Dušan T. Bataković

A TURBULENT DECADE
THE SERBS IN POST-1999 KOSOVO

Destruction of Cultural Heritage, Ethnic Cleansing, and Marginalization (1999—2009)

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Preface

Several hundred detailed books, thousands of studies, case-studies, articles, position papers as well as numerous volumes of legal documents, personal testimonies, diaries, and eye witness accounts, often recorded by international organizations from UNHCR to OSCE have been published about the Kosovo problem in the past several decades. Most of these precious materials relate to the period prior to and after the war in 1999. Having worked on this question as a historian since 1983, I have published several scholarly books as well as dozens of studies regarding this question, in the Serbian language and in various European languages, notably French, English and Italian. Having reviewed numerous books and an almost endless number of volumes of material and testimonies, I noticed that the suffering of the Kosovo Albanians before and during the 1999 war are well-documented. However, within a wide spectre of research topics in main Western languages, the least studied were the articles or books regarding the position of the Serbs from Kosovo (Kosovo and Metohija) after June 1999.

Apart from a few specialist studies or recollections, almost all in the Serbian language, I discovered that within the Western scholarship there were no detailed analyses regarding the extremely difficult political position, fragile social conditions or the ambiguous legal status of the Kosovo Serbs, reduced to an ethnic minority. Being exposed to forced expulsions, and ethnically-based discrimination, the Kosovo Serbs, despite

being a constituent nation by 1244 UN Security Council Resolution of 1999 were treated as any other minority Kosovo ethnic group, known as "non-Albanians". After their mass exodus (sixty percent of Kosovo Serbs, i.e. more than 200,000, still live as internally displaced persons in the rest of Serbia). The Serbs of Kosovo and Metohija (*Kosovo i Metohija* in Serbian) gradually disappeared both from the international media and the political map of Kosovo after the unilateral proclamation of independence by the Albanians in February 2008.

After the negotiations between Belgrade and Priština, on the future status, failed and Kosovo Albanian-dominated institutions of self government proclaimed their own independence, Kosovo Serbs were either sporadically mentioned as collateral damage in a brutal interethnic conflict (in the memoirs of the Hague Tribunal for former Yugoslavia by the former chief prosecutor Carla Del Ponte), or in Swiss Senator Dick Marty's report for the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, which curiously obtained little attention from the international media. Dick Marty's report, however, provided reliable data on the organ-trafficking of several hundred Kosovo Serbs, abducted and killed by the Kosovo Albanians, during and after the 1999 Kosovo war, with a crime scene located in northern Albania. Similarly insignificant attention has been given to the *avis consultatif*, the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice at the Hague issued on 22 July 2010, regarding the accordance with international law of the unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo.

Thus, the purpose of this study is not to provide a detailed and complete picture of the life of Kosovo Serbs in the first post-war decade, but to point out the main political currents which primarily permitted, and then covered up the process of systematic discrimination, forced expulsions and violation of their basic human rights. All of this is an unacceptable political practice, apparently in sharp contrast with the basic European and general human values. Furthermore, there is a particular emphasis on the unprecedented destruction of Serb patrimonial sites by the Kosovo Albanian extremists, churches and

monasteries which were and still are an important component of European and world culture, as confirmed by UNESCO, which enlisted four Serbian medieval monasteries in the UN-administered Kosovo on the list of World Heritage Sites.

Serbian monasteries in Kosovo, which have been guarded from the hostile Albanian environment for more than a decade by KFOR-troops, are the only European cultural monuments which are still being protected from immediate destruction by strong international military forces, including, in various phases tanks, cannons or armored vehicles. On my numerous trips to Kosovo during the first decade of the twenty first century — always escorted by members of KFOR — I questioned a variety of soldiers from France, Denmark, Italy or Scotland on what they thought would happen if the military force guarding these monasteries were to be removed. Without hesitation, they all resignedly answered: "They would be destroyed fairly quickly".

The facts and analysis, mostly of Western origin, presented in this book, might provide the additional scholarly, political and cultural interest for the difficult position of the Kosovo Serb population since June 1999. Obviously, the additional efforts to prevent the ongoing denial of basic human and community rights, as well as to improve the standard of the protection of human rights, property and freedom of movement for the rapidly declining Kosovo Serb community are still badly needed. In spite of the obvious political weight of this question, I offer this book to the general public, not as the current ambassador of Serbia to France, but as a historian specialized in the Kosovo question, occasionally also involved in the process of finding the solution that would be acceptable both for Belgrade and Priština. Thus, all the interpretations and conclusions drawn in this book are solely mine, and do not represent, in any way whatsoever, those of the Serbian government or any other state institution of the Republic of Serbia.

Paris, 17 March 2011 D. T. Bataković



The List of Serbian Churches, Monasteries and Hermitages
in Kosovo and Metohija

History, Memory, Identity: Serbian Medieval Heritage & UNESCO Patrimonial Sites

The autonomous province of Kosovo (Kosovo and Metohija) covers 10,887 square kilometres that is 12.3 percent of the total area of Serbia. The estimate of Kosovo's population in 1991 of 1,954,747 inhabitants or 20.5 percent of the total population of Serbia proved to be inaccurate — it was too high.[1] Due to the huge waves of emigration from the whole of Serbia to Western Europe and USA during the economic crisis in the 1980s and 1990s, Kosovo Albanians included, the real number of inhabitants permanently living in Kosovo in 1991 was roughly 1.3 to 1.5 million, among them at least seventy percent were ethnic Albanians. The 1999 war over Kosovo made Serbian cultural heritage a privileged target of Albanian extremists. Their goal was — and still is — to change the thousand-year long historic landscape and to justify, through the systematic destruction of non-Albanian monuments, a new ethno-political reality based on a selective, revised version of history.[2]

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[1] The number of ethnic Albanians was only a demographic projection, after they boycotted the census of 1991 claiming to be more than 90 percent of the population of Kosovo. (Branislav Krstić, *Kosovo izmedju istorijskog i etničkog prava*, (Belgrade: Kuća Vid, 1994), 11–20.

[2] A growing number of biased pro-Albainan scholarly books offering a revised version of history has been published during the last several decades: Noel Malcolm's standard pro-Albanian work, written to promote a new state and a newborn "Kosovar nation", was financially supported and largely distributed by Bujar Bukoshi, the 'Prime Minister' of Kosovo Albanian shadow government in exile

While the vast majority of ethnic Albanians, previously Islamized, drawn from among the clans of northern Albania (Gashi, Krasniqi, Berisha, Kelmendi, Bitiqi, Shala, Thaçi, etc.), settled on to the flatlands of Kosovo and Metohija during the Ottoman reign (1455–1912), in particular after the Great Serb Migrations in 1690 and 1739 provoked by Habsburg-Ottoman wars, the Serbian tribes, which embraced Eastern Christianity in the ninth century from Byzantium, had settled throughout the Western Balkans, present-day Kosovo and Metohija

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during the 1990's: see Noel Malcolm, *Kosovo. A Short History* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), and the review by Aleksa Djilas, "Imagining Kosovo: A Biased New Account Fans Western Confusion", *Foreign Affairs* (September 1998). As underscored by the leading Greek expert for the Balkans, Thanos Veremis, "Malcolm is probably the most explicit case of one-sided analysis. The book enjoyed warm reception by reviewers in the *Times Literary Supplement*, the *Economist*, the *New York Review of Books*, etc. The sole exception was Aleksa Djilas scathing review in *Foreign Affairs* (Sept.-Oct-1998) in which among others he points out the inconsistency of Malcolm's views on Bosnia and Kosovo. Whereas he is a strong advocate of restoring a unified state in the former, he pleads the cause of secession for the latter." (T. Veremis, *Action Without Foresight: Western Involvement in Yugoslavia* (Athens, Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy & YALCO 2002, 49).

For a less biased but still incomplete history of Kosovo, see Miranda Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian. A History of Kosovo* (London: Hurst & Co., 1988). For a German, mostly pro-Albanian view, see *Kosovo/Kosova. Mythen, Daten, Fakten*, Wolfgang Petritch, Karl Kaser and Robert Pichler, eds. (Klagenfurt–Vienna: Wieser Verlag, 1999). In French-speaking countries, for an example of highly biased support to the Albanian hard-line positions, see Michel Roux, *Les Albanais en Yougoslavie. Minorité nationale, territoire et développement* (Paris: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 1992). A standard insight on pro-Albanian political and scholarly stances is provided by Anna Di Lellio, ed., *The Case for Kosova: Passage to Independence*, (London & New York: Anthem Press 2006). Important for certain personal testimonies is Tim Judah, *Kosovo. War and Revenge* (Yale University Press, 2000). Very dissapointing and suprisingly one-sided is : Tim Judah, *Kosovo. What Everyone Needs to Know* (Oxford University Press 2008 The ardent promoter of Albanian Kosovo is: Robert Elsie (ed.), *Kosovo in the Heart of the Powder Keg*, East European Monographs (Boulder: Columbia University Press, 1997). The most recent passionately pro-Albanian advocacy for independent Kosovo is provided by: Denis MacShane, *Why Kosovo still Matters* (London: House Publishing 2011).

included, already in the seventh century. As a centuries-long possession of Byzantium, the plains of Kosovo and Hvosno (future Metohija), were, during the reign of various Serbian rulers from Dioclea and Rascia, partly or temporarily under Serbian rule. After Stefan Nemanja, the founder of the Nemanjić dynasty (1066–1371), won decisive victories in the vicinity of Priština (1160), it was his second son and successor Stefan the First-Crowned (*Stefan Prvovenčani*) who incorporated the whole area into medieval Serbia together with the important, previously Byzantine-held city of Prizren. The whole of today's Kosovo and Metohija became an integral part of the Kingdom of Serbia after Constantinople was captured by the Western crusaders at the turn of the thirteenth century.[3]

Only a year after becoming autocephalous in 1219, the Serbian Orthodox Church founded its first bishopric in Hvosno (today's Metohija) in the Peć area. Under Archbishop Sava Nemanjić (Saint Sava), three out of ten Serbian bishoprics were established in present-day Kosovo and Metohija. Several decades later, most likely in 1253, the seat of the Serbian Archbishopric was relocated to the immediate vicinity of Peć.[4]

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[3] Leonidas Mavromatis, *La foundation de l'Empire serbe : le Kralj Milutin*, (Thessaloniki: Kentron Byzantion Ereunon 1978); George S. Soulis, *The Serbs and Byzantium during the Reign of Tsar Stephen Dušan (1331–1355) and his Successors* (Washington, D.C. : Dumbarton Oaks Library and Collection, 1984). A general overview of Serbian-Byzantine relations in: Bariša Krekić, "Medieval Serbia: The Nemanyids and Byzantium", in: *Byzantine Studies. Essays on the Slavic World and the Eleventh Century*, Speros Vryonis Jr., ed. (New Rochelle, New York: Aristide D. Caratzas, Publisher 1985), 43–52; Sima M. Ćirković, "Vladarski dvorci oko jezera na Kosovu", *Zbornik Matice srpske za likovne umetnosti*, 20 (1984), 72–77; Boško I. Bojović, "Le passe des territoires : Kosovo-Metohija (XI^{e}-XVII^{e} siecle)", *Balkan Studies*, vol. 38 (1), 1997, 31–51.

[4] King Stefan Uroš I (1243–1276) established in 1276/1277 St Nicholas Monastery in Hvosno: "[…] I Stefan Uroš, made efforts in the honor of my fathers and ancestors, to build the church of the holy archpriest and miracle-worker of Christ, Nicholas, in Hvosno on the river Bistrica, in the vicinity of the great Archbishopric of the Serbs [in Peć]" Quoted from: *Selected Charters of Serbian Rulers, 12th—15th Century,* (Athens: Centre for Studies of Byzantine Civilisation 2000) No 4, p. 47.

The successors of the first Serbian Archbishop Sava (the third, youngest son of Stefan Nemanja) built several additional temples around the Church of the Holy Apostles near Peć, laying the ground for what was to become the Patriarchate of Peć in the middle of the fourteenth century.[5]

A separate Serbian bishopric in Mala Studenica, within Hvosno near Peć, founded already in 1220, was indicative of the growing political importance of the whole region that would, in the next century, become a new state and the religious centre of medieval Serbia. With the proclamation of the Serbian Empire under Stefan Dušan (1346–1355), the patriarchal throne was permanently established at the Peć monastery in 1346. The rulers of Serbia allotted the fertile valleys between the towns of Peć and Prizren, as well as adjacent areas, to churches and monasteries. Thus the whole region eventually acquired the name Metohija, from the Greek word *μετόχι* (metochion), meaning an estate owned by the church.[6]

Both Metohija and Kosovo are famous for their enormously rich Serbian cultural heritage, including as much as 1,300 Serb Christian Orthodox churches, monasteries, fortresses (Zvečan, Novo Brdo, Vučitrn), royal palaces (Pauni, Svrčin, Nerodimlje), former church sites (*Bogorodica Hvostanska*, etc.), some partially ruined, and hermitages scattered on the mountains slopes bordering Albania (*Dečanska pustinja*, *Sv. Petar Koriški*, *Sv. Marko Koriški*, etc.).

