

Israel, Kosovo to Establish Diplomatic Relations Today in Trump-Brokered Deal

Israel and Kosovo will establish full diplomatic relations in a virtual ceremony to take place today, making Kosovo the first Muslim-majority nation to have an embassy to Israel in Jerusalem.

Kosovar Foreign Minister Meliza Haradinaj-Stublla announced the event, to be held with Israel's Foreign Minister Gaby Ashkenazi, in a video on her official Facebook page.

Haradinaj-Stublla had planned to visit Israel for the signing this week, but the trip was postponed after Israel stopped all flights due to COVID-19.

"Recognition by Israel is one of the greatest achievements for Kosovo, coming at a key moment for us, thanks to the United States of America, our common and eternal ally," Haradinaz-Stublla says as reported by *The Times of Israel*. She also calls Israel's recognition of Kosovo one of the country's "greatest achievements," thanking the U.S. for facilitating it, and mentioned Albanians who assisted in the saving of Jews during the Holocaust. She says Israel has returned the goodwill by supporting taking in Kosovar refugees during the country's quest for independence from Serbia.

The decision on mutual recognition between the two nations was achieved last September at a White House summit of Kosovo-Serbia leaders in the presence of then-President Donald Trump. At the same meeting, Belgrade also agreed to move its embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, although this has not yet taken place, reports the *Arab News*.

Most Western nations recognize Kosovo's independence, but

China and Serbia do not. The Trump administration officially recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital in late 2017 and moved the U.S. Embassy there in May 2018. {eo}

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