



Ethnic Cleansing from the Balkans to Palestine

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Contents

01

**Ethnic Cleansing from
the Balkans to Palestine**
4

02

**Israel's Role in the
Bosnian Genocide**
7

03

**Israel's Covert
Colonisation of Albania**
10

04

**The Israel–Serbia
Alliance**
13

05

**Israel–Kosovo
Relations**
16

06

**Israel–Bulgaria
Relations**
19

07

**Israel–Croatia
Relations**
22

08

**Palestine Solidarity
in the Balkans**
25

09

Western Media Bias
29

*

Endnotes
34

“At the end of 1994, an investigation into the remains of a mortar grenade on Sarajevo airfield revealed that it bore Hebrew letters, and in August 1995, a news programme on Israeli television reported that private Israeli arms dealers were supplying the VRS [Bosnian Serb Army]. This must have taken place with the consent of the [Israeli] government.”

A 2002 report by the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation.⁹⁷

Nederlands Instituut
voor
Oorlogsdocumentatie
NETHERLANDS INSTITUTE FOR WAR DOCUMENTATION

01

[◀ BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

Ethnic Cleansing from the Balkans to Palestine



01

Ethnic Cleansing from the Balkans to Palestine

Palestine has served as a prism through which Balkan collective histories of ethnic cleansing, war, and occupation have been viewed and rearticulated.⁷¹



Bosnia

Like Palestinians, who continue to be ethnically cleansed by the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) across occupied Palestine, Bosnians – particularly Bosniak Muslims – were ethnically cleansed by Serb forces during the 1992-1995 Bosnian War, which took place following the breakup of Yugoslavia.¹

Both the IOF and Serb forces employed similar tactics of siege, ethno-religious supremacy, indiscriminate killing, and the targeted slaughter of men and boys, in their respective genocidal campaigns.²

Like the besieged Gaza Strip, the Bosnian city of Srebrenica – among other towns – suffered from years of siege which culminated in the 1995 Srebrenica genocide.³

As Israel's genocide in Gaza unfolded, several Bosnian scholars and activists drew parallels with the genocide against Bosniak Muslims and the ongoing Israeli genocide in the besieged Gaza Strip, such as the use of dehumanising language, intentional killing of children, and the weaponisation of humanitarian aid blockades.⁴



Kosovo

Kosovo and Palestine have shared similar struggles for self-determination and have both been subject to European occupation.⁵

Like the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians by Zionist settlers, Kosovan Albanians also suffered from ethnic cleansing by Serb forces in the 1999 Kosovan war, when over 90 percent of Kosovo's population was forcibly displaced and thousands were slaughtered.⁷

This shared experience of genocide has informed Palestine solidarity groups in Albania. One of the largest grassroots organisations in Albania, the Free Palestine Collective, reflected on how the genocide of Kosovan Albanians influenced their work: “We are Albanians, we have lived through genocide, and we understand what it means.

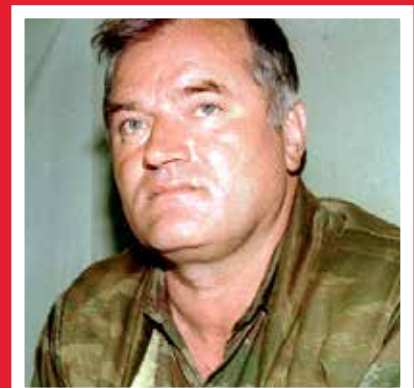
It's not a special status that we hold; but we lived it, and that means we understand it and we don't want anyone else to ever experience it either. Today it's the Palestinians; tomorrow it could be an entirely different people.”⁷²

One photograph from protests in Albania shows a protester holding a sign saying “Israel = Serbia, Netanyahu = Milosevic, Palestine = Kosova, Palestinian Resistance = UÇK,” referencing the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA)'s Albanian name – highlighting the shared struggles of both peoples.¹⁹

“From Israel – they offer joint combat against extreme Islam – offer the training of our men in Greece at their expense. They offer us special weapons for 500 men – snipers for free.”

