemployment, shifts in the economic system, emigration, the increase of illegal activities, and fragile public institutions, among other issues. Over the years, different governments have prioritized the combat against organized crime in their political agendas. Nonetheless, throughout their tenures, some ministers and senior officials have been alleged to have collaborated with or been involved in organized crime. These officials have been charged with passive corruption and facilitating criminal actions. This section aims to give a brief overview of certain legal measures concerning organized crime.

Law no. 7895, dated January 27, 1995, known as the "Criminal Code of the Republic of Albania," specifies in Article 28 that a criminal organization consists of three or more individuals collaborating to commit crimes for both material and non-material benefits; a terrorist organization is defined as a group of two or more individuals working together over time to carry out terrorist activities; an armed gang refers to a group outfitted with weapons and tools to commit crimes outlined in Chapters V, VI, and VII of this Code; and a criminally structured group is made up of three or more persons collaborating for criminal offenses. The act of forming or participating in such groups constitutes a criminal offense under the Code. Members are accountable for crimes committed in the pursuit of their goals, although those who provide significant help in disclosing their operations may receive reduced sentences or be granted immunity from punishment. Organizing or leading such groups is punishable by imprisonment for a term ranging from 5 to 20 years. Money laundering, addressed in Chapter XI of the Albanian Penal Code, pertains to crimes committed by armed groups and criminal organizations. The Criminal Code is presently under revision, though no draft has been made available for public review.

Law no. 10,192, enacted on December 3, 2009, entitled "On the prevention and combating of organized crime, trafficking, corruption, and other crimes through preventive measures against money laundering," as modified, aims to thwart and tackle organized crime, trafficking, corruption, and various offenses through its provisions that allow for the confiscation of assets belonging to individuals who possess unjustified economic wealth linked to suspected criminal activity. The law specifies the criminal offenses for which property confiscation may be enforced, identifies the individuals or legal entities subject to these actions, as well as those directly or indirectly connected to such individuals or properties. Article 5, point 1 emphasizes that, "The procedure for the imposition and enforcement of preventive measures, as per this law, is independent of the status, stage, or outcome of the criminal proceedings against individuals to whom this law applies." Thus, these procedures are related but also separate from each other and are clearly regulated in the other

articles. This law established the Agency for the Administration of Seized and Confiscated Assets as the managing authority for these assets. Furthermore, it repealed Law no. 9284, dated September 30, 2004, "On the Prevention and Combat of Organized Crime" along with its subsidiary laws.

The EU Integration has posed numerous challenges and responsibilities for the Albanian Government. The initiation of the accession phase imposed many obligations on the Albanian Government. The year 2024 is expected to be significant for the adoption of various strategies, raising an essential question: Will all of these strategies be executed, monitored, and evaluated?

The Vetting Reform, or justice reform, was designed as an initiative aimed at tackling corruption within the judicial system, purging the judiciary of corrupt individuals, particularly assessing the integrity, qualifications, and competency of judges and prosecutors throughout the nation, as well as addressing organized crime and corruption within government bodies and authorities. For this crucial reason, the Albanian Constitution underwent amendments. In 2016, Article 135 was revised: "2. The Special Courts adjudicate criminal offenses related to corruption and organized crime, in addition to criminal charges against the President of the Republic, the Speaker of the Assembly, the Prime Minister, Council of Ministers members, judges from the Constitutional Court and Supreme Court, the Prosecutor General, the High Inspector of Justice, Mayors, Parliament members, deputy ministers, members of the High Judicial Council and the High Prosecutorial Council, and heads of central or independent institutions as defined in the Constitution or by law, as well as charges against former officials mentioned above. 3. The Assembly may, through legislation, create additional courts for specific areas; however, no extraordinary courts shall be established." The revised Article 148 states: "4. The Special Prosecution Office and the Special Investigative Unit for prosecuting and investigating criminal offenses related to corruption and organized crime, as well as criminal cases under Article 135, paragraph 2, of the Constitution, operate independently from the General Prosecutor. The Special Investigative Unit falls under the jurisdiction of the Special Prosecution Office." Following these amendments, Parliament ratified law no. 95/2016 "On the organization and functioning of institutions for the fight against corruption and organized crime." The objective of this law is:

1. To guarantee the operation of the Special Prosecution Office as a specialized entity, exercising the powers outlined in point 1 of Article 148/dh of the Constitution, effectively and independently, without any unlawful internal or external pressure.

