

High Inspector of Justice

NEWSLETTER

Nr.14

March 2022



HIGH INSPECTOR OF JUSTICE SIGNED COOPERATION AGREEMENT WITH 6 CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

The establishment of a continuous communication between the civil society and the Office of HIJ, was formalized by signing a cooperation agreement between the High Inspector of Justice Mr. Artur Metani and six civil society organizations (CSOs), that are engaged in monitoring justice reform, human rights, transparency, accountability and good governance.

The cooperation initiated earlier with the civil society, through the consultation for the Strategic Plan

and Action Plan of HIJ 2020-2022, materializes with this agreement, which aims to increase the performance and capacity building of the Office of High Inspector of Justice, through the increase of communication and development of joint activities, in the framework of monitoring, analysing, accountability and awareness-raising on the activity of the Office of High Inspector of Justice, through the exchange of data, organization of periodic meetings, providing relevant expertise of specialized CSOs.



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FROM THE AGREEMENT

The purpose of the cooperation is to establish ongoing communication between civil society and the Office of the High Inspector of Justice, through transparent processes of monitoring the activity and increasing public confidence, in terms of raising public awareness on the mission, competencies and responsibilities of the High Inspector of Justice. The parties with the aim of increasing the performance and capacity building through this agreement are engaged in increasing communication and developing a series of joint activities, through the exchange of data, the organization of periodic meetings, providing relevant expertise of specialized CSOs, or think-tank.

(continues)

Institute for Policy and Legal Studies (IPLS), represented by Mr. Ardian Dhima; Institute for Political Studies (ISP), represented by Mr. Afrim Krasniqi; Cooperation and Development Institute (CDI), represented by Ms. Krisela Hackaj, Albanian Helsinki Committee (AHC), represented by Ms. Erida Skëndaj, European Centre (EC), represented by Ms. Klara Kodra and Albanian Institute of Science/Open Data Albania, represented by Ms. Aranita Brahaj.



During the ceremony of signing the agreement, the High Inspector of Justice Mr. Metani praised the important role of civil society organizations in strengthening democratic processes and underlined that this institutional cooperation mechanism will serve to improve the work of HIJ, and in addition the whole system for the functioning of a professional, responsible, accountable and transparent justice.

[Click](#) to read the Agreement.

DISCIPLINARY INSPECTION AND INVESTIGATION, HIJ SIGNES COOPERATION AGREEMENT WITH ITALIAN COUNTERPARTS



High Inspector of Justice Mr. Artur Metani, during his working visit to Rome, had a meeting at the Italian Ministry of Justice, where he signed a memorandum of understanding with the Head of the General Inspectorate of Justice in Italy, Mrs. Maria Rosaria Covelli, with a view to strengthening the inter-institutional relations and exchanging the best practices, within the framework of inspection procedures and disciplinary investigation against magistrates.

In his speech during the signing ceremony, Mr. Metani said that different member states of the European Union, such as Italy years ago, or aspiring countries like Albania, have undergone evolution and profound reforms regarding the justice system in general and the disciplinary system of magistrates in particular.

“The powers entrusted to magistrates are closely linked to the values of justice. The standards of conduct applying