Ratko Mladić

Serbian General convicted of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity in Bosnia by the ICTY, in his diary.⁸



02

[◀ BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

Israel's Role in the Bosnian Genocide



02

Israel's Role in the Bosnian Genocide

During the breakup of the former Yugoslavia and Serb forces' invasion, ethnic cleansing, and genocide in Bosnia, Israel ignored the UN arms embargo in place by exporting arms, including ammunition and rifles, and providing training to Serb forces.⁹

These arms exports continued long after the publication of a numbers of testimonies exposing the Bosnian genocide and the creation of Serb concentration camps.¹⁰

Serbian General Ratko Mladić – who was convicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia (ICTY) for genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity – explicitly mentioned in his journal Serbia's arms trade with Israel at the time.¹¹

An Israeli volunteer in a humanitarian organisation in Bosnia during the war testified that in 1994, a UN officer asked him to look at the remains of a 120mm shell with Hebrew writing on it, that exploded on the landing strip of the Sarajevo airfield.¹² He also testified that he saw Serb forces in Bosnia carrying Uzi guns made in Israel.¹³

In 1995, Israeli arms dealers, in collaboration with the French, closed a deal to supply Serbia with LAW missiles while Serbia was committing genocide.¹⁴

A Dutch report on the Srebrenica genocide also recorded that “Belgrade considered Israel, Russia and Greece its best friends”, and October 1991 – a month after the arms embargo came into effect – “Serbia closed a secret arms deal with Israel.”¹⁵

Israel did not just profit financially from these arms exports to Serbia during the Bosnian War – they were part of a deal with the Serbian government to allow Israel to encourage Jews from Sarajevo to colonise Palestine.¹⁶ A 2002 report from the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation recorded that after the start of the siege of Sarajevo in 1992, Jews were permitted to leave.¹⁷

In 2016, the occupation's Supreme Court rejected a petition calling to reveal details of the Israeli government's arms exports to the Serbian army during the Bosnian genocide, citing potential damage to Israel's foreign relations “to such an extent that it would outweigh the public interest in knowing that information, and the possible prosecution of those involved”.¹⁸

This denial and stated reason further reveals the significance of Israel's involvement in arming Serbia and complicity in the Bosnian genocide.²⁰

“[During the ethnic cleansing of Bosnia] Belgrade considered Israel, Russia and Greece its best friends. In autumn 1991 Serbia closed a secret arms deal with Israel [after the UN arms embargo].”

A report prepared at the request of the Dutch government on the investigation of the Srebrenica genocide.²¹



03

[◀ BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

Israel's Covert Colonisation of Albania



03

Israel's Covert Colonisation of Albania

Zionists are attempting to infiltrate Albania through land theft disguised as real estate development and cultural domination.²²

Ivanka Trump and Israeli asset Jared Kushner are trying to colonise Albania's Sazan Island, a former military base and nature reserve, home to dozens of endangered species, including flamingos, seals, and sea turtles.²³

Trump described herself and Kushner as “finding” the island, promoting a colonialist narrative that erases Albanian history and indigeneity to the island.²⁴

This discourse has clear parallels with Zionist imperial narratives about “making the desert bloom”, which erase Palestinian indigeneity to the land of Palestine, as well as Palestinians' rich history of agricultural cultivation, being famous for produce such as olives, oranges, dates, and strawberries.²⁵

On 23 May, protests began in the Albanian village of Zvërnec against the real estate development on Sazan Island.²⁶ Since then, protests have continued every day, and grown in number across Albania, in what is being termed the Flamingo Revolution.²⁷

Protestors are demanding an end to the development of Sazan Island and the corruption of Albanian politicians, including demanding the resignation of Albanian Prime Minister, holding placards reading: Albania is not for sale, and depicting Albanian land being colonised by Israel.²⁸

Kushner's ties to Israel have raised concerns that the island will be used as an Israeli military asset in the European Mediterranean, with the so-called resort having the potential to act as a front for Israeli operations on the island.²⁹

The existence of numerous bunkers and tunnels across the island means that the island is a prime location for Israeli military operations, and such activity could take place covertly without public awareness.³⁰

Given Trump and Kushner's documented links to Jeffery Epstein's paedophile and child sex trafficking ring, concerns have also been raised about the potential for Sazan Island to become a new Epstein island.³¹

Released correspondence to Epstein in 2012 described Albanian girls as “extraordinary”, and the island's use as a former military base means that there are numerous tunnels and bunkers that could be used to conceal illegal activity.³²

The real estate colonisation of Sazan Island is not an isolated incident of theft.³³ Albanian land has also been confiscated from locals by the government and sold to real estate developers for luxury tourist resorts elsewhere across the country.³⁴

Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama has clearly been compromised by Israel.³⁵ Rama described the belief that Zionist imperialism is one of the major devils in global politics, as propaganda.³⁶ He has also spoken at the Knesset, prayed at the Western wall in occupied Jerusalem, overseen the launch of an Israel Allies Caucus, and is selling off Albanian land to Israeli-linked investors.³⁷

From 9-12 June 2026, Albania's Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation ran a so-called Israeli ‘cultural festival’ known as ‘Israeli Culture Week’, in collaboration with the Israeli Embassy in Tirana.³⁸ The event hosted Israeli singers, dancers, and theatre performers, in a clear attempt to normalise genocide.³⁹ Over 600 Albanian cultural figures signed a petition opposing the event.⁴⁰

“I left the barbed wire in occupied Palestine, and I found it in Zvërnec. A week ago, I left the executioners in occupied Palestine and found them in Zvërnec. Edi Rama is not the Prime Minister of Albania, he is Israel’s governor in Albania... That the fence will be removed, there is no doubt. That the project will be cancelled, there is no doubt. What we demand is resignation!”

