



Albanian Older Women in Vulnerable Situations

I am Ermira Pirdeni, representative of Albanian Society for All Ages.

In Albania, the political and social structures have neglected the problem of the elderly.

The infrastructure on ageing is underdeveloped in both central and local governments.

The lack of access to services, inadequate pensions, and active age discrimination means poor quality of life and lack of respect situation for older Albanian.

In the building next to me, 100% of the tenants are elderly. Albania's most famous folk dancer also lived there. This gentleman suffered muscular atrophy and did not have proper medical care. For example, I contact the local government to get him a proper medical bed. Instead, they gave him a regular portable bed so he suffered a lot of pain. Because there is no government help, his 80-year-wife served him by herself until he passed away. At his deathbed, their 83-year-old neighbor helped his wife.

The geriatric service is lacking in primary healthcare, hospital, and the door-to-door service.

Therefore, right to health care and dignity is not there for older Albanians.

The economic situation has worsened in the past years. Younger people are emigrating, and this means the elderly population is now 50%. While younger people can go and look for work, older people are suffering because they have limited pension.

I personally, in the time of corona received only \$80 in aid, in addition to my \$200 monthly pension after 35 years of work. Most of my peers gets less. Some have no government pension after years of work.

My neighbor was happy with her \$80 aid. She could then afford her blood thinning medication, which costs more than what she received in aid and is not reimbursable. Older Albanians have difficulty getting reimbursable medication. This big problem is talked about in media.

Older Albanians need to choose between eating, paying for heating, or getting their medication with their small pensions.

I live in the same community for 48 years. We used to have two modest community venues of the former pre-90s system, a Public Library, a Community Park. In 2019, the authorities decided to convert the park to only for cars. There is now no green space.

Older women, also supported by the environmental association, had a protest at the park. Media showed our protest on the news.

But the authorities ignored older women's voices and calls for preservation.

Today, older people and mothers with small children cannot find physical space for a minimal life action, like staying in a pleasant public environment and talking to each other.

This means older Albanians are more isolated and lonelier.

“Development” has become a scary word for many communities, because the local government has not taken any step forward to assist older Albanians in the community with social services.

UN convention for older people and ‘Age with Right’ ambition is to support a place where people age well, where older women are valued, respected, and appreciated, and where older people are seen and treated as the rights holders.

The Older People UN Convention is an important international legal document that pressure unwilling governments to take action now. Current representation is inadequate and stakeholder voices are being muted. The UN Convention will emphasize the importance of endorsing programs and policies that protect the rights of all older people globally. Thank you

Poverty wears the face of an older woman



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