

# REPORT

by Sali Berisha

## THE TRUTH BEHIND SALI BERISHA'S NON-GRATA

The transnational corruption of officials as weapon to destroy the opposition.

- Extended version -

Tirana, July 2023

REPORT<sup>1</sup>

(Extended version)

**THE TRUTH BEHIND SALI BERISHA'S NON GRATA**

*Transnational corruption of officials as a weapon to destroy the opposition.*

By Sali Berisha

Former President, Former Prime Minister and Chairman of the Democratic Party of Albania

1. In this report, I will present evidence - facts, official and public documents – of the transnational political corruption of Albanian and foreign officials. This report has been drafted from the position of a witness, who was designated non-grata by the State Department and the Home Office eight years after leaving any leading public position, and based on no evidence, facts, or documents. I make these facts public today not only to prove what I said from the beginning – that my non-grata designation had no ground and was a product of the lobbying and corrupt interests of George Soros, Edi Rama and other foreign diplomats and officials sponsored by them – but primarily to denounce the use of the trans-national corruption mechanism by the government of Edi Rama (described as the most corrupt government in Europe), as a weapon against the Albanian opposition and political opponents.

2. US Ambassador Ms Yuri Kim has declared dozens of times publicly and privately that “we have facts, but we don't disclose them”. A factfinding mission of the Council of the American Ambassadors, visited Albania on May 2023 and published recently a report (also quoted further in this document), in which it notes that they were not provided with any evidence regarding Berisha's alleged corruption and that the process of his designation does not reflect the American way of justice and that it was probably unique in the US jurisprudence. Up until today, the Department of State has yet to present any evidence, facts, or documents on which it based its decision. Therefore, hereunder I will provide the “testimony and proof” presented by the Home Office as the basis of its decision.

3. On the 21<sup>st</sup> of July 2022, Prime Minister Edi Rama announced in the Parliament that the former President, former Prime Minister, and Chairman of the Democratic Party of Albania, Sali Berisha, had been declared non-grata by the Government of Great Britain<sup>2</sup>. Three hours after this announcement, I received a confidential letter from the UK Embassy, signed in the name of the Home Secretary for the Department of the Interior but without the name of the person who signed

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<sup>1</sup> The correspondences and annexes referred below in this document, as part of the official exchanges with the U.K. Home Office, can be found at <https://www.sali-berisha.com/ukdocumentsarchive>

<sup>2</sup> <https://gazetasi.al/non-grata-edhe-nga-britania-rama-paralajmeron-serish-berishen/>

it, in which they informed me of the decision excluding me from the United Kingdom, based on my alleged ties to organised crime and corruption. (Attachment 1)

4. After learning the decision, I immediately informed the public through a press conference<sup>3</sup>, in which I denounced the decision as groundless, based on slander and fiction, and as serving the interests of the same group that had sponsored the decision of the Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken, to designate me non-grata in the United States as of 19<sup>th</sup> of May 2021<sup>4</sup>.

5. I stated at the time that although an often-repeated lie may gain ground, it can never turn into a truth. I decided to challenge the Home Office's decision and request through a legal process that they prove the accusations against me with concrete evidence.

6. The official documents submitted by the Home Office to the court explicitly stated that the main sources of their information, in number and content, are from:

a) lies from the Open Society Foundation<sup>5</sup> of George Soros, with whom I have been in permanent conflict<sup>6</sup>;

b) fabrications from the same Soros – sponsored media BIRN/ Balkan insight/reporter.al, who in Albania acts as a single media entity, as well as,

c) unfounded accusations by my political opponents – Edi Rama and his funded media, Erion Veliaj, Lulzim Basha, as well as their corrupt influence and distortion of facts to the current UK Ambassador to Tirana Mr Alastair King-Smith and his predecessor Mr Norman Duncan.

7. The documents submitted by the Home Office (HO) show that its accusations regarding my ties to organised crime specifically refer to 1) Faton Dauti, a person whom I have never met in my life and who has never had any formal or informal position in any of the Democratic Party (DP) structures; 2) Damir Fazlic, a British citizen who has never been convicted of any criminal offence, in Albania or Great Britain, and in my knowledge in no other country, and who during my government tenure has neither requested nor benefitted from public finances, concessions or public assets, and who has never sponsored the DP, myself, or any other DP official. 3) These slanders culminate in accusations about my connections with the gangs of Elbasan. Contrary to this claim, I have publicly denounced these gangs more than anyone else in Albania<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://a2news.com/2022/07/22/sali-berisha-shpallet-non-grata-nga-britania-e-madhe/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://sot.com.al/politike/dash-reagon-per-gazeten-sot-ja-pse-e-shpalleme-non-grata-berishen-aferat-i442695>

<sup>5</sup> OPEN Summary of Exclusion decision – Sali Berisha, date 12 korrik 2021, §9.

<sup>6</sup> After the expulsion from Albania in 1992 of two employees of Open Society Foundation, American citizens, Fran Nazi and Fred Abrahams, due to their cooperation with the resident of the Yugoslav Intelligence Service in Tirana, my relations with George Soros remained difficult. In 2017, due to the placement of all Soros-sponsored NGOs under the umbrella of the Socialist Party and the intervention of OSF in the justice reform, with which the justice system was placed under the control of the Rama Government, I have publicly requested that Albania designate non-grata the multibillionaire speculator George Soros, and I have called on the European Parliament and the US Congress to stop his political activity outside the US. <https://www.balkanweb.com/berisha-shperthen-nga-cadra-e-pd-soros-te-shpallet-non-grata-shba-te-hetoje-monstren-e-korrupsionit/>

<sup>7</sup> OPEN Summary of Exclusion decision – Sali Berisha, pg. 4. Annex A, §8.

**8. Regarding the accusations of my alleged ties to Fation Dauti**, in its official response that the Home Office has presented later, during the appeals procedure, it has been obliged to admit that *“It is noted that it has not been possible to sufficiently prove that BERISHA has personal connections to DAUTI.”*<sup>8</sup>.

8.1. The allegations of my connections to Fation Dauti have only one source: Lulzim Basha. On the 21<sup>st</sup> of December 2021, Lulzim Basha declared that "Berisha is accompanied by criminals, traffickers who break the doors down the hall", referring to the fact that a person, who I later learned was called Fation Dauti, kicked a door in the DP building, at the moment when the DP Refoundation Commission and I, entered the hall to conduct the meeting of this commission. Basha also stated that he would send this information to foreign embassies.

8.2. On the same day, I denounced the violence and stated in front of the media that: (i) I have never personally known Fation Dauti, and he had nothing to do with me; (ii) According to the information I received from the media (to media information), he was expelled from the United Kingdom in 2018; (iii) I was informed that he was a DP supporter, who had supported Lulzim Basha in several protests and electoral campaigns and came from a family persecuted by the communist regime.

8.3. Since then, the integrity of my statements has remained intact, and no one has been able to provide evidence that I ever had any connections to Fation Dauti. Despite this, the UK Ambassador to Albania has forwarded Lulzim Basha's fake statement to the Home Office as proof of my connections with criminals, along with disinformation that Dauti held positions within DP structures.

9. The Home Office alleges that **I have used my elected position to protect Damir Fazlic “...when evidence of his criminality emerged”**<sup>9</sup>. The Home Office cites George Soros' BIRN/Balkan Insight network as the source of this information.

9.1. Damir Fazlic, mentioned in the Home Office decision, is a British citizen who, according to my knowledge, has never been accused or convicted in the UK. Contrary to the Home Office's statement, no criminal evidence has emerged against Fazlic in Albania during my time in office as Prime Minister of Albania, and to my knowledge, not to this day.

9.2. In 2008, the Albanian Public Prosecutor (PP) started an investigation against him for his private land purchase transactions in Porto Romano only because he had transferred money from an offshore account to Albania, despite this being legal in Albania. Even though there was no indication of any violation from Fazlic, besides the Socialist Party accusations, there was no effort to stop or intervene in the Prosecutor's investigation. The PP investigation extended to his.

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<sup>8</sup> Annex D §42: See also Annex D§25, quoted below.

<sup>9</sup> Home Office Exclusion Order

activities in Bosnia, England, and Cyprus. The PP received answers from some of these countries<sup>10</sup> and could not find any irregularities or evidence of criminality.

9.3. At one point during this investigation, the PP verbally requested that Fazlic be detained at the Tirana airport and his forceful conduct for interrogation without issuing a legal warrant and without ever having summoned him before. Law enforcement agencies did not enforce the verbal request of the PP, as it violated the Code of Criminal Procedure (CCP) and the basic Human Rights (HR) guarantees established by the Albanian legislation<sup>11</sup>. Other public institutions and I denounced this PP action as a violation of the CCP and HR. According to the Home Office, this constitutes an interference with the PP's investigation. As a matter of fact, in any democracy, detention based on a legal warrant is one of the basic guarantees of human rights.

9.4. When the PP sent a written summons to Fazlic to testify, he immediately appeared at the prosecutor's office and gave his testimony. The prosecution also took testimony from many other people, including my family members, and there was no attempt to prevent this investigation. After over a year, the PP took the decision to end the investigation for lack of evidence.

**10. The same goes regarding the Home Office's allegations of my connections to the gangs of Elbasan<sup>12</sup>.** These allegations are a complete lie, transmitted to the Home Office through the corrupt lobbying of Ambassador Alastair King Smith and his predecessor.

10.1. For the first and only time, this accusation was articulated by Lulzim Basha in November 2021. He stated that in Elbasan, Berisha is collecting DP delegates' signatures to convene the DP Assembly with the help of the Elbasan gang.<sup>13</sup>

10.2. I reacted immediately against this lie, stating that I have never had any connection with any thug of the Elbasan gangs or any other gangs. I also informed the public that on 21 April 2021, after the murder of Dr Pjerin Xhuvani in Elbasan during an armed clash with DP activists, Basha called me and requested that in my statement regarding the event, which I was about to release, I should not mention the names of the gangs involved. Naturally, I refused his request and denounced all the bandits who participated in the tragic event by name<sup>14</sup>. Whereas Lulzim Basha

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<sup>10</sup> [Letër-porositë nga Bosnja: Fazlic, asnjë aktivitet të paligjshëm të ne - Arkiva Shqiptare e Lajmeve \(arkivalajmeve.com\)](https://www.arkivalajmeve.com)

[Prokuroria, subjekt i një historie të gënjeshtërtë e të motivuar politikisht për rastin Damir Fazlic - Arkiva Shqiptare e Lajmeve \(arkivalajmeve.com\)](https://www.arkivalajmeve.com)

<https://www.arkivalajmeve.com/Fazlic-dhe-Remzi-Hoxha-l-na-Rama-niset-drejt-Anglise.110255/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://balkaninsight.com/2014/09/23/my-role-in-fazlic-s-extraordinary-interview/>

<sup>12</sup> OPEN Summary of Exclusion decision – Sali Berisha, fq. 4. Annex A, §8.