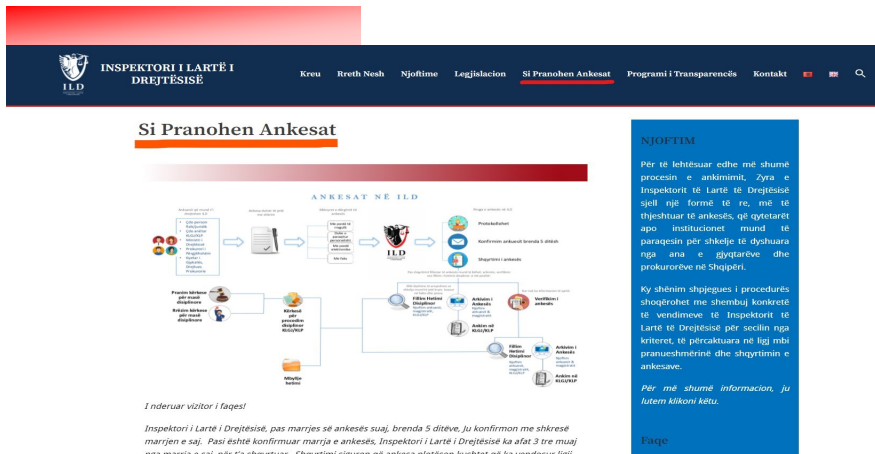


to magistrates are the corollary of these values and a precondition for citizens’ confidence in the administration of justice. Despite the differences among the disciplinary systems of different countries, at European level there is a common goal, which is finding the balance between the independence of the judicial system or the decision-making authority of magistrates and the disciplinary responsibility. This is our joint challenge now”, said Mr. Metani.

After signing the agreement, Mrs. Maria Rosaria Covelli said that the Italian Inspectorate enthusiastically accepted the invitation of the Albanian counterpart, being sure that the formalized cooperation with this memorandum will be a mutual added value which will further consolidate the already excellent relations that Italy has with Albania.

Among the forms of cooperation, Article 2 of the Memorandum provides for the exchange of information on practices and experiences related to disciplinary investigations against magistrates, on the methodology of inspections and preparation of annual plans and on modalities of communication with the public in order to guarantee the balance between the principle of open justice and the principle of personal data protection.

For her part, the Minister of Justice Mrs. Marta Cartabia, underlined the importance of this agreement within the framework of the cooperative relations between Italy and Albania.



COMPLAINT PROCESS AT HIJ

The Office of the High Inspector of Justice continues with intensive work to confirm the complaints carried and those administered since February 1, 2020, when it was established as an institution. To facilitate this process for interested persons, HIJ has published on the official website a special complaint form, which:

- ⇒ can be completed directly and submitted online;
- ⇒ can be downloaded, completed and sent by email to info@ild.al or by mail at the address Boulevard "Dëshmorët e Kombit", Building

no.13, Tirana.
 ⇒ It can also be completed by presenting at the Office of the High Inspector of Justice, if necessary, to ask for assistance of the team of the Complaints Office.

Upon receipt of the complaint, the High Inspector of Justice within 5 days confirms in writing its receipt. The criteria for the admissibility of the complaint are published on the official website of HIJ www.ild.al, in the section "How to receive complaints".

"The main commitment of the High Inspector of Justice Office is that judicial functions in the Republic of Albania must be performed independently, impartially and with integrity through a system of responsibility and accountability."

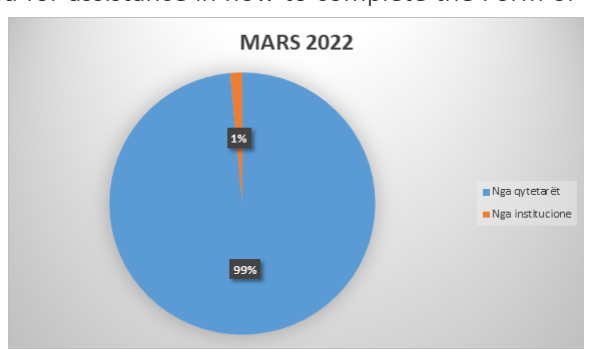
STATISTICS

During **March** the Office of High Inspector of Justice received **69 complaints** made by citizens and institutions.

This total figure resulted in:

68 complaints filed by citizens;; **1 complaint** filed by institutions; **34 phone calls** with citizens, who asked information about the stage of their complaints or asked for assistance in how to complete the Form of the Complaint; **25 meetings** with citizens.

The High Inspector of Justice Office has performed the standard confirmation process of receiving complaints for all the new complaints submitted during March, 2022. Complaints against judges and prosecutors are referred to the inspectors and they are at different stages of the process such as the initial consideration, verification and the archiving together with relevant decisions.





MEETING THE CITIZENS AT HIJ

Communication with citizens is part of the daily work of the High Inspector of Justice.

The HIJ Complaint Sector is responsible for guaranteeing the right of citizens to information and transparency to the public. This Sector monitors the complaints traceability in the system and provides answers to complainants on their complaint stage.

