

Albania's special court has accepted the prosecution's request to send to trial the former minister of the environment

The incinerators affair saw the issue of three concessions for the **construction and operation of waste incinerators** in Fier, Tirana, and Elbasan to a company with no experience in such matters and with no demand.

First published in *Exit*, investigations revealed that the contracts would see the company being paid for every day the incinerators were not burning waste, even during the construction phase. This has seen millions in taxpayers' money be ploughed into them, to the benefit of those behind them, with nothing in the way of results.

The case relating to the Elbasan incinerator will be heard by the **Special Court of the First Instance for Corruption and Organised Crime** and relates to charges against former [environment](#) minister Lefter Koka, former MP Alqi Bllaku, five officials and business people Mirel Mertiri, Klodian Zoto and Stela Gugallja. The companies Albtek Energy and Integrated Technology Services are also subject to criminal charges.

According to the indictment, [government](#) officials awarded a concession through unannounced procurement using a procurement method not provided for in public procurement legislation.

**Koka** is charged with abuse of office, passive corruption, and money laundering while **Bllaku** as well as the five officials are accused of abuse of office, while the business people face active corruption and money laundering charges.

All the officials are currently in prison or in other security measures, while the administrators of the incinerator companies are wanted.

According to SPAK, Koka received some €1.2 million in bribes from the concession company while Bllako fictitiously employed his father in the Tirana incinerator, to the tune of €6,000 a month between October 2018 and January 2020.

Meanwhile, the government continues to pay the concessions under the terms of the contracts, arguing it cannot breach them, a point that has been disputed by local legal experts.

The EU has repeatedly called on the government to fully investigate the incinerator scandal and bring all those involved to justice, Euractiv reports.