Baki Goxhaj

speaker at the 1st of June protest against the ecocidal project in Pishë Poro-Nartë, two weeks after he returned from the Global Sumud Flotilla mission to Gaza.⁴¹



04

[◀ BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

The Israel-Serbia Alliance



© EPA, Baz Ratner, Pool

04

The Israel–Serbia Alliance

The Serbian government has openly supported Israel during its genocide in the besieged Gaza Strip, being a key military partner for Israel during the genocide.⁴²

Since the genocide began, Serbia's arms exports to Israel reached €114 million in 2025 – 42 times higher than exports prior to October 2023.⁴³

In 2026, Serbia also announced plans to open a factory to produce drones for Israeli weapons manufacturer Elbit Systems, which have been used to massacre Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip.⁴⁴

Immediately after the genocide began, some of the largest pro-Israel demonstrations in the world took place in Serbia's capital, Belgrade.⁴⁵

In 2025, Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić remained during Prime Minister Netanyahu's speech at the UN General Assembly, despite many delegations leaving the hall in protest of his campaign of genocide.⁴⁶

Following the UNGA, it was announced that Serbia and Israel are in the process of negotiating a free trade agreement between the two countries to expand economic and technological trade.⁴⁷

Serbia has also hosted Israeli football and basketball teams Maccabi Haifa and Maccabi Tel Aviv for their home games in international tournaments since the beginning of the genocide.⁴⁸

From 2021 to 2025, trade between Israel and Serbia has quadrupled, exceeding \$250 million in 2025.⁴⁹

In September 2020, the Serbian government previously recognised Jerusalem as the capital of the Zionist entity following pressure from US President Donald Trump during his first term.⁵⁰

Serbia's support for Zionism predates even the existence of the Zionist entity.⁵¹ In 1917, the Kingdom of Serbia was the first country to write in support of the Balfour Declaration.⁵²

“The government of Serbia is one of Israel’s strongest and most determined allies, without any shame. I hear that Serbia could become a centre for drone production and that lithium in this country could be used for militarisation. No one will benefit from such a partnership.”

Francesca Albanese

UN Special Rapporteur on the
Occupied Palestinian Territories.⁵³



05

[◀ BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

Israel-Kosovo Relations



© Amir Cohen, Reuters

Israel–Kosovo Relations

Despite their shared struggles for self-determination, the Kosovan government has not supported the Palestinian self-determination struggle due to their reliance on U.S. support for their recognition and statehood.⁶

For over a decade, Kosovan governments and political elite have consistently adopted a pro-Israel stance in order to gain its recognition as an independent state.⁵⁴

Consequently, Kosovan political elites have claimed that Kosovo’s recognition should “be judged as a case unto itself rather than by comparing it to the Palestinian declaration of independence”, and developed close ties to Israel.⁵⁵

In September 2020, Israel officially recognised Kosovo as an independent state, as part of normalisation agreements brokered by US President Donald Trump during his first term.⁵⁶ In exchange, Kosovo was the third country, and the first Muslim-majority nation, to move its Israeli embassy to Jerusalem.⁵⁷

This agreement was part of wider US-sponsored normalisation agreements between Muslim-majority countries and Israel, with the Israeli Foreign Minister stating that the agreement with Kosovo reflected “a change in the region, and in the Arab [and] Muslim world’s relationship with Israel”.⁵⁸

Following the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 2021, Israel has cancelled visas for Kosovan citizens wishing to travel to occupied Palestine.⁵⁹

In 2025, Israel signed two memorandums of cooperation with the Kosovan Ministry of Education and Ministry of Environmental Protection to develop collaboration in technology, education, academic, and environmental protection.⁶⁰

“People [in Srebrenica] were in their state of pain and sorrow and memories, but at the same time, they had the commitment to stand up against genocide and oppression and injustice. You could see it in the flags that they were waving. They weren’t waving Bosnian flags, they were waving Palestinian flags. They were wearing Palestinian flags, they were wearing the colours of Falasteen and “Free Falasteen” on their shirts, on their backs. [...]

