



Monthly newsletter

February 2025



The ALSAI from 1925 to 2025, a 100-year journey of public finance control



The year 2025 marks one of the most important events in the history of public financial control in the country, the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Albania Supreme Audit Institution as the highest external audit institution in the Republic of Albania.

The Albanian Supreme Audit Institution has a deeply rooted history dating back to May 20th, 1925, under the name of the Audit Council, going through a long and difficult journey of institutional formation and development.

Subsequently, the core of the public financial control institution has been developing and improving until a genuine financial control institution was built.

This jubilee anniversary finds the ALSAI as a consolidated institution, guided by international auditing principles and standards; cooperating with counterpart institutions to benefit from the best experiences; communicating continuously with every stakeholder and with the public, guided by the principle of increasing the well-being of citizens through good governance.

Today, the ALSAI is one of the most important institutions in the management of public finances, vital for the protection of citizens' interests. Furthermore, the ALSAI is also an active supreme audit institution in the international arena.

The ALSAI has begun preparations for the activities that will be held on the occasion of this jubilee year.

The Chairman of the ALSAI, Mr. Arben Shehu, has approved the logo of the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the ALSAI, which will be used in all official documents throughout 2025, to convey the important message on the role that a "guardian" institution of public finances plays in increasing transparency, accountability and responsibility for the best and most efficient management of public resources.

Within the framework of the 100th anniversary, the ALSAI will organize a series of activities, including the organization of a scientific conference with representatives from counterpart institutions.

As part of the activities for this jubilee anniversary are: the promotion of the historical book "100 years of the ALSAI"; the preparation of a documentary about the historical journey of the institution; the issuance of a special series of postage stamps; the presentation of the new website, etc.

Meanwhile, a number of foreign delegations from various Supreme Audit Institutions around the world, leaders and representatives of international audit organizations, as well as high-ranking personalities in the country have been invited to participate in the official ceremony of the 100th anniversary of the ALSAI, which will take place on May 20, 2025.

Statistics:



7 finalized audits in 2025

7 finished audits in January

71 audits are in process

13 audit reports are published in the web

May 20th, 1925

First document establishing the Albanian Supreme Audit Institution

The first specific document with historical value of the formation of the Financial Control institution in Albania is considered the Decree-Law of May 20th, 1925 "On the formation of the Control Council". This decree-law was adopted with priority during the period of the Parliamentary Republic, led by Ahmet Zogu and entered into force on May 25th, 1925. The first Chairman of the Control Council was elected Kol Thaçi, who led the institution for 5 years.

The Financial Control Council was formed as a constitutional institution and was regulated by articles no. 93-97, part C "Executive Power" of the Fundamental Statute of the Albanian Republic.

The basic principles of the Statute for the Supervisory Council were:

Art.93 - State finances are controlled by the Financial Control Council.

Art.94 - The organisation of this council, the manner of exercising its offices and the qualifications of the members that comprise it are determined in a special law.

Art.95 - The rights of this council are the preventive and repressive control of the accounts of the entire state administration, as well as those specified in the special law.

Art.96 - The chairman and members of this council are appointed by the President of the Republic and other officials, according to the law.

Art.97 - The immovable property of the Financial Control Council is secured in the manner specified in this statute for the members of the Court of Dictation, with the exception that it is only for five years from the date of appointment of each of them.

With the establishment of the Financial Control Council, Ahmet Zogu created a political economic structure that was under his control and that, along with other measures taken, would allow him to focus on overcoming the difficult financial situation of the country and ensuring a strong external alliance to overcome economic difficulties.

This document was echoed in many official sources and newspapers of the time. The newspaper "Indipendence Shqiptare" in the article "Control Council" or "Cour des Comptes" in French, wrote:

"The formation of the Control Council will curb any injustice and abuse of power to the detriment of the treasury, and this step is considered the first step that the new Republic is taking in the campaign of accountability for actions, keeping these under very close control."



Newsletter "Albanian Independence", December 12th, 1925



Ahmet Zogu, King of Albania, 1928-1939



Kol Thaçi, Head of Control Council, 1925-1930



Decree-Law of May 20th, 1925 on the establishment of the Supervisory Council



Audit of accounts according to the French "Cour des Comptes" model

The Audit Office that was established under the government of Ahmet Zogu had similarities with the French state audit model. In accordance with the requirements of the Fundamental Statute of the Parliamentary Republic, legislation was elaborated and prepared on the State Audit Office, in French this office was called "Cour des Comptes".