<sup>13</sup> <https://dosja.al/basha-akuzon-berishen-kur-do-flet-me-emra-pse-si-dennoncon-suel-celen-e-doshin>

<sup>14</sup> <https://dosja.al/sali-berisha-i-plagosur-ne-masakren-e-elbasanit-mbeti-dhe-suel-cela-po-kurohet-ne-nje-spital-privat-me-kelmend-xhaferri-filmimet-i-kontrollon-don-lala>

<https://www.oranews.tv/vendi/nen-kujdesin-e-rames-dhe-balles-dennoncimi-i-for-te-berisha-dy-te-fortet-i-796839>

the former chairman of the DP, for reasons known to himself, did not mention any names in the statement that he released about the event on the 21<sup>st</sup> of April<sup>15</sup>.

10.3. Regarding the accusations about my alleged connection to organised crime, the Home Office has been obliged to admit that there is no concrete evidence for this accusation either (Annex D, §20) but desperately chooses absurd logic over the truth it asserts in its arguments. More precisely, Annex D§20<sup>16</sup> expressly states that (i) the sources on which the Home Office relies for its accusations about my connections with organised crime come from reports that *do not provide* concrete evidence for these connections; (ii) that it does not agree to make these reports public<sup>17</sup> and that, (iii) despite claiming that there is *no* evidence, the Home Office chooses to believe these reports, claiming that they are supported by the Fation Dauti's case, about whom a few paragraphs below (§25, 42)<sup>18</sup> explicitly states that it has not been able to prove that Dauti has any connection to Berisha; (iv) Taking the absurd to a grotesque level, in Annex D§25, after asserting once that there is no evidence of Berisha's connection with Dauti, and then that the case of Dauti nevertheless serves as proof of Berisha's connection with organised crime, in the same document (§25), the Home Office removes the brick (the evidence) of the Dauti case to its accusation regarding my alleged connections with organised groups and states "*Consequently, even if it cannot be proved that BERISHA had personal connections to DAUTI, this does not impact on the assessment that he has been connected more widely to criminals and/or organised crime groups*<sup>19</sup>".

11. In contrast with these groundless accusations, the Albanian public knows very well that through my public speeches in parliament, in my media interviews and on my Facebook, I have denounced the gangs of Tirana (Shullazi and others), the gangs of Elbasan (Suel Çela and Çapja), the gangs of Vlora (Habilaj, Geron Xhafa, Edison Harizi, Ferdinand Llana), the gangs of Durrës (Lul Berisha, Fetaj, Avdulaj), the gangs of Shkodra (Bajra), as well as other gangs in various districts of Albania. These denunciations have been widely covered by the media in Albania and the foreign media too.<sup>20</sup> A summary, perhaps incomplete, of the list of websites containing my statements against gangs and organised crime is about four pages long in a Microsoft Word

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<sup>15</sup> <https://dosja.al/basha-vrasja-ne-elbasan-e-rende-te-presim-drejtisine>  
<https://abcnews.al/lulzim-basha-vrasja-ne-elbasan-e-rende-te-presim-drejtisine/>

<sup>16</sup> Annex D §20: "The CSN Project team have assessed that the reporting indicates that BERISHA has been connected to wider criminality, albeit we assess that these indications require (and gain) support from other sources. Whilst these do not provide concrete evidence of such ties, its weight is to be assessed in combination with the video footage of BERISHA with Fation DAUTI (relied on in the original submission of July 2022), as well as the information found at Annex E. The combination of evidence allows for a reasonable degree of confidence in the conclusion that BERISHA has been connected with criminal actors and serious and organised crime. This is therefore another example of BERISHA having benefitted from criminal activity". See also §23, §24, §25§42.

<sup>17</sup> Annex E, which is mentioned in §20, has not been submitted in court.

<sup>18</sup> Annex D §42: "It is noted that it has not been possible to sufficiently prove that BERISHA has personal connections to DAUTI."

<sup>19</sup> Annex D§25. See also §23, §24, §42.

<sup>20</sup> <https://gazetasi.al/jehona-belge-e-safet-bajrit-kush-e-mbrojti-ne-shqiperi/>  
<http://www.panorama.com.al/denoncimi-kisha-informacion-te-sakte-per-5-kg-kokaine-te-enver-bajrit-por-policia/>

document. In addition to these, only on my Facebook are hundreds of posts denouncing the criminals of the aforementioned gangs.

12. I did this unceasingly, not only to denounce the powerful ties that strengthen the gangs, who, in return, feed the politics with votes and narco-euros but also, I did it to kill the fear of citizens and journalists from the gangs. Precisely because of this uncompromising stance in the fight against organised crime, throughout my career, no one has ever articulated the accusation that I cooperate with any criminal groups or gang. Therefore, the shameful accusations of my ties with criminal gangs are an encouragement to them and a cover-up for their true ties to politics.

13. In addition, I have also denounced in the media, in the national and international forums, billionaire George Soros as the main corruptor of Albanian politics, and I have denounced his plan against the democratic interest of the Albanian people<sup>21</sup>. I have perpetually criticised the corrupt decisions of Edi Rama's Government for allowing Soros-owned oil companies to operate in an environmentally protected area in Albania, creating vast pollution at the expense of human health and the environment<sup>22</sup>. Oil operations in these areas were strictly forbidden by law<sup>23</sup>.

14. As an opposition Member of the Parliament, I have denounced publicly and based on documents, the connections between the Prime Minister, his two successive Interior Ministers and their family members with the bosses of drug cartels and organised crime<sup>24</sup>. According to State Department and other international reports, these connections and cooperations have turned Albania into an operational centre for regional, European, and worldwide criminal organisations<sup>25</sup>. Albania has become the top producer of cannabis in Europe, the main road of heroin to the continent, and a crucial hub of cocaine from South America in the region<sup>26</sup>. The country is considered like Columbia or the first and unique narco-state in Europe<sup>27</sup>. According to the latest UN report, Albania is considered seventh in the world for the production and trafficking of cannabis<sup>28</sup>. Albania's overtaken by the narco-trafficking activity was enabled by Edi Rama's direct connections to these groups. His connections to the Sinaloa drug cartel were first made public by the Albanian media<sup>29</sup>. International media too, have also voiced allegations of his ties to the Sinaloa drug cartel<sup>30</sup>. In December 2023, journalist Elton Qyno, who had investigated extensively the use of SKY ECC phone devices by the Albanian criminal groups<sup>31</sup>, was detained

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<sup>21</sup> <https://albaniandailynews.com/news/berisha-describes-george-soros-as-architect-of-corruption-in-albania>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.kumtari.al/berisha-kompania-e-naftes-e-lidhur-me-george-soros-shkaterroi-shtepite-e-banoreve-te-patosit/>

<sup>23</sup> <https://55news.al/aktualitet/item/191828-si-rama-e-beri-sorosin-pronar-te-pusit-te-naftes-ne-narte-duke-shkelur-ligjin>

<sup>24</sup> <https://abcnews.al/berisha-albania-is-a-center-of-organized-crime/>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.ifimes.org/en/researches/2023-local-elections-in-albania-choice-between-drug-cartels-and-parliamentary-republic/5169>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.ispionline.it/en/publication/albanias-key-position-global-drug-trafficking-31834>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/albania-drug-cannabis-trafficking-hub-europe-adriatic-sea-a8747036.html>

<sup>28</sup> <https://lapsi.al/2023/07/03/ne-2021-ne-shqiperi-u-prodhua-3600-ton-kanabis-rekord-nga-2016/>

<sup>29</sup> <https://dosja.al/politike/fotot-ekskluzive-rama-prit-ne-zyre-ortaket-e-kartelit-sinaloa-i242770>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/bidens-strange-tolerance-for-albanias-narcostate>

<sup>31</sup> <https://24-ore.com/elton-qyno-komunikimet-ne-sky-ecc-jane-te-egra-te-etura-per-gjak/>

for interrogation by the Special Prosecutor on Corruption and Organized Crime (SPAK). His home premises were searched and his telephones and computer devices were seized. Mr.Qyno's attorney declared that these measures were triggered because Mr.Qyno had obtained information that these encrypted phones were used by high government officials, including Prime Minister Rama, the former head of the Albanian Police Ardi Veliu, officials of the vetting institutions of the judiciary, and other government officials<sup>32</sup>.

15. Rampant corruption and organised crime are principal violators of human rights and freedom, including the freedom to vote for Albanian citizens. They were the main reason for blocking the opening of the negotiations with the EU for the last six years. Worse than that, between 2014 and 2021, according to Eurostat, more than 937,000 Albanians (about one-third of the population) have fled the country, and most of them have sought asylum, mainly in European countries and the United Kingdom<sup>33</sup>. The same has happened with many foreign investors who left Albania because they did not have a chance to have proper business activity against massive due to corruption or organised crime.

16. I stress that during my term as Prime Minister (2005-2013), our zero-tolerance fight against organised crime turned Albania into a safe country, enabled our membership in NATO, the signing of the Stabilization and Association Agreement, liberalisation of visas with the EU, the receipt of EU Commission recommendation for the status of a candidate country. In all these important decisions, Great Britain voted in favour of Albania.

17. The Albanian government's zero-tolerance fight against organised crime at that time also received numerous international praises. We had remarkable and successful cooperation in the fight against organised crime, including joint covert operations with British Law enforcement agencies. Appreciating this cooperation, the General Director of the Serious and Organized Crime Agency (SOCA), Bill Hughes, in September 2009 declared in Tirana that: "You are a valuable ally of Great Britain in the fight against organised crime." and that "we will request that the cooperation model with you be extended to other countries as well"<sup>34</sup>.

**18. The Home Office's sources for its accusations of corruption against me come mainly from fabrications of the BIRN/Balkan Insight/ Reporter.al network, which in Albania operates as a single entity sponsored by George Soros and serves his agenda in this country<sup>35</sup>.**

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<https://boldnews.al/2023/10/03/nuk-lokalizoheshin-dot-gazetari-sky-nuk-ka-lidhje-me-valet-e-antenes-por/>  
as downloaded on 16 March 2024.

