

NDI AND IRI CALL ON ALBANIAN LEADERS TO CONDEMN VIOLENCE, REACH CONSENSUS

Over the course of 20 years, Albania has made great steps in its democratic transition. Since 1991, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the International Republican Institute (IRI) have been proud to support Albanian political parties, civic groups and citizens as they seek to build a political system of fairness, inclusion and transparency.

In the wake of the tragic events of January 21, and in advance of potential developments this coming weekend, NDI and IRI call upon Albania's political leaders to rededicate themselves to the principles on which Albania's democracy is founded; to reject and condemn violence that exploits or suppresses peaceful political expression; and to uphold the right to freedom of speech, assembly and association.

The Institutes also call upon political leaders to take collective action to restore public confidence in addressing the immediate consequences of last week's violence in a timely, transparent and accountable manner. They also call upon Albania's leaders to produce multipartisan consensus on how to address the longstanding, underlying political causes of the current situation, with a particular but not exclusive view toward municipal elections scheduled for May of this year.

NDI and IRI see the need for a broader section of Albanian society—particularly those individuals who are unconnected to party politics—to participate in public dialogue, so that the political system serves the interests of all citizens. NDI and IRI call upon civil society to encourage a more active citizenry and broad-based participation, and likewise call upon political parties to welcome independent, nonpartisan voices into the public debate. Peaceful, widespread, diverse and active citizen engagement in the political process is essential, now more than ever, to strengthen and advance Albanian democracy.

NDI and IRI have had the good fortune to work with thousands of Albanians across the political spectrum and throughout civil society, and in their courageous efforts the Institutes place their confidence in the future of democracy in the country.