"The Audit Office is an administrative authority organized administratively to control those who use state money just as civil courts control those citizens who interfere in the use of other people's property".

The adopted French model was legitimized even in the formal aspects of the identity of this institution. The circular bilingual seal of the Audit Council read "Cour des Comptes".



Bilingual seal of the Controlling Council



10 FOUNDATIONAL STONES IN 100 YEARS OF HISTORY

Budgeti konsuntiv



Year 1925

In 1925, the National Assembly approved the first Fundamental Statute of the Albanian State (Constitution), which, among other things, also defined the institution responsible for state control of public finances. It was the Chamber of Deputies, which had the attributes of an institution that had the right and duty to control the government, for the protection of the general interests of the country.

Years 1928-1939

In the years 1928-1939, the country was ruled by an institutional monarchy. In the Fundamental Statute of the Albanian Kingdom, state control underwent refinement in form and content. In this Statute (Constitution), state finances were controlled by the Control Council, which assumed the attributes of an independent body.

Years 1939-1944

In the years 1939-1944, Albania was occupied by the forces of the Nazi-fascist coalition of Italy and Germany. As a result, all activities of this supreme institution, like all other state institutions, were suspended.

Year 1945

In 1945, the Antifascist National Liberation Council, which had the attributes of a Parliament, institutionalized state control through a Control Council. The main task of the Control Council was preventive and consumptive control of state expenditures, supervision of state revenues and the activities of officials who administered state money and materials.

Year 1946

In August 1946, a complete reorganization of the control bodies took place, both in form and content. By a special law of the People's Assembly, the State Control Commission was established.

Year 1950

In January 1950, with some changes in the organic law, this institution limited the scope of its control. Its objective was only to control the accounts and expenditures of the government and the implementation of its decisions.

The basic task was defined as preventive and final control over the accounts of the state in all economic, financial and productive units; preservation of the state's monetary and material values in enterprises, agricultural cooperatives, state and social institutions.

Year 1966

In 1966, the State Control Commission was abolished. This body was reorganised into a State Inspectorate, which it maintained until 1987.

Year 1987

In 1987, by special decree, the State Control Commission was re-established, with almost the same organisation, objectives and powers that this body had in previous years. The State Control Commission continued to operate until the end of 1991.

Year 1992

In 1992, by a special law, the supreme state control institution was established. This institution was named the State Control Service. The State Control Service assumed the attributes of an organisation independent of the government. The State Control Service was the highest body of economic and financial control with the objective of organising, directing and carrying out control over the implementation of the state budget and the administration of state property.

Year 1997

The full independence, depoliticisation and de-partisanship of the Albania Supreme Audit Institution was achieved with the adoption of Law No. 8270, dated 23.12.1997 and after the adoption of the Constitution in October 1998.

In 2014, in order to align the law with international auditing standards, Law No. 154, "On the Organisation and Functioning of the Albania Supreme Audit Institution", was drafted with the support of DG Budget, SIGMA and the EU Delegation in Tirana, which is in full compliance with international standards of Supreme Audit Institutions.

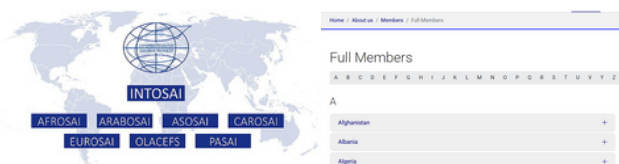
The ALSAI is the highest state external audit institution in the Republic of Albania, independent, which exercises its powers subject to the Constitution and laws in force.



Delegation of the State Control to the INCOSAI Congress, Washington DC, October 1992

The ALSAI, part of the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions since 1992

During the period 1993-1996, the State Audit Service established numerous links with counterpart institutions and international audit organizations. The State Audit Service also drafted a Code of Ethics for employees, a copy of which was sent to the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI) in 1993.



The Albania Supreme Audit Institution has been a formal member of the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI) since 1984, and an active member since 1992. Membership in this organization imposes obligations to respect international auditing standards (ISSAI).