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.mcntv.al/2023/12/15/hetimi-p-r-gazetarin-llangozi-do-t-plaste-bomba-e-madhe-p-rmendet-rama-tar-t-vetingut-dhe>

[https://www.mcntv-al.translate.google.com/2023/12/15/hetimi-p-r-gazetarin-llangozi-do-t-plaste-bomba-e-madhe-p-rmendet-rama-tar-t-vetingut-dhe? x tr sl=sq& x tr tl=en& x tr hl=en& x tr pto=wapp](https://www.mcntv-al.translate.google.com/2023/12/15/hetimi-p-r-gazetarin-llangozi-do-t-plaste-bomba-e-madhe-p-rmendet-rama-tar-t-vetingut-dhe?x_tr_sl=sq&x_tr_tl=en&x_tr_hl=en&x_tr_pto=wapp)

<https://boldnews.al/2023/12/27/avokati-llangozi-spak-po-fsheh-pergjimet-ku-del-dhe-edi-rama/>  
as downloaded on 16 March 2024.

<https://politiko.al/e-tjera/gazetari-amerikan-rama-i-lidhur-me-kartelin-sinaloa-i474934>

<https://ndiqparate.al/?p=18310>

<sup>33</sup> <https://telegraf.al/aktualitet/kane-ikur-700-mije-shqiptare-eurostat-ne-10-vitet-e-fundit-25-e-popullise-jane-larguar-nga-shqiperia-duke-marre-leje-qendrimi-ne-be/>

<sup>34</sup> <http://arkiva.km.gov.al/?fq=brenda&m=news&lid=11482&gj=gj2>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.osfa.al/tematika/media/media-investigative>



19. In fact, one of the accusations of the Home Office is based on a title of this network, which contains just the title and a Microsoft Word document that could be produced by anyone, regarding a contract between two private telecommunication companies, with no article, explanatory text, analysis, authentic evidence, and much less investigative writing<sup>36</sup>. Two other articles<sup>37</sup> referring to Damir Fazlic and other matters contain blatant lies visible to anyone who reads them and other fabrications for which the network has declined to publish a refutation. The Home Office has been obliged to affirm in many paragraphs that these lies and distortions weaken the source<sup>38</sup>.

20. Apart from the above, the Home Office has quoted as evidence international reports that touch upon corruption issues in Albania. It is striking that the Home Office desperately use some reports, that refer exclusively to Rama's government and have nothing to do with Berisha and his government<sup>39</sup>. Others, regardless of their title, illustrate the state capture only with examples pertaining to Rama's government, whilst in relation to the DP governance period, they mention court proceedings against three government ministers. In fact, in stark contrast with the SP government, during the period of the DP government, the immunity of ministers and deputies has been removed immediately when required by the Public Prosecutor and the ministers have been subjected to investigation and a judicial process. In addition, we removed by law the immunity of officials in corruption cases<sup>40</sup>. The Human Rights Reports of the State Department (2007 – 2010), referenced by the Home Office, whilst relaying the inherited and persistent problems typical for any emerging democracy, highlight the distinct efforts of Berisha and his government, as well as their achievements, in the fight against corruption and organised crime.

**21. The expansion of the Porto Romano Park to enrich businessman Damir Fasllic and my family members.** This ridiculous and baseless accusation relies on the Soros-sponsored BIRN

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OSFA webpage: "Investigative journalism comes as an important component of the 'Concept of Impunity' of the Foundation's 2014-2017 Strategy. This component has as its main objective: Increasing investigative reporting and developing related capacities. In this context, the Foundation supports BIRN Albania, established in April 2014, as part of the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network BIRN ([www.birn.eu.com](http://www.birn.eu.com)), present through a network of editors and journalists and in other countries of the Balkans, including Bulgaria, Croatia, Montenegro and Romania. On April 1, BIRN Albania launched a three-year program, which aims to denounce corruption and impunity, through investigative journalism and close cooperation between journalists and civil society".

<sup>36</sup> [Albanian Telecoms Deal Cost '\\$1m to Buy Off Politicians' | BIRN SOURCE](#)

<sup>37</sup> [Albania Ex-PM's Daughter Takes Legal Route to Riches | Balkan Insight](https://balkaninsight.com/2014/07/14/how-berisha-s-inner-circle-profited-from-multi-million-euro-land-deals/)" <https://balkaninsight.com/2014/07/14/how-berisha-s-inner-circle-profited-from-multi-million-euro-land-deals/>

<sup>38</sup> Annex B, §89: "...Our considered view is that though this conflation weakens the article's argument, it still carries weight...". Annex B§90: "Ms Malltezi also contests two points the article makes based on Wikileaks material reporting to be a US diplomatic cable. The original referral case did not place reliance on any of the Wikileaks material referred to in the Balkan Insight article and which purports to be a US diplomatic cable. We continue not to rely on it. The UK Government can neither confirm nor deny the veracity of the Wikileaks material. We do not therefore provide further comment on these points". Annex B§98: "...However, the article does appear to conflate the three law firms, and so wrongly attributes clients of the law firm (...) to the law firm Malltezi (...)". Annex B, §99: "This conflation weakens the strength of the article's argument because these clients cannot be traced back to a law firm directly run by Ms. Malltezi"; Annex D §16/d: "...the media outlet is not infallible".

<sup>39</sup><https://www.scribd.com/document/427073869/HOUSE-OF-LORDS-The-UK-and-the-future-of-the-Western-Balkans-pdf#>

<https://www.state.gov/reports/2019-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/albania/>

<sup>40</sup> [2021 Report DeconstructingStateCaptureAlbania\\_English.pdf \(transparencycdn.org\)](#)

article, which claims that in 2009, the Government decided to expand the existing energy park of Porto Romano by 810 hectares (from 51 hectares that were approved in 2001) in order to enrich Damir Fazlic, who (almost two years before this government decision) had bought 14 hectares of land from private landowners, of which about 2 hectares from my son-in-law. This land surface was partly within the existing park approved by the previous socialist government (2001) and the rest in the newly approved plan.

21.1. Official acts, which are public and can be checked by anyone, clearly show that the expansion of the energy park was a complex process that included several layers of decision-making from the local and central government, as well as the cooperation of other stakeholders. The decision was taken, pursuant to a thorough study undertaken by the pertinent ministry, in accordance with the strategic economic interest of Albania. It is worth noting that a further expansion of the same park is currently under consideration.

21.2. **The claims that Fazlic bought this land based on insider information** are also without merit. Public evidence of legal nature demonstrates that the potential for expansion of the park had become public knowledge since the time of the socialist government, through publication in the official gazette and the national media of the several laws and concessionary contracts approved on the same area during the period 2001 – 2004 and after<sup>41</sup>.

21.3. I emphasise that the transactions of the sale and purchase of land by Damir Fazlic were made in full compliance with the legal framework in Albania and in accordance with the market conditions. They were declared at the time of signature in all controlling bodies, including tax authorities and the authorities in charge of controlling money laundering. This is a fact that the

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<sup>41</sup> The transfer of the oil deposits by the SP government in 2001, from the publicly owned port of Durres to the privately owned area of Porto Romano Energy Park, was public knowledge as it was published in the Official Journal. Few years later the land inside the park was already sold out and investors were buying land outside the approved area. Their business decisions were not relied on insider information, but on public legal information, published on the official journal and other public media. Moreover, a concession contract for the construction of a pontoon in Porto Romano was approved in 2004 and turned into law, by the Albanian Parliament. The law, the concession contract and its business plan highlighting the interest of investment in the area were published in the official gazette (Law no. 9298, date 28.10.2004, published in the Official Gazette no.88/2004.) The law was amended in 2006 to accommodate the expansion of the object of activity (on capacity and NLG infrastructures), which again highlighted and publicized the continuing trend of increasing investment interest in Porto Romano.

([http://www.energija.al/images/kuadri\\_ligjor/ligjet/ligj\\_9578\\_11\\_07\\_2006\\_portoromano\\_ndryshime.pdf](http://www.energija.al/images/kuadri_ligjor/ligjet/ligj_9578_11_07_2006_portoromano_ndryshime.pdf)  
[Pamja e dokumentit - Qendra e Botimeve Zyrtare \(qbz.gov.al\)](http://www.qbz.gov.al)).

The contract received wide media attention (<https://tvklan.al/porto-romano-jepet-me-koncesion-20-tetor-2004/>). Furthermore the Albanian legislation requires that prior consultations with the interested community are carried out for any type of infrastructure project. This is a mandatory legal prerequisite for the approval of the project by the multilayer decision making bodies further in the process. See: Law on ratification of the Aarhus Convention on the right of the public to be informed, to participate in decision making and to address to courts on matters relating to environment; law no.8672, date 26.10.2000, published in the Official Gazette 35/2000. The law "On protection of the environment", no. 8934/2002, date 5.9.2002, chapter X, articles 77-79 [Pamja e dokumentit - Qendra e Botimeve Zyrtare \(qbz.gov.al\)](http://www.qbz.gov.al) ;The law "On assessment of the environmental impact", no.8990/2003, date 23.1.2003, article 20 . [Pamja e dokumentit - Qendra e Botimeve Zyrtare \(qbz.gov.al\)](http://www.qbz.gov.al) ; Ministerial strategy for the action plan for the implementation of the Aarhus Convention, Microsoft Word - Strategjia dhe Plani i Veprimit-aarhus.doc ([eurokonventa.al](http://eurokonventa.al)) . Bylaw approved by the Minister of Environment "On the approval of the methodology for a preliminary assessment of the environmental impact of any activity", no. 6/2006.

prosecution itself has stressed in its decision to end the investigation against Damir Fazlic.

**22. Allegations of payments by a private company to local election candidates.** Based on the BIRN article<sup>42</sup> regarding some negotiations between two private telecommunication companies, the Home Office selects misleading interpretations over facts. Referring to private transactions between parties seeking to invest in the telecommunication market in Albania in 2006, it fabricates accusations against me that are pure lies, that allegedly Fazlic had requested 1 million US\$ from his partner investors as a contribution to candidates in the local elections<sup>43</sup>.

22.1. First, in quoted the Word document<sup>44</sup>, it is nowhere specified which candidates would be sponsored, but it is alluded to local election candidates without concrete names of individuals or parties.

22.2. Furthermore, the Home Office chooses to ignore its own source, the BIRN article<sup>45</sup>, which states that “Neither BIRN nor the US business partners have been able to confirm whether any money was then sent to the Democratic Party”. The same article affirms that Fazlic states the money was intended for business investments: “(...) nothing was given to me to give to Berisha or the Democratic Party” and that he “...strongly denies promising to funnel funds to the party in exchange for approval of the deal”<sup>46</sup>.