As part of the transparency program, in order to increase the communication with the interested citizens, the High Inspector of Justice Office in addition to the official address and the official Web, has made available the telephone number +355 4 2217217



MARCH OF HIJ IN NUMBERS

95 archived decisions,
of which:

- **65 decisions** after the initial review;
- **10 archived decisions** after verification (HIJ);
- **20 archived decisions** after verification from the backlog from ex HCJ;
- **21 verification decisions** from 26 reviewed complaints;
- **1 decision** to initiate a disciplinary investigation;
- **1 decision** to close a disciplinary investigation for 3 subjects.

THE OFFICE OF THE HIGH INSPECTOR OF JUSTICE SUBMITS TO THE ASSEMBLY THE WORK REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2021

The annual work report is part of the obligation that independent constitutional institutions such as the High Inspector of Justice have to submit to the Assembly and presenting their activity and the level of implementation of the recommendations of the Resolution of the Assembly for the Institution.



MESSAGE FROM THE HIGH INSPECTOR OF JUSTICE

Honourable Members of Parliament,

It is the second time that I have the pleasure to share with the Assembly through annual reporting, the progress of the work of the Office of the High Inspector of Justice, currently for the calendar year 2021. In two years of existence of the HIJ, we got used to the difficulties of setting up and standardizing the activity of a completely new institution.

It happened to be more often guided by challenges than challenges guided by us!

In the past two years, we did everything in the name of building work practices and ensuring maximum results, without prejudice and without getting tired in the mission we have set for ourselves.

Today we are aware that we need to start a new chapter because the biggest challenge is still there! It is a challenge that cannot be overcome alone because it is the challenge of restoring trust in Justice. With this aim, as you will see in this report, we have focused on the citizens, their orientation to the complain process in HIJ, when they have claims for judges and prosecutors. For me as the High Inspector of Justice, the trust in justice is read especially when you address the institutions, and this is shown by the growing number of complaints submitted to our institution.

4127 is the total number of complaints administered in HIJ for 2021. An impressive figure, consisting of the stock inherited from other institutions and new complaints coming directly to HIJ. For handling the inherited stock, we are working according to a methodology, which has the priority of avoiding the culture of impunity and forgetfulness, by prioritizing the review of complaints and practices that are within the 5-year statute of limitations and those subject to incumbent magistrates. Obviously, the work continues with the handling of new complaints, those coming directly to HIJ.

“The entire process is carried out with only 8 Inspectors, from 1 that we had in the first year of work, but still we are far from the number needed to cope with the large volume of work. Completing the investigation capacities remains an ongoing challenge, while HIJ will do its part by recruiting non-magistrate inspectors.”

Disciplinary proceedings are the final moment of the work, to which special attention is paid because the primary purpose is not simply to punish magistrates, but also to educate them on the importance of professionalism and integrity of magistrates, for public trust in justice.

"Only during 2021 there are 22 decisions to start a disciplinary investigation approved by HIJ for 31 subjects of disciplinary investigation. Among these, 17 cases have been submitted for disciplinary proceedings in the Councils, while concerning 4 the investigations have been closed. Out of 17 requests for disciplinary proceedings, 10 are investigations initiated by the High Inspector of Justice and 7 are the result of the investigation of filed complaints. The thematic inspections themselves have produced 3 disciplinary proceedings, 2 of which during 2020 and 1 during 2021. The measures required for investigated judges and prosecutors range from confidential reprimands to dismissal. Regarding the 17 requests for proceedings forwarded to the Councils, none of them was rejected, and only for 2 of them another disciplinary measure was imposed. This is also merit of the scrupulous work of the team of Inspectors of the HIJ Office, despite the absence of 18 inspectors and the workload of 8 Inspectors on duty."

The year 2021 is marked for HIJ by the increase of cooperation with national, international actors and civil society, which is a close observer of the work of ILD. Cooperation with the HJC and the HPC has been important in coordinating uniform standards to ensure a regular disciplinary process and respect for the independence of magistrates, as well as the exchange of inter-institutional information.