Since 2004 and 2006 the Serbian medieval heritage of Metohija and Kosovo includes four UNESCO World Heritage Sites:[7]

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[5] *Cf.* more in: Gabriel Millet, *L'Ancien art serbe. Les Églises* (Paris: Ed. de Boccard, 1919).

[6] A wider perspective is available in: Sima M. Ćirković, *La Serbie au Moyen Age* (Paris: Zodiaque 1992), Jovanka Kalić, *Srbi u poznom srednjem veku* (Belgrade: Institute for Balkan Studies, SASA, 1994).

[7] The Monastery of Visoki Dečani was the first that was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site (2004), and the extension in 2006 included the Patriarchate of Peć, the Monastery of Gračanica, and

1. ***Visoki Dečani Monastery (Manastir Visoki Dečani)*** founded by Serbian King Stefan Uroš III Nemanjić (*Stefan Dečanski*), was commissioned in 1327, as the burial church for his founder and was eventually completed by his son and successor, King and future Emperor Stefan Dušan, in 1335. The spectacular by its architecture, Visoki Dečani are decorated by frescoes that covers almost 2,000 sq meters with more than 1,000 individual figures including the genealogical tree of the House of Nemanjić and the portraits of its founders.[8] The location of this monastery, as stressed in the first Dečani Charter (1330) was already chosen by Sava Nemanjić, the first Serbian archbishop: "[…] I glorify and loud our enlightened and blessed Sava […] It was here in this place called Dečani in the region of Zatrnava that, finding this place lovely and suitable for building a house of God, he marked it and then blessed it with his holy hands, so that this place would be a holy ground. And after a time he did not manage to build this place of worship, but rose into the heavenly abode […] To me, a sinful and unbefitting slave of this Saint, to me, Stefan, to the King of all Serbian lands and the Littoral, blessed by God, Uroš the Third [King Stefan Dečanski], through his prayers revealed this hidden sanctuary which was concealed in this place by the holy Lord, and it was kept safe through all this time for me and for my son, the young King [Stefan Dušan]."[9]

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the Church of the Mother of God of Ljeviša [Our Lady of Ljeviša] in Prizren (Serbia: Date of Inscription: 2004; Extension: 2006, Criteria: (ii)(iii)(iv); Property: 2.8802 ha; Buffer zone: 115.3879ha Autonomous province of Kosovo; N42 39 40 E20 15 56; Ref: 724bis). (http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/724/)

[8] *Cf.* more in: *Dečani i vizantijska umetnost sredinom XIV veka*, Vojislav J. Djurić, ed. (Belgrade: Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti 1989); *Cf.* also, Vojislav Korać, "Architecture in Medieval Serbia", in: *The History of Serbian Culture*, Pavle Ivić, ed. (London: Porthill Publishing 1992), 75–86; *Dečanska pustinja, skitovi i kelije manastira Dečana*, Danica Popović, Branislav Todić, Dragan Vojvodić (Belgrade: Institute for Balkan Studies, 2011).

[9] Milica Grković, *The First Charter of the Dečani Monastery* (Belgrade & Priština: Mnemosyne, Priština Museum (displaced) & Archives of Serbia 2004) 58. The title of the 'young King' was reserved in medieval Serbia to the heir to the throne.

Visoki Dečani monastery only, disposed with estates that encompassed more than 1,800 sq. km including villages, forests and vineyards; among its most famous wine cellars are those in *metochion* of Velika Hoča.[10]

The monumental structure of the Dečani monastery was constructed under the supervision of the friar Vita of Kotor (Cattaro, the most important Serbian town on the Adriatic coast) Dečani monastery stands out for its monumental size and artistic beauty which combined Romanesque-Gothic architecture with some elements of the Serbian (Rascia school) style. Furthermore, the Dečani treasury (*Dečanska riznica*) is the richest one in Serbia, with roughly ninety icons dating from fourteenth to seventeenth century, most of them of exceptional artistic beauty, a 160 old manuscripts and seventeen old printed books, Ottoman documents issued to the monastery and a series of priceless liturgical objects in silver and gold.[11] The marble coffin with the relics of the Holy King Stefan Dečanski is an object of a remaining strong, if not the strongest cult in Kosovo and Metohija, equally venerated by Christian Orthodox Serbs and, during the Ottoman domination, by Muslim Albanians, formerly Catholic or Orthodox Christians.[12]

2. ***Patriarchate of Peć (Pećka patrijaršija)***, is a complex of three churches built in a Jerusalem-style complex of several churches including the Holy Apostles (*Sv. Apostoli*), Holy Virgin (*Presveta Bogorodica*), and St. Demetrios (*Sv. Dimitrije*). The construction of the Church of Holy Apostles, in 1230's under the auspices of Archbishop Arsenije I, who was also responsible for the fresco paintings from approximately 1260s, was the founding one within the future Archbishopric and future Pa-

[10] *Visoki Dečani Monastery* (Dečani & Belgrade: Dečani Monks & Stari Grad Municipality, 2007).

[11] Mirjana Šakota, *Dečanska riznica* (Belgrade & Priština: Prosveta & Jedinstvo 1984).

[12] Smilja Marjanović-Dušanić, *Sveti Kralj. Kult Stefana Dečanskog* (Belgrade: Institute for Balkan Studies & Clio, 2007).

triarchate.[13] The Church of St. Demetrios, next to the northern side of Holy Apostles was built by Archbishop Nikodim roughly a century later (1321–1324).[14] The complex was eventually completed by the two churches, a larger one dedicated to Virgin Hodegetria (*Bogorodica Odigitrija*) and a smaller chapel of St. Nicholas (1330–1337), founded by Archbishop Danilo II, the famous biographer of Serbian kings and archbishops. Archbishop Danilo II has built a monumental narthex to the western facades of all three main churches, decorated by the genealogical tree (1330–1334) of the Nemanjić dynasty. Furthermore, the first Serbian patriarch Joanikije was responsible for the painting of St. Demetrios (*Sv. Dimitrije*) in 1345/6, whilst the first Serb patriarch of the Patriarchate of Peć under Ottomans re-established in 1557, Makarije Sokolović, added walls for the outer narthex and commissioned the painting of his famous predecessors (archbishops and patriarchs) on the Serb religious throne in order to highlight spiritual continuity with the traditions of medieval Serbia.[15]

3. ***Gračanica Monastery (Manastir Gračanica)***, in the vicinity of Priština (in the village of Gračanica, an 11,000 strong Serbian enclave guarded by KFOR forces since June 1999) was built by the main patron of the revitalized mining industry in medieval Serbia, King Stefan Uroš II, better known as King Milutin (1282–1321). The Gračanica Monastery (constructed from 1315 to 1321), which used to be the seat of the bishopric of Lipljan (Ulpiana), remains one of the most beautiful medieval monuments in the fourteenth-century Balkans. The Gračanica monastery is a spectacular five-dome building, built on the remnants of an older Byzantine church, with an outside narthex added in the sixteenth

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[13] Sreten Petković, *Le Patriarcat de Peć* (Belgrade: Patriarcat de Serbie, 1982).

[14] Gojko Subotić, *L'Eglise Saint-Démétrios à Peć* (Belgrade: Jugoslavija, 1976).

[15] *Cf*. a detailed monograph on the Patriarchate of Peć monastery in: Vojislav J. Djurić, Sima M. Ćirković & Vojislav Korać, *Pećka Patrijaršija* (Belgrade & Priština: Jugoslovenska knjiga & Jedinstvo, 1990).

century. The frescoes of Gračanica, painted by the best artists of Salonica in 1321, beside usual scenes from the Bible, offer the famous portrait of King Milutin and his Byzantine wife Simonida, as well as the portraits of Serbian archbishops, including the scene of the funeral of Gračanica Metropolitan Dionisije.[16] In the 1321 founding charter of Gračanica, still available as an inscription of the western wall of the monastery, King Stefan Uroš II (King Milutin), "autocrat of all Serbian lands and the Littoral" granted a vast possession to the monastery including "the villages, hamlets, summer as well as winter pastures". The narthex includes one of most important medieval genealogical trees of the Nemanjić dynasty, presenting King Milutin and his sainted dynasty of Nemanjić's as bearers of royal prerogatives coming directly from Christ. King Stefan Uroš II Milutin's son and future successor, Stefan Uroš III Dečanski — the rebelled prince still expelled from the royal family — was not presented in this genealogical tree. The exceptionally rich treasury of Gračanica was destroyed in the fires that occurred after several Ottoman raids from 1379 and 1383, but also during the plundering after the 1389 Battle of Kosovo. The remaining treasury is a collection of sophisticated, mostly sixteenth and seventeenth-century icons.[17]

4. ***Mother of God of Ljeviša Cathedral*** (***Bogorodica Ljeviška***) is a Serbian cathedral in Prizren and the seat of Serbian bishops and metropolitans of Prizren: built in 1306–1307 on the foundations of an earlier Byzantine church, the Cathedral was commissioned by King Uroš I Nemanjić (1243–1276)

[16] See more Branislav Todić, *Serbian Medieval Painting. The Age of King Milutin* (Belgrade: Draganić 1999).

[17] *Cf.* more in *Vizantijska umetnost početkom XIV veka.* Naučni skup u Gračanici 1973, Sreten Petković, ed. (Belgrade: Filozofski fakultet, Odeljenje za istoriju umetnosti, 1978); Slobodan Ćurčić, *Gračanica. King's Milutin Church and its Place in Late Byzantine Architecture* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1977); *cf.* also Branislav Todić, *Gračanica. Slikarstvo (*Belgrade & Priština: Prosveta & Jedinstvo, 1988).

and eventually completed by his second son King Milutin.[18] The Cathedral was turned into a mosque after Prizren was captured by the Ottomans in 1455, to be restored as a church after the 1912 liberation. It is a five-dome church with spectacular frescos dating from 1307–1313, comprising of supernatural-size portraits of King Milutin and his ancestors, including *grand župan* Stefan Nemanja, founder of the Nemanjić dynasty (portrayed as the monk Symeon), as well as the portraits of Nemanja's youngest of three sons — St. Sava, the founder of autocephalous Serbian Church — and his older brother King Stefan, known as First-Crowned (*Stefan Prvovenčani*). The Mother of God Cathedral in Prizren, located in the Albanian-inhabited area, was burned and severely damaged during the March Pogrom in 2004, when Albanian extremist, in spite of heavy presence of German KFOR contingent, were not prevented to set fire inside and destroy its beautiful frescoes, and to burn several other Serbian medieval churches in Prizren as well, including the nineteenth-century Theological School (*Prizrenska Bogoslovija*).[19]

All four UNESCO World Heritage Sites of Serbia situated in Kosovo, as well as many other Serbian monasteries and churches in Kosovo and Metohija — built in unusually huge numbers between the early thirteenth and late fifteenth centuries, were, according to Albanian propagandists, constructed on the foundations of earlier "Illyrian churches". Some of them indeed were built on earlier foundations, but those were the remains of Byzantine-era churches, which is a phenomenon typical of medieval Serbia and the whole of the "Byzantine Commonwealth", as well as elsewhere in southern Europe and in the wider Mediterranean area.[20]

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[18] Draga Panić & Gordana Babić, Bogorodica Ljeviška (Belgrade: Srpska književna zadruga, 1975). Cf. also: Hasan Kaleshi, "Kada je crkva Svete Bogorodice Ljeviške u Prizrenu pretvorena u džamiju" *Prilozi za književnost, jezik istoriju i folklor*, vol. XXVIII, t. 3–4 (Belgrade: Filološki fakultet 1962).

[19] *Kosovo and Metohija. The March Pogrom* (Belgrade: Ministry of Culture, 2004).

[20] Detailed description and analysis of artistic value of Serbian monuments in Kosovo can be found in Gojko Subotić, *Art of Kosovo: The Sacred Land* (New York: Monacelli Press, 1998).