22.3. Intentionally defying publicly known evidence, the Home Office states that at the time of the alleged transactions (2006), Altelecom was a state-owned company. It is well-known and easily verifiable that 76% of Altelecom shares were privatised by the previous socialist government in 2004. The private majority shareholder (Çalik Holding) had control over management and preemptive rights over the rest of the shares, which he exercised during the privatisation of the remaining shares conducted during the DP government. Any transaction between the private joint stock company Altelecom and other companies was managed by them privately, and I had no role in it. I emphasise that during the years of the Democratic Party government, businessman Damir Fazlic has not benefited a penny from public funds or assets and has not requested or received any tender or public contract from the DP government. I also point up that this businessman, who continues his business in Albania even today, has never sponsored, directly or indirectly, me or the Democratic Party of Albania.

23. The allegations, based on the Soros-sponsored BIRN article<sup>47</sup>, regarding the case of a Pakistani

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<sup>42</sup> [Albanian Telecoms Deal Cost '\\$1m to Buy Off Politicians' | BIRN SOURCE](#)

<sup>43</sup> OPEN Summary of Exclusion decision – Sali Berisha, Annex 1, §14: “There is evidence to suggest that Berisha benefitted from his connections to Fazlic. For example, minutes from a meeting in 2006 between an American telecoms company and Fazlic regarding a lucrative telecoms contract with the state-owned Albania Telecoms company indicate the US firm was asked to provide a \$1m payment to the Democratic Party.”

<sup>44</sup> [Albanian Telecoms Deal Cost '\\$1m to Buy Off Politicians' | BIRN SOURCE](#)

<sup>45</sup> The evidence provided by the Home Office was this link: [Albanian Telecoms Deal Cost '\\$1m to Buy Off Politicians' | BIRN SOURCE](#). Another link was found amongst Balkan Insight’s articles that appears to be an expansion of the first title. Quotations are from <https://balkaninsight.com/2014/10/23/albanian-telecoms-deal-cost-1m-to-buy-off-politicians-claim-us-businessmen/>

<sup>46</sup> <https://balkaninsight.com/2014/10/23/albanian-telecoms-deal-cost-1m-to-buy-off-politicians-claim-us-businessmen/>

<sup>47</sup> [Albania Ex-PM’s Daughter Takes Legal Route to Riches | Balkan Insight](#)

investor, Zanafar Ansar, a Socialist Party appointed honorary counsel of Albania to Pakistan, who in 2008 sought assistance from my daughter's law firm for his investment in a thermal power plant, are also completely false. My daughter explained to Mr Ansar clearly, in the presence of two other participants in the meeting, that her law firm would offer legal services only for the procedures of a direct, strictly private investment that did not involve the government and did not require bidding procedures. In that meeting, he affirmed that he did not want to pursue procedures that required government intervention. He later changed his mind and requested my daughter's help to avoid the bidding process for his PPP investment. My daughter refused and explained to him that bidding was mandatory for a PPP investment and that if he chose to channel his investment as PPP, she could no longer represent him because it would be a conflict of interest. When his request to avoid mandatory bidding for public contracts of this type was denied by the pertinent government officials, Mr Ansar, without any evidence or facts, slandered and made up reasons for the rejection of his request. He alleged that his request was denied because he refused to buy a plot of land offered by my daughter's law firm. My daughter has publicly answered these accusations at the time they were made. She explained that the law firm did not possess land, hence at the request of Mr. Ansar, external experts were hired to locate potential land plots that met the specific criteria defined by him<sup>48</sup>. Contrary to his claim that he found the legal fees to be excessive, in fact, he left without paying a bill of 8,000 EUR, which he owed to the law firm for legal fees and other outsourced experts that the firm hired upon his request. My daughter answered publicly that her lawyer fees were regulated by the market and were in the same range as those applied by other law firms operating in Tirana. The National Bar Association issued a statement in this case, declaring that the legal fees were compliant with the Bar Association's legal framework<sup>49</sup>. The Albanian courts' jurisprudence has followed the same approach, in considering the lawyers' fees a matter of private agreements between the parties. Recently this practice was reinforced by the Albanian Constitutional Court<sup>50</sup>.

24. **The same article**<sup>51</sup>, propounds that my daughter acted as a gatekeeper. The bombastic headline promising to show my daughter's bank accounts and activity, to the author's shame, displays the activity and individual bank accounts of another law firm, including private accounts of other people, which without any proof, are misleadingly presented as part of my daughter's assets. The Home Office admits these flagrant fabrications in several paragraphs of its documents and

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<sup>48</sup> Mr. Ansar asked the law firm to identify suitable land parcel(s) in Porto Romano that met his specific requisition with regard to an approximate size, geological properties, proximity to the railway station and high voltage line. Geology, infrastructure and real estate experts were engaged to identify potential areas and prepare a report, which was then presented to Mr. Ansar. Moreover, Mr. Ansar was informed that the purchase of the land was not guaranteed because of the inherent difficulties of this process, related to the fragmentation of properties in the area among many owners, which increased the risk of failure of the acquisition.

<sup>49</sup> <https://durrelajm.al/dhoma-e-avokatis-shperblimi-i-avokatit-shprehe-vullneti-mes-paleve/>

<sup>50</sup> The Constitutional Court pronounced unconstitutional a legal provision that imposed a limit of 5% to the attorney's success fees. The Court declared the provision unconstitutional and a violation of the principle of economic freedom, enshrined in Article 11 of the Albanian Constitution. See The Constitutional Court of Albania, decision no.37, date 01.12.2022. Summary of the decision in English: [https://www.gjk.gov.al/web/Lista\\_e\\_Vendimeve\\_92\\_1.php](https://www.gjk.gov.al/web/Lista_e_Vendimeve_92_1.php)  
[https://www.gjk.gov.al/templates/NEModules/kerkese\\_list/konsulto.php?id\\_kerkesa\\_vendimi=3582&language=Ln\\_g2](https://www.gjk.gov.al/templates/NEModules/kerkese_list/konsulto.php?id_kerkesa_vendimi=3582&language=Ln_g2)

<sup>51</sup> Albania Ex-PM's Daughter Takes Legal Route to Riches | Balkan Insight

acknowledges that they weaken the article<sup>52</sup>. The case of Mr Ansar exemplifies the falseness of allegations on gatekeeping. The fact is that despite his connection with my daughter's firm Mr Ansar's request for exemption from the bidding process was denied.

25. **Another illustration of the fabrications served by the same BIRN article** is the case of Pirro Misha, one of my well-known opponents, a former head of the Soros Foundation in Tirana, who deceives the American ambassador by telling him that in a private contention, he had with an Italian businessman, the case was immediately resolved in his favour after the legal mediation of my daughter. The story, which is a total lie as my daughter has never been asked to intervene and did not know the parties at all, is an example of the guided strategy against me followed by Soros-sponsored media and his representatives in Albania.

26. These articles were refuted with arguments at the time of their publication through an email that my daughter sent to the editor of BIRN/ Balkan Insight, but they declined to publish her rebuttal<sup>53</sup>. In 2005, I promised during the electoral campaign that the trail of government lawsuits against journalists would end and that no member of the DP administration, my associates and my family would be allowed to sue journalists in court. Instead, they would be obliged to answer any claim publicly. In all cases, despite the partisanship of some newspapers, they have all published their rebuttals. The case of BIRN/ Balkan Insight was the only case when the media refused to publish a rebuttal that refuted their articles' arguments.

27. In absence of any corroborating evidence, **the Home Office makes groundless accusations against me, in relation to my alleged role, inciting and benefiting from the pyramid schemes some 27 years ago**. Contrary to its accusations, the evidence submitted by the Home Office<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup>Annex B, §89: "...Our considered view is that though this conflation weakens the article's argument, it still carries weight...". Annex B§90: "Ms Malltezi also contests two points the article makes based on Wikileaks material reporting to be a US diplomatic cable. The original referral case did not place reliance on any of the Wikileaks material referred to in the Balkan Insight article and which purports to be a US diplomatic cable. We continue not to rely on it. The UK Government can neither confirm nor deny the veracity of the Wikileaks material. We do not therefore provide further comment on these points". Annex B§98: "...However, the article does appear to conflate the three law firms, and so wrongly attributes clients of the law firm (...) to the law firm Malltezi (...)" Annex B, §99: "This conflation weakens the strength of the article's argument because these clients cannot be traced back to a law firm directly run by Ms Malltezi"; Annex D §16/d: "...the media outlet is not infallible".

<sup>53</sup> See email attached.

<sup>54</sup> The Home Office refers to Culture Trip and Unheard (Annex B, §13, 14, 20, 28, 131), which it states are not formal media providing news coverage. Actually, Culture Trip is a platform that offers articles about tourist trips. Its writings provide travel suggestions and not political coverage or analysis. Nor does the platform claim to have such profile of journalism (<https://comms.theculturetrip.com/about/>). In addition, chairmen of the portal accept the generation of articles through artificial intelligence (<https://medium.com/global-editors-network/culture-trip-a-business-model-combining-media-and-travel-9015dd2fb54>). They also acknowledge that the platform publishes sponsored articles and that it faces difficulties to control the content of all posts (<https://www.forbes.com/sites/samshead/2019/07/04/culture-trip-ceo-opens-up-about-bad-reviews-i-cant-say-i-find-it-easy-to-read-that-stuff/#342a7e0e5dbc>). The above could explain the fact that its article quoted by the Home Office does not provide any facts or details, but only general assessments, hence it lacks any evidentiary value ( [The Pyramid Crisis in Albania Examined \(theculturetrip.com\)](#)). The article of UnHerd ([How Albania became a pyramid scheme - UnHerd](#)) is based on interviews with representatives of the Soros Foundation, socialist ministers and Erion Veliaj and reflects their biases. The quotations of the article contain general assessments, without names or events, which cannot be considered as evidence, since no answer can be given to them. Both articles contain unfounded statements, totally contrary to reality and contradicted by legal or public facts, published in the media and the official journal. The

directly and unequivocally proves that the pyramids resulted from a lack of understanding by the Albanian Government, the IMF and WB mission, and the lack of a legal regulatory framework. In the absence of a specific regulatory framework on the private banking and non-banking financial market, the pyramid schemes based their activity on the Albanian Civil Code. The IMF expert quoted in the Home Office documents claims that the WB and IMF did not understand the Albanian Ponzi schemes at that time and *initially suggested that these schemes be licensed as banks. They warned the Albanian government about the danger of the firms only a few months before their collapse*<sup>55</sup>.

28. However, unlike in other countries in the region, public institutions in Albania were not involved and had no investment in the pyramidal schemes. The Home Office has offered no evidence to prove its accusations of my role or links to the pyramid schemes of 1997 simply because there is no connection of this kind. I was never involved with these companies and have never benefited from them. I have never participated in events or activities of any companies involved in money lending, and I have never received party donations from them. On the contrary, pursuant to my instructions, the government explored legal paths to allowing it to intervene and possibly close them down. A lawsuit was filed against one of them to assess whether this was a viable approach<sup>56</sup>. The criminal investigation of these schemes from the Public Prosecutor revealed no connection or involvement of the DP government or Berisha with them. After their collapse, the leaders of the pyramid schemes were arrested and prosecuted.