2. To ensure the operation of the Independent Investigative Unit for probing criminal acts related to corruption and organized crime, along with other offenses committed solely by the individuals specified in point 2 of Article 135 of the Constitution, free from any unlawful internal or external influence.

The law fundamentally seeks to guarantee the independence and effectiveness of both the Special Prosecution Office and the Independent Investigative Unit in fulfilling their duties without facing external or unlawful influences. The phrase "Special Structure Against Corruption and Organized Crime" refers to the Special Prosecution Office Against Corruption and Organized Crime along with the Special Investigative Unit, known as the National Bureau of Investigation (in Albanian: *Byroja Kombëtare e Hetimit*). Thus far, this entity has made significant progress, with numerous ministers, deputies, and members of organized crime groups being investigated, imprisoned, and having their assets seized. Judges of the Special Court of the First Instance for Corruption and Organized Crime are encountering many threats from political figures and those being accused. The public continues to have high expectations, particularly given concerns about the relationship and influence from political entities.

Law no. 14/2024, which concerns the endorsement of the national security strategy of the Republic of Albania, aims to thoroughly address the primary challenges and threats to the national security of the country while incorporating institutional responses over the period from 2023 to 2028. This strategy highlights the importance of safeguarding critical and essential infrastructures and addressing their vulnerabilities amid the rising cyber threats, which could be leveraged by terrorism and organized crime, thereby worsening other security-related issues for the nation. It stresses the need for collaboration between the Albanian government and regional partners, as well as other organizations, to enhance institutions and mechanisms for combating terrorism and violent extremism, mitigating the effects of radicalization, and addressing other unlawful activities such as organized crime.

The Decision no. 736 from the Council of Ministers, issued on December 13, 2023, regarding "Approval of the Guideline for the Rule of Law," became effective in early 2024. This document outlines various strategies to address corruption, including legislative, institutional, and awareness-raising efforts. It emphasizes the necessity of sustainably maintaining data relevant to the implementation of integrity and anti-corruption initiatives while enhancing transparency and accountability through the adoption of the Intersectoral Anti-Corruption Strategy for 2024–2030 in collaboration with civil society organizations. Additionally, it aims to improve the communication network with anti-corruption civil society groups starting in 2024. Among the suggested measures related to organized crime, terrorism, and money laundering are

a more effective and systematic approach to financial investigations (parallel investigations); a focus on tracing the financial flows that bolster criminal organizations, rather than solely concentrating on individual offenders; a gradual improvement in the documentation of preventive asset seizures and confiscations, including non-conviction-based confiscation and confiscation from third parties; as well as advocating for and increasing the application of social repurposing of confiscated assets, while enhancing the capabilities for the storage and management of seized and confiscated assets.

The Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 161, dated March 20, 2024, "Approval of the 2025–2027 prioritized policy document," as amended, outlines all the strategies, legal acts, and responsible institutions required to adopt and execute all the prioritized measures, along with their implementation timelines, as well as their financial, institutional, and social impacts, particularly concerning corruption, public consultation, etc. This act declares: "The battle against corruption is a principal priority for the Albanian government. The primary objectives of the anti-corruption policy encompass a range of actions designed to prevent corruption, reinforce institutions, enable general monitoring by civil society organizations, and facilitate the administrative and criminal prosecution of corrupt officials. The initiation of the process to draft the Intersectoral Anti-Corruption Strategy 2024–2030 will concentrate on measures and interventions aimed at reducing corruption within the public sector, extending this focus to the private sector as well."