Among many other medieval Serbian churches and monasteries throughout Kosovo and Metohija there are often extraordinary historical monuments with sophisticated frescoes:

St. Stefan Church in Banjska in the north of Kosovo, near Zvečan was built of three-colored stone blocks and painted by the best artist of the epoch, being converted to a mosque under Ottomans and partially reconstructed after 1918 while the rest of the complex is now mostly ruined, it consisted of a large defense tower, refractory and many other residential buildings. After King Milutin died in Nerodimlje in 1321, his remains were relocated to St. Stefan monastery at Banjska, where they remain until the Battle of Kosovo in 1389. Queen Theodora, Emperor Dušan's mother, was buried shortly after Milutin in the north chapel of the monastery. The Banjska monastery was, according to later sources ('the gold of Banjska'), considered to be one of the churches with the richest sculptural and ornamental decorations.[21]

During the period of uninterrupted Serbian rule the areas of both Kosovo and Metohija were a centre of both political and cultural institutions of Serbia. As testified by Serbian royal charters, most of present-day Kosovo and Metohija was populated by Serbs, with small portions of Albanians (*Arbanasi*) in the areas bordering Albania. According to the Dečani Charter (*Dečanska povelja*) of 1330, on the monastery's huge estates, there were only three out of eighty-nine settlements with a significant Albanian population. Furthermore, these Albanian-inhabited villages were not located within the territory of today's Metohija. Out of 2,432 households enlisted in the Dečani Charter, only 1.8 percent were identified as Albanian.[22]

Urban centres of Serbia, including the prospering mining cities of Trepča, Janjevo and Novo Brdo in the Kosovo

[21] Marica Šuput, *Banjska Monastery* (Belgrade: Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments in the Republic of Serbia, 2003).

[22] *Cf*. analysis in: Milica Grković, *Imena u dečanskim hrisovuljama (*Novi Sad: Filozofski fakultet i Institut za južnoslovenske jezike, 1983).

area, were more multicultural than the rural, predominantly Serb-inhabited areas. Apart from Dubrovnik (Ragusan) and Venetian merchants, Saxon miners and Teutonic and Catalan mercenaries, there were certain numbers of Albanians as well, probably miners or traders, all attracted to Serbia by the booming economy of the mines, activated under King Milutin Nemanjić.[23] In the 1430s, the presence of Albanian miners of the Roman Catholic rite was recorded in Novo Brdo, while besides dozens if not hundreds of Serbian Orthodox churches and monasteries, the urban centres of Kosovo and Metohija contained several Roman Catholic parishes, for Saxons, Venetians, Ragusans and other foreign miners and traders.

The largest of the royal endowments, the Church of the Holy Archangels (*Sv. Arhandjeli*) in the vicinity of Prizren, founded by Emperor Stefan Dušan in the Bistrica River Canyon (1343–1352). As the main endowment of Emperor Stefan Dušan, The Holy Archangels, probably the most monumental in both sculpture and frescoes in the whole of medieval Serbia, the monastery of Holy Archangels (*Sveti Arhangeli*), was the most spacious Christian Orthodox church built in a Byzantine Commonwealth during the fourteenth century as well. The imperial endowment dedicated to the Holy Archangels was completely destroyed by the Ottomans in the late sixteenth century in order to provide marble stone for the Sinan Pasha Mosque in Prizren.[24]

Apart from the main endowments by the rulers of the House of Nemanjić, the foremost characteristic of late medieval Kosovo and Metohija was a dense network of churches

[23] *Cf.* Desanka Kovačević, "Dans la Serbie et la Bosnie médiévales : Les mines d'or et d'argent", *Annales. Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, 15/2 (1960), 253–258; also useful is a new comprehensive monograph on medieval Novo Brdo: Vojislav Jovanović, Sima Ćirković, Emina Zečević, Vujanin Ivanišević & Vesna Radić, *Novo Brdo* (Belgrade: Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of the Republic of Serbia, 2004).

[24] Vojislav S. Jovanović, "Arheološka istraživanja srednjovekovnih spomenika i nalazišta na Kosovu" in: *Zbornik okruglog stola o naučnom istraživanju Kosova*, 17–66.

and monasteries, built mostly by local nobility or church dignitaries from the late thirteenth to the end of the fourteenth century. In Bela Stena, above the small town of Istok is located the monastery of St. Nicholas in Gorioč, founded probably by a local nobleman. Dependant as a *μετόχι* of the monastery of Dečani, Gorioč monastery possessed an important collection of medieval Serbian books and manuscripts that in the nineteenth century ended up, through the Russian Consul A. F. Hilferding, in the St. Petersburg Public Library.

The Church of Christ's Transfiguration in the village of Budisavci, 17 km east of Peć, also a quite impressive medium-size monastery, was most likely built by a local landlord in the early fourteenth century. Unusually large among the churches of local Serbian landlords, the Church of the Virgin Hodegetria in Mušutište, 10 km southeast of Suva Reka was founded in 1315 by the main court official Jovan Dragoslav and his family. The church contains frescoes that can be placed among the most important ones of the epoch of King Milutin. Monastery of Budisavci are considered, along with the Church of Virgin Hodegetria as the most valuable Kosovo medieval church founded by the local nobility[25]

A possible founder of the Church of St. Nicholas in Djurakovac, Danilo, was a local nobleman buried there in 1362. Another local Serbian landlord Radoslav, after becoming monk John, was buried in the monastery of St. John that he founded in 1355 in Crkolez. In 1395, the St John Church was bestowed by the *vojvoda* (duke) Novak and his wife Vidosava to the St. Pantheleimon monastery on Mount Athos.[26] The Church of the Holy Virgin in Vaganeš near Novo Brdo was founded by nobleman Dabiživ with his parents and brothers in 1354–1355, while the Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple Church in Lipljan, constructed between 1320s and 1330s on

[25] *Cultural Heritage of Kosovo and Metohija*, M. Omčikus, ed. (Belgrade: Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of the Republic of Serbia, 1999), 37–38, 50.

[26] Zoran Rakić, *The Church of St. John the Baptist at Crkolez* (Belgrade: Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of the Republic of Serbia, 2007).

the foundations of an earlier Byzantine basilica, with its sophisticated frescoes and rich architecture, was probably a seat of a local Serbian diocese. Amongst the medium-size monasteries in Metohija built in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century, is the monastery of Devič, located in the Drenica area, where the relics of a highly venerated local saint — St. Joanikije Devički — are kept since his death in 1430.[27]

Among dozens of Serbian Orthodox churches with its main Cathedral Mother of God of Ljeviška in late medieval Prizren, an important monument is the Church of St. Savior, constructed by local nobleman Mladen Vladojević and his parents in 1330 was bestowed already in 1348 to the Holy Archangels monastery, a royal endowment of Stefan Dušan. Both St. Savior Church and St. Nicholas Church, located in the present-day centre of Prizren (built by the landlord Dragoslav Tutić in 1331–1332), were decorated with frescoes by the artists of the same workshop. As St. Savior, St. Nicholas Church was also bestowed to a larger monastic community to the Dečani monastery — after its founder Dragoslav Tutić became monk Nicholas. A second Serbian church dedicated to St. Nicholas in Prizren was founded by the local feudal lord Rajko Kirizmić. The son of King Vukašin (after 1365–1371), Prince Marko Mrnjavčević was the founder of the Church of the Holy Sunday in Prizren, built in the second half of the fourteenth century. Most of the Serbian churches in Prizren were burned or heavily damaged by Albanian extremists, during the March Pogrom in 2004.

East of Prizren is located one of the most venerated monasteries, dedicated to the local saint, a monk Peter — St. Peter of Koriša. The monastery, constructed next to his famous hermitage was built in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century on the remnants of an older church from 1220's, was the resting place of the relics of St. Peter Koriški.

Among others, the important ones were Ubožac or Rdjavac monasteries near Kosovska Kamenica (dedicated to the Presentation of the Virgin), considered as a prototype of

[27] *Cultural Heritage of Kosovo and Metohija,* 41–42, 67, 77–78

Moravian style of church architecture that prevailed in Serbia since late fourteenth century, an endowment of Isaiah, the future prior of Chilandar monastery in Mt. Athos. Rather small but elegant monasteries in Dolac near Klina (dedicated also to the Presentation of a Virgin), and in Dobra Voda (Holy Apostles Peter and Paul) were organized as monastic communities under the auspices of the Dečani.[28]

St. Archangel Gabriel monastery in Draganac and St. Demetrios Church in Kmetovce (built by the local landlord in 1350s, afterwards dedicated to St. Barbara), are both located in the vicinity of Gnjilane in eastern Kosovo. In northern Kosovo, in Boljetin near Kosovska Mitrovica, Sokolica monastery dedicated to Mother of God from the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century was a foundation of a local landlord from the neighbouring town of Zvečan. The cult of the Mother of God of Sokolica was, regardless of confession, venerated by the local population during the Ottoman rule as well.

Another among many endowments in the same area is the small Church of St. George in the village of Rečane, which was founded by an unknown Serbian duke (*vojvoda*) who was buried there in 1370.[29] Apart from seven other smaller churches in Mušutište, important for its artistic beauty is the St. Simeon Church built in 1326, by King Stefan Dečanski. St. Cosmas and Damian monastery in Zočište southeast of Orahovac is, according to popular tradition, older than the Dečani monastery. Probably an endowment of a great Serbian landlord from the fourteenth century, the Zočište monastery was destroyed shortly after the Battle of Kosovo (1389) and restored and repainted in the second half of the sixteenth century, containing an important collection of icons and manuscripts.

Approximately six kilometres west of Uroševac, in Nerodimlje area — famous for the royal palaces of Stefan Dušan and his son Uroš, the most important church built in the late fourteenth century — is a monastery dedicated to the Assumption, known also as the monastery of St. Uroš.

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[28] *Ibid.*, 50–51

[29] *Cultural Heritage of Kosovo and Metohija*, 89–92.

According to popular belief, Dušan's wife, Empress Jelena built a new church over the grave of her son, the last direct ruler of the House of Nemanjić, who died there in December 1371. The Church was abandoned in 1487 to be reconstructed in the late sixteenth century. The relics of Holy Emperor Uroš (*Sv. car Uroš*) remained in the monastery until 1705, when Serbian monks transferred them to the Serbian monastery of Jazak in Srem, a province of Hungary under the Habsburg realm (in present day Serbian province of Vojvodina).[30]

Out of twelve medieval or late medieval churches in Velika Hoča — a village near Orahovac in Metohija, dependant to the Dečani estate, famous for its vineyards and wine cellars — the most important are the Church of St. John from the fourteenth century and the Church of St. Nicholas, founded by the parents of local Serbian landlord Gradislav Sušenica in 1345.[31] Many Serbian churches were destroyed during the Ottoman rule, while a certain number was restored under the Serbian church, restored under the name of the Patriarchate of Peć (1557–1766).[32]

[30] Ibid., 93–96.

[31] *Ibid.*, 84–88. Cf. also Mirjana Menković, *Velika Hoča. The Pearl of Metohija* (Belgrade: Mnemosyne, Center for Protection of Heritage of Kosovo and Metohija, 2003).

[32] Olga Zirojević, *Crkve i manastiri na području Pećke patrijaršije do 1683. godine* (Belgrade: Istorijski institut & Narodna Knjiga 1984).