Bosnians are my people. And not just because we share the same religion, but because they’ve been oppressed and I’ve been oppressed. [...] And it doesn’t matter who it happens to – whether it’s those in Bosnia, those in Palestine, or [...] First Nations peoples.”

Khaled Sultan

a Palestinian visiting Bosnia during the 30th anniversary memorial events for the Srebrenica genocide.⁶¹



06

[◀ BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

Israel-Bulgaria Relations



06

Israel–Bulgaria Relations

Bulgaria's close relationship with Israel dates back to the Zionist entity's inception, with Bulgarian Jews constituting five percent of all Jewish colonisers arriving to occupied Palestine between 1948 and 1954.⁶²

Since then, Bulgaria has remained one of Israel's most reliable allies in the world, particularly in southeastern Europe.⁶³

In 2012, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Israeli Ministry of Defense and the Bulgarian Ministry of Economy, Energy, and Tourism to promote military industry cooperation.⁶⁴

In 2022, Israeli exports to Bulgaria totalled \$62.8 million, while Israel imported \$320 million worth of goods from Bulgaria.⁶⁶

By the end of 2023, Israeli investments in Bulgaria amounted to €298.1 million.⁶⁷

Bulgaria also serves as a gateway through which Israeli policies, business initiatives, and energy projects are expanded into the Balkan region and Europe more broadly.⁶⁸

Bulgaria has continued to support Israel during its genocide in the besieged Gaza Strip, banning pro-Palestine demonstrations in the country and voting against UN resolutions condemning Israel's conduct in Gaza.⁶⁹

**“If it wasn’t for
the courage, for
the resilience, for
the sumud of the
Palestinian people,
for the snaga [strength]
of the Bosnian people,
[...] our peoples wouldn’t
be here today.”**

Nehal Al Tarhuni

a member of the Palestinian-Lebanese
community, whose son is Bosnian.⁷⁰



07

[◀ BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

Israel-Croatia Relations



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Israel–Croatia Relations

Croatia’s leadership is currently divided over their level of cooperation with Israel, with the pro-Israel Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic supporting a close relationship, and Croatian President Zoran Milanovic being critical of Israel’s genocide in the besieged Gaza Strip.⁷³

In October 2023, the Croatian government voted against the UNGA’s resolution calling for an “immediate, durable and sustained humanitarian truce leading to a cessation of hostilities in Gaza Strip.”⁹¹ Days before the vote, the Croatian Minister of Foreign Affairs Grlić Radman visited Polish-Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.⁹²

In 2024, Croatian exports to Israel had a value of over \$84.9 million, increasing by eight percent a year for the past five years.⁷⁴

As of May 2025, Croatia’s president ordered the suspension of all cooperation between the Croatian Armed Forces and the IOF due to Israel’s violations of international humanitarian law.⁷⁵

In October 2025, Croatian President Milanovic refused to meet with Foreign Minister Gideon Sa’ar during Sa’ar’s official visit to Zagreb, remarking that his visit was unacceptable while Israel’s genocide against Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip continued.⁷⁶

Since November 2025, the Croatian president has refused to approve the proposed Israeli ambassador “due to the policies of the current Israeli government”.⁷⁷ This is the first time in Croatian history that a Croatian president has withheld approval of an ambassador’s appointment.⁷⁸

“Why was the Israeli Foreign Minister invited to Zagreb, and why did the Speaker of the Croatian Parliament, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Government of the Republic of Croatia meet with him?”

At a time when the Israeli government and army are expelling the entire population of Gaza City and announcing an attack on that city of one million inhabitants, meeting with a member of that same government is actually supporting Israel’s policy of violence, ethnic cleansing, and war crimes.

How wrong it is to meet with a member of the Israeli government [who] compares the Croatian Homeland War and the Israeli aggression on Gaza. This is offensive to Croatia and all the victims of the aggression on Croatia because Croatia defended itself, unlike Israel, which is rampaging and killing tens of thousands of people in Gaza.”