29. The DP government and I admitted our mistake of not understanding and allowing the schemes. As a means of resolving the political crisis in the country, we decided to hold early elections. Unlike my Socialist Party rival Fatos Nano, who promised in the 1997 election campaign, that he would return every penny lost by creditors to these schemes, I declared that we would not assume the pyramidal schemes debts, as this was not an obligation contracted by the government. Despite being aware that this decision would cost me the loss of the election, I chose to follow the law. Had the DP government or I promoted, supported, or been involved with the pyramidal schemes, we would have had the enticement to fuel money into the schemes and quell the ensuing rebellion. But subsidising and assuming the debts of the Ponzi schemes would harm those citizens who had not invested in those schemes and devalue their wealth. We refused to impose on these citizens a debt they had not taken. This standing is praised by the IMF expert whom the Home Office quotes as evidence of its allegations<sup>57</sup>. In his report entitled "The Rise and Fall of the Pyramid Schemes

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only reference that can be debated on logical grounds and verifiable facts is a report by an IMF expert who served in the IMF mission in Albania during the period of pyramid schemes. This article actually contradicts the position of the Home Office: [Finance & Development, March 2000 - The Rise and Fall of Albania's Pyramid Schemes \(imf.org\)](#). The quotations are from a more detailed version of the same author: [IMF Staff Papers - Vol. 47, No. 1, March 2000](#).

<sup>55</sup> "The first signs of distress appeared as early as 1996, when the IMF and the World Bank issued a warning to the Albanian government regarding these institutions. Neither the government nor the opposition reacted to this warning." [IMF Staff Papers - Vol. 47, No. 1, March 2000](#).

<sup>56</sup> Decision of the District Court of Tirana, no. 3450, date 30.04.1996. Decision of the Court of Appeal in Tirana, no. 467, date 5.2.1997. The district court granted decided the dissolution of the scheme. The decision was appealed by the company and the case was pending appeal by the end of the year, when the scheme collapsed. The Court of Appeal upheld the decision of the first instance court in February 1997.

<sup>57</sup> The Rise and Fall of the Pyramid Schemes in Albania, [IMF Staff Papers - Vol. 47, No. 1, March 2000](#) pg 25, 27.

in Albania", he writes that initially "Both the authorities and foreign observers, including the IMF, regarded the informal lending companies as benign, and indeed as making an important contribution to growth: given the manifest deficiencies of the formal banks, these companies were probably the best intermediaries for savings in Albania, and the investments they funded were among the most profitable."<sup>58</sup> and that for this reason, "...an IMF mission to advise on financial sector problems at the end of 1995 focused mostly on the possibilities for improving the formal financial system by integrating the most positive elements of the informal market."<sup>59</sup> He explicitly states that "The Albanian authorities did a reasonably good job in dealing with the pyramid schemes once they were identified. Undoubtedly the two best things that they did were to refuse a costly bailout from the budget and to freeze the assets in the banking system of the two companies with the most depositors. The latter move, in particular, saved the latest depositors, who usually suffer most, about half of their money."<sup>60</sup>.

30. Even more important is the praise of the Albanian government standing on this issue, by a report of the UK Parliament, regarding the 2009 collapse of investment schemes of the highly reputed UK financial institution (City and others). Whilst comparing these schemes with the Albanian pyramidal schemes of 1997, the report titled 'The Largest Heist In History. Building the Great Pyramid: The Global Financial Crisis Explained', explicitly praises the position of the Albanian government on this issue as the correct approach<sup>61</sup>. I quote:

"...City executives, traders and financiers proved to be pyramid purveyors not any more sophisticated (although perhaps better mannered) than their Albanian gangster counterparts who carried out a similar scheme 1996-97".

"Facing a complete meltdown and an "Albanian scenario," the government acquiesced to the bankers' demands by injecting cash on an unprecedented scale and giving wide guarantees."

"If governments take the route of continuing to inject money, they will make taxpayers dependent on the financial system in the same way that criminal loan sharks control their customers—their debt is ever increasing, and customers keep on paying forever as much as it is possible to extract from them."

"In a normal free market economy, a business that fails should be allowed to collapse. If a business is a giant pyramid scheme, like the current financial system, it must be allowed to collapse, and its executives and operators should face prosecution. After all, running pyramid schemes is illegal."

"If governments do not liquidate the global pyramid scheme, the money they injected will be, in time, converted into toxic instruments (e.g., securities) and cashed in by organisers and privileged customers of these schemes (or in the case of Albania, gangsters and their

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<sup>58</sup> Idem, pg. 6.

<sup>59</sup> Idem, pg. 6-7.

<sup>60</sup> Idem, pg. 27.

<sup>61</sup> The Largest Heist In History. Building the Great Pyramid: The Global Financial Crisis Explained. Memorandum from Greg Pytel. February 2009. <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmtreasy/144/144w254.htm>

customer friends).”

“Looking back to the 1990s, Albanian gangsters must feel really crossed considering that they were not offered such a "rescue" package first by the Albanian government, and then by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.”

31. Contrary to these groundless accusations, during my years as Prime Minister, the fight against corruption was one of the government’s main priorities. We established a task force against organised crime and corruption, which efforts and progress are highlighted in international reports, including the US State Department Reports (2007–2010) quoted by the Home Office. The government I led accepted every request submitted by the Attorney General's Office to remove the immunity of Cabinet Ministers or MPs with no hesitation. Furthermore, at my initiative as Prime Minister, in 2012, we removed the ministers and MP immunity for corruption cases by law<sup>62</sup>. The Council of Europe considered the removal of lawmakers’ immunity in the cases of corruption charges amongst the most tangible results in the fight against corruption<sup>63</sup>. Ironically, these achievements have been highly praised by Antony Blinken, at the time the national security advisor to Vice President Joe Biden, during my visit as prime minister at the White House<sup>64</sup>.

32. We undertook deep reforms, established *the one-stop shop* for business registration, issued permits and licenses, and became the first country in the world with a fully digital public procurement system. Our country met all the conditions to win the Millenium Challenge Corporation Compass. For all these achievements, the UN awarded Albania the world’s second prize for transparency<sup>65</sup>.

33. Thanks to this fight, Albania had an increase of the GDP *per capita*, and in a real *quantum leap*, jumped from the group of low-income countries to the group of middle-high-income countries, constructed and reconstructed of over eleven thousand kilometres of roads, doubled the salaries and pensions, the tripled foreign investments and exports.

34. During the years in opposition, I have denounced the rampant corruption of Prime Minister Edi Rama and his ministers with unrefuted facts and evidence: his silence about the OSCE report of 2014 alleging that he has 200 million euros hidden in offshore accounts, his undeclared funds for the construction of his large mansion, and his wife’s five floors palace<sup>66</sup>, as well as for hundreds of tenders awarded to his family members in flagrant violation of the law on the conflict of interest. I have publicly condemned the 18 times increase of secret procurements during the years of

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<sup>62</sup> <http://arkiva.km.gov.al/?fq=brenda&m=news&lid=6190>

<sup>63</sup> <https://www.oranews.tv/korrupsioni-kie-forconi-luften-ndaj-tij-berisha-drejtesia-ne-shqiperi-udhehiqet-nga-biznesi>

<sup>64</sup> <http://arkiva.km.gov.al/index.php?fq=brenda&m=news&lid=10337&gj=gj1>

<https://a2news.com/2021/05/19/ne-vitin-2009-blinken-vleresonte-kryeministrin-berisha-ne-luften-kunder-korrupsionit-dhe-krimet-te-organizuar/amp/>  
<https://opinion.al/ne-vitin-2009-blinken-vleresonte-berishen-per-luften-kunder-korrupsionit/> <https://dosja.al/dje-e-shpalli-non-grata-si-e-vleresonte-blinken-berishen-per-luften-kunder-korrupsionit-dhe-krimet-te-organizuar-deklarata-e-vitit-2009-qe-ruhet-edhe-sot>

<sup>65</sup> 2010 United Nations Service Award for improving transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in publicservice. <http://arkiva.km.gov.al/skedaret/Shqiperia-UNAward.pdf>

<sup>66</sup> <https://www.botasot.info/shqiperia/284788/pd-ankimon-rokaden-e-kreut-te-ildkp-shkarkimi-xhukes-e-votimi-i-ganjt-i-pavlefshe/>



Rama's government<sup>67</sup>, the disproportional increase of the price for public works, which, when financed by Albanian taxpayers' money, cost six-to-eight times more than the price of public contract carried out in Albania with the European Union financing<sup>68</sup>. I have repeatedly denounced the lack of open competition in hundreds of tenders, concessions, PPPs, government decisions, as well as laws passed in the Parliament to serve the specific interests of drug clans in Albania<sup>69</sup>. Albania, according to the World Bank, ranks today as the second country in the world for bribing<sup>70</sup>. Whereas, according to State Department reports, corruption in Albania is rampant and pervasive and at all levels of government<sup>71</sup>.

35. More recently, our denunciations regarding major corruption affairs of Edi Rama, namely the PPP for the Port of Durres and the PPP for the waste incinerators, have been followed by the heavy criticism of the reports of international institutions, such as the European Parliament<sup>72</sup>, the State Department<sup>73</sup>, and the Freedom House<sup>74</sup>.

36. In my statement of 21 July 2022, I pointed out that the Home Office decision may have been taken within the framework of the Five Eyes Treaty, as an obligation to the US. But British ambassador King Smith, rejected this claim in the media and stated that the UK had its own motives for my exclusion. In contrast to his statement, **the Home Office affirms that the decision to expel Berisha was made to comply with the decision of the US State Department**<sup>75</sup>.

36.1. On 19 May 2021, the Secretary of State Antony Blinken designated me, my wife, and my children non-grata on the grounds of significant corruption<sup>76</sup>. This groundless decision was taken eight years after I resigned from the leadership of the Democratic Party (DP), following the loss of DP in the general elections of 2013 and whilst there had never been evidence charges for corruption against me or my family members. This political decision came four weeks after the DP lost the general elections, after which I strongly opposed a possible coalition between the DP and the ruling Socialist Party, because this would leave the country without an opposition.