The Republic of Serbia, 2006

Kosovo Albanians against Serbia: from Boycott to Conflict (1991–1999)

Turning minority into majority and vice-versa was a phenomenon that occurred several times within communist Yugoslavia as well as prior to its final disintegration in 1992. Turning the Albanian minority into a ruling nation within the autonomous province of Kosovo and Metohija (*Kosovo* in international terminology since 1999), led to mass demonstrations challenging the very unity of Yugoslavia, while the forceful change of status of Serbs in Croatia, from a constituent nation to a minority ethnic group in 1990 led directly to a bloody civil war.[1]

The enhanced autonomy granted to Kosovo by the 1974 Constitution of Tito-led communist Yugoslavia, turned in March 1981, only a year after Tito's death, into a major rebellion against Yugoslavia and Serbia. This autonomous status was largely misused to institutionalize Albanian rule and discrimination of the Kosovo Serbs and non-Albanian minority groups. The Kosovo Albanians (officially a minority, i. e. *narodnost* within Serbia and Yugoslavia), being a majority

[1] An excellent analysis in: Robert M. Hayden, "Constitutional Nationalism in Former Yugoslav Republics", *Slavic Review* 51/ 4 (1992). The first to publicly condemn the constitutional amendments that led to 1974 Constitution and the violent dismemberment of communist Yugoslavia was the Law Professor at the University in Belgrade, Mihailo Djurić, who spent a year in prison for criticizing Titoist last constitutional reform (1968–1974): see his astute insights in : Mihailo Djurić, *Iskustvo razlike: suočavanja s vremenom* (Belgrade: Tersit, 1994).

population in Kosovo, treated the Serbs within provincial boundaries as a minority since 1968 after the constitutional amendments (1968–1972) were adopted and eventually confirmed in the Constitution of 1974 .[2]

The extensive autonomy of Kosovo deprived of statehood-like competencies as provided by 1974 Constitution, was limited to a scale similar to the 1963 Constitution of Serbia, as provided by the constitutional changes in Serbia by her new 1990 Constitution. The majority of Kosovo Albanians, opting since 1981 for the status of the seventh Yugoslav republic for Albanian-dominated Kosovo (only republics disposed with Leninist-inherited right to self-determination, i.e. secession from Yugoslavia) were strongly opposed to be returned to the status of a minority within Serbia. In response, the Kosovo Albanians boycotted since 1990 all the Serbian-controlled provincial institutions and the Belgrade-appointed officials or Belgrade-approved administration. Tens of thousands Albanians left their jobs in protest to the new legal framework, while dozens of thousands of others were fired after continuous boycott of state institutions and laws of Serbia, including the new constitution of 1990.[3]

Denouncing what they described as the Serbian-sponsored 'apartheid', the Kosovo Albanians, in parallel, organized in 1991 their own school and health system, financed from abroad, a parallel system, which became famous for its peaceful approach, was tacitly tolerated by the neo-communist hardliner Slobodan Milošević, in order to keep the Kosovo question behind, during the wars for the succession that raged over the former Yugoslav federation.[4] The Kosovo Albanians,

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[2] General surveys in: Stevan K. Pavlowitch, *The Improbable Survivor. Yugoslavia and its Problems 1918–1988* (London: Hurst & Co, 1988); D. T. Bataković, *Yougoslavie. Nations, religions, ideologies* (Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme 1994).

[3] "Ustav Republike Srbije", *Službeni glasnik Republike Srbije* 1 (1990); the wider political context in: D. T. Bataković (ed.) *Histoire du peuple serbe*, (Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 2005), 373–377.

[4] The Albanian points of view claiming ethnically-based persecution, serious human rights violation and "apartheid" are available in the following publications: *What the Kosovars Say and Demand (Collection*

ignoring the political will and the rights of not only the

of studies, articles, interviews and commentaries), (Tirana: 8 Nëntori Publishing House, 1990); Ibrahim Rugova, *Independence and Democracy* (Prishtina: Fjala, 1991); Alush Gashi, ed. *The Denial of Human and National Rights of Albanians in Yugoslavia* (New York: Illiria, 1992); *Open Wounds: Human Rights Abuses in Kosovo* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1993). Majority of Kosovo Albanians remained strongly anti-Serb oriented during the 1980's and 1990s, but roughly ten to fifteent percent of Kosovo Albanians, however, remained loyal to the Serbia and the Yugoslav state, which afterwards, made them privileged targets of Albanian terroroist groups.

Cf. an interesting but incomplete sociological explanation in: Julie A. Mertus, *Kosovo. How Myths and the Truths started a War* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: California University Press, 1999); David Fromkin, *Kosovo Crossing. American Ideals Meet Reality on the Balkan Battlefields* (New York: The Free Press 1999). Among more balanced and accurate are the following monographs: standard Italian overview covering the contemporary period, Marco Dogo, *Kosovo. Albanesi e Serbi: le radici del conflitto* (Lungro di Cosenza: Marco, 1992) ; Jean-Arnauld Dérens, *Kosovo. Année zéro*, preface Marek-Antony Nowicki (Paris: Paris-Méditerranée, 2004); very useful, with several chapters on Kosovo, Alexis Troude, *Géopolitique de la Serbie* (Paris: Elipses, 2006). *Cf.* also: D. T. Batakoviċ, *The Kosovo Chronicles* (Plato: Belgrade, 1992); *Conflict or a Dialogue. Serbian Albanian relations and integrations of the Balkans* Boško Kovačević, ed. (Subotica: Open University, 1994); Milovan Radovanović, *Kosovo and Metohija. Serbian and Regional Context* (Belgrade: Mnemosyne, 2005); *Kosovo and Metohija. Past, Present, Future* ed. Kosta Mihailović (Belgrade: Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 2006); *Kosovo i Metohija u velikoalbanskim planovima 1878–2000 ed.* Nikola B. Popović, (Belgrade: Institute for Contemporary History, 2001); Branislav Krstić, *Kosovo. Facing the Court of History*, (New York: Humanity Books, 2004). On post-1999 period very useful and competent is: Ian King & Whit Mason, *Peace at Any Price. How the World Failed Kosovo* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2006).

More details on Serbian population of Kosovo, as well as on non-Albanian minorities are available in: *Kosovo and Metohija. Living in the Enclave*, D. T. Batakoviċ ed. (Belgrade: Institute for Balkan Studies of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 2007); D. T. Batakoviċ, *Kosovo : Un conflit sans fin ?* (Lausanne : L'Age d'Homme 2008) ; D. T. Batakoviċ, "Kosovo and Metohija. Serbia's Troublesome Province", *Balcanica*, vol. XXXIX (2008), (Belgrade: Institute for Balkan Studies 2009), 243–276. *Cf.* also *Minorities in the Balkans*. *State Policy and Interethnic Relations (1804–2004)*, D. T. Batakoviċ, ed. (Belgrade: Institute for Balkan Studies of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 2011). For the Kosovo Serbs in particular see more in: D. T. Batakoviċ, „The Kosovo Serbs: Minority Status by Force (Forced Expulsions, Ethnic

Kosovo Serbs but of other non-Albanian minority and ethnic groups in the Province as well, adopted their own Constitution (7 September 1990) and organized a secret referendum on independence (26 September 1991). However, the European Union, as well as the other sovereign states, declined to recognize their independence, with the exception of their kinsmen in neighbouring Albania, which became the only state that recognized the Albanian government in Priština, clearly showing that it was a purely ethnically-motivated political decision, only superficially camouflaged as the democratic will of an inexistent Kosovo nation.

The Albanian nationalist movement was headed by Dr Ibrahim Rugova, head of the largest Albanian party in Kosovo, the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK). Rugova's party, as well as other Kosovo Albanian's political parties were monoethnic and nationalist, leaving no room for membership of non-Albanian communities**.** When asked by the American ambassador to Yugoslavia on persecutions against Kosovo Serbs Rugova replied in a following way:

> "Referring to the Serbian abuses against Albanians, no aspect of which was ever conceded by Serbian officials, I asked him how Albanians had treated Serbs when they held the upper hand before the Milošević period. 'Unfortunately', he [Rugova] answered without hesitation, 'there were many crimes committed against Serbs'."[5]

LDK sought to the maximum to internationalize the Albanian question within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, reorganized in April 1992 into dual federation of Serbia and Montenegro. In October 1992, Bujar Bukoshi, Prime Minister of the government-in-exile of Rugova's self-proclaimed "Republic of Kosovo", submitted the so-called "Charter of Freedom" with Albanian demands to the United Nations and the USA, insisting upon the abolition of the state of emergency

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Cleansing, Destruction of Cultural Heritage, Minority Treatement)", *Minorities in the Balkans*, 263–309.

[5] Warren Zimmermann, *Origins of a Catastrophe* (New York: Times Books, 1996), 80.

and all resultant measures, and called for international control over the Serbian police and army. As early as November 1993, the president of neighbouring Albania, Sali Berisha, called for an international intervention, including the bombing of military targets throughout the troublesome Serbian province, which provoked a harsh diplomatic protest from the Yugoslav side. Within only two years, Kosovo was visited by some seventy foreign delegations focused on the status of the Albanian community, while various lobbying groups, notably Joseph Diogardi's *Albanian-American Civic League*, which won over senators Robert Dole and Eliot Engel, amply relied on the steady inflow of Albanian money, of reportedly unknown or dubious (often criminal) origin, for propagating the idea of Kosovo's independence.

The Democratic opposition in Serbia (DEPOS) accused the Kosovo Albanians, reluctant to side with the democratic forces in Belgrade, of sustaining the populist regime of Slobodan Milošević which they themselves had constantly accused of 'discrimination' and 'apartheid'. The Kosovo Albanians *de facto* helped maintain the status quo established through mutual, although unwilling, co-habitation with Serbian authorities in the early 1990s, blocking any progress towards restoring broken ties on various levels of everyday life, resuming political dialogue and rebuilding interethnic co-habitation, with the prospect of restoring European-type autonomy and bringing about a long-term reconciliation between the two very distant communities. The attempt of the Belgrade federal government and its Prime Minister Milan Panić to initiate a dialogue immediately after the meeting with Ibrahim Rugova during the London Conference on Yugoslavia in 1992 was bluntly rejected in spite of western mediation urging Rugova to establish contact with the democrats in Belgrade.

After the cooperation in signing the Dayton Peace Accord in November 1995, that ended the civil war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slobodan Milošević obtained unconditional Western support to become the chief negotiator for the solution to the pending Kosovo crisis. However, the increasing

efforts of different international mediators demanding a viable solution to the problem of the Albanian boycott of Serbian institutions within the autonomous province of Kosovo, eventually failed from both the political and the humanitarian perspective.[6]

The issue of schooling of Albanians was regarded by Belgrade as humanitarian question where Milošević negotiated to allow the state-owned school facilities to be used by Albanian students learning in the self-imposed isolation of private facilities. However, Milošević remained reluctant to discuss any constitutional changes that the Kosovo Albanians in Priština demanded as a first major concession, the re-establishment of the 1974 autonomy status.[7]

Different, often semi-official Serbian proposals called for partition of Kosovo, mostly on mixed ethnic and historical criteria (Dobrica Ćosić, Aleksandar Despić, Branislav Krstić, Milovan Radovanović), as a means to a permanent solution to the centuries-long inter-ethnic conflict. However, in parallel, the Serbian democratic opposition proposed various transitional solutions ranging from regionalization (Miodrag Jovičić and alli) of the province to the Swiss-like cantonization of Kosovo (D.T. Bataković). The cantonization plan, later accepted both by Democratic party of Zoran Djindjić and by the Serbian Orthodox Church, treated both Serbs and ethnic Albanians of Kosovo as the two main national communities on equal footing and with equal rights

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[6] D. T. Bataković, "Kosovo-Metohija Question: Origins of a Conflict and Possible Solutions", *Dialogue,* vol. 7, No 25, Paris 1998, 41–56; D. T. Bataković, "Twentieth-Century Kosovo-Metohija: Migrations, Nationalism and Communism", *Serbian Studies* 13:2 (1999), 1–23.

[7] The Milošević–Rugova agreement on education of Albanian students in Kosovo, signed under the auspices of Roman organization Sant' Egidio, never came into effect due to different interpretations: Denisa Kostovicova, *Kosovo: The Politics of Identity and Space* (London & New York: Routledge, 2005). The review of different initiatives with corresponding documentation available in: Stefan Troebst (ed.), *Conflict in Kosovo: An Analytical Documentation, 1992–1998,* Working Paper No 1 (Flensburg: European Centre for Minority Issues, 1998).

in defining the internal reorganization of the autonomous province.[8]

A non-violent, passive resistance of the Kosovo Albanians was symbolized by Ibrahim Rugova. Among many Albanian political parties in Kosovo, however, despite claiming Western-type democracy and multi-ethnic coexistence, none of them enlisted non-Albanian members from other Kosovo minority groups, such as Muslim Slav (future Bosniaks), Goranis, Roma, Ashkalis, ethnic Turks, tiny groups of ethnic Croats or Circassians. The whole Albanian movement in Kosovo, officially democratic, but in fact predominantly nationalist, was completely ethnically-based, lacking any political communication or democratic dialogue with non-Albanians, while the contacts with Kosovo Serbs, including the Serbian democratic opposition in Belgrade, were practically inexistent.[9]

Meanwhile, tolerated by Serbian authorities, the Kosovo Albanians, both in the Province and throughout the Diaspora, freely collected contributions (three percent of total monthly income per family) for funding all of the parallel institutions of the Kosovo Albanians. The monthly distribution of the millions of German marks was controlled by appointed activists of Ibrahim Rugova's Democratic League of Kosovo. By 1997, their number rose to roughly 25,000, a significant group that managed to control this parallel infrastructure of the self-sufficient, clan-based Albanian society in the Province. In return for unofficial tolerance of these structures by Milošević, the Kosovo Albanians persistently boycotted all multiparty elections in Serbia, thereby granting his regime more than 30 of 250 seats in the Serbian Assembly (*Narodna Skupština Srbije*) based on no more than a hundred thousand non-Albanian votes. These seats were important for wining parliamentary majorities that ensured Milošević's uninterrupted rule,

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[8] D. T. Bataković, "Progetti serbi di spartazione" "Kosovo: Il triangolo dei Balcani", *Limes*, No 3, Roma 1998, 153–169. *Cf*. also, Predrag Simić, *Put u Rambuje. Kosovska kriza 1995–2000* (Belgrade: Nova, 2000).