Being a completely new institution, HIJ has been paying increased attention to building and strengthening professional investigation capacities, through the exchange of best practices regarding the procedures of investigating disciplinary violations against magistrates. We have started this journey with good friends, international partners from EURALIUS and OPDAT, to CEPEJ and up to the European Network of Justice Inspection Services, where currently the High Inspector of Justice holds the status of observer in the Network, where members are only from the European Union countries.

During 2021 HIJ has paid special attention and has fulfilled most of the recommendations of the Resolution of the Assembly, adopted on 03.06.2020, despite the subjective difficulties it has faced.

Despite the challenges, we consider transparency with the public as a strong point of the institution, as HIJ sees the relationship with the public as one of the most effective ways, not only to guarantee the trust of citizens in the institution in particular, but also in justice in general. It was precisely this spirit with which justice reform was conceived and the HIJ in these two years of existence is playing an important role in this regard and through measurable results.

Personally, I think that there is no more suitable time for all of us, to turn justice into what every Albanian deserves: a virtue where everyone can rely, and where to everyone shall be served justice. This of course requires sacrifice! And these sacrifices require heart, require clear mind, require cooperation, appreciation and institutional respect. But today we must do everything in the name of what may one day become our common good: "Independent Justice"!

You will find this philosophy in the activity of HIJ, summarized in the annual report for 2021 and presented before you!

FROM THE COMPLAINTS PROCESS DURING 2021

From the analysis of the statistical data of the complaints administered by the Office of the High Inspector of Justice, some specifications can be distinguished. The analysis of these data is seen as useful in terms of drafting internal labour policies, not only to improve service in the function of public interest and transparency, but also a better understanding of the individual complaints and the development of awareness policies in this regard.

Thus, referring to the collected data for the subjects that set-in motion the High Inspector of Justice, from 990 archiving decisions, the data was categorized, according to the category of subjects, divided into "natural person" and "legal person".

From **990 archiving decisions**:

⇒**945** of them were received after reviewing the complaints of individuals

⇒**41** archiving decisions were taken after reviewing the submitted complaint by legal entities ;

⇒**4** of them were received after reviewing complaints coming from the media .

Another phenomenon analysed was the geographical distribution of complainants, which shows that: **Tirana** is the district with **the highest number** of complainants, while **Shkodra** has **the lowest number**.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF	
Tiranë	375
Vlorë	70
Durrës	66
Fier	66
Lezhë	57
Korçë	57
Shkodër	51

The data show that for the category of archiving decisions; for **48** cases, the complaints came from the claimants whose registered residence is the institutions of execution of criminal decisions. For **18** of the complainants the address was not indicated, **14** of the complainants have an address registered outside the borders of Albania and 6 of them forwarded their complaints via e-mail, without specifying an address.

For complaints submitted by individuals, two other indicators were collected, that of gender and age of complainants.

From the collected data, it results that from the reviewed complaints, 626 complainants belong to the category "male" and 226 complainants belong to the category "female".

AGE OF COMPLAINANTS	
20-30 vjeç	19
30-40 vjeç	102
40-50 vjeç	186
50-60 vjeç	290
Mbi 60 vjeç	386

Regarding age, for complaints submitted by individuals, **the highest** number of complainants belongs to age **over 60 years**, while **the lowest number** of complainants belongs to age **20-30 years**.

The alleged violations were also analysed as data derived from the complainants' allegations in the complaints filed during 2021 for disciplinary violations of the subject of the disciplinary investigation.

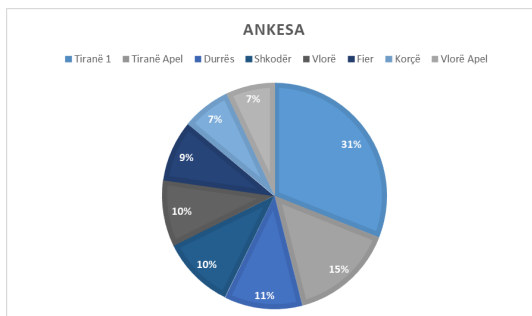
Complaints come more regarding **judges** than **prosecutors**, while the type of alleged violation is more related to the activity of magistrates in the exercise of their duties, as all complainants have had cases for trial or under investigation by courts or prosecution offices.

