

LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

Communicated to Members
of the Council

C.514.1923.I.

Geneva,

August 15th, 1923.

MINORITIES IN ALBANIA.

Note by the Secretary-General.

In a memorandum submitted to the Council on July 7th, 1923 (Document C.466.1923) the Secretary-General informed the Members of the Council that the Albanian representative had just notified him that a law regarding the legal status of the religious communities in Albania had been passed by the Albanian Parliament on June 5th, 1923. The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit herewith to the Members of the Council, for their consideration, copies of the French translation of this law.

The Secretary-General ventures to remind the Members of the Council of the tenor of the second paragraph of Article 5 of the Albanian Declaration concerning the Protection of Minorities, dated October 2nd, 1921:

"Within six months from the date of the present Declaration, detailed information will be presented to the Council of the League of Nations with regard to the legal status of the religious communities, churches, convents, schools, voluntary establishments and associations of racial, religious and linguistic minorities. The Albanian Government will take into consideration any advice it might receive from the League of Nations with regard to this question."

At its meeting on July 7th, 1923, the Council decided to insert this question in the Agenda of its next session.

Translation from the French text furnished by
the Albanian Government.

LEGAL STATUS OF RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES IN ALBANIA.

Article 1. Liberty of conscience is granted in conformity with
(1)
Article 93 of the Constitution and with Articles 1 and 2
of the Declaration adopted by Parliament on October 2nd, 1921.

Article 2. The Mohammedan sects, such as the Sunis, Bektashis,
Rufaias, Halvetis, Kadiris, Sadis, etc; the Christian denomina-
tions, such as the Catholics, the Protestants and the members
of the Orthodox Church; and, further, all sects of every other
religion, may organise themselves as religious communities,
independent of one another.

Article 3. These several religious or denominational communities may
maintain relations with the great religious centres outside
Albania on spiritual and dogmatic questions only. Their mutual
relations and correspondence in this connection shall remain
free from all interference on the part of the Government.

The higher clergy must fulfil the following conditions:

- a) They must be Albanian subjects;
- b) They must know the Albanian language;
- c) They must be in possession of civil and political rights;
- d) They must be of Albanian race or members of a family
which has been established in Albania for three generations.

Persons who have fought against the Albanian cause since
November 28th, 1912 cannot be included in this category, even
if they fulfil the above conditions.

The inclusion of persons who do not fulfil the above condi-
tions may be authorised by special Act of Parliament.

(1) Translation from the French text furnished by the Albanian
Representative of Article 93 of the Provisional Constitution
of the Albanian State.

The Albanian State has no official religion.
All religions and creeds shall be respected, and liberty
ensured for their external ceremonies and exercises.
Religion may in no circumstances be put forward as a
legal disability. Religions and creeds may not be made
use of, in any way whatsoever, for political ends.

The lower clergy must fulfil all the conditions mentioned in this article.

Clergy belonging to Albanian districts in which the Albanian language is not spoken are excepted from the provisions of paragraph (b) of this article.

The heads of religious sects and denominations shall be chosen in conformity with their respective statutes. They shall receive a decree of Exequatur (recognition) from the Government.

At official ceremonies precedence shall be given to the ecclesiastic who is most senior in his office.

Article 4. All religious associations, communities and institutions, such as mosques, tekkes, churches, monasteries, etc., shall be recognised as legal persons, and shall be represented in conformity with their religious statutes.

All such bodies shall be entitled to possess, acquire or alienate moveable and immoveable property and to possess all other civil rights which are compatible with their character. They shall also be entitled to administer their own estates.

The State reserves the right to supervise the administration of such estates and of annual incomes in accordance with the special Law on Associations.

Immoveable property may be alienated.

All associations and religious or denominational communities shall be entitled, out of their own resources, to preserve, repair, build or manage mosques, tekkes, monasteries

and other places of worship, and also their ancillary institutions, such as cemeteries, charitable establishments, etc, without hindrance, and subject to no formalities. Nevertheless, all such bodies must comply with the Municipalities Law regarding buildings.

Article 5. Communities (associations) are entitled to take disciplinary measures against their clergy and officials.

Article 6. This law shall have effect from the date of its promulgation.

Article 7. The Minister of Justice shall be responsible for the carrying out of this law.

(Signed) A. ZOGU,

President of the Council.

M. TATULANI,

Minister of Justice.