[9] Mario Brudar, *Nada, obmana, slom. Politički život Srba na Kosovu i Metohiji, 1987–1999* (Belgrade: Nova srpska politička misao, 2003).

despite the fact that his party had already lost the support of the majority of voters in Serbia in December 1992.

The tacit coexistence of two parallel systems, Serbian and Albanian, spared the province from large-scale inter-ethnic conflicts, such as those raging in other parts of the former Yugoslav federation between 1991 and 1995. Nevertheless, the same period witnessed a yearly rhythm of six to twelve terrorist attacks on the Serbian police by smaller armed groups of Kosovo Albanians. This low-intensity conflict, more like testing the police force in preparation for large-scale actions, went on until the middle of 1996, when the number of attacks tripled. The reported score of thirty-one ambush attacks in 1996 rose to fifty-four in 1997. According to Belgrade's accurate data, there were thirteen police officers, nine Albanian terrorists and twenty-five, mostly Serb, civilians killed, and sixty-seven persons wounded. Moreover, in 1997 there were twenty-seven registered attacks on the Yugoslav army (*Vojska Jugoslavije*), hitherto uninvolved in operations against terrorist groups. Also observed during 1997 was intensive smuggling of both drugs, which as well as of ever-larger quantities of weapons from Albania, where the looted army barracks (700,000 pieces of small arms were stolen) became a source for the illegal export of tens of thousands of Kalashnikovs, shoulder and other weapons, usually of Chinese, Soviet and Albanian provenance, into Serbia, mostly Kosovo and Metohija and adjacent regions. Concurrently, more sophisticated western arms (of Swiss, German and American origin) were smuggled into Kosovo from Albania, Macedonia and other countries across the permeable borders with the majority Albanian population on both sides.[10]

The KLA ("Kosovo Liberation Army" or UÇK in Albanian) emerged as an organized military force in 1998. In Kosovo, the KLA was considered a liberation military group to the ethnic Albanians only, and an oppressor, paramilitary force in

[10] *Cf.* more in: *Kosovo i Metohija u velikoalbanskim planovima 1878–2000*, Nikola B. Popović, ed. (Belgrade: Institut za savremenu istoriju 2001, 229–253).

the eyes of the Kosovo Serbs and other non-Albanian ethnic groups in the Province. Purely Albanian, the KLA was formed as the military wing of one of many pro-Communist guerrillas often of a Stalinist and Enver Hoxha-inspired, relied on the Albanian narco-mafia and the Albanian national radicals in Diaspora. Trained and armed in neighbouring Albania in the military camps of Bairam Curri and Kukes, and sponsored from abroad, KLA, led by warlords such as Hashim Thaçi and Ramush Haradinaj started attacks against Serb policemen, civilians and Albanians loyal to Serbia.[11]

The cycle of ethnical violence, launched by the KLA flourished, despite international efforts to bring cease-fire and provide appeasement. The KLA remained adamant in pursuing attacks on Serbian officials, while retaliation, in response of the killing of four Serbian policemen, brought death to the KLA founder Adem Jashari and his extended family (after rejecting to surrender the civilians in this object) in his fortified stronghold in Gornje Prekaze in early March 1998.

It was on 29 August 1998, that opposition Belgrade radio B92 reported that Yugoslav authorities after recapturing the village accused the KLA for the killing of twenty-two Serbian civilians that were afterwards burned in a privately-made crematorium in the village of Klečka. The arrested KLA activist declared that he participated in the firing squad that shot ten of the Serb victims, including two children and three women. Furthermore, in September 1998, the KLA units, most probably under the command of Ramush Haradinaj, had kidnapped and killed at least thirty Kosovo Serbs and moderate Albanians loyal to Serbia and thrown them into the Lake of Radonjić (*Radonjićko jezero*), near Glodjane in Kosovo. The reports in the Western media on these crimes were mixed or mildly presented, which was not the case with the massacre of

[11] "Kosovo Serbs Live in Fear of Future", *Chicago Tribune*, 22 February, 1999 by Tom Hundle; *cf.* another rather pro-Albanian approach: *The Kosovo Spring* (Bruxelles: The International Crisis Group Guide to Kosovo, 1998); International Crisis Group, *Report of September 1*, Bruxelles 1998.

the eighteen members of an Albanian family in Gornje Obrinje, on 29 September 1998:

> "[...]The period since August[1998] has been marked by more discoveries of concentrations of corpses and evidence of massacres, including the massacre of Serb and Albanian civilians. Serbian authorities announced that, on 27 August 1998, in the village of Klecka, they discovered in a makeshift crematorium what they believe are the remains of civilians abducted and then killed by the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). Serbian Ministry of Interior officials announced that they had arrested two members of the KLA who had given statements describing the torture and execution of a number of abducted persons, including women and children. One of those arrested was brought to the scene and questioned in the presence of reporters; later, his arraignment before an investigative judge was broadcast on television. The exact number, identity, age and sex of the persons who died at Klecka has yet to be determined.
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> […] On 2 September 1998, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights issued a statement in which she drew attention to statements, made by all parties in the Kosovo crisis, calling for independent investigation by experts, including international forensic specialists, into the violent deaths resulting from armed actions. The High Commissioner observed that "joint efforts to promote independent investigation into these tragedies are in the interest of all persons committed to human rights in Kosovo".
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> […] Shortly after the discovery of the Klecka site, the remains of at least 37 persons were discovered in nearby Glodjane. In contrast to the treatment of the Klecka site, Glodjane and others subsequently discovered appear to have been treated more carefully and clinically by government authorities and the media. On 29 September 1998, the bodies of 14 Kosovo Albanians, including six women, six children and two elderly men, were found in a forest close to the village of Gornje Obrinje in the Drenica region. Four of the children were under the age of 10, the two youngest being about four years of age. One of the women was pregnant. International observers who went to the scene

> reported that some bodies had been heavily mutilated. Most of the killed had been shot in the head at close range, and their throats had been slit. There are reports that on 26 September 1998, another 14 Kosovo Albanian men had been massacred in the village of Golubovac, a few kilometres from Gornje Obrinje. In early October 1998, the police discovered the remains of four persons believed to have been abducted by KLA in a pit close to the Volujak copper mine near Klina. Two more bodies were reportedly found on 4 October 1998 near Gremnik.
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> […] The fate of many Serbian, Kosovo Albanian and Roma civilians and Serbian police officers abducted by armed Kosovo Albanians, believed to belong to KLA, remains unknown. Yugoslav authorities say that 249 civilians and police have been abducted by KLA. Ninety-two of those persons were reportedly released, 9 escaped and 29 have been found dead. The International Committee of the Red Cross reports that it is currently following around 140 cases of abductions."[12]

These excerpts from the *Human Rights situation in Kosovo Report of the* [*UN*] *Secretary-General*, compiled by Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights from 1998 showed that Kosovo was at the edge of a full-scale civil war. In addition, increased hopes of the rebelled Kosovo Albanians were nurtured by the continuous illegal influx of both weapons and trained military units from neighbouring Albania. Thus, they were repeatedly calling for NATO military intervention.

More serious implications for the immediate future of Kosovo, however, were to be produced by new ideological formulations of the Balkan conflict based on the stereotyped division into "good guys" and "bad guys" applied more or less effectively during the civil wars in Croatia and Bosnia. This Hollywood-style simplification of the complex Balkan interethnic conflicts, necessarily superficial and inaccurate,

[12] Human rights situation in Kosovo. Report of the Secretary-General. Fifty-third session Agenda item 110 (c).

gave rise to a distinct continental doctrine of humanitarian intervention. Inspired by a growing number of humanitarian disasters, the new doctrine emerged as a pretext to coordinated military action of major Western powers, regardless of the absence of a mandate given by the UN or any other relevant international organization. The architect of the *droit d'ingérence* was Bernard Kouchner, intermittently a French minister and a "doctor without borders", who was appointed the first UN administrator in Kosovo after the international protectorate was established there in the summer of 1999.[13]

The French-invented doctrine of humanitarian military intervention in interethnic conflicts massively affecting the civilian population soon found influential supporters overseas. This was especially widespread among the emerging ideologists or paid lobbyists who had called for a relentless NATO bombing of the Bosnian Serbs, openly flouting legal barriers and ignoring the presence of foreign Islamic fundamentalist mercenaries in the Bosnian Muslim army.[14] The limited success of the brief campaign of NATO air strikes against the Bosnian Serb positions towards the end of the civil war in Bosnia and Herzegovina only goaded them into developing the doctrine further, predicating it mostly on the presumption of exclusive Serbian culpability in the Balkan civil conflicts — a presumption, however, insufficiently supported by either military or diplomatic facts.[15]

The full-scale war instigated by the KLA and their foreign sponsors in 1998 lead, after the failed negotiations between Belgrade and Priština held at Rambouillet, to the unilateral

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[13] *Cf*. more in: Pierre Péan, *Le monde selon K.* (Paris: Fayard 2009). See also the opposite claims presented by Bernard Koucher himself in: *Les guerriers de la paix : du Kosovo à l'Irak* (Paris: B. Grasset, 2004).

[14] J. R. Schindler, *Unholly Terror. Bosnia, Al 'Qa'ida, and the Rise of Global Jihad* (St. Paul: Zenith Press, 2007).

[15] See more with accurate data in: Diane Johnstone, *Fools Crusade. Yugoslavia, NATO and Western Delusions*, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2002); *Lessons of Kosovo. The Dangers of Humanitarian Intervention,* Aleksandar Jokić ed. (Toronto: Broadway Press, 2003). *Cf* also: *Understanding the war in Kosovo*, Florian Bieber & Židas Daskalovski, eds. (London: Frank Cass, 2003).

NATO intervention in March 1999: seventy-eight-days of severe bombing of the whole of Serbia (from the northern province of Vojvodina through central Serbia and as far as Kosovo in the southernmost area) and partially of Montenegro, the second member-state of the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Many media manipulations on alleged Belgrade "Horseshoe strategy" regarding the large-scale expulsions of the Albanians proved to be false, fabricated to alarm public opinion for the military intervention.[16] The NATO bombing campaign consisted of massive air-strikes and missile-strikes launched from the military vessels in the Adriatic Sea. It was the NATO military operation without precedence, launched in order to halt the "humanitarian catastrophe" of the Kosovo Albanians and support their fighting units (KLA), that, confronted by the Yugoslav armed and police forces, were losing the war on the ground. Many war crimes, indeed, were committed on both sides, provoking forced displacement of tens of thousands civilians, mostly Albanians, but some Serbs as well, in particular after the bombing, often with cluster bombs and depleted uranium acquired dramatic proportions, rising significantly the number of displaced persons in neighbouring Albania (one of the main supporters of Albanian armed struggle against Serbia and the main logistic base for KLA units) and Macedonia (FYROM).[17]

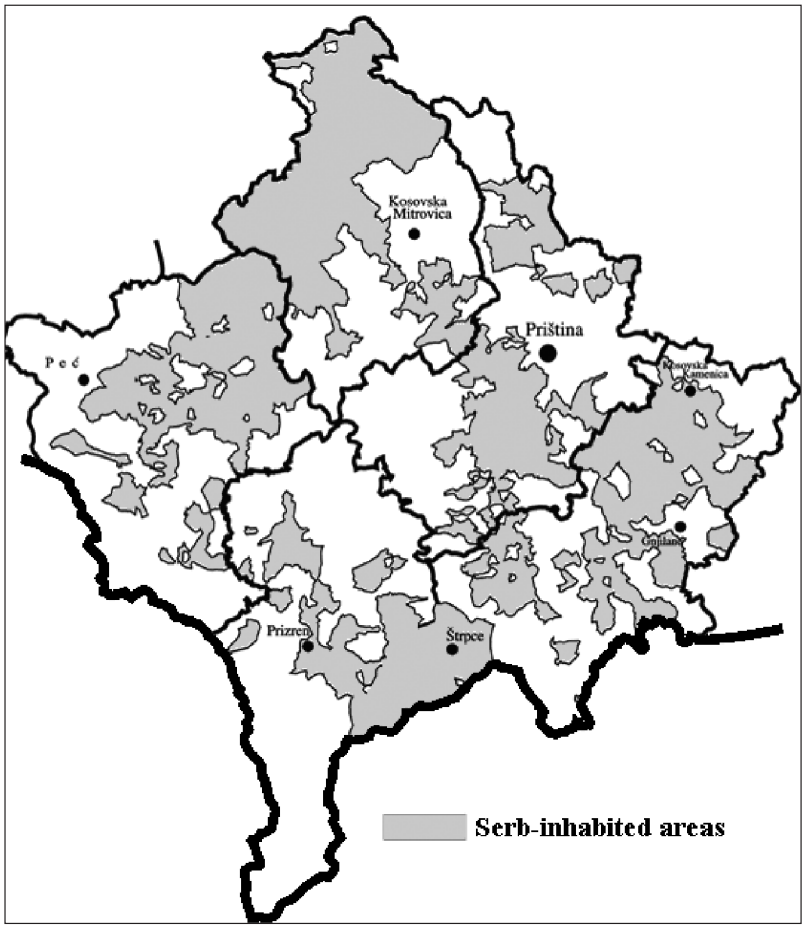
Nevertheless, the whole NATO bombing campaign (38,000 combat sorties from 24 March to 10 June 1999) launched without legal endorsement of United Nations was strongly opposed by many important international players, from several EU members, most of South American, Asian and African states, including two permanent members of UN Security Council, the Russian Federation and China.[18]

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[16] See more in: Jürgen Elsässer, *La RFA dans la guerre au Kosovo : chronique d'une manipulation* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2002).