2.4 Targeted approaches to combat organized crime

Psychological factors such as personality traits, cognitive biases, and emotional states significantly influence an individual's decision to engage in organized crime. For instance, traits including impulsivity, aggression, and a lack of empathy have been associated with criminal behavior. (Anderson, 2018) Understanding these motivations enables law enforcement and policymakers to develop targeted strategies aimed at preventing individuals from becoming involved in criminal networks. Initiatives that address underlying psychological issues like trauma or social isolation can potentially reduce the likelihood of individuals engaging in criminal activities. (Farrington, David P., and Brandon C. Welsh, 2007) Concentrating on mental health and social support empowers communities to implement measures that dissuade involvement in organized crime. Grasping the psychological traits of individuals engaged in organized crime can improve law enforcement strategies. Psychological profiling can help identify potential offenders and illuminate their behavioral patterns, enhancing investigative methods. (Turvey, Brent E, 2011) This insight can also prove beneficial in negotiations and interventions, particularly in hostage situations or when dealing with organized crime factions. By understanding the dynamics of these groups and their effects on members, law enforcement can devise strategies to disrupt these interactions and encourage individuals to exit criminal affiliations. Recognizing the psychological factors that lead to organized crime is vital for developing effective rehabilitation programs. Tailored psychological interventions can address offenders' specific needs, aiding them in reintegrating into society. (Maruna, 2001) By prioritizing psychological rehabilitation over mere punishment, there is a greater possibility of reducing recidivism rates among former offenders.

2.5 Community-Initiated Approaches

Policies that support community engagement and collaboration can significantly impact crime prevention. Involving community members in crime prevention efforts enables authorities to build trust and improve the flow of information, which is crucial for dismantling organized crime networks. (Skogan, Wesley G., and Susan M. Hartnett, 1997)

Efforts in community policing that focus on building relationships with residents can empower communities to fight organized crime. Strengthening institutions and addressing corruption within law enforcement and political systems is crucial for effective crime prevention. Initiatives aimed at increasing transparency and accountability can help reduce the influence of organized crime on public institutions. Measures to combat corruption, such as establishing independent oversight bodies and providing protections for whistleblowers, can empower citizens and enhance the credibility of law enforcement. Policies that focus on psychological interventions for offenders, which prioritize rehabilitation over mere punishment, can decrease recidivism rates among those involved in organized crime. Implementing psychological treatments tailored to the specific needs of offenders can support their reintegration into society. Providing mental health support, job training, and social services can help former offenders build stable and law-abiding lives. Gaining a comprehensive understanding of the psychological factors influencing organized crime can inform the development of evidence-based policy initiatives. Policymakers can create laws and interventions that address the underlying psychological causes of criminal behavior rather than just the symptoms. This proactive approach can lead to more effective crime reduction strategies.

3. Methodology

This literature review aims to integrate recent research regarding crime and organized crime, with a particular focus on Albania. The review was conducted using a systematic approach to ensure a comprehensive inclusion of relevant academic literature and reports. The methodology followed an organized sequence of steps to gather, evaluate, and analyze the key sources.

3.1 Search Strategy

To locate relevant research, a comprehensive search of scholarly databases, including Google Scholar, JSTOR, and PsycINFO, was conducted. The search utilized keywords such as "organized crime," "Albania," "substance misuse and violence," "childhood abuse and crime," and "community policing." A combination of keywords along with Boolean operators (AND, OR) was used to refine the search and ensure a variety of studies were included. The focus of the investigation was on research published in peer-reviewed journals, books, and reports produced by governmental or non-governmental organizations from 1949 to 2021. In addition to journal articles, analyses from reputable entities like the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and Transparency International were included. These references provide insight into the broader context of crime and corruption in Albania.

