



Cyber hate trends in Albania

Although being a relatively new topic in Albania, cyber hate is identified as a growing phenomenon affecting the most vulnerable people, such as women and minors.

Based on the official figures by the Albanian State Police, online hate speech which reaches the criminal act threshold as online harassment, blackmail with intimate photos or frauds, have quadrupled during the last five years.

Other forms which could not be criminalized under Albanian legal framework, such as bullying or misuse of identity in social media, constitute one the main threats for the young generation. These messages of hate and denigration of the image in social platforms are suspected to be the cause of 4-5 suicides of teenagers per year and incitement to several juvenile conflicts at the elementary Schools.

Following one of these conflicts last November, when a 14-year-old boy was fatally stabbed outside a school in Tirana, the Albanian authorities imposed a one-year ban on TikTok platform. This restrictive measure was based on the opinions gathered during consultations with 65,000 parents from schools nationwide, aimed at combating violence, bullying, and digital threats against pupils.

Albania's decision to block TikTok aligns with a broader global debate on the role of social media platforms in amplifying harmful content, managing privacy, and influencing political processes. Unlike other countries, which have targeted specific risks or legal violations, the Albanian government has opted for an outright ban without citing concrete legal breaches by the platform, an approach that raises questions about the proportionality of the measure and its compliance with international standards on digital rights and freedom of expression.

Being not yet a full member of the European Union, Albania cannot take advantage of regulations under the Digital Service Act – DSA in holding accountable major online platforms providers for the content they deliver.

The 2024-2027 Growth Plan¹ documents for Albania sets forth as an objective the launch of a legal gap analysis between national legislation and the DSA, with the aim of full transposition of this framework by June 2026.

Following the entry into force of TikTok ‘banning, the state and non-state actors in the country are not able to take advantage of privileged communication with TikTok to initiate criminal investigations or block illegal materials for users who continue to access the network through other means. Since 2023, the platform enabled exclusive channels for reporting harmful content via the State Police and the Audiovisual Media Authority (AMA) and dedicated channels for organizations experienced in reporting harmful content, including Isigurt.al (CRCA) and the Trusted Flaggers Network (ASP). These channels are paused.

In contrast to the ban on TikTok and similar platforms, the implementation of legal regulations for the services provided by these networks constitutes a more sustainable solution that upholds the fundamental rights of citizens.

To date, governments and international regulatory institutions, including Albania, have concentrated on identifying and mandating platforms to remove illegal content or attempting to limit their services. Nonetheless, these efforts are insufficient to manage and eliminate the vast amount of harmful content generated by billions of users, along with the platform owners' desire to expand their audiences and profits. Consequently, the primary recommendation is to develop legal measures and mechanisms that govern the operation of social media platforms, holding them accountable for boosting transparency and enforcing measures over the content shared through their services.

Based on the periodic monitoring reports² provided by the Albanian Trusted Flaggers Network, it is noted in 2024 a first appearance of anti-Semitic narratives in the online space in Albanian after the resumption of the conflict in Gaza by October 2023. The recent analyses (2025) show a decline in the use of antisemitic narrative, but it does not exclude the existence of this rhetoric in non-public discussions.

TikTok is identified as the platform with the most harmful content, including hate speech, sexist language and the promotion of violence. It should be noted that hate speech is encountered also in other social platforms, proving that this situation with social networks reflects violent culture and broader issues in Albanian society.

¹ [National Reform Agenda 2024–2027](#)

² Policy brief [Beyond the ban of TikTok towards regulating it](#)

Instagram is mostly used to create fake profiles with identities of young people, mainly girls, to post materials with the aim of damaging their image or blackmailing them. These cases are even more evidenced by the reports of the State Agency for Children's Rights and Protection, to the National Registry of Harmful Materials ³.

It is noted that the YouTube platform continues to be used most often to share content with extremist messages in the Albanian language, despite other platforms where this narrative is less common.

The Academy of Political Studies (ASP) has supported in collaboration with the "Center Against Violent Extremism" (QKEDH) and the "National Cyber Security Authority" (AKSK) the monitoring of cyber threats and violent extremism narratives in the Albanian language online.

ASP is a member of the International Network Against Cyber Hate (INACH) and part of the TikTok Community Partner program⁴ in Albania. Since 2016, ASP has provided its expertise to enhance the research capabilities and cooperation with state actors as National Center for Countering Violent Extremism (CVE Center) and the National Cyber Security Authority (AKSK).

One of the actions is also the establishment and support of the Albanian Trusted Flaggers Network, a group of 20 persons trained in collaboration with AKSK and CVE Center in identification of hate speech and extremist propaganda in social media and reporting harmful content to the providers of these platforms.

Some recommendations are listed below:

- o Strengthening the legal framework**

The changes initiated in the Criminal Code with the aim of criminalizing "Harassment using electronic means of communication" need to be implemented without wasting time to create a legal framework that protects young people from blackmail or identity theft.

- o Interaction with social platform providers**

The authorities' decision to block the TikTok platform service in Albania, is a measure to limit harmful material, but not automatically successful. The best solution to minimize the risks is to regulate the functioning of the platforms according to European Union practices, which increase transparency and charge platforms with legal responsibility for preventing harmful material.

- o Development of education and awareness programs**

³National Register for Hazardous Materials at AKSK - <https://aksk.gov.al/raporto-3/>

⁴ TikTok Community Partner program: <https://www.asp.al/index.php?idn=675&mod=4&lang=2>

Implementing comprehensive education programs targeting young people to raise awareness about the dangers of hate speech and radicalization. These programs should focus on critical thinking skills, media literacy and digital citizenship to enable the rapid reporting and blocking of harmful material.

Along with these recommendations, it is necessary to encourage the creation of positive spaces online that promote tolerance, diversity and inclusion. Countering narratives of hate, discrimination and extremism can be most effective through social media campaigns, online forums and success stories.