What is noticeable is the fact that most of the complaints refer to violations with the object of unfair decision

-making of magistrates during the review of a case, procedural violations and delays in the judicial/ investigative process.

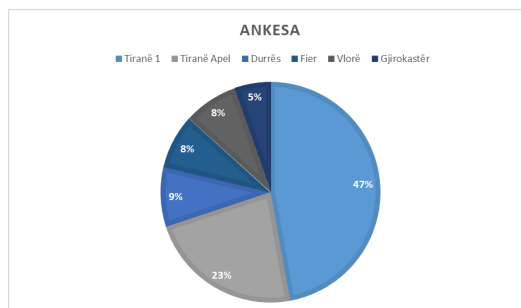
Regarding the appeals handled by archiving decision, it turned out that the complainants have raised more claims against the magistrates of these courts:

- ⇒ Tirana Court of First Instance (124 complaints);
- ⇒ Tirana Appeal Court (60 complaints);
- ⇒ Durrës Court of First Instance (45 complaints);
- ⇒ Shkodra Court of First Instance (42 complaints);
- ⇒ Vlora Appeal Court (38 complaints);
- ⇒ Fier Court of First Instance (35 complaints);
- ⇒ Korça Court of First Instance (28 complaints);
- ⇒ Vlora Court of First Instance (28 complaints);



While regarding complaints handled by archiving decision, it turned out that the complainants have raised more claims against the magistrates of these prosecution offices:

- ⇒ Prosecution Office at Tirana Court of First Instance (124 complaints);
- ⇒ Prosecution Office at Tirana Appeal Court (60 complaints);
- ⇒ Prosecution Office at Durrës Court of First Instance (23 complaints);
- ⇒ Prosecution Office at Fier Court of First Instance (21 complaints);
- ⇒ Prosecution Office at Vlora Court of First Instance (21 complaints);
- ⇒ Prosecution Office at Gjirokastra Court of First Instance (14 complaints);



Complaints handled, according to the object of the lawsuit

From the information generated in the Office of the High Inspector of Justice, has been identified the type of litigation / object of the lawsuit reviewed by the magistrate against which allegations are made. From the complaints handled during 2021, result to have **more allegations of criminal** than civil cases; **the most common type of reported criminal offense is falsification**, while **the most common object of civil litigation is for property issues**.

The recording of these data is considered as an indicator that is closely related to the understanding of the mission of the High Inspector of Justice by the public. It is one of the priorities of the High Inspector of Justice, in terms of raising public awareness on the mission of HIJ. The obtained data serve for the drafting of policies in this field with the aim of simplifying and understanding the mission of the High Inspector of Justice. Raising public awareness is the premise for creating facilities to minimize the flow of complaints, which are outside the scope of activity, or are unacceptable due to non-compliance with legal criteria. On the other hand, data recording serves the needs for improvement, both at the service level, but also understanding whether awareness has achieved its purpose, that of simplification and education of the public, in terms of a correct understanding of behaviours, which give rise to disciplinary proceedings by the High Inspector of Justice.

HIJ UNDERSTANDS THE MAGISTRATES WORKLOAD YET WILL NOT TOLERATE ILLEGALITY

The High Inspector of Justice gave an interview to Top Channel journalist Anila Hoxha, on the progress of the complaint process against magistrates and the HIJ work during the two years, since its establishment as an institution.



Asked about the most common topics of complaints that citizens file with the HIJ and the cities they come from, Mr. Metani said that there are about 4500 complaints administered and from the ones handled it results that the greatest number is about allegations of delays in court proceedings by magistrates which according to the HIJ statistics come mainly from Tirana and Vlora.

“What we have noted with great concern and I want to share it with you is the delay in issuing decisions. So, once the litigation is over, it takes a long time to issue the decision. This results from many reasons and we are trying to balance this situation with the heavy workload that magistrates have, with the lack of magistrates in the system due to other processes that are happening in Albania because of the reform, also due to the complexity of cases, and of course even with the possible cases of judges negligence, or with cases of judges poor professional performance. We have also taken measures for this. We have also prosecuted magistrates for delays in issuing decisions. However, finding the right balance between the time to issue decisions and unjustified delays due to the negligence of judges, but at the same time without affecting the quality of writing the decisions, is something we are seeing as a priority and I call on all judges and prosecutors, to be careful with these procedures. “There should be no delays, yet the quality of writing the decisions must not be affected because this is definitely very important,” said the High Inspector of Justice.

