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KOSOVO PLEDGES TO PROTECT SERBIAN ORTHODOX RELIGIOUS SITES IN NEW AGREEMENT WITH SERBIA



At the White House on Friday, Serbian and Kosovar leadership signed an agreement on economic normalization that President Trump hailed as a “truly historic commitment.”

The talks leading up to the agreement focused on job creation and eventually establishing lines of transportation from Belgrade to Kosovo’s capital city of Pristina.

However, the agreement, signed by Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić and Kosovar Prime Minister Avdullah Hoti does not constitute recognition of Kosovo by Serbia, Vučić emphasized, reports the Albanian Daily News.

“There is no mutual recognition. People in Serbia can breathe freely,” he said.

The agreement also directly addresses the fate of Serbian Orthodox religious sites: “Both parties pledge to protect and promote freedom of religion, including renewed interfaith communication, protection of religious sites and implementation of judicial decisions pertaining to the Serbian Orthodox Church, and continued restitution of

Holocaust-era heirless and unclaimed Jewish property.”

If upheld, the agreement would be a major step forward, considering Kosovo’s history of persecution of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

“It is also important that both parties are obliged to promote the protection and free cultivation of various religions, interfaith communications, and in particular the protection of religious sites, as well as the implementation of court decisions regarding the properties of the Serbian Orthodox Church,” President Vučić commented.

“With this we have managed that the Americans guarantee us the inclusion of court decisions both for the property of the Patriarchate of Peć and the monastery of Dečani, for which the Americans assured us that these will be safe properties for Serbian priests and Serbian believers,” he explained.

Just three weeks ago, it was reported that Kosovar authorities are illegally constructing a highway through Dečani Monastery property, and that the Serbian Orthodox bishop of Raška and Prizren in Kosovo was unjustly stopped and harassed at the border.

Other points include Serbia moving its embassy in Israel to Jerusalem and the recognition of Hezbollah as a terrorist organization.

And: “Both parties will work with the 69 countries that criminalize homosexuality to push for decriminalization.” This point “is very important to them,” President Vučić said, referring to the American officials who mediated the deal.

Kosovo politicians are already actively working towards legalized gay civil partnerships.

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