[17] Ivo H Daalder & M. E. D. Hanlon, *Wining Ugly. NATO's War to Save Kosovo* (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institute, 2000).

[18] See rather critical analyses of the Kosovo crisis development and NATO operations in: Ignatio Ramonet et Alain Gresh, "La nouvelle guerre des Balkans" *Le monde diplomatique,* Manière de voir No 45,



Kosovo and Metohija Serb-inhabited areas in 1999

mai — juin 1999 (collection of previously published articles); Eric Laurent, *Guerre du Kosovo. Le dossier secret*, (Paris: Plon, 1999).

C. Lane, *Blunder in the Balkans. The Clinton Administration's Bungled War against Serbia*, (Washington D.C.: Cato Institute Policy Analysis, 7 March 1999); *The Kosovo News and Propaganda War*, P. Goff, ed. (Vienna: International Press Institute, September 1999); *The Kosovo Dossier*, (London & AIken: Lord Byron Foundation for Balkan Studies, 1999).

Kosovo Serbs under the UN Administration and KFOR Protection

Periodic occurrences of interethnic and inter-religious cooperation, as well as rare attempts of mutual communal assistance between the Christian Serbs and Muslim Albanians — usually short-lived and only superficially tolerant — were not, as claimed by certain historians, the prevailing political practice neither under the Ottomans nor during the various ideological patterns during the Serbian and Yugoslav period between 1912 and 1999. On the contrary, interethnic communication remained very limited and became more strained after the 1981 Albanian riots against Titoist Yugoslavia, thus failing to survive both the dissolution of the Yugoslav communist federation and the mounting Serbian-Albanian conflict at the very end of the twentieth century.[1]

The 1999 NATO military action against Serbia took the lives of roughly 10,000 Albanians and 2,000 Serbs in Kosovo only, plus several thousand Serb, mostly civilian victims in other regions of both Serbia and Montenegro (FRY). After months of intense air strikes, the NATO bombing that started in late March 1999 was eventually terminated in early June 1999. Serbia complied with peace only after NATO and Russian mediators previously promised to Belgrade that Kosovo, after being entrusted to the UN administration, will remain

[1] *Cf.* Ger Duijzings, *Religion and the Politics of Identity in Kosovo* (London: Hurst & Co, 2000); Petrit Imami, *Srbi i Albanci kroz vekove* (Belgrade: Radio B92, 1998).

under Yugoslav sovereignty.[2] The legal position of Kosovo and Metohija was redefined after the NATO bombing campaign was halted after the Military-Technical Agreement was signed in Kumanovo (FYROM) on 9 June, 1999 between NATO and Yugoslav military representatives. By the Kumanovo agreement, Kosovo and Metohija, constitutionally an autonomous province within the Republic of Serbia (a member-state of Federal Republic of Yugoslavia), was to be entrusted, after the eventual withdrawal of all Yugoslav military and police personnel, to the military protection of a NATO-led 48,000 strong Kosovo force (KFOR).[3]

The bilateral Military-Technical Agreement was a prerequisite for UN Security Council Resolution 1244, adopted the next day, on 10 June, 1999. Kosovo and Metohija (referred to only as Kosovo in the 1244 UNSC Resolution) were placed under the administration of the United Nations. Main provisions of 1244 UN SC Resolution were focused on the cessation of military and paramilitary activities and the beginning of demilitarization of armed groups (paragraphs 3 and 15), the establishment of an international civilian presence under UN auspices to assist in interim administration (paragraphs 5 through 11), the commencement of international financial assistance to Kosovo, and setting out continuing reporting requirements. In addition, *Annex 1* to the 1244 UNSC Resolution lists "general principles on the political solution to the Kosovo crisis" adopted by the foreign ministers of G-8 in May 1999,[4]

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[2] Martti Ahtisaari, *Misija u Beogradu*, (Belgrade: Filip Višnjić 2000), translated from the Finnish original.

[3] D. T. Bataković, "Kosovo: from Separation to Integration", *Serbian Studies. Journal of the North American Society for Serbian Studies*, vo. 18, No 2, Washington D.C. 2004, 311–320.

[4] The *Annex 1* list is as follows: Immediate and verifiable end of violence and repression in Kosovo; withdrawal from Kosovo of military, police and paramilitary forces; deployment in Kosovo of effective international civil and security presences, endorsed and adopted by the United Nations, capable of guaranteeing the achievement of the common objectives; establishment of an interim administration for Kosovo to be decided by the Security Council of the United Nations to ensure conditions for a peaceful and normal life for all inhabitants

whilst *Annex 2* lists general principles on which there should be agreement in order "to move towards a resolution of the Kosovo crisis."[5] Nevertheless, it was essential for Belgrade to insist on 1244 UNSC Resolution's preambular statement on "[r]eaffirming the commitment of all Member States to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. […]"[6]

Whereas calling for the disarmament of Albanian paramilitary units (the Kosovo Liberation Army), the 1244 UN Security Council Resolution foresaw the return of an agreed number (less than 1,000) of Yugoslav (i.e. Serbian) security and military forces in the Province. The UN Resolution also envisaged the establishment of 'a substantial autonomy' for Kosovo and Metohija within Serbia — since June 2006 the legal successor of both the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (April 1992 — February 2003) and the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro (February 2003 — June 2006).[7]

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in Kosovo; the safe and free return of all refugees and displaced persons and unimpeded access to Kosovo by humanitarian aid organizations; a political process towards the establishment of an interim political framework agreement providing for a substantial self-government for Kosovo, taking full account of the Rambouillet accords and the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the other countries of the region, and the demilitarization of the KLA; comprehensive approach to the economic development and stabilization of the crisis region.

5 *Annex 2* called for the establishment of an interim administration for Kosovo as a part of the international civil presence under which the people of Kosovo can enjoy substantial autonomy within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, to be decided by the Security Council of the United Nations. The interim administration was to provide transitional administration while establishing and overseeing the development of provisional democratic self-governing institutions to ensure conditions for a peaceful and normal life for all inhabitants in Kosovo. *Cf.* more in *Documents on Kosovo and Metohija /Dokumenti o Kosovu i Metohiji, bilingual edition* (Belgrade: Liber Press 2002)

6 Christopher J. Borgen: "Kosovo's Declaration of Independence: Self-Determination, Secession and Recognition", February 29th 2008, available on: www.kim.sr.gov.rs/.

7 The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (*Savezna republika Jugoslavija*) was renamed into the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro (*Državna zajednica Srbija i Crna Gora*) on 4 February 2003, and eventually

The main purpose of the UNSC Resolution 1244 — at least the one officially declared as such — was not to bring about the separation of Kosovo and Metohija from the rest of Serbia, but to rebuild this war-torn area, under the auspices of the United Nations, into a new democratic, tolerant multicultural society that would eventually, enjoying the high degree of substantial autonomy, be gradually reintegrated into a future democratic framework of the Republic of Serbia.

Under UN administration since June 1999, the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija and its Albanian-dominated Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG), were obliged to gradually restore the protection of fundamental human rights and provide freedom of movement for all Kosovo inhabitants, regardless of their ethnic origin or religious affiliation. Furthermore, according to UNSC Resolution 1244, they were obliged to provide for the fast and safe return of internally displaced persons and create a stable legal framework as the main precondition for the restoration of a multicultural, multi-ethnic society in compliance with fundamental UN and European standards regarding human rights, property rights, etc.[8]

Nevertheless, the Kosovo war, often described as a Hitler-like campaign of the Serbian army against Kosovo Albanians, as it was confirmed soon after NATO entered Kosovo, was not a 'genocide' as claimed during NATO's ruthless bombing campaign.[9] A Canadian military expert described the first post-war delusions with the scale of the war crimes in a following way: "When the horde of journalists finally descended upon Kosovo, reporters weren't interested in Albanian revenge killing of Serbs — they were on a collective race to uncover the

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succeeded since 5 June 2006, after the referendum on independence of Montenegro, by the Republic of Serbia.

[8] *The Kosovo Conflict: A Diplomatic History through Documents*, Auerswald P. E. & Auerswald D. P. eds., foreword by Senator Joseph R. Biden Jr., (Cambridge, MA: Kluwer Law International, 2000).

[9] Daniel Pearl and Robert Block, "Despite Tales, the War in Kosovo was Savage, but wasn't Genocide", *Wall Street Journal*, 31 December 1999.

first 'mass graves, discover the 'rape camps' and the shattered remains of the Serbian army. What they found was evidence of a very different way from the one they had just spent the past three months reporting. The mass grave sites proved to be elusive. [...] After five months of searching, UN forensic teams had uncovered only 670 bodies. Keeping in mind that this tally included Albanian, Serbian, Gypsy civilians plus suspected combatants, the number did not justify the careless use of the word *genocide* [...]. Claims of mass rape also failed to stand up to scrutiny."[10]

Nevertheless, already during the first weeks, after NATO-led KFOR took control over Kosovo, both the political and security situation became alarming. In early July, *The Economist* of London, printed an article to serve as a major warning for the coming UN administration: "When Bernard Kouchner arrives in Kosovo next week as UN's new administrator of the province, he will face some unpleasant problems and unhelpful *faits accomplis.* Five will hit him at once. First, hope for some kind of democratic, multi-ethnic government, including Serbs as well as the now dominant Albanians, is just about dead. Second, the guerrillas of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) are clearly determined to set up their own embryo government, whatever Dr Kouchner's putative supreme powers. Third, Kosovo's Albanian majority is deeply divided; the Kosovars look likely to fight bitterly among themselves for mastery of the province. Fourth, it may be too late for an orderly return of refugees: most of those who left have already come back, even though many of their homes and villages are in ruins. And fifth, Dr Kouchner's staff, so far, is pathetically small. Of these problems, the most intractable is the ethnic one. In the month since NATO forces came in under the UN's aegis, at least 75,000 of Kosovo's Serbs have fled, along with many thousands of Gypsies, whom the Albanians accuse of collaborating with the Serbs. Some Serbs say that only 30,000 of their

[10] Scott Taylor, *The Violent Aftermath of the Kosovo Conflict. Diary of an Uncivil War* (Ottawa: Esprit de Corps Books, 2002), 13.

people, out of the 200,000 or so who were there 18 months ago when the violence began to spread, are still there."[11]

In spite of several efforts to provide appeasement, Dr Kouchner soon became the target of various journalists and analysts accused for a biased approach in regard to Kosovo Albanians in general and their KLA warlords in particular. Kouchner's initial efforts to justify Albanian-perpetrated ethnic cleansing against the Kosovo Serbs — as a community collectively guilty for war crimes, regardless of their participation in the 1999 War — was met with harsh criticism: "Kouchner did more to justify violence against the remaining Serb civilians then to stem it: 'Human nature dictates these response among some Albanians, revenge being a direct antidote to the poison that has infected this war-ravaged region', prescribed the borderless doctor. Kouchner told Albanians that he felt very close to them, adding: 'I love all peoples but some more than others and that is the case with you [ethnic Albanians].'[...] Kuchner, however confessed that love is missing in Kosovo among Albanians as well.' Moreover, Kouchner was the most frightened by 'the spirit of vengeance', which does not make [Albanian-dominated] Kosovo 'an affectionate place'."[12]

The ambiguous role of Dr Kuchner in Kosovo, after his critical biography by Pierre Péan a first-rate investigative French reporter was published, attracted considerable interest. Pierre Péan, is highly critical towards Kouchner's role in Kosovo. Other analyst, such as Jean-Jacques Chavigné wrote that Pierre Péan « reproche à Kouchner de privilégier 'l'affect, l'émotionnel, terrain d'élection d'une politique de l'instant, partisane et souvent belliqueuse' et de le faire sans vraiment beaucoup de scrupules. En affirmant, par exemple, le 25 juin 1999 que '11 000 Kosovars ont été exhumés des fosses communes'. 'Information' que le Tribunal de la Haye démentait

[11] "Kosovo. Mission impossible? Reinventing Kosovo is already proving hard", *The Economist*, London, 8 July 1999.

