

Asylos and ARC Foundation publish report on the situation of trafficked boys and young men from Albania

The report is the first in a series of strategic research reports that address most critical gaps in country-of-origin information

Asylos and ARC Foundation are pleased to announce the publication of our joint report *Albania: Trafficked Boys and Young Men*. The report addresses a critical gap in country of origin information (COI) in refugee status determination procedures. It combines relevant and timely publicly available material with new information generated by interviewing a range of individuals with authoritative knowledge on the topic. It can be [downloaded here](#).

The critical need to prioritise COI production on children and young people's risk profiles has become increasingly apparent as lawyers are consistently raising concerns to us about the scarcity of available information in relation to child-specific persecution and harm acting as a barrier to proper consideration of young people's protection claims.

This is especially stark in the UK as Albanian children regularly form one of the top five largest groups of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, yet not one was granted asylum or humanitarian protection in 2018 despite Albania being the third-most prominent foreign country of origin for trafficked children identified in the UK in 2018.

The report covers nine key research areas relating to the trafficking of Albanian boys and young men and includes interviews with ten different individuals and organisations. Whilst it will be clear to readers that sources held a range of different and sometimes diverging opinions, we found that there was some consensus on a number of key issues. Sources agreed that boys and young men are being targeted for exploitation by groups in Albania associated with organised crime, and several sources commented on these networks having links to the UK. Sources spoke about the existence of an 'implementation gap' between a strong legislative and policy framework and practice in reality in Albania, with corruption as one of the most significant barriers, coupled with a weak child protection system. Sources also raised concerns about the effectiveness of the Albanian National Referral Mechanism in identifying male victims, linked to a societal and state level denial that the practice affects boys and young men. Sources mentioned that young trafficked men are returned without having been formally identified as such, thereby preventing their access to support, exacerbating the already significant barriers to reintegration and increasing the risks of re-trafficking. In sharing our findings, Asylos and ARC Foundation hope to help fill the gap in the COI literature about the situation of Albanian boys and young men who are victims of trafficking and to contribute to a more transparent and informed debate about their risk profile.

More about Asylos and ARC Foundation's 'strategic research project'...

On the back of our [2017 report on 'westernised' young men being returned to Kabul](#), Asylos and ARC Foundation have received a three-year grant to publish a series of strategic research reports with the aim of addressing the most critical gaps in country of origin information (COI) in UK refugee status determination (RSD) procedures. The topic for each report will be chosen from the suggestions we receive from practitioners supporting asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants in the UK, with periodical call outs being announced through legal networks and on our website. Please get in touch with us at info@asylos.eu and info@asylumresearchcentre.co.uk to learn more about the project and topic scoping.