
ALBANIA'S CHAMS WANT GREEK APOLOGY FOR WARTIME EXPULSION

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Greece, which dismisses the Cham issue as non-existent, and neighbor Albania have started talks on a number of issues including their borders and a state of war law still active in Greece since Italy invaded it from Albania in World War Two.

The talks are intended to reach agreements by Orthodox Easter on April 8 to ensure Albania has no obstacles in its path to the start of accession negotiations with the European Union, of which Greece is a member. Both are members of NATO.

The Chams are enraged that their demands are being neglected and at the idea that Tirana and Athens could agree to drop terms like Chameria and Northern Epirus, respectively the name Albanians use for lands in Greece and Greeks for lands in Albania.

Addressing a rally of a few thousand Chams at the gate of the compound where the Greek Embassy is located, Shpetim Idrizi, the leader of the Cham party, said they wanted first an apology for thousands of Chams killed at home, not in the battlefield.

We Albanians of Chameria do not want a revenge, we do not want a change of borders, we want an apology so we can be able to forgive and the two peoples can live peacefully and we can return to live in our homes. We are peaceful, Idrizi said.

We want to get back to our homes, to get back the status we had before we were violently removed. We do not ask for our properties, we want our homeland, and our homeland is Chameria, Idrizi said to applause from the peaceful crowd.

Demonstrators held up placards reading Chameria Genocide; We will never forget.

Idrizi dismissed allegations by Greece that the Chams collaborated with the Nazis, and pointed to large photos held aloft by supporters purporting to show the collaboration of Greek wartime leaders with the Nazi occupiers.

After two rounds of talks between the foreign ministers of Greece and Albania, Greeces Foreign Ministry categorically in late January denied statements by Albanian officials that the Cham issue had been included in the talks.

It is one thing for the Albanian side to want to raise the issue and another for the issue to be accepted for discussion, it said. We call on the Albanian side not to raise issues that hinder the sincere and constructive dialogue that is under way.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-albania-greece-chams/albanias-chams-want-greek-apology-for-war-time-expulsion-idUSKCN1G800O?il=0>

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