[12] Quoted from: Diana Johnstone, *Fools Crusade. Yugoslavia, NATO and the Western Delusions*, 254.

dans la journée. Pierre Péan le souligne, le rapport de l'Onu établi par la procureur Carla Del Ponte révélera, dans la plus grande discrétion d'ailleurs, que les atrocités commises par les Serbes au Kosovo n'étaient que des affabulations. Mais ces affabulations avaient, estime Pierre Péan, contribué à justifier les 58 574 missions aériennes effectuées en 78 jours sur la Serbie et le Kosovo »[13]

In addition, the similar accusations by Péan were, as described by Chavigné, on the following topics : « Pierre Péan cite Diana Johnson (18 juin 2007 sur le site *Mondialisation.ca*) et sa stigmatisation de la partialité de Kouchner au Kosovo : 'Comme dictateur du Kosovo du 2 juillet 1999 à janvier 2001, Kouchner a montré la nature de son humanisme (…) Il a permis que la province tombe encore plus aux mains de clans armés et de gangsters qui terrorisent depuis les non-Albanais en toute impunité.' Et Pierre Péan souligne 'Kouchner n'aura pas réagi avec beaucoup d'ardeur aux massacres et à l'épuration ethnique des Serbes au Kosovo par la majorité qui avait sa faveur et celle des Etats-Unis'. Pierre Péan accuse également Bernard Kouchner d'épouser, presque systématiquement, les combats de Washington. 'Pendant que Kouchner gérait civilement le Kosovo, écrit-il, les Américains y construisaient pour leur part la plus grande base de l'Otan, le camp Bondsteel. »[14]

These critics were shared by other democratic organizations and media throughout Europe. According to the Socialist European sources in August 1999:

> "in the Kosovo capital Pristina, where the number of Serb residents has decreased from 40,000 to less than 2,000 in the past eight weeks, KFOR spokesman Major Jen Joosten described the atmosphere of intimidation. 'Serbs cannot go to hospitals, shop, or even receive humanitarian assistance. There must be many of whose existence we are not even aware.' After acknowledging that they cannot leave their homes for fear of violence he tried to excuse the failure of NATO's military to protect them. 'Everything is being done

[13] http://www.democratie-socialisme.org/
[14] *Ibid.*

to keep the Serbs here, but KFOR can't be on every street corner or in every house,' he said lamely. Head of the United Nations mission in Kosovo, Bernard Kouchner, revealed the extent of the KLA's campaign in a statement to an Athens newspaper this week. 'In the future, I will not allow the homes of 10 or 15 Serbs to be burnt down every night, even if it means confrontation with the KLA. I have told [KLA leader Hashim] Thaçi that my patience has run out.' Kouchner, however, outlined no planned steps to halt the attacks on Serbs and other ethnic groups. There have been a series of killings in Pristina. On June 23, for example, the bodies of three men were found in the basement of the Economics' faculty of Pristina University. They were Milenko Lekovic, a Serb professor of economics, Miodrag Mladenovic, a Serb guard in the building, and Jovica Stamenkovic, a Serb waiter from the café in the faculty. They had been beaten with a blunt instrument before being shot. Most of the Serbs remaining in the capital are the elderly and disabled who have no means of leaving or no place to go. Two elderly women were murdered in the first week of August; both were shot through the doors of their apartments. A Serb woman and her four-year-old child were reportedly shot on August 11. The woman staggered with her child to a KFOR checkpoint where she died, the child was taken to hospital. On Monday, two Serb teenagers were killed and five other Serbs injured during a mortar attack on the village of Klokot, south-east of Pristina.[15]

In the first months of post-1999 war, the remaining representatives of the democratically oriented Kosovo Serbs, joint with the representatives of the Serbian Church, were willing to cooperate with UNMIK, hoping for fair treatment and equal participation of both Serbs and Albanians in the future political development of the UN-administred Province. It turned out, however, that the Albanians obtained a „carte blanche" from both KFOR and UNMIK, despite the guarantees given

[15] "Serbs and Roma flee KLA terror in Kosovo", by Michael Conachy, 20 August 1999, available on: *World Socialist Web Site* and *http://www.kosovo.net/testimonies8.html*

to the Kosovo Serbs regarding the equal treatment of all national communities as envisaged by the UN SC Resolution 1244. This meant that the Serbs were expected to comply with everything that the Kosovo Albanians wanted, thus creating the illusion of a single, multi-ethnic state in the eyes of the international media. Momčilo Trajković, one of the remaining members of the pro-Western democrats among Kosovo Serbs (*Srpski pokret otpora*), indicated an unwillingness to continue co-operation:

> "The real reason for the abortion of our co-operation with foreign and Albanian officials is KFOR's inability to prevent further violence in Kosovo. What good is it being the ruling party when the whole population is either dead or out of the country. The whole of Metohija has been purged of Serbs. There are no Serbs left in Suva Reka, Uroševac, Srbica. [...] The Serbs in Priština and Gnjilane are living a nightmare as we speak. We are paying the price for what the state military and police forces did to Albanians during the bombing. Both then and now, the ones who got hurt were the innocent people. Trajković continues, stating that people were being killed, kidnapped, and thrown out of their homes, their doors broken down with axes. At first, it was only Serbs who were being attacked, but then the Albanians started attacking their kinsmen who were on Serbia's side. A mafia war is on the brink of breaking out between the Albanian and Serbian mafia. Albanian leaders disassociated themselves from all this, and every day a new part of Kosovo was cleared of Serbs. KFOR watches all this without wanting to further interfere and deeper involve themselves. They are the army, and the events going on are a job for the police, a police which is not yet existent. In Priština, for example, there are one thousand Serbs left. Twenty thousand were driven away. In peacetime two hundred people were kidnapped. Of those, thirty were murdered. The destruction of temples and churches is a whole different story. We have confirmation that fifteen of them have been burned down or demolished. A 700 year old tree, planted by Emperor Uroš, was cut down. All the Serbian villages have been burned down. I don't want to

> accuse the international community of being involved in these atrocities, but I get the feeling that they came to Kosovo unprepared to deal with this conflict. Those are the real reasons behind the breaking off of our co-operation."[16]

Facing the orchestrated waves of ethnic cleansing, destruction of the cultural monuments and ethnically-motivated violence, none of the solemnly proclaimed goals by NATO, UN, UNMIK and KFOR have been respectively achieved. These goals, regarding security, democracy, rule of law interethnic reconciliation and a sustainable society were not even partially achieved, during the ten years of UN administration. In spite of the fact that after the ousting of the authoritarian regime of Slobodan Milošević in early October 2000, democracy was ultimately restored in Belgrade, and where new authorities were eager to closely co-operate with the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), both UNMIK and ethnic Albanians did very little to promote negotiations between Belgrade and Priština and start building a "substantial autonomy" of Kosovo within FR Yugoslavia and Serbia. Both the federal and Serbian governments were offering serious negotiations with the legitimate representatives of the Kosovo Albanians, to support the fulfilment of the main requirements of 1244 UN Security Council Resolution. Furthermore, the resolutely democratic approach of Belgrade to the Kosovo problem was confirmed by the rapid liberation of all Kosovo Albanian prisoners of war both military and civilians detained in Serbian prisons, whilst efficient collaboration with KFOR was established in managing the security in the Ground Safety Zone established after June 1999 between UN-administered Kosovo and the rest of Serbia.[17]

In sharp contrast to the open and democratic policy of post-Milošević government in Belgrade, willing to cooperate both with UNMIK, KFOR and the Albanian political

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[16] "Zločini na Kosovu. Suočavanje i neverica" http://www.vreme.com/arhiva_html/445/12.html

[17] *Serbia after Milosevic. Program for the Solution of the Crisis in the Pčinja District*, Milo Gligorijević, ed. (Belgrade: Liber Press, 2001).

representatives on the whole process of rebuilding Kosovo and Metohija as a democratic, multi-ethnic society with substantial autonomy as proclaimed by UN administration, the Kosovo Albanians, led by warlords, involved in organized crime and drug-trafficking, made every effort to avoid cooperation with Belgrade and promote independence from Serbia as their only political option. It explains why very modest or no progress at all was achieved by Albanian-dominated *Provisional institutions of Self-Government*, assisted by both UNMIK and KFOR, in most of the sensitive areas that involved the return of internally displaced persons, multi-ethnic cooperation or interethnic reconciliation. UNMIK administration and KFOR forces focused primarily on assisting Kosovo Albanians, perceived as the main victims of interethnic conflict. Thus, the internationals failed to provide efficient protection not only to Serbs, but to non-Albanian communities and minority groups as a whole, from the Albanian-extremist led, highly orchestrated, large-scale campaign of ethnic cleansing. The campaign of brutal expulsion, destruction of Serbian churches, desecration of graves and usurpation of privately-owned landed property, was directed primarily against Serbs, as a constituent nation in Kosovo and Metohija as well as in the rest of the Republic of Serbia. Orchestrated by Albanian extremists led by former KLA warlords, this new wave of post-war ethnic cleansing was tacitly approved not only by the majority of the Kosovo Albanians, but by their political leaders as well.[18]

The ethnic cleansing perpetrated against the Kosovo Serbs after 10 June 1999 has been publicly justified both by Albanians and their supporters throughout the international community as a kind of ugly, regrettable but inevitable revenge for all the criminal acts previously committed against local Albanians by the Serbian police or paramilitaries under the Milošević regime while fighting the KLA and its supporters

[18] *Cf*. more details in: D. T. Bataković, "Surviving in Ghetto-Like Enclaves. The Serbs of Kosovo and Metohija 1999–2007", in: *Kosovo and Metohija. Living in the Enclave*, 239–263.

during the fifteen months of armed clashes before and during the NATO bombing campaign.[19] In compliance with the Kumanovo Agreement, the Yugoslav army took all its military equipment out of Kosovo and Metohija, while the KLA fighting units remained armed, despite occasional, mostly symbolic, handovers of arms to KFOR. Although being one of the main prerequisites in UNSC Resolution 1244, the complete disarmament of the KLA was never accomplished. Thus, the Kosovo Serbs, fully disarmed, could find protection only with KFOR, while Albanians, using the reluctance of KFOR to confront the KLA, a major NATO ally during the bombing campaign, were free to take their revenge against the Serbs and the members of those ethnic groups considered as loyal to Serbia during the 1999 conflict.

