

# FACT SHEET

## Focus on Albania

### Why Albania?

Albania was an economic ruin when it emerged from decades of oppressive rule in 1992. Today, the legacy of dictatorship under Enver Hoxha can still be seen, in crushing poverty, failed institutions, poor social conditions and inadequate healthcare systems.

### Who do we help?

We focus our support on the terminally ill and their families, those living beyond the reach of the Government's healthcare system.

We care for individuals in their homes, working in and around two of Albania's largest cities, the capital Tirana and the coastal town of Durres.

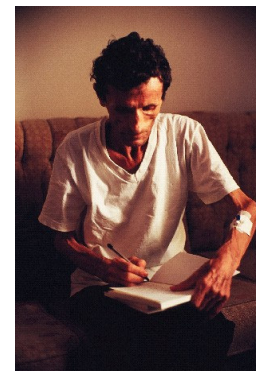
In all, we reach over 75 individual patients and their families every day of the year.

Shpetim's story is typical:

"I used to live in Elbasan with my wife and eight children. I was diagnosed with lung cancer 18 months ago, but was unable to receive treatment as the only oncology unit is over two hours away in Tirana.

"I was too ill to work and was struggling to provide for my family. Eventually we all moved to a short-term shelter in Tirana, but we had to keep moving every few weeks. The most difficult thing was looking after the children, as they could not go to school and soon joined a group of children begging on the streets.

"A few months ago the hospital referred us to Ryder Albania. They provided medical and nursing care, and helped us with money. With the help of their social worker, we even got all our children into a local school. Although I am still ill, Ryder Albania has helped enormously and we are all more positive about the future."



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### How do we work?

Since 1994, we have worked in partnership with our sister organisation, the Ryder Albania Association, which has pioneered the development of palliative care in Albania in partnership with Ryder Italia.

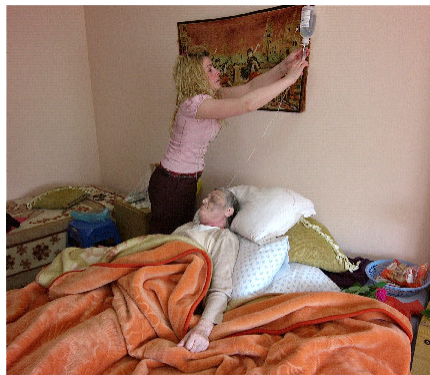
Today, Ryder Albania's multidisciplinary teams offer care in patients' homes in Tirana and Durres. Their medical, psychological and social care is provided free of charge to over 2,500 patients and their families every year.

In addition to providing care, Ryder Albania also publishes learning materials, trains around 520 of Albania's doctors, nurses, social workers and psychologists every year and plays a leading role in the National Association of Palliative Care, which it helped to establish.



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## Why us?



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*The need is acute and widespread.* At present, Albania's government does not provide any care services for people with terminal illness and does not offer any funding for Ryder Albania's activities. This means that only a fraction of those with terminal illness can hope to receive appropriate treatment and most are cared for by relatives with no access to the specialised care and pain controls they need. Over 90 per cent of Albanians have no access to palliative (pain-relieving) care.

Ryder Albania is now the country's leading expert in palliative care. As well as offering practical care to individuals, it has initiated national standards in palliative care and helped to raise awareness of its importance.

## Our future plans

Every Albanian has the right to access palliative care. We will work with both the Albanian government and relevant non-governmental organisations to enable individuals to exercise this right.

We will continue to campaign to secure government support within the framework of Albania's evolving national health care insurance and will invest in Ryder Albania's capacity to fundraise. Finally, we will continue to promote national standards in palliative care, in partnership with the National Association of Palliative Care.

## How can I help?

If you are supporting Sue Ryder Care you are already helping, but if you would like to do something specifically for Albania, or would like to learn more about our work there, please email [international@sue Rydercare.org](mailto:international@sue Rydercare.org) or call 0207 400 0637.