Asked by the journalist about his findings related to the priority announced since taking office, the priority of conditional releases of persons sentenced to life imprisonment, Mr. Metani said:

“At the time the High Inspector of Justice was elected, in January 2020, this was undoubtedly the greatest sensitivity of the society because there were several cases of conditional releases from prisons of some individuals and therefore the first decision made by the High Inspector of Justice at the time was the inspection of conditional releases files, as part of a major thematic inspection because all courts and prosecutors’ offices where there are detention and imprisonment institutions were affected. We proposed some measures. Among them, there were the measures for the dismissal of 3 magistrates. These measures continue even today because there are still magistrates under investigation. An investigation has been completed and sent for proceeding to the HJC. So this is something we have paid a lot of attention. It is neither to be recognized as a success, nor with any consideration. It is a normal working process of HIJ and it is a clear message to any magistrate that HIJ will not breathe down their necks but none of their illegal actions will be tolerated. I have said this since the first interview and I insist on saying it again.”

High Inspector Metani also spoke about the challenge with the files inherited from the former HCJ, HJC, Prosecutor General and the Ministry of Justice, which must be handled by HIJ in the absence of inspectors.

“All inspectors are handling them with priority so that their deadlines will not exceed and the complaints will not expire because of that. However, this is something that is happening, I mean, we are trying to handle every complaint, but it is a heavy workload that we cannot handle, I mean, handling complaints in time. Secondly, the citizens want a solution; they submitted the complaint 5 years ago and it is not normal for a public institution not to respond to the citizen, at least 5 years later. Thirdly, which is also important, I have tried, even though they are old complaints, to proceed magistrates even for these old complaints with the view to reminding everyone that nothing is forgotten,” Mr. Metani highlighted.

Full interview of High Inspector of Justice Mr. Artur Metani with journalist Anila Hoxha for Top Channel

Journalist Anila Hoxha: First of all, thank you. From the inspections carried out so far, but also referring to the citizens’ complaints with the HIJ, what have the Albanian citizens mainly complained about? Is it mainly about judges or prosecutors and is there a figure about it?

High Inspector of Justice, Mr. Artur Metani: Thank you for the interview. To be specific with your question, the institution of the High Inspector of Justice has received 4500 complaints so far. This includes complaints received since 2020, the time the High Inspector of Justice was elected, but it also includes previous complaints or backlog, as they are called, forwarded by other institutions – The High Judicial Council, the High Council of Justice, the Prosecutor General and the Ministry of Justice. The number of complaints has been seen and continues to be seen and handled with priority. About 1700 complaints have been handled by this large group so far. The number of complaints continues to increase significantly. From October, last year, until today the number of complaints has increased significantly. So, in these 4-5 months we have received about 800 complaints. This is a fact to be considered and it shows the reflection of our society about the problems the judicial and prosecution system have today; it may also show the efficiency of the new justice institutions that are functioning, such as the High Inspector of Justice or even the relevant Councils when referring or handling citizens’ complaints. Citizens’ complaints generally focus on the procrastination of court proceedings or investigative files by the prosecution, the biased court decisions, the actions or inactions of prosecutors in certain cases. The largest number of complaints is against judges and not prosecutors. But, what we have noted with great concern and I want to share it with you is the delay in issuing decisions. So, once the litigation is over, it takes a long time to issue the decision. This results from many reasons and we are trying to balance this situation with the heavy workload that magistrates have, with the lack of magistrates in the system due to other processes that are happening in Albania because of the reform, also due to the complexity of cases, and of course even with the possible cases of judges negligence, or with cases of judges poor professional performance. We have also taken measures for this. We have also prosecuted magistrates for delays in issuing decisions. However, I would like to point out that this is a careful balance which must be preserved not only for the delays of judges in issuing decisions, but also for the fact that these delays must not affect the quality of decision-making, because the workload but also the pressure of issuing decisions quickly, can result in poor quality of decision writing. Of course, we do not want that. However, finding the right balance between the time to issue decisions and unjustified delays due to the negligence of judges, but at the same time without affecting the quality of writing the decisions, is something we are seeing as a priority and I call on all judges and prosecutors, to be careful with these procedures. There should be no delays, yet the



quality of writing the decisions must not be affected because this is definitely very important.

