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Albanian ultra-nationalists burn Northern Epirote flag at World War 2 monument for Greek martyrs



The Albanian ultra-nationalist movement Djempes e Laberias- “Boys of Laberia” has made another provocative action against the Greek minority in Northern Epirus, southern Albania.

This time they have burnt the flag of Northern Epirus in Kleisoura (Κλεισοῦραι, Albanian: Këlcyra).

The flag of the Autonomous Epirus was burnt today in the cemetery of Kleisoura, in the presence of the regional channel “ALPO TV” owned by Aristotel Petro, a businessman who supports and strengthens the anti-Greek action of extremist groups and has been declared persona non grata from Greece since last year.

The ultra-nationalists climbed the legendary and blood-stained Hill 731, which was the modern Thermopylae during the Greco-Italian War and removed the flag from the historic monument to burn it in the presence of television camera.

The ultra-nationalists said “this rag (flag) has no place in our lands” and “long live the Albanian nation from Nis (Serbia) to Preveza (Greece) and from Skopje to the island of Corfu (Greece).”

The Boys of Labëria have also said that on June 17 they will protest at the front of

the Greek Consulate in Argyrokastro (Αργυρόκαστρο, Albanian: Gjirokastër).

Argyrokastro is one of the main centres for the Greek minority in Northern Epirus, where the region has over 120,000 indigenous Greeks.



Greek autonomy should exist in Northern Epirus under the Albanian state because of the Corfu Protocol signed on May 17, 1914, between the representatives of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Greeks of Northern Epirus, headed by Georgios Christakis-Zografos who was representing about 250,000 people, and the newly formed Albanian state headed by Prince William of Wied.

This was done with the mediation of the International Commission of the six Great Powers even though Greece liberated the region from Ottoman rule during the Balkan Wars. The Greek Army liberated the Greek-majority area, but the Great Powers decided to award the region to the newly formed Albanian state.

The Great Powers after World War 2 again handed over the region to Albania even though Greece liberated it again during the Italo-Greek War, and Albania was an ally to the Axis Powers, in which Greece fought against.

To this day, Greeks in Northern Epirus are discriminated against by journalists and politicians, as reported by Greek City Times. The Greeks also continue to have their

properties confiscated without compensation, bilingual signs removed, and harassment from police and Albanian ultra-nationalists.

Perhaps the implementation of the Corfu Protocol needs to be re-explored for the approximately 120,000 Greeks still living in Northern Epirus so that they can better protect themselves from not only state harassment, but from ultra-nationalists who defile areas where Greek martyrs are buried.

[Source](#)