Zoran Milanovic
Croatian President.⁷⁹



08

[◀ BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

Palestine Solidarity in the Balkans



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08

Palestine Solidarity in the Balkans



Albania

Since October 2023, pro-Palestinian protests in Albania have been among the most sustained in terms of duration, mobilisation of resources, and social media attention, even if they have not always been massive in scale.⁸⁰

Pro-Palestinian activists, including grassroots groups such as Palestina e Lirë, Shalqi për Paqe, Liri Palestinës, the Balkan Solidarity Network and other activist and online groups, have launched national campaigns to boycott socio-cultural activities organised by the Israeli Embassy in Albania and to sustain boycotts of Israeli products.⁸¹

In June 2024 and 2025, these grassroots groups established and curated the Month of Palestinian Culture in Albania.⁸²

The grassroots collective Palestina e lirë — Free Palestine — has been involved in a number of initiatives since 2023, including drafting the petition ‘Not in My Name’, which was signed by over 6,500 people in opposition to Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama being awarded the presidential medal of honour by Israeli President Isaac Herzog in 2024.⁸³

Albanian activist Baki Goxhaj filed a criminal complaint against Israeli Chief Rabbi Joel Kaplan for participating in war crimes and crimes against humanity, who has been resident in Albania since 2012.⁸⁴



Bosnia

Many large pro-Palestine demonstrations against Israel’s genocide in the besieged Gaza Strip have taken place in Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia.⁸⁵

During the 2026 World Cup, tens of thousands of Bosnian fans chanted “Palestina!” and brought Palestine flags to wave before all of their matches.⁸⁶

Palestine Solidarity in the Balkans



Croatia

Pro-Palestine protests have been held in Croatia under the banner ‘Not in Our Name’, including direct action protests and demonstrations in the public square in front of the Croatian government.⁹³

These protests have largely been organised by the Free Palestine Initiative, a broad coalition of different groups and individuals, who also organise teach-ins on Palestine to educate the Croatian public.⁹⁴



Kosovo

In Prishtina, the Feminist Collective for Thought and Action and the Social Space for Deconstruction have mobilised for Palestine in protests, film screenings, and talks.⁸⁷



Serbia

Despite the Serbian government’s close relations with Israel, a growing pro-Palestine movement in Serbia has protested Israel’s genocide in the besieged Gaza Strip and their government’s complicity.⁸⁸

One of the main protest groups organising these demonstrations is Women in Black, a Serbian civil society group known for its decades-long anti-war activism. The group held signs reading “Stop the genocide in Gaza” and “End military aid to Israel”.⁸⁹

In April 2026, dozens of protesters gathered outside Serbia’s state broadcaster RTS in Belgrade, demanding the nation withdraw from the then upcoming Eurovision Song Contest due to Israel’s participation.⁹⁰

“We very well know how important it is for a nation that is suffering to have someone who will keep mentioning it worldwide.

Bosnians (and Bosniaks especially) know very well how it feels to be exposed to genocide and how it feels to fight not only aggressors, but also to fight for justice and the right to be heard and supported globally. In that context, we stand for Palestine maybe even more than others. We have been in the same shoes, and it is our obligation to let Palestinian people know that we feel them and understand them.”

Lejla Turcilo

a professor at the University of Sarajevo's Department of Communication.⁹⁵



09

[◀ BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

Western Media Bias

© TRT World



09

Western Media Bias

Failure to condemn Serbia's collaboration with Israel to build killer drones

Western media has failed to condemn Serbia's decision to collaborate with Israeli weapons manufacturer Elbit systems to produce drones used by the Israeli Occupation Forces to massacre Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip.



REUTERS

**Serbia and Israel to jointly manufacture
combat drones, Vucic saysw**



INDEPENDENT

**Serbia agrees to produce
combat drones with Israel**

AP

**Serbia agrees to produce
combat drones with Israel**

Western Media Bias

Failure to condemn Serbia for hosting Israeli matches

Western media has failed to condemn Serbia's decision to host Israeli teams Maccabi Haifa, Maccabi Tel Aviv, and Israeli national team football and basketball games in international competitions, despite the fact that there should be a complete boycott of all Israeli sports teams.

BBC NEWS

Republic of Ireland v Israel to be played in Serbia

The Washington Post

Ireland-Israel Nations League match will be in Serbia behind closed doors



INDEPENDENT

Republic of Ireland to face Israel behind closed doors in Serbia after fans called for boycott amid Gaza war

Western Media Bias

THE IRISH TIMES

Ireland will play Israel in Serbia as neutral venue for Nations League match



Why are Israel's football clubs playing in Serbia?

“I went to Bosnia not expecting to necessarily see Gaza, but everywhere I looked in Bosnia, there was Gaza. I think maybe some of the people that feel closest to Gaza in the world today are in Bosnia. You see it on the streets, in the graffiti, in the keffiyehs people wear. Even in Srebrenica they have the keffiyehs — the families of the victims who were going to mourn their family members had their keffiyehs and had the shirts saying Free Falasteen.”

Nabil Sultan

a Palestinian describing his visit to Bosnia during the 30th anniversary memorial events for the Srebrenica genocide.⁹⁶



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