Journalist Anila Hoxha: What cities do most complaints come from, if we were to divide or list them?

The High Inspector of Justice, Mr. Artur Metani: Yes, the largest number of complaints comes from Tirana, about 600, then Vlora, Durrës, Fieri, and Shkodra and then every city has a small number. But, I can say that Tirana is the leader...

Journalist Anila Hoxha: Is this because it has the largest number of cases and it has the highest flow of cases or referring to alleged violations?

High Inspector of Justice, Mr. Artur Metani: Yes, I believe that Tirana has courts with the highest number of cases because it is the most populated city. Undoubtedly, there are more court conflicts, more cases to be tried, but it is also the fact that citizens who live in Tirana can come more easily to the Office of the High Inspector of Justice compared to those who live in other districts. Of course, complaints can be sent by mail, but being in the same city, makes it probably easier to contact the Office of the High Inspector of Justice. For this reason, we are looking at other forms of communication with citizens, in addition to what we have on our website and the facilities we try to create for the citizens of the districts to file their complaints. We are trying to make a program to go to the cities, to make the role of the High Inspector of Justice clearer for the public, so that citizens can have more contact with the HIJ Office.

Journalist Anila Hoxha: Do citizens mostly complain about violations related to trials and criminal investigations, or violations related to administrative and civil cases?

High Inspector of Justice, Mr. Artur Metani: It is the later, so there are more complaints about cases of civil and administrative courts, but without a doubt, there are a large number of complaints about criminal trials as well. There is a considerable number of complaints, about 50, coming from people serving their prison sentences. But the biggest dynamic comes from civil and administrative cases.

Journalist Anila Hoxha: Since we are talking about criminal cases, you have proposed and perhaps approved some measures regarding judges and prosecutors for early release. How did you find the justice system in this area? What were your findings?

High Inspector of Justice, Mr. Artur Metani: At the time the High Inspector of Justice was elected, in January 2020, this was undoubtedly the greatest sensitivity of the society because there were several cases of early conditional releases from prisons of some individuals and therefore the first decision made by the High Inspector of Justice at the time was the inspection of early conditional releases files, as part of a major thematic inspection because all courts and prosecutors' offices where there are detention and imprisonment institutions were affected. We proposed some measures. Among them, there were the measures for the dismissal of 3 magistrates. These measures continue even today because there are still magistrates under investigation. An investigation has been completed and sent for proceeding to the HJC. So this is something we have paid a lot of attention. It is neither to be recognized as a success, nor with any consideration. It is a normal working process of HIJ and it is a clear message to any magistrate that HIJ will not breathe down their necks but none of their illegal actions

will be tolerated. I have said this since the first interview and I insist on saying it again.

Journalist Anila Hoxha: Did you find, during these thematic inspections, a justice system that was willing to open the doors for early release to individuals considered dangerous?

High Inspector of Justice, Mr. Artur Metani: It was a phenomenon that was happening and that is why we took measures against specific magistrates; measures which were concretized with proposals for dismissals to the Councils. It is a process that I do not want to talk about because it is a process that continues in the Special Appeal Chamber. For this reason I would not like to get involved with other comments about it, but the facts speak for themselves.

Journalist Anila Hoxha: Are there any more requests of individuals of this genre I call dangerous, who continue to demand early conditional releases, after these inspections? So, did the HIJ inspections work?

High Inspector of Justice, Mr. Artur Metani: Request... I cannot know if there are requests because they do not come to me. The requests are addressed to the courts, but the fact is that we have no information that people have been early released because of this institute of law.

Journalist Anila Hoxha: So, the judges and prosecutors have received the message?