3.2 Criteria for Inclusion and Exclusion

Research was considered relevant if it met the following criteria:

- Focused on illegal activities, organized crime, or methods for preventing crime.
- Investigated how socio-economic or political factors, including the impacts of conflict or migration, influence crime rates. (Dyrli, 2014) (King, Russell and Jelena Vullnetari, 2003)
- Explored the psychological factors that drive criminal behavior.
- Provided empirical data or theoretical perspectives on criminal behavior and its ties to social structures. (Sutherland, 1949)

Every study identified through the search was assessed for its relevance, quality of methodology, and its contribution to the research question. Key themes were extracted from the studies, focusing on:

- The link between childhood trauma and criminal activity, as described in the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study. (Felitti, Vincent J., Robert F. Anda, David Nordenberg, Donna F. Williamson, Adrian M. Spitz, Valerie Edwards, 1988)
- The socio-economic and political elements affecting crime, especially in relation to Albania. (Hoxha, 2019) (Gambetta, 1996)
- Strategies for crime prevention, including community policing and early intervention measures. (Skogan, Wesly G., and Susan M. Hartnett, 1997) (Farrington, David P., and Brandon C. Welsh, 2007)

The selected studies were examined through thematic analysis, and a comparative assessment was conducted to highlight patterns and gaps in the existing literature. Special attention was given to research that investigated the unique socio-political context of Albania, which has undergone significant transformations since the collapse of communism.

3.3 Limitations

While the methodology aimed to be comprehensive, it is important to recognize several limitations. First, the literature review was confined to studies published in English or Albanian, which may have excluded significant research available in other languages. Additionally, due to the rapidly changing nature of crime, particularly in areas such as organized crime and drug trafficking, some of the most recent data might be lacking, as certain reports, such as the 2021 World Drug Report by UNODC, may not have been included because of their delayed publication.

3.4 Moral Considerations

Because this literature review is based on secondary data, there were no ethical concerns involving human participants. All the information used in the review was publicly available through academic databases or reputable organizations.

4. Results and Discussion

Motivations for joining organized crime can differ greatly, often stemming from a combination of economic, psychological, and social factors. A primary factor driving individuals to engage in organized crime is the potential for financial gain. In many cases, the lure of quick and substantial profits may outweigh the perceived risks associated with illegal activities. Studies show that individuals facing financial difficulties or limited job opportunities are more likely to turn to organized crime as a means of survival. (Friedrichs, 2010) Characteristics such as impulsiveness, a desire for excitement, and a lack of empathy can make individuals more vulnerable to engaging in criminal acts. Research has suggested that those with antisocial personality traits may be more prone to participating in organized crime due to their indifference toward societal standards and repercussions. Furthermore, some individuals may pursue a sense of dominance, authority, or affirmation through their involvement in organized crime.

Social connections and cultural attitudes can significantly influence a person's decision to partake in organized crime. Individuals who grow up in environments where criminal behavior is normalized or glorified may be more likely to exhibit similar conduct. The effect of peer influence and the desire for acceptance within a group can strongly motivate individuals to engage in illegal activities. (Sutherland, 1949)

4.1 Group Dynamics within Organised Crime Networks

Peer influence significantly impacts an individual's likelihood of engaging in organized crime. Social circles have a strong effect on behaviors and attitudes, particularly among younger people. When individuals are surrounded by peers involved in illegal activities, they often mimic those behaviors due to the desire for acceptance and belonging. This effect is especially prominent in regions where organized crime is prevalent and normalized.

In Albania, certain locales and social groups have become infamous for their criminal activities, creating environments where unlawful behaviors are both accepted and encouraged. For instance, young people in these areas may observe their friends gaining prestige and financial rewards from involvement in drug trafficking or other illegal ventures. As a result, they may feel compelled to conform to these actions to gain social approval and avoid feeling isolated. The normalization of criminal activity within these social circles can establish a cycle in which individuals continually recruit others into organized crime.