These standards ensure the quality and professionalism of audit work, the full independence of the institution and its credibility in the public, as well as guide the main activity in improving public governance.



At the recent XXIV Congress of INCOSAI (International Congress of Supreme Audit Institutions), held on 7-11 November 2022 in Brazil, the ALSAI participated with a delegation headed by the Chairman, Mr. Arben Shehu. This congress, organized by INTOSAI, brings together the heads of supreme audit institutions from around the world and is held every 3 years.

INTOSAI is an autonomous, independent, professional and non-political organization, which aims to provide support to all Supreme Audit Institutions; to ensure high quality auditing standards for the public sector; to promote good governance, and to encourage the development of SAIs' capacities and continuous improvement of performance. This organization currently has 195 members.

Membership in the European Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (EUROSAI)

The Albania Supreme Audit Institution has also been a member of the European Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (EUROSAI) since 1993. Within the framework of this membership, the SAI cooperates with counterpart supreme audit institutions and actively participates in several working groups. Through cooperation with international organizations and counterpart SAIs, including participation in coordinated or parallel audits, it is possible to exchange experiences with the aim of increasing the professional capacities of the staff.



EUROSAI is one of the regional organizations of INTOSAI and consists of 51 members (Supreme Audit Institutions of European countries and the European Court of Auditors). EUROSAI aims to promote professional cooperation, advance the study of public sector auditing and work towards the harmonization of terminology in the field of public auditing.

COOPERATION AGREEMENT

The Chairman of the Albanian Supreme Audit Institution, Mr. Arben Shehu, hosts the experts of the Norwegian SAI in a meeting

The Chairman of the ALSAI, Mr. Arben Shehu, hosted a meeting with experts from the Norwegian SAI in the field of Information Technology (IT) and audits in the Extractive Industry.

The Chairman of the ALSAI thanked the experts for their presence and all the cooperation so far, emphasizing the importance and added value that their expertise offers in the agreed areas of cooperation. Mr. Shehu also expressed the full willingness of all the ALSAI staff to continue with professionalism in this bilateral engagement.

The OAGN experts, thanking Mr. Shehu for the meeting, appreciated the cooperation with the ALSAI staff, involved in joint activities, and confirmed the continuity of the defined programs and their assistance in IT and performance audits, but also in the newer field, that of audits in the extractive industry.



Experts from the Norwegian SAI hold working sessions at the ALSAI on IT and audits in the extractive industry

Within the framework of the joint plan of activities in implementation of the Cooperation Agreement with the SAI of Norway, on January 27-31, 2025, working sessions with Norwegian experts in the field of Information Technology (IT) and audits in the Extractive Industry were held at the ALSAI.

The working sessions in the IT field addressed several topics that included strengthening cybersecurity; understanding the mindset of hackers; developing proactive defence strategies; compliance with security laws and regulations; opportunities for professional growth in the field of IT Audit Department, as well as the IT Directorate at the ALSAI participated in this activity.



This workshop provided benefits to the participants, increasing their knowledge and reactive skills in the field of "Ethical Hacking" and "Cyber Security". Through it, the use of internal testing and penetration testing techniques was enabled, enabling staff to identify, but also mitigate potential risks or vulnerabilities that could affect the ALSAI's internal systems and network.



Also, on January 28-30, 2025, a workshop was held on "Identification of risks and auditing related to the management of the extractive industry of the oil sector in Albania". The workshop focused on the assessment of the Patos-Marinzha hydrocarbon agreement with the contractor "Bankers Petroleum" JSC. This workshop addressed several issues related to the agreement, such as: assessment of the state of the Patos-Marinzha basin in relation to the remaining oil capacity; assessment of the state of investments made over the years; assessment of oil losses or spills above or below ground during hydrocarbon operations if they are in accordance with generally accepted standards of the international oil industry, etc.

The workshop was attended by auditors from the Department of Audit of Public Companies and Foreign Investments, which is also responsible for this audit.

The ALSAI participates in the training "Information Systems Audit and e-Government Audit" in India

Within the framework of the Technical and Economic Cooperation Program of the Government of India, on January 6-29, 2025, at the International Center for Information Systems and Auditing, iCISA, in Noida, India, the international training "Information Systems Auditing and e-Government Auditing" was held. At this event, the ALSAI was represented by auditor Klara Frangaj.

The Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme provided a unique platform where participants from different countries shared knowledge and built skills needed for auditing information systems and e-government topics.

The 3-week training helped participants gain skills in assessing and improving digital governance structures, ensuring that they remain secure, efficient and reliable.



Hydrocarbon agreements are audited

From the audit carried out in the entities Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy (MoIE), National Agency of Natural Resources (NANR) and Albpetrol JSC on "Hydrocarbon Agreements executed within the Republic of Albania", for the period from the identification/proposal of concluding the agreements until 31.12.2023, deficiencies have been found in the implementation of the legal framework of hydrocarbon agreements.

Some of the problems found are as follows:

- From the evidence obtained for the activity in the hydrocarbon sector, it results that MoIE, NANR and Albpetrol JSC do not have periodic, annual programs or plans to exercise controls on entities as holders of hydrocarbon permits.
- From the audit of the bid form submitted by "EDG N. G." Ltd for the "Povelcë" and "Frakull" fields, in relation to the assessment of financial and technical capacities, it was found that the above company is not profitable (with a positive result) for the years 2018 and 2019, as well as the value of free liquidity, bank balances are insufficient for commitments in the hydrocarbon sector.
- The company "EDG N. G." Ltd does not have the financial resources and technical capacities to fulfil the contractor's obligations arising from the conclusion of the Hydrocarbon Agreement, in violation of law no. 7746, dated 28.07.1993 "On Hydrocarbons", as amended.
- "Sh. U. Albania" B.V. has not fulfilled the obligation regarding the social investment fund of 1,000,000 USD, as an obligation of the company during the suspension period.



- For Block 4, the parties, until the end of the audit period, have not found a solution regarding the status of pending costs, in the amount of 2,954,441 USD (payment of experts from Shell subsidiaries in other countries for work performed on behalf of Block 4), as an expense incurred without economy.
- NANR did not use the opportunity for training in international institutions for NANR staff, a right that derives from Article 27.4 of the IPC for the "Dumrea" block in the amount of 600,000 EUR per contractual year for the exploration period, and the annual training program prepared jointly (ENI and NANR) was not presented as income and missing investment.
- The liability of "B." for the total amount of 54,009.978 tons of crude oil, not withdrawn for the years 2019 - 2023 on account of the Pre-Existing Production (PEP) and the Albpetrol JSC Share (PPA) according to the Hydrocarbon Agreement is 18,659,033.93 USD, an amount which represents missing income for Albpetrol JSC.
- It is established that "B. P. Albania" Ltd does not pay the obligation for electricity to Albpetrol JSC, an amount which until 31.12.2023 is 1,654,040,397 ALL.

The "Environmental Services" project is audited at the Ministry of Tourism and Environment and AARD

The ALSAI has audited the "Environmental Services" project at the Ministry of Tourism and Environment and the Agency for Agricultural and Rural Development (AARD), financed with loans and grants totaling 22.8 million USD.

The "Environmental Services" project was launched on 29.01.2015 by the Ministry of Environment, with the main objective of supporting sustainable land management practices and through them increasing monetary and non-monetary benefits for communities mainly in high mountain areas affected by erosion. The project was to end on 30 September 2019, but was subject to two restructurings, which included an extension until 31 May 2021. The restructuring of the project has also increased operational costs and has led to postponements of the deadlines for the implementation of other consultancy contracts.

During 2020 and 2021, 11.86 million USD of funds were disbursed, which constitute 57% of all funds made available for 4 years (2015-2019).

When analysing the applicant files at the AARD, it was noted that applicants who had no previous experience in the field of forests and pastures were selected, and the creation of associations was observed at a time close to the application for the first or second call for projects.

In the audited files for the creation and protection of forests, the documentation sent by the winning applicants was analyzed and the plots where the project would be implemented were verified.

The verification was carried out from satellite images obtained by the State Authority for Geospatial Information (AGI), where, based on the search from the given coordinates, unforested plots resulted. In total, the value of the beneficiary associations that has been disbursed by AARD is 27,439,647 ALL. Also, at the end of the afforestation projects, no steps have been taken on the registration of these forest areas (according to the project), as one of the main goals of the development of the "Environmental Services" project.