36.2. In an open letter that I addressed to Secretary Blinken on the same day<sup>77</sup>, I wrote that: (i) his decision was based on disinformation, under the corruptive lobbying of George Soros and Edi Rama; (ii) I asked him to make public any fact or document that his government, or any other in the planet, has on my corruption; and (iii) assured him that should there be single evidence against

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<sup>67</sup> <http://www.panorama.com.al/tenderet-sekrete-u-rriten-me-18-here-berisha-shteti-eshte-kthyer-ne-nje-makineri-vjedhjeje/>

<sup>68</sup> <https://boldnews.al/2023/03/18/berisha-80-e-buxhetit-vidhet-nepermjet-puneve-publike/>

<sup>69</sup> <https://politiko.al/shqiperia-rrezikon-te-behet-nje-narko-shtet-berisha-komenton-analizen-e-medias-italiane/>

<sup>70</sup> <https://www.topalbaniaradio.com/v7/shqiperia-e-dyta-ne-bote-per-ryshfetin/>

<sup>71</sup> <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/albania>

<sup>72</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2023-0204\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2023-0204_EN.html)

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2023-0204\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2023-0204_EN.html)

<sup>73</sup> <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/albania/>

<sup>74</sup> <https://freedomhouse.org/country/albania/nations-transit/2023>

<sup>75</sup> OPEN Summary of Exclusion decision – Sali Berisha, id., pg.1 (iii), pg. 2 (vi), pg. 8§25, OPEN Summary of Exclusion decision – Sali Berisha, Annex 1, §24. Annex B §135

<sup>76</sup> <https://www.state.gov/public-designation-of-albanian-sali-berisha-due-to-involvement-in-significant-corruption/>

<sup>77</sup> [https://botapress.info/lajmerohet-sali-berisha-i-shkruan-leterpergijgje-sekretarit-amerikan-antony-blinken/?fbclid=IwAR0Zy7iiz4cJeBpCOdsMuw-8zboi11vZ5px\\_dJX6WMN8XpSoKEBmOroMNMQ](https://botapress.info/lajmerohet-sali-berisha-i-shkruan-leterpergijgje-sekretarit-amerikan-antony-blinken/?fbclid=IwAR0Zy7iiz4cJeBpCOdsMuw-8zboi11vZ5px_dJX6WMN8XpSoKEBmOroMNMQ)

me, I would immediately withdraw from politics. On the 20<sup>th</sup> of May 2021, I informed the public that I had filed a lawsuit for defamation against Secretary Blinken in Paris (Tribunal Judiciaire de Paris)<sup>78</sup>.

36.3. On the 21<sup>st</sup> of May 2021, the spokesperson of the State Department stated to an Albanian newspaper that the decision against Berisha is based on (i) media articles, (ii) NGO reporting, and (iii) Edi Rama's government reporting<sup>79</sup>. It is noticeable that the sources referenced by the Home Office are the same Soros-controlled non-governmental organisations and media, as well as statements of my political opponents.

36.4. As of 19<sup>th</sup> of May 2021, the Department of State has not submitted any evidence, fact, or document to prove its accusations against me, despite repeated requests from Congressman Lee Zeldin and the media<sup>80</sup>. Congressman Lee Zeldin stated to Secretary Blinken during a hearing that, your decision comes out of nowhere, because we have investigated and have not seen anything about corruption in relation to Sali Berisha, and that there is concern regarding the fact that this decision is influenced by George Soros. Congressman Lee Zeldin sent three letters, at different times, to Secretary Blinken and received no concrete documents or facts from the State

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<sup>78</sup> [Former Albanian President to sue US State Secretary Antony Blinken – EURACTIV.com](https://euractiv.com/en/news/former-albanian-president-to-sue-us-state-secretary-antony-blinken)

<sup>79</sup> <https://sot.com.al/politike/dash-reagon-per-gazeten-sot-ja-pse-e-shpalleme-non-grata-berishen-afere-i442695>

<sup>80</sup> <https://m.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/may/28/sali-berisha-ex-albanian-leader-rejects-us-charges/>  
<https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/jun/7/antony-blinken-pressed-alleged-george-soros-link-u/>  
<https://www.worldtribune.com/secretary-of-state-antony-blinkens-family-ties-to-george-soros-run-root-deep/>  
<https://nypost.com/2022/02/06/antony-blinkens-horrific-stain-on-albania-and-its-all-for-george-soros/>  
<https://exit.al/en/comment-sanctions-as-a-tool-of-us-foreign-policy-the-use-of-public-designation-under-section-7031-c/>

[Former Albanian President to sue US State Secretary Antony Blinken – EURACTIV.com](https://euractiv.com/en/news/former-albanian-president-to-sue-us-state-secretary-antony-blinken)

<https://euronews.al/shpallja-non-grata-e-berishes-philips-nuk-u-zbatuan-parimet-themelore-te-ligjit/>

<https://www.campuslately.com/the-office-of-the-attorney-general-of-donald-trump-strongly-attacks-us-secretary-of-state-for-george-soros/>

<https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/oct/28/sali-berisha-gets-antony-blinken-defamation-lawsuit/>

<https://bongino.com/former-albanian-president-sues-secretary-of-state-blinken-for-defamation-cites-connections-to-soros/>

<https://bongino.com/secretary-of-state-blinkens-family-ties-to-george-soros-exposed/>

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/16122021-the-misleading-influence-of-foreign-ambassadors-in-albania-oped/>

<https://exit.al/en/comment-the-usas-diplomatic-disaster-in-albania/>

<https://www.neweurope.eu/article/amateur-hour-for-us-diplomacy-in-albania/>

<https://freebeacon.com/biden-administration/zeldin-accuses-state-department-of-sanctioning-former-albanian-president-as-retribution-for-loyalty-to-republicans/>

<https://creativestructuremedia.com/video/2022/04/15/io-episode-112-former-albanian-pm-and-opposition-leader-sali-berisha/>

<https://www.neweurope.eu/article/interventionist-us-ambassador-in-tirana-under-pressure/>

<https://bongino.com/former-european-president-exposes-how-soros-infiltrated-his-country>

<https://www.ifimes.org/en/researches/the-role-of-open-society-foundation-in-putting-the-justice-system-under-the-control-of-the-albanian-socialist-party-through-the-judicial-reform/494>

<https://exit.al/en/2022/04/22/appeals-court-remands-pd-leadership-case-as-berisha-and-us-ambassador-trade-accusations-of-interference/>

<https://www.newsmax.com/nikolakedhi/autocracy-berisha-churchill/2022/06/20/id/1075249/> Donald Lu, George Soros cohort, plays Albania political games - Washington Times

Department<sup>81</sup>. In dozens of articles, American newspapers have evidenced a connection between this decision, George Soros's interference, and the close family ties of George Soros with the family of the Secretary of State Blinken<sup>82</sup>.

36.5. At the end of July 2021, during his visit to Tirana, the Assistant Secretary of State, Philip Reeker, demanded that Berisha be expelled from the parliament due to Secretary Blinken's decision without any evidence, facts, or documents.

36.6. Entangled, in what with time was revealed to be a web of blackmailing and illicit rewards, and under strong pressure from the United States Ambassador to Tirana, Yuri Kim, on the 9<sup>th</sup> of September 2021, Lulzim Basha, declared his decision to expel me from the Democratic Party parliamentary group. This decision was taken in violation of the country's Constitution, of the DP statutory rules and without any consultation with the party structures. Lulzim Basha adamantly refused all calls to convene the party forums to vote on his decision.

36.7. Information which emerged later showed that Basha had pawn-acted under the constraint of a criminal investigation against him, the case known as the *Russian money*. Earlier media articles<sup>83</sup> had alleged that Basha received Russian finances, which he then used for paying lobbyists in the US. This information was later reiterated through foreign intelligence and other media reporting<sup>84</sup>. Albanian Public Prosecutor's (PP) attempt to investigate the source of 720.000 EUR, met with resistance by the US Ambassador Kim, who is alleged to have prevented the PP from obtaining a testimony of a key US witness. However, the PP investigation encompassed a probe into the potential use of undeclared funds from Basha<sup>85</sup>, a violation which, according to Albanian legislation, is punishable by up to 6 years of imprisonment. Upon completion of the investigation and upon what is believed to be Edi Rama's direct influence, the PP used a legal technical manoeuvre not to file the indictment against Basha on time<sup>86</sup>. Yet, this tactic does not prevent the PP from re-opening the case in the future, hence turning Basha into a pawn of Rama's political interest<sup>87</sup>.

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<sup>81</sup> <https://lapsi.al/2021/06/08/non-grata-e-berishes-kongresmeni-leter-dash-kerkoj-nje-shpjegim-te-detajuar-mbi-procesin-e-ndjekur/>

<https://politiko.al/english/e-tjera/berisha-non-grata-kongresmeni-amerikan-i-shkruan-letren-e-trete-dash-it-i448425>

<sup>82</sup> Idem. See also Richard Grenell, speech in the Conservative Political Action Conference, July 2021, available at: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2926070501045396>

[Blinken Acts as Agent of George Soros in the Balkans | American Center for Law and Justice \(aclj.org\)](https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2926070501045396)

<sup>83</sup> <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2019/03/prosecutors-question-albanian-politician-on-payments-from-russia-linked-firm-to-gop-lobbyist/>  
<https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2019/06/the-head-of-albanias-conservative-party-faces-criminal-charges-and-an-ex-trump-aide-is-involved/>

<sup>84</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-62897570>  
[https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/short\\_news/albanian-political-parties-spar-over-russian-funding-allegations/](https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/short_news/albanian-political-parties-spar-over-russian-funding-allegations/)

<sup>85</sup> DP officials testified at the PP that the small amounts of funds that were disbursed from the DP were all declared in the pertinent agencies.

<sup>86</sup> <https://5pyetjet.al/2022/09/14/zeri-i-amerikes-si-u-mbyll-dosja-e-bashes-per-parate-ruse/> <https://politiko.al/e-tjera/500-mije-nga-rusia-mother-jones-dosja-e-lulzim-bashes-per-lobim-u-mbyll-i467141>

<sup>87</sup> See also

36.8. For this reason, in accordance with the statute, we collected the signatures of 62% of the delegates of the DP National Assembly and deposited them in the DP headquarters one month before the meeting of the Assembly. On the 11<sup>th</sup> of December 2021, the assembly of the Refoundation of DP convened, and we approved the DP statutory changes. On the 18<sup>th</sup> of December 2021, Lulzim Basha was dismissed from the position of chairman of the DP by a referendum of DP members. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April 2022, the membership of the Democratic Party elected Sali Berisha as the party's Chairman through another referendum.

36.9. Since my expulsion from the DP parliamentary group, US Ambassador Kim has engaged in an open public campaign, with weekly statements against me, and has intervened in court proceedings against the DP<sup>88</sup>. She has put constant pressure on the Albanian prosecutor's office to open a criminal case against Sali Berisha. The latter has controlled every aspect of my activity for decades and that of my family members without being able to find any violations.

