

UMD: Kosovo Prime Minister Albin Kurti Pushes Irredentism in Macedonia Visit

We call on the international community to react against Kurti's firebrand rhetoric that fuels ethnic tensions and may spark further conflict in the Balkans.

WASHINGTON, DC, USA, August 15, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The United Macedonian Diaspora (UMD), the leading voice of Macedonians around the world, condemns the statements and behavior of Kosovo Prime Minister Albin Kurti during his recent visit of Macedonia. We call on the Macedonian government to publicly denounce his irredentist and nationalist proclamations. We call on the international community to react against his firebrand rhetoric that fuels ethnic tensions and may spark further conflict in the Balkans.



Map of Greater Albania behind Kurti

Namely, Mr. Kurti visited the Macedonian city of Tetovo on Friday, August 11, not accompanied by any official representative of the Macedonian government. He held a political-style rally in the center of the city cheered on by a large crowd of spectators waving Albanian national flags and flags of "Greater Albania," a 19th century nationalist dream of unifying all areas with Albanian population in the Balkans under one flag, including present-day Albania, Kosovo, large parts of Macedonia and Montenegro, as well as minor parts of Greece and Serbia. The idea of "Greater Albania" was championed by Italy's fascist WWII dictator Benito Mussolini – Italy occupied parts of western Macedonia during WWII. The highlight video of his visit, posted on Facebook by Bilal Kasami, the ethnic Albanian mayor of Tetovo, opened with the song "Welcome to Albania."

Earlier in the day, Mr. Kurti visited the municipality of Cair in Skopje, the capital of Macedonia. He was a guest of honor at a street-renaming ceremony where he proudly proclaimed victory of the Albanian people in all parts of former Yugoslavia, including Macedonia. His brash behavior was only outdone by the cultural violence the street renaming represents. The street was originally named "2nd Macedonian Brigade," a multiethnic, anti-fascist brigade that fought against the Nazis in World War II throughout Macedonia and beyond. With Mr. Kurti's blessing, it was newly titled "Adem Demakji," an Albanian nationalist who fought for the independence of Kosovo, with

little to no connection to the Albanian community in Macedonia.

The silence following these events is deafening. How long will the international community allow Mr. Kurti free rein to sow discord across the Balkans? His political doings are a direct threat to U.S. and E.U. interests in the region and should be tamed before tensions spill over into conflict.

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