High Inspector of Justice, Mr. Artur Metani: Once again, this is a working process and it is neither for consideration nor for success. This is a normal working process of public institutions and I appreciate that even magistrates understand this.

Journalist Anila Hoxha: Is the HIJ currently conducting a certain inspection with a certain theme?

High Inspector of Justice, Mr. Artur Metani: Yes, today we have two thematic inspections, which I believe we will process within a very short time. They are related to the measures taken by some prosecutor's offices and courts for illegal possession of weapons, i.e. security measures. Another decision on thematic inspection about issues of implementation of instructions of a general nature of the Prosecutor General.

Journalist Anila Hoxha: However, HIJ is working to some extent with a limited staff... Have you filed requests in order to expand the entire organizational structure of HIJ and of course as long as you control all justice in the country with 8 inspectors, can they also be called insufficient?

High Inspector of Justice, Mr. Artur Metani: Yes, there are 26 inspectors in the organizational structure. So, there should be 26 inspectors in the institution – judges, prosecutors and non-magistrate inspectors. We currently have 8. Of course, 26 does not compare to 8 because of the workload. For this reason, for 16 months now, I have proposed legal changes and submitted it to the Ministry of Justice as well as to the Law Commission, to reduce the candidacy criteria for those who want to be part of HIJ as magistrate inspectors. I understand that there is a debate, it can be a legal debate, because it is a legal choice, but on the other hand it is a situation that needs to be resolved. If we do not lower the criteria for judges who want to come here as inspectors, then what

are we going to do, how are we going to attract the few judges who are left in the system, until the courts are filled with judges?! So this is a dilemma of the whole system, but on the other hand it is a thing that needs to be solved, it needs to be addressed and given a solution.

Journalist Anila Hoxha: Have you received a solution in the meantime, an answer?



High Inspector of Justice, Mr. Artur Metani: No.

Journalist Anila Hoxha: And this of course affects the effectiveness, what comes next?

High Inspector of Justice, Mr. Artur Metani: What I am afraid of, and I do not want, is to create the impression that the work can be done even with 8 inspectors... You cannot work with 8 inspectors! People are getting tired because they want to respond to citizens. People are getting tired because they want to meet every obligation that a public institution has, but on the other hand there are some limits to their workload. Undoubtedly, citizens, the media and everyone else, do not want to know how much work the inspector or the High Inspector of Justice has, they want solutions. For this reason the balance of these difficulties must find a solution if not legal, a practical one.

Journalist Anila Hoxha: What will the next step be after this proposal for changes to reduce to some extent the criteria that have been set, which as far as I understand are rigid, as long as you have not received an answer? Will you make a second proposal?

High Inspector of Justice, Mr. Artur Metani: The proposal is still in the Assembly, i.e. in the Ministry of Justice and the Assembly. I do not know how the Ministry of Justice and the Assembly will proceed. I hope that this issue will be proceeded quickly, at least in a really professional discussion. Secondly, depending on the solution that the Assembly will offer us, we will start taking steps to find a solution to avoid all this burden. It is important to say, that about 4500 complaints are a lot and this number, as I said, includes a large group of the backlog of complaints. They are very important, first of all I would not like their statute of limitations to expire. All inspectors are handling them with priority, so that their deadlines will not exceed and the complaints will not expire because of that. However, this is something that is happening, I mean, we are trying to handle every complaint, but it is a heavy workload that we cannot handle, I mean, handling complaints in time. Secondly, the citizens want a solution; they submitted the complaint 5 years ago and it is not normal for a public institution not to respond to the citizen, at least 5 years later. "Thirdly, which is also important, I have tried, even though they are old complaints, to proceed magistrates even for these old complaints with the view to reminding everyone that nothing is forgotten.

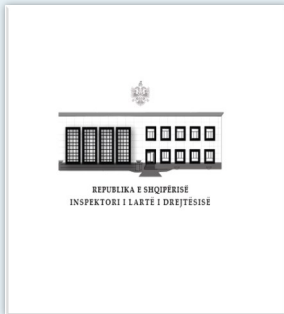
Journalist Anila Hoxha: Thank you for the interview!

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