36.10. In December 2021, during an interview given in Tirana, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the State Department, Gabriel Escobar, was asked by the interviewing journalist: "Does your help for justice mean that you will provide evidence and files and data for the Albanian justice system when it comes to the case of Mr Berisha and his family? Mr Escobar replied: Yes, we can do it<sup>89</sup>." Until today, after almost two years, no proof, fact, or document has been brought in or reported. This is because there is no proof, facts, or document, and the decision of my designation non-grata is based on transnational corruption.

36.11. Some of the most important figures in US politics have expressed their concern about the lack of evidence supporting the decision of the Secretary of State against me and the corrupt influence of George Soros in this decision<sup>90</sup>.

36.12. In a recent TV interview, Richard Grenell, the former Acting Director of the United States National Intelligence (DNI), explicitly stated that (i) during his time as DNI, despite being very involved with the Balkans, he never saw any accusation for corruption, files or evidence, against Sali Berisha, although if there was anything of that kind, he should have known, (ii) that the actions of the Secretary of State Blinken are driven by partisanship against conservatives, and that (iii) it

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<https://www.balkanweb.com/financimet-ruse-ne-pd-berisha-mesazh-bashes-mos-kujto-se-u-mbyll-ky-problem-do-dalesh-ketu-para-e-do-deklarosh/>

<https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2023/02/how-the-case-of-arrested-fbi-agent-charles-mcgonigal-is-tied-to-russia-linked-influence-effort/>

<sup>88</sup> <https://abcnews.al/ke-ndikuar-ne-gjyq-yuri-ki-i-pergjigjet-berishes-shba-do-vazhdoje-betejen-kunder-korrupsionit/>

<https://lapsi.al/2023/07/01/ambasadorja-e-be-hohmann-ajo-qe-shkateroi-modelin-yuri-kim/>

<sup>89</sup> <https://al.usembassy.gov/sq/sq-teskt-i-intervistes-se-zv-ndihmes-sekretarit-te-shtetit-te-shba-gabriel-escobar-me-sokol-balla-real-story-news-24/>

<sup>90</sup> <https://lapsi.al/2021/06/08/non-grata-e-berishes-kongresmeni-leter-dash-kerkoj-nje-shpjegim-te-detajuar-mbi-procesin-e-ndjekur/>

<https://politiko.al/english/e-tjera/berisha-non-grata-kongresmeni-amerikan-i-shkruan-letren-e-trete-dash-it-i448425>

See also: Richard Grenell, speech in the Conservative Political Action Conference, July 2021, available at:

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2926070501045396>

Blinken Acts as Agent of George Soros in the Balkans | American Center for Law and Justice (aclj.org)

<https://euronews.al/shpallja-non-grata-e-berishes-philips-nuk-u-zbatuan-parimet-themelore-te-ligjit/>

is unacceptable and suspicious that despite several requests from Republican US Congressmen to Mr Blinken to inform them on the evidence on which his decision against Berisha is based, he has refused to submit any evidence, both in the open and in classified sessions, despite being legally bound by the obligation to inform the Members of Congress<sup>91</sup>.

36.13. The corruption scandal of Charles McGonigal, the former head of the counter-intelligence of FBI for NY, has revealed that Rama had engaged Charles McGonigal and his team, during his time in office, against the opposition and myself<sup>92</sup>. The US and other countries' newspapers<sup>93</sup> have indicated that the State Department's decision to designate Berisha was carried under the influence of Rama's corrupt lobbying and that McGonigal and his team (Marc Rossini and Lou Bladell) were directly involved in Berisha's case<sup>94</sup>. I would like to add that, similar to McGonigal, but vested with political means, the United States Ambassador to Albania, Juri Kim, engaged in fierce fights towards the destruction of the Albanian opposition and the support of Edi Rama's government. Due to her anti-opposition stances, she was often branded as the Secretary of the Socialist Party of Albania<sup>95</sup>.

36.14. Concerns on the non-transparent and the undemocratic approach followed in the adoption of the DoS decision against Sali Berisha have been echoed in strong terms by the Council of American Ambassadors<sup>96</sup>. In its report following a fact-finding mission in the Western Balkans,

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<sup>91</sup> <https://politiko.al/e-tjera/grenell-per-sanksionimin-e-berishes-skame-pare-dosje-ne-dash-blinken-i-p-i483586>

<sup>92</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/03/nyregion/fbi-intelligence-charged-albania.html>

<https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/the-albanian-shakedown-a-new-twist-in-the-fbis-charles-mcgonigal-scandal>

[Former FBI agent Charles McGonigal's side work puts bureau under new scrutiny - The Washington Post](https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/the-fbi-balkan-scandal-keeps-spreading)

<https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/the-fbi-balkan-scandal-keeps-spreading>

<sup>93</sup> [Hunter Biden's link to disgraced ex-FBI official Charles McGonigal \(nypost.com\)](https://nypost.com/2023/02/03/hunter-biden-link-to-disgraced-ex-fbi-official-charles-mcgonigal/)

German journalist, Herbert Bauernebel, a NY correspondent of Bild newspaper, declared in an interview for Syri TV ([here](#)), that Sali Berisha's case is interesting because according to documents of the U.S. Department of Justice and to investigations of American journalists, it appears that McGonigal is involved in the operation of the non-grata designation of former President and Prime Minister Sali Berisha.

<sup>94</sup> Regarding the role of Rossini see, [Ekskluzive në Top Story/ Mark Rossini kritika të forta: Berisha po bëhet kukull e Putinit - Top Channel \(top-channel.tv\)](#)

In reference to Lou Bladel, according to the U.S. Washington indictment, on March 4th 2018 McGonigal introduced to PM Rama his predecessor at the FBI, former agent Lou Bladel. As a result of that meeting, the Albanian Government signed a direct secret contract with EY, represented by Lou Bladel, on May 28th, 2018. PM Rama presented the contract, totaling 375K EUR, declaring that this "is not an agreement for consulting services, but an agreement leading to joint activities in the field". On October 8th, 2018, Sokol Balla, an Albanian journalist well known for his very strong ties to PM Rama, publishes a tweet ([here](#)) referring to internal sources, that "Bladel is heading an investigating team examining opposition {DP} corruption and accusation files".

For the role of McGonigal's team see [Q&A Rama/McGonigal: the plot behind the effort to eradicate the DP \(campaign-archive.com\)](#)

[Lucas: Follow the \\$\\$ through case of spies & State Dept. \(bostonherald.com\)](#)

<sup>95</sup> <https://www.syri.net/op-ed/603344/yuri-kim-po-iken-si-nje-hije-e-zeze-nga-shqipëria/> <https://www.syri.net/op-ed/603895/yuri-shqiptareve-u-ke-ngrene-buken-dhe-u-ke-permbysur-kupen/>

<https://lapsi.al/2023/07/01/ambasadorja-e-be-hohmann-ajo-qe-shkateroi-modelin-yuri-kim/>

<sup>96</sup> According to its website, the Council of American Ambassadors is a nonprofit and nonpartisan organisation of non-career US ambassadors, which "convenes roundtable discussions with Ambassadors to the United States, organizes overseas fact-finding missions, publishes a bi-annual journal, *American Ambassadors Review*, administers *American Ambassadors Live!*, the Council's digital platform for foreign affairs commentary, and educates the public about foreign policy issues affecting the national interest."

in May 2023, the Council considers this designation as a unique case in the US jurisprudence and notes that they were not provided with evidence (underlining added)<sup>97</sup>:

*“Prime Minister Rama and his Socialist Party of Albania now enjoy virtual monopolies of the national government and of local and regional elected offices. The once-ruling Democratic Party made a series of gravely mistaken calculations and abandoned Parliamentary seats in favor of joining street protests in 2017 and thereafter boycotted 2019 provincial and local elections it claimed were rigged. We visited shortly before nationwide municipal elections, and the Democratic Party was fighting to win back seats but was badly hampered by internal divisions that Rama’s party is credited by some with helping to foment and finance.*

*In May 2021, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken took the advice of the U.S. Embassy and designated former Albanian President (1992-1997) and Prime Minister (2005-2013) Sali Berisha — who led Albania’s first post-Communist government and set the country on a democratic path — as permanently excluded from eligibility to enter the United States. Section 7031(c) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act of 2021 gave Secretary Blinken and future Secretaries of State the power to designate an individual and his/her family on the basis of evidence of criminality or corruption presented and considered in camera, without any opportunity for challenge. The United Kingdom followed suit, and Berisha acknowledged in mid-2022 that he was no longer eligible to visit the UK. Based on this, Lulzim Basha, Chairman of the Democratic Party in Albania, expelled Berisha from the party, leading to a split in the main opposition party in advance of the municipal elections.*

*Several members of our delegation questioned Ambassador Kim and her country team members closely about the decision to ban Berisha from the United States and the timing of the decision seeking:*

- *hints of what evidence might justify such sweeping and final action against a politician formerly close to the United States;*
- *information about whether such accused persons ever had access to mechanisms for contesting accusations or evidence;*
- *whether the appearance of electoral interference and favoritism had been thoroughly weighed in advising Secretary Blinken;*
- *precedents for the application of this policy in similar cases.*

*Ambassador Kim and her staff assured us the evidence supporting the determination was substantial, but firmly communicated that they could not share any of it. They also acknowledged that the process was an entirely in camera determination exempt from adversarial contest and without appeal. This is highly unusual, if not unique, in U.S. jurisprudence. Berisha sympathizers complained to us that his designation was akin to a Star Chamber proceeding, the antithesis of the American due process tradition. Ambassador Kim did, however, intimate that the fight against corruption was of such fundamental importance to U.S. policy and of such high priority that Biden administration officials considered it important to make an example of someone — to underscore that no one is above the law or immune when it comes to crimes of corruption. We are mindful that Berisha is 79 years old and might be considered to be approaching the end of his political life, a dispensable political figure to some, but it is not the American way of justice to target someone else as an object lesson for an actual culprit. This would be more akin to the*

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<sup>97</sup> As extracted from the full report, downloaded on 13 March 2024, from [Council of American Ambassadors](#)

*Chinese adage about “killing the chickens to scare the monkeys.” Berisha has filed suit in France against the U.S. Secretary of State, and he is represented pro bono by a prominent Washington lobbyist.”*

**37. The Home Office states in its documents that its decision was not coordinated with and is not intended to support Edi Rama, although the facts speak differently.**

37.1. Two years before being designated non-grata by the US Department of State, Edi Rama was the first to make this fact public in the Albanian parliament<sup>98</sup>. Moreover, Edi Rama was the first to declare in parliament, too, that I would be declared non-grata by the United Kingdom before I received notification from any source, including the official channels<sup>99</sup>.