Recently, researchers in law and psychology have studied organized crime through a gender lens. The "Pink Panthers" were a well-known group of thieves from Montenegro in the early 2000s. Furthermore, women from across the Balkan region, including Albania, head organized crime rings primarily involved in cannabis production and the recruitment of sex workers. Other women assist in managing their families' criminal operations. Women also take part in cross-border trafficking of various illegal goods, as they typically face fewer obstacles from police and border security personnel compared to men.

Additionally, loyalty and unity are critical characteristics of organized crime groups. Members often develop strong emotional bonds and a sense of loyalty toward one another, which can override individual moral beliefs. This loyalty is reinforced by shared experiences, a collective identity, and the conviction that members must protect one another from external threats, such as law enforcement. Various psychological factors also contribute to bolstering loyalty and cohesion within organized crime groups:

- **In-group versus Out-group Dynamics:** People often see themselves as part of a distinct in-group, which fosters a sense of connection and identity. This can lead to an "us against them" mentality, where group loyalty is prioritized.
- **Symbols and Ceremonies:** Many organized crime groups engage in rituals or use symbols that reinforce group identity and commitment. These actions can strengthen bonds among members and create a sense of shared purpose.
- **Cooperative Support and Reciprocity:** Loyalty is often built through a reciprocal system, where members assist one another in both legal and illegal activities. This mutual support can deepen individuals' involvement in criminal organizations.

A major tool used by organized crime groups to maintain loyalty and control among their members is fear and intimidation. The threat of violence or repercussions can discourage individuals from leaving the group or cooperating with law enforcement. This fear can show itself both psychologically and physically, creating an environment where individuals feel trapped in their illegal activities. In Albania, criminal networks often exploit fear and intimidation. Members may face violence not only from rival groups but also from their own organizations if they attempt to exit or betray the

group. This creates a culture of silence (omertà), where individuals are reluctant to express their concerns about criminal activities or seek help from authorities.

There is no single, widely accepted definition of organized crime. Various international organizations and institutions often have their own interpretations that may emphasize different aspects, such as the nature of organized crime, its defining features, or the involved factors. Some definitions are specifically tailored to organized criminal organizations and the related criminal activities.

Due to the inherently transnational character of organized crime, with participants and supply chains crossing national and continental boundaries, it is crucial for countries to collaborate globally to effectively combat this widespread issue. Organized crime has prompted significant advancements in the realm of criminal liability, establishing the criminal accountability of legal entities, where individuals acting on their behalf and in their interests can face criminal sanctions.

Albania has formulated a legal framework aimed at addressing organized crime and money laundering that closely mirrors the legislation of the European Union (EU) and international treaties. The Special Structure Against Corruption and Organized Crime is essential in enforcing these laws. Although SPAK's independence is constitutionally and legally guaranteed, continued efforts are necessary to ensure its functions remain free from political influence, which would enhance public trust and the effectiveness of Albania's judicial system.

The Special Court of the First Instance for Corruption and Organized Crime requires support and special protection for both the judges and their families, to ensure their professionalism, neutrality, and independence. Any threats or damage to the reputation of these special judges should be treated as criminal offenses, granting them the right to compensation for damages.

As Albania confronts significant challenges regarding the government's response to organized crime and its efficiency, the rapid pace of organized crime operates without borders. This analysis of organized crime in Albania highlights several key psychological factors that greatly influence individuals' involvement in criminal activities. Economic issues such as high unemployment and poverty drive many individuals towards organized crime as a means of financial survival. The desire for power and status within criminal organizations can further entrench individuals in a life characterized by illegal behaviors. Psychological traits like impulsivity, aggression, and a lack of empathy can render some individuals more susceptible to engaging in criminal actions, increasing their susceptibility to the allure of organized crime.

Additionally, social dynamics such as peer pressure, loyalty, and fear play critical roles in maintaining organized crime groups. Influence from peers can lead individuals to partake in criminal activities, while loyalty among members fosters a sense of belonging that may outweigh ethical considerations. Fear and intimidation strengthen group cohesion, creating an environment where members feel compelled to remain loyal to their criminal affiliations.

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