

More context

Previously, on 19 May 2021, Berisha, his wife, son, and daughter were sanctioned by the US Department of State and barred from entry into the United States after being accused of "involvement in significant corruption". The [US Department of State declaration](#) reads: *“In his official capacity as Prime Minister of Albania in particular, Berisha was involved in corrupt acts, such as misappropriation of public funds and interfering with public processes, including using his power for his own benefit and to enrich his political allies and his family members at the expense of the Albanian public’s confidence in their government institutions and public officials. Furthermore, his own rhetoric demonstrates he is willing to protect himself, his family members, and his political allies at the expense of independent investigations, anticorruption efforts, and accountability measures.”*

Sali Berisha, who used to be Prime Minister and President of Albania, had previously resigned as PD leader after losing a parliamentary election in 2013, but the special elections allowed him to engineer a return, forcing out Lulzim Basha after nine years at the PD helm. Berisha again took over PD in May 2022, but there are still major divisions between Berisha and Basha’s respective party factions. These highly politicized internal divisions dominated Albania’s political scene in 2022 and still in 2023. Most Albanian political leaders remained hostile to liberal democratic values (including Mr Berisha) and have shown little appreciation for why equality under the law and subject to the rule of law are important democratic values. Most political parties are dominated by iron-fisted leaders, with a lack of internal party democracy. ([Nations in Transit 2023](#))

Sali Berisha, a highly influential political figure, enjoys the support of a large number of followers, especially on social media but also within the Democratic Party base. He currently leads the opposition, i.e. the Democratic Party. However, it's worth mentioning that the party isn't without its divisions, having experienced internal disputes consistently over the past two years. Berisha's significant media coverage and the attention he draws from the public highlight his ability to shape public opinion effectively.