

BACKGROUND

Albania has registered one of the highest per capita rate of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) in Europe that joined the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

Lack of employment, poverty, and low levels of education further contribute to vulnerability to violent extremism. GCERF has successfully supported the rehabilitation and reintegration (R&R) of 37 female and youth returnees from Northeast Syria, while strengthening the capacity of frontline workers (government and non-governmental) to provide specialised case management support.

Albania became a GCERF partner country* in 2019. To date, GCERF has invested USD 4 million in the country, with two active grants to support R&R and prevention programmes.

The main areas of interventions are immediate psycho-social and family counselling, longer term economic reintegration through training to create income generating opportunities and mentoring in building and disseminating alternative narratives.

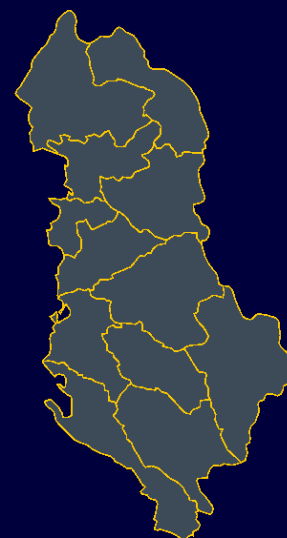
GCERF'S INVESTMENT STRATEGY IN ALBANIA

GCERF's investment is focused on sustainability through establishing a National Referral Mechanism for prevention counterterrorism violent extremism (P/CVE) and R&R.

Strengthening local government structures to identify and address cases of potential radicalisation and recruitment, and support service delivery through a municipally-managed, multi-use, multi-agency centre, are the other pillars of the GCERF funded projects.

The three main drivers of violent extremism in Albania are:

1. The role of modern technologies in the dissemination of extremist views.
2. Albania's strategic geographical location, coupled with ethnic-driven tensions in neighbouring areas.
3. Limited employment opportunities and social exclusion.
4. Security challenges from domestic and external sources.



WHERE

- Tirana
- Durrës
- Korce
- Diber
- Kukës
- Shkoder
- Elbasan
- Berat
- Vlore

WHO

- Returnees from conflict zones; women and children
- National and local institutions and frontline workers
- Local authorities, local and community based CSOs and other R&R actors

*Partner countries are those in which GCERF funds civil society organisations to implement initiatives aimed at preventing violent extremism.

CURRENT GRANTS



 IMPLEMENTED BY		 PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES	
Principal Recipient: Initiative for Social Change ARSIS Sub-recipients: Albanian Center for Population and development		Strengthen coordination mechanisms for P/CVE and R&R through the establishment of an online server. Implement awareness-raising initiatives to promote community resilience through the engagement of religious leaders and journalists. Provide case management services for returning children and their families to facilitate their reintegration into Albanian society.	
 AREAS OF IMPLEMENTATION		 GRANT AMOUNT	 PERIOD OF THE GRANT
Vlora, Fieri, Kavaja, Cerriku, Pogradeci and Tirana		USD 500,000	August 2024 – July 2026

 IMPLEMENTED BY		 PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES	
Principal Recipient: Terre des Hommes Albania Sub-recipients: Tirana Legal Aid Society, IANS – Instituti per Aktivizem dhe Ndryshim Social		Ensure case management support to returnees and vulnerable populations. Support sustainable transition case management services to government led facilities. Ensure community resilience, inclusion, and tolerance building activities contributing to reintegration of returnees and at-risk individuals and prevention of violent extremism.	
 AREAS OF IMPLEMENTATION		 GRANT AMOUNT	 PERIOD OF THE GRANT
Tirana Municipality		USD 910,000	July 2023 – December 2025

STORY OF CHANGE

YOUTH VOICES AGAINST RADICALISATION – A PODCAST
FOR CHANGE– INITIATIVE ARSIS

Youth Voices Against Radicalisation: A Podcast for Change

As part of efforts to engage at-risk students in targeted schools, a powerful youth-led initiative took place at “Kristaq Shtembari” 9-Year School in Fier on 5 June 2025. Supported by Nisma ARSIS, a group of ten students produced and launched the first episode of a podcast titled “Radikalizmi nuk ka vend në shoqërinë tonë – Ndryshimi fillon nga të rinjtë” (“Radicalisation Has No Place in Our Society – Change Begins with Youth”).

The students took full ownership of the process by developing the concept, writing the script, and recording the episode. Through this creative and empowering platform, they voiced their perspectives on social inclusion, respect for diversity, and the importance of dialogue. One participant, a 14-year-old boy who had previously struggled with school attendance and social withdrawal, played a leading role as the podcast moderator. With support from facilitators and encouragement from his peers, he used the experience to speak openly about peer pressure, discrimination, and harmful online narratives. Teachers observed a marked improvement in his engagement, confidence, and participation in class following the activity.

The podcast quickly attracted attention, reaching over 500 listeners on Facebook within its first week and inspiring students from other schools to produce their own episodes. This initiative demonstrates how creative expression and peer collaboration can strengthen resilience and empower young people to stand against radicalisation.

Summer Camps Organised by Terre des Hommes – July 2025, Tirana, Albania



KEY RESULTS

Cumulative from 2021 to July 2025

4,970

individuals, including youth, parents, educators, and local leaders were engaged through awareness campaigns and trainings to foster inclusive dialogue and promote positive, community-driven counter-narratives

1,541

front-line workers, including psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers, have been trained on trauma-and-violence informed care (TVIC) and Reintegration & Rehabilitation services

37

returnees received psychosocial, education and enrollment support for their sustainable reintegration into society

20

returnees received legal support, essential for their reintegration

GCERF'S VALUE PROPOSITION

GCERF'S UNIQUE MODEL OF INVESTMENT PRIORITISES:

Community-ownership and localisation: We invest in trusted grassroots civil society organisations that prioritise the needs and grievances of communities most affected by violent extremism. Many of these organisations have never received international funding before.

Sustainability: Our programmes involve all groups of society and strengthens trust between government, civil society and community members to build stronger, more resilient societies. This ensures that initiatives and structures continue to be relevant and effective.

Robust monitoring and evaluation processes: Our multi-layered monitoring and evaluation system, operating locally and globally, provides continuous feedback on programme effectiveness, identifies areas for improvement, and ensures objectives are consistently met.

Knowledge sharing: Our global network of civil society organisations working on PVE facilitates the exchange of good practices and lessons learned, fostering collaboration and enhancing the effectiveness of interventions. We also share our experiences through our participation in various conferences, publishing of articles and research papers in reputed journals to advance the understanding of PVE.

Capacity strengthening: We strengthen the capacity of civil society organisations to manage large-scale grants and implement effective initiatives, while also enhancing government capacity to develop comprehensive, holistic strategies to prevent violent extremism.



GCERF
Preventing Violent Extremism
and Terrorism

Find out more about becoming an investor, our work, and the collective impact we make at:
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