It was not a surprise that despite the massive 48,000-troops strong military presence of international (KFOR) troops, the overall security situation concerning the personal safety and freedom of movement for the Serbs and the members of non-Albanian minorities since June 1999 has been constantly deteriorating. The major positive achievement of the UN mission in Kosovo was the quick and safe return of hundreds of

[19] The numerous Albanian testimonies of wartime sufferings, dramatic and extensive although not fully reliable, are available in: *Under Orders. War Crimes in Kosovo* (New York: Human Rights Watch 2001). There is an extensive report of OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission: *Kosovo/Kosova. As Seen, as Told. An Analysis of the Human Rights Findings of the OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission. October 1998 to June 1999* (Warsaw: OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, 1999). There is a growing literature regarding the persecution and drama of Kosovo Albanians in 1998–1999: *cf.* for instance: Fred Abrahams & Eric Stover *A Village Destroyed, May 14, 1999: war crimes in Kosovo,* introduction, Carroll Bogert (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001). Furthermore, the worst crimes against ethnic Albanians were committeed in the village of Ćuška near Peć, in Podujevo and in Suva Reka area, in Velika Kruša during the 1999 war and its perpetrators, mostly Serb paramilitaries and police reservists are currently tried and some of them already convicted in Serbian courts. *Cf* also "The Evidence against Milosevic. A Massacre in a Village Called Suva Reka May lead to a Powerful Case against the Former Strongmen", *Newsweek,* 23 July 2001, 15–18.

thousands Albanians who had fled or were forced to leave Kosovo during the 1999 NATO bombing campaign. They safely returned to their often destroyed homes within several weeks after KFOR and UNMIK took full control over the administration of the province. Nevertheless, as confirmed by independent sources, dozens of thousands of Albanians from economically backward areas of northern Albania also entered Kosovo and Metohija in order to pillage the abandoned property of Serbs who fled to central Serbia or to Montenegro.[20]

The Ethnic Cleansing of Serbs and non-Albanians under KFOR and UNMIK: the Initial Phase

Conversely, most of the Kosovo Serbs and other non-Albanians were forced out of the Province by the Albanian extremists, while the remaining ones were deprived of their fundamental human rights. The chronology of post-war developments concerning the Serbs and other non-Albanians was the following: prior to the establishment of UNMIK, at least 30,000 Serbs fleeing Albanian persecutions, retribution and attacks hastily left Kosovo and Metohija. During the first three months of UNMIK-KFOR administration, approximately 150,000 Serbs were expelled by Albanian extremists from Metohija and Kosovo and forced to find refuge in central Serbia or in Montenegro.[21]

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[20] The first UNMIK administrator Bernard Kouchner on 2 August, 1999 warned publicly, that "the presence of gangsters coming from the neighboring Albania and amplifying the already existent chaos in Kosovo". Despite 36,500 staff strong military and civilian forces, with only 555 international policemen and twenty judges, it was impossible to deal with a large scale KLA-sponsored Albanian mafia, involved in drug smuggling, women trafficking and arms dealing in UNMIK-administrated Kosovo.

[21] Alexandros Yannis, *Kosovo under International Administration*, (Athens: Eliamep/Isis, 2001).

After the initial shock by rapid arrival of a small Russian military contingent from Bosnia to Priština, KFOR officially took over in Priština on 12 June, looking primarily for suitable accommodation for the incoming NATO troops. In parallel, as reported from the diocese to the Serbian Orthodox Church "a wave of unprecedented violence, looting, murders and abductions spread throughout the Province, especially in the cities, where the main victims were the remaining Serbs, Roma, Gorani and Muslim Bosniacs", apart from a tiny ethnic Turk minority, practically the members of all non-Albanian communities and minority ethnic groups.[22] Furthermore, tens of thousands of Roma, and thousands of Muslim Slavs (mostly Goranis), whose houses were also burnt or usurped by Albanians fled the Province as well.[23]

The very difficult situation for the Serb and non-Albanian population became highly critical, going from bad to worse. Thus, on 17 June 1999, approximately 5,000 Kosovo Serbs left Uroševac (Ferizaj), an important town in the south of the province, escorted by a strong KFOR contingent. According to the data offered by the Serbian police and confirmed by UNMIK, since 1 January 1998 there were 1,303 missing persons: 944 Serbs, 210 Muslim Roma and 149 ethnic Albanians. According to other data provided by The Hague Tribunal in charge for war crimes in former Yugoslavia (ICTY) only in June 1999, there were 547 Serbs killed while additional 932 Serbs and other non-Albanians were kidnapped.[24]

The first five Serb civilians had been kidnapped on the streets of Priština already on 12 June 1999, while news kept arriving of an orchestrated campaign of terror against both

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[22] *Žrtve albanskog terorizma na Kosovu i Metohiji*, Ilija Simić ed., Committee for gathering Information on Crimes against Humanity and Violations of International Law (Belgrade: JP Službeni glasnik 2001).

[23] *Cf.* the documentation in *Blic*, Belgrade, 22 August, 1999. "Ne ubijaju Srbe tamo gde ih nema" ("Serbs Not Killed In the Places Where There Are None").

[24] *Cf.* detailed documentation on 932 missing persons in: *Abductions and Dissapearances of non-Albanians in Kosovo* (Belgrade: Humanitarian law Center 2110). *Cf.* also: UNHCR/OSCE, *Overview of the Situation of Ethnic Minorities in Kosovo*, 3 November 1999.

the Serb and Roma population. The Serb population of the village of Zočište near Orahovac fled from the village on 14 June 1999 after their homes, together with the monastery of the Holy Healers St Cosmas and St Damian (a fourteenth-century medieval Serb endowment) were burned by a group of Albanian extremists. The small but historically important monastery church was completely blown up afterwards. Between June 14 and 16 in Orahovac (a vineyard area of Metohija) approximately 600 Serb residents scattered in various parts of the town all fled to the Serbian quarter located near the church, ready to organize joint resistance to Albanians who were burning to the ground, one after another, all the Serbian possessions. On 24 June roughly 3,200 Serbs were forced to leave Orahovac escorted by KFOR. From 6,000 pre-war Serb residents scarcely 2,000 remained ghettoized in the Serbian-held quarter of Orahovac. Nevertheless, a 1,200-Serb-strong enclave in the neighbouring Velika Hoča, a historic Serb village with fourteen churches from various periods, oriental architecture monuments and well-preserved fourteenth-century wine cellars founded by Serb Emperor Stefan Dušan in the fourteenth century, present-day property of Dečani monastery, managed to survive, protected, as the remaining Serbs in Orahovac, by permanent KFOR surveillance and protection by barbed wire.[25]

Another notable fourteenth century monastery, the Holy Trinity in Mušutište was looted on 12 June, set on fire and then burned to the ground, while the nuns barely managed to escape. Four days after German KFOR troops entered Prizren, on 16 June 1999, a KLA armed group kidnapped Fr. Chariton Lukić, a monk of the monastery of Holy Archangels near Prizren, in charge of the evacuation of Serbian nuns from the monastery of Mušutište and monks from the monastery of Zočište. More than a year later, beheaded and mutilated body of Fr. Chariton was found in the vicinity of Prizren. On

[25] First-hand reports by Berlin-based journalist: Nikola Živković, *Kosovo. Dnevnik 1999–2000* (Prometej: Novi Sad 2000).

June 15, 1999, German KFOR finally decided, but only after the Albanian mob had destroyed most of Serb monuments around the seat of the Raška-Prizren Bishopric (*Eparhija raško-prizrenska*), to provide continuous military protection to the besieged Serb Cathedral and Bishop's Residence.[26] The OSCE report highlighted the following verified facts in the second half of 1999:

> "[…] Since the end of the conflict, 97% of Kosovo Serbs and 60% of Roma have left Prizren/Prizren.The most visible feature in Prizren/Prizren town since the end of the NATO air campaign has been the extensive house burnings of largely Serb and Roma dwellings. In excess of 250 properties have been burned which effectively emptied Prizren/Prizren of these minorities. Elsewhere in the region, the arrests of alleged war criminals from Velika Hoca/Hoce e Madhe and Orahovac/Rrahovec and the disappearance of 15 Kosovo Serbs and six Roma also from Orahovac/Rrahovec have created a siege mentality throughout that municipality. The subsequent blockade which continues to surround Orahovac/Rrahovec in protest at the deployment of Russian KFOR troops has heightened ethnic tensions and strengthened the desire of minorities to leave the area. Harassment and intimidation of mostly elderly Kosovo Serbs in the Župa region culminated in September with the disappearance of 17 elderly Serbs from an isolated hamlet. In the Gora/Dragashi municipality there is an increase of violence against Muslim Slavs. Throughout the Prizren/Prizren area, intimidation and harassment against minorities is more the norm than the exception and it continues to affect those Kosovo Albanians who speak out against the continuing violence and revenge."

The other areas in the vicinity of Prizren in Metohija, with significant Serb settlements, were rapidly emptied after armed Albanian extremists continued unhindered, in a wave of terror of ethnically motivated crimes, from abduction and expulsion to torture and random killings. The villages of Belo Polje

[26] Marilina Veca, *Il Kosovo Perduto?* (Belgrade: Hrišćanska Misao 2004).

and Vitomirica near Peć were completely emptied of Serbs. The Serbs of Belo Polje were forced from their houses and left for neighbouring Montenegro on June 19th after three of their co-nationals were found massacred by the Albanian extremists. Between mid-June and late July 1999, the Metropolitan of Montenegro and his monks, authorized by the patriarch to provide protection to the nuns at the monastery of the Patriarchate of Peć and its flock in the immediate vicinity, found and buried about thirty Serb bodies, mostly of elderly men and women, massacred in the most brutal manner throughout the Peć area. The Dečani Monastery, famous for providing shelter for all ethnic groups in danger, now provided shelter not only to Serbs but also to fifty Roma after the Albanians had torched their houses. Another sheltered family was from the Gorani (*Goranci*) community. The tiny Serb community of Djakovica, living in a single street, known as *Serbian Street (Srpska ulica*) gathered around the parish church of the Mother of God. A series of evacuations reduced Serb presence to only six old ladies, living in complete isolation under the protection of Italian KFOR forces.[27]

As reported on 15 August the situation in British-controlled area of central Kosovo was the following: "Looted houses, banished senior citizens, stolen cars, racketeering, murders, abductions, rape, trafficking: the KFOR troops are facing crime, both organized and uncontrolled, committed by Kosovars [i.e. Kosovo Albanians] and Albanian Mafia. In two months, in the British Sector only, there were 127 murders (accounted for), 378 arsons, 504 known robberies. Kosovo has only been under UNMIK administration for six weeks, and the word 'mafia' emerged into media reports. A coincidence?"[28]

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[27] These elderly ladies were eventually evacuated by Italian KFOR on March 17th, 2004 when thousands of Kosovo Albanian rioters attacked their parish home and church with stones and petrol bombs. After their evacuation to Dečani Monastery, the church and their home were looted and set on fire. In the following days all remains of the church were completely removed.

[28] *Cf*. James Pringle, "Harvest massacre blamed on Kosovo guerrillas", *The Times*, Gracko, 26 July, 1999; Chris Bird, "This is what will happen

According to verifiable sources of the Kosovo bishopric of the Serbian Orthodox Church (*Raško-Prizrenska eparhija*) the number of Serbs remaining in the larger Kosovo cities was the following: Gnjilane: of 25,000 Serbs the number dropped to 5,000; Kosovska Mitrovica: of 27,000 the number fell to 15,000 Serbs; Kosovo Polje: of 20,000 the number fell to 10,000 Serbs; Peć: of 12,000 in the municipality the number fell to less than a hundred Serbian civilians in the town; Priština (the town itself): of 30,000, the number fell to 500–1000 persons; Prizren: of 5–6,000 in the town, the number dropped to 600 Serbs.[29]

During the first three months of UN administration approximately 250,000 Serbs and other non-Albanians (Roma, Muslim Slavs, ethnic Croats and a tiny Jewish community) were expelled and displaced from Kosovo, finding asylum in the rest of Serbia or in Montenegro. Abductions and random killings of Kosovo Serbs from every region of the Province became the predominant content of hundreds of comprehensive well-documented reports of local priests and church-people's councils, covering the events concerning the Serb victims from Gnjilane, Vitina, Lipljan, Klina, Uroševac, Prizren, Orahovac and Peć areas.[30]

A significant number of Serbs left Kosovska Vitina on 19 July 1999, after the random attacks by Albanian extremists

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to us all", *The Guardian*, 29 July 1999; Report by Agence France Presse of 15 August, 1999.

[29] Detailed account available in: D. T. Bataković "Kosovo: From Sparkling Victory to Troublesome Peace", in: Dusan Simko & Henko Haumann (eds.), *Peace Perspectives for South Eastern Europe*, Proceedings of the Symposium 2000 Basel, Switzerland, 29–30 June 2000, (Prague: Academia, 2001), 127–147.

[30] These *Reports*, especially covering the first months (July — October 1999) sent from from Gnjilane, Vitina, Lipljan, Prizren, Orahovac and Peć have been partially reproduced in the anthology of documents on post-war crimes against Serbs and non-Albanians in Kosovo: *Nova Srpska Golgota (The New Serbian Golgotha)*, vol. 1–4 (Cetinje: Svetigora, 2000). Mirko Čupić, *Oteta zemlja.Kosovo i Metohija. Zločini progoni, otpori* (Belgrade: Nolit 2006).

culminated when a group of Serbs was injured by a hand grenade near the Serb Orthodox church. In another region in Metohija, Hieromonk Stefan Puljić, the priest at the monastery of Budisavci (the *metochion*, dependency of the Patriarchate of Peć) was abducted with one other Serb by extremist Albanian Roman Catholics, only to be tortured and eventually killed.

The Metohija — the agrarian