37.2. After I initiated the movement for the Refoundation of the Democratic Party, the UK Ambassador to Albania started campaigning against it, trying to persuade my associates not to support my initiative for the Refoundation and not to support my election as the Party’s chairman.

38. Rightly, one might ask: How could the distinguished Home Office base its accusations and decisions on absurd lies, slander and fabrications?

39. The truth is that these accusations are clear evidence of the corrupt connections of the UK Ambassador Alastair King-Smith and his predecessor Norman Duncan in Tirana, who, under the corrupt influences of Edi Rama and his government, have relayed as truths to the authorities of their country, the lies of the Soros-controlled media, and statements from my political opponents. Based on these falsehoods and fabrications, these diplomats, as corrupt as Charles McGonigal, have engaged in the destruction of the Albanian opposition and the strengthening of Edi Rama’s power and autocracy.

40. Examples of Ambassador King-Smith's disinformation are provided in several paragraphs of the documents submitted by the Home Office in this proceeding. From several falsehoods he sent to his government, I quote Mr King-Smith's fabrication that Sali Berisha launched public attacks against the UK government after the exclusion order<sup>100</sup>. It is easily verifiable that this statement is an outright lie. There is no public statement or communication whatsoever in which I attack the UK government for any reason. On the contrary, I have denounced in my public statements in the Parliament and my interviews in the Albanian<sup>101</sup> and UK media<sup>102</sup> the attacks of Edi Rama and his ministers against the government of the United Kingdom on the issue of illegal emigration of Albanians, as well as on the export of criminality from Albania to the UK and other countries. I add here that as a former President and former Prime Minister of this country, after the fall of the

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<sup>98</sup> <https://www.oranews.tv/article/kryeministri-sfidon-berishen-e-kalon-dot-oqeanin>

<sup>99</sup> <https://gazetasi.al/non-grata-edhe-nga-britania-rama-paralajmeron-serish-berishen/>

<sup>100</sup> Annex G52: “...disputed Democratic Party leader Sali Berisha has launched public attacks against both HMG and HMA Tirana personally”.

<sup>101</sup> <https://politiko.al/ditari-i-opozites/pd-denon-gjuhen-e-rames-berisha-britanise-analizoni-pse-shqipt-i470104>

<sup>102</sup> <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11421577/Albanians-streets-demonstrate-against-government-rising-cost-fuel-food.html>

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11421577/Albanians-streets-demonstrate-against-government-rising-cost-fuel-food.html>

communist dictatorship, I worked with a special dedication and commitment for the restoration of diplomatic and wide-ranging relations with the UK and towards the complete resolution of all issues between the two countries, deriving from the communist past of Albania. On my official visits to Great Britain, I was received with respect at Buckingham Palace, 10 Downing Street, and the British Parliament. I have had the great honour of receiving members of the Royal family in Albania, distinguished members of the House of Commons and House of Lords and members of the British government. From its foundation, the Democratic Party of Albania has always had close and valuable cooperation with the Conservative Party of Great Britain. During my years in office, the UK has provided invaluable support for the country's transformational reforms, its membership of the Council of Europe, NATO and its progress towards EU integration.

41. In the aforementioned document<sup>103</sup>, being aware that the slanders and fabrications against me, which the Ambassador has sent to his government, do not stand and cannot be defended in court, the ambassador writes that " If Berisha's legal challenge to his exclusion is successful HMG will face international reputational damage, particularly in the Western Balkans region."<sup>104</sup>. In the logic of a perpetrator, he adds that: "Withdrawing Berisha's exclusion ahead of his legal challenge would lead to at least as significant – and likely greater – reputational damage."<sup>105</sup>

42. The recommendations above by Ambassador King Smith in Tirana are a desperate attempt to protect himself from his wrongs and to cover up the disinformation he has provided to his government. His main argument for maintaining the sanctions against me is not the truth supported by any evidence, but the damage that would be caused to the reputation of the UK if the unjust exclusion decision against me is overturned by British justice, due to the total lack of evidence. According to this reasoning, the reputation is damaged not by maintaining a decision unwarranted by evidence but by correcting an unjust decision.

43. In his recommendations, Ambassador King Smith shows that he is willing to ignore justice, law and honesty, which are essential elements of his country's reputation, and all this said to protect his chair and denigrate an innocent man with falseness.

44. In his recommendations to not revoke the unfounded Home Office decision, he uses blunt political arguments against me in the absence of evidence. Demonstrating evident partisanship, he states his concern that the revocation of the Home Office's decision against Berisha will positively affect the result of the Democratic Party in the local elections: "... This risk is heightened by the timeline for local elections which take place in May 2023, where Berisha faces a tough challenge to retain his party's share of the vote and seats"<sup>106</sup>.

45. Furthermore, he uses another absurd political argument while recommending that the exclusion order be upheld. He advises his government: "Dropping the Berisha exclusion could present reputational risks to HO and wider HMG. The UK has received recent public criticism from senior Albanian leaders (including PM Edi Rama) over the presentation of Albanian migrants in the

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<sup>103</sup> Annex G.

<sup>104</sup> Annex G§4.

<sup>105</sup> Annex G§5.

<sup>106</sup> Annex G, §4.



media.”<sup>107</sup>. Whilst it is true that Edi Rama, on political grounds, has accused the British conservative government of racism during the ongoing refugee crisis, these attacks have nothing to do with me, and no sound mind can understand how this could be an argument against the revocation of the groundless HO order against me.

46. Striving to corroborate the fabrications that he has submitted to his Government against Berisha, Ambassador King Smith, presents Carlo Bollino, (an Italian journalist and media owner residing in Albania) as an impartial witness. In the media reliability assessment, he states that shqiptarja.com and Report. tv, owned by Carlo Bollino, are “...slightly leaning towards the government, although not too much”<sup>108</sup>. The narration is a mockery of reality and Albanians living in this country. Carlo Bollino is known in Albania not only for his blind support for Rama and his government but first and foremost, for the public accusations that Rama rewards his services by granting him, directly or through people related to him, lucrative concessions, public contracts and assets by the government and other corrupt enterprises. These facts have been widely publicised in the Albanian media<sup>109</sup>, but the Ambassador has chosen to ignore them and to portray a completely deformed narration to the HO.

47. Several sources in Albania testify that after lying to his government about my alleged links to criminal groups and corruption, Mr King – Smith now desperately knocks on the doors of Albanian ministries and government institutions requesting documents or facts about Berisha’s corruption, claiming that “...we need information because we risk losing the court case”.

48. The public opinion and Albanian media have been vocal in noticing that the HMA, whilst on the same tune with the government of Edi Rama, works against the opposition, and by doing so damages the check and balance mechanisms that a true opposition provides in every democratic society<sup>110</sup>. In deep contrast with this approach towards the opposition, Mr. King Smith’s attitude with respect to the government, has been continuously regarded by the media as an unusual behavior<sup>111</sup>.

49. In conclusion, the accusations of the Home Office pertaining to matters from twenty-five to

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<sup>107</sup> Annex G§7.

<sup>108</sup> Annex F, §11.

<sup>109</sup> <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/albania/>  
<https://pd.al/2020/09/endri-hasa-skema-e-korrupsionit-si-transferohen-parate-e-tenderave-te-fituar-nga-igligjelishti-ne-llogarite-e-carlo-bolinos/>  
<https://dosja.al/denoncimi-i-pd-hasa-rama-i-dha-1-milard-lek-carlo-bolinos-permes-kompanise-se-igligjelishtiparate-e-tenderave-shkon-per-makiazh-te-propagandes-qeveritare-deklarata>  
<https://www.cna.al/denoncim/skema-korruprive-e-carlo-bollino-s-qe-nuk-u-cua-ne-spak-i354641>  
<https://www.cna.al/aktualitet/carlo-bollino-si-misionar-i-mediave-apo-lepires-i-pushtetit-i348866>  
<https://www.cna.al/aktualitet/carlo-bollino-si-fjale-e-lire-si-ka-perfituar-nga-parate-e-shqiptareve-i349066>  
<https://www.cna.al/2022/01/05/milionat-e-inceneratorave-pushtojne-mediat-kikia-mbeshtet-denoncimin-e-cna-al/>

<sup>110</sup> <https://www.syri.net/politike/577614/mediat-britanike-groposin-ramen-ambasadori-do-te-gropose-opoziten/>

<sup>111</sup> <https://dosja.al/politike/king-smith-alastair-king-smith-si-depertoimes-socialisteve-ambasadori-i249565>  
<https://www.podiumi.com/2021/10/11/vetem-ne-shqiperi-behen-ambasadoret-e-huaj-guvernator-e-vip-a-se-ne-britani-dhe-kudo-ne-perendim-nuk-i-njeh-as-komshiu/>

fifteen years ago are baseless and do not prove even a single violation of the country's laws. All references that are presented as evidence by the Home Office to corroborate the decision for my exclusion are based in total falsities, libel, false interpretations of media articles controlled by George Soros and baseless accusations of my political opponents. At no time do they prove any connection with corruption, organised crime, or any kind of legal violation or illegal benefit from me, my family members, DP or other persons mentioned therein.

50. Therefore, my exclusion is a classic case of the successful use of transnational corruption of foreign officials by Edi Rama's government, as a weapon to sanction political opponents and destroy the opposition, therefore protecting his government and his own corruption and links to organised crime.

51. The goal of sanctioning Sali Berisha is, primarily, to devalue and question the trustworthiness of a voice that continues to denounce, more than anyone else, the hundreds of corrupt affairs of Rama's government, probably the most corrupt government in Europe, including the mega affairs of the incinerators, and of the Port of Durrës, which were recently denounced by the European Parliament and the State Department.

52. Secondly, the sanction is a tool that seeks to invalidate the voice that has denounced more than anyone else the connections of Edi Rama and his ministers with crime and with the drug cartels in Albania, the Sinaloa cartel of Mexico and in other countries in the world. Therefore, the baseless decision of the Home Office represents a typical case of using sanctions not to discourage organised crime and corruption, but for proper political revenge.

53. Third, Ambassador King-Smith and his predecessor, like McGonigal, were used by the Albanian government as a weapon to obliterate the opposition and consolidate in Albania the mono-party regime of Edi Rama. The obliteration of the opposition annihilates the hope and ruins a free society. Today, the policies of Edi Rama's regime, have transformed Albanians into boat people. According to Eurostat, during the years 2014-2021, 937,000 citizens left Albania towards the Schengen area.