The initial study analysis on the project idea for the implementation of the environmental service projects includes many statistics on the state of the forest system of Albania, as well as on the population living near these areas. The analysis shows the poor state of this system.

The audit team was unable to obtain answers regarding the state of the forest system and the population after the implementation of the project, whether this project has been effective in improving the problems listed in the initial analysis prepared by the World Bank.

The majority of the project financing of 22.8 million USD was spent on consultancy services and operating expenses.

Audit on the Security Academy

The ALSAI has completed the audit of the Security Academy (SA), for the period of activity from 01.01.2022 to 31.12.2023, where the main findings and conclusions are as follows:

- The audit conducted found a lack of coherence and harmonization between the legal and sub-legal framework in force. The provisions provided for in the Council of Ministers' Decision no. 320, dated 02.06.2021 "On some amendments and additions to the Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 881, dated 28.10.2020, on granting special status to the Security Academy, as the only public institution of higher education in the field of public order and security, as well as its organization and functioning", point 15, are in contradiction with article 43, point 4 of law no. 108/2014 "On the State Police", and are not implemented in the internal legal acts of the Academy.

The audit of the implementation of contracts resulted in the following:

- From the review of the receipt of goods and the examination of the goods in the warehouse, it was found that they are not in accordance with the technical specifications and evaluation criteria, causing ineffective use of funds in the amount of 3,789 thousand lek.

- For the contract with the object "Food cooking and distribution service (catering) for the Security Academy", irregularities and deficiencies were found in the procedures for the management and control of food delivered and received by the Security Academy, where for the cases treated, for which their calculation has been made possible, they result in ineffective use of funds in the amount of 9,450 thousand ALL. It was also found that another entity was included in this contract, which is not part of the framework agreement of the contracting authorities/entities, where until 31.12.2023 the value of the catering service was paid in the amount of 1,704,864 lek excluding VAT, a value which is not contracted and exceeds the provisions of the contract conditions and the values provided for in the framework agreement.

Audit on the Ministry of Defense

The ALSAI has completed the financial and compliance audit at the Ministry of Defence, for the period of activity 01.07.2021- 30.06.2023.

The audit of procurement procedures resulted in:

- Deficiencies in the drafting of procurement procedure criteria and qualification of economic operators.
- The audit of contract implementation resulted in inaccuracies for unfinished but liquidated works and overlapping of work items in the amount of 4,268,613 ALL.
- The audit of the service contract with the object: "Preventive project design, construction of the necessary infrastructure for UAVs at Kuçovë Air Base" and "Preliminary project design for the new campus of the Faculty of Defence and Security of the AAF" did not meet the legal provisions of the DCM no. 354, dated 11.05.2016, causing economic damage in the amount of 15,887,636 ALL.
- From the audit of 3 procurement procedures "Services" at the Institute of Geography and Military Infrastructure (IGMI), the legal and sub-legal acts of the LPP, in the selection of procurement procedures and qualification criteria were not applied.
- From the audit of the documentation and liquidation procedures for the project "TO BE READY" violations of contracts and deficiencies in reporting and justifying paid services were found, including unfair payments to project managers and financiers; deficiencies and violations in the management and implementation of procurement procedures. Some contracts for services and procurement were concluded in violation of the relevant regulations and the necessary documentation to prove the legality of the processes is missing. Inconsistencies were identified in the values declared for reimbursement in the FLC, causing economic damage in the amount of 18,396,391 ALL.

Audit on the Ministry of Justice

From the thematic audit at the Ministry of Justice "On the implementation of the contract for improving the electronic surveillance system in the criminal field", it resulted that:

- Article 6, point 2 of the "General Conditions of Contract", which relates to intellectual property and the delivery at the end of the contract by the Union of Economic Operators to the Contracting Authority of the Source Code, reports and maps, diagrams, sketches and any other material collected or prepared by the contractor during the implementation of the contract, has not been implemented.
 - The contract signed for the procurement of the service with no. 8383/10, dated 21.02.2017, results in it not being regularly signed on every page by the Authorising Officer, the former Secretary General; there is no page number quoted, and there is no contractual agreement on the level of service (SLA) signed and attached as an annex to the contract.
 - It is noted that the three acceptance reports were all compiled within one day (dated 21.03.2017), not respecting the weekly execution schedule according to the contract, in violation of Article 11 of the contract, Law 10 494 dated 22.12.2011 "On electronic surveillance of persons whose movement is restricted by court decision".
 - There is no complete argumentative report on how the equipment was evaluated before being accepted, or the tests that were carried out by the working group. There are only three minutes of receipt (electronic bracelet, access control system, security camera system) out of the nine items on the invoice, along with the entry slips, as well as a training document for staff in the total value of 34,236,000 ALL including VAT, while partial liquidation has been carried out in the value of 150,000,000 ALL or approximately 63% of the tax invoice.
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Audit of IT systems at the NAMMD and CEC

The ALSAI conducted an audit of the Information Technology systems at the National Agency for Medicines and Medical Devices (NAMMD).

The audit found that there is no act establishing the state database for the Information System for Registration and Control of Medicines and Medical Devices (ISRCMMD), which means that there has been no identification of the primary data of this system, as well as the secondary data needed for its smooth operation and functioning.

The “software” and “hardware” infrastructure where the Information System for Registration and Control of Medicines and Medical Devices (ISRCMMD) was established, until the end of 2022, was considered a “Critical Information Infrastructure”, based on the Council of Ministers No. 553, dated 15.7.2020 “On the approval of the list of critical information infrastructures and the list of important information infrastructures”, which belongs to the audited period. Now improved with the name “System for Registration and Control of Medicines and Medical Devices”, it does not appear to be on the list of critical or important information infrastructures, although its importance is high given the fact that its violation or destruction would have a serious impact on the health of citizens.

Fig.3 Planja e mposhtme tregjimit gjendjen e dhomës së serverëve në godinën qendrore të KQZ-së dhe asistencës së ndodhurës në të



Kabllozet e rrejtura për të gjithë godinën e KQZ-së

Barriera: Grupi i Auditimit

The audit found that the NAMMD does not have a special structure (ICT sector) or IT employees in its organisation, who have the field of expertise in each system and infrastructure "hardware" and "software" of the institution.

NAMMD is not aware of the list of internal, external and database users of the Information System for Registration and Control of Medicines and Medical Devices (ISRCMMD), their rights, as well as specific accesses for each of them. This information was requested from the IT structure of the NAMMD, located at the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, who also had no knowledge. The lack of this information and control violates the integrity, availability and confidentiality of data stored in the information system of medicines and medical devices.

The ALSAI has conducted an audit on Information Technology at the Central Election Commission (CEC), which has identified several issues, as follows:

The CEC has processed and requested data on voters' photos from the National Civil Status Registry, although this information is not defined as an electoral component in the Electoral Code. This action poses a risk of violation of privacy rights and protection of personal data.

The update of Annex I of Instruction No. 465 of the Commissioner for Personal Data Protection has been modified by adding the voters' photo as an element, although this is not defined in the Electoral Code, causing inconsistency with the existing legal framework.

The CEC structure lacks a dedicated position for data security, despite the fact that the institution manages personal and sensitive data. This situation increases the risk of loss or unauthorised access to data managed by this institution. Information security policies and procedures have not been implemented, which increases the risk of incidents that could cause loss, manipulation or unauthorised dissemination of confidential information.

The “National Program for the Modernization of the Water Supply and Sewerage Sector” is being audited

The ALSAI has conducted a financial audit “On the reporting carried out on the national program for the modernisation of the water supply and sewage sector in Albania” at the National Water Supply and Sewerage Agency (NWSSA), in which several shortcomings were found in the implementation of the regulatory framework for financial reporting.

Some of the shortcomings found are:

NWSSA grants subsidies every year to Water Supply and Sewerage Companies that are in financial and economic difficulties. It turns out that for 2020, 3 types of subsidies were given (for electricity, Covid and tax obligations), while for 2021 and 2023, the subsidy was given to cover electricity costs. It turns out that the financial situation of water supply companies is not good, as the subsidies were used to pay employee salaries, social security and taxes, which are deferred obligations. It is also found that water utilities have outstanding electricity obligations, further aggravating the situation with late payment interest for failure to repay obligations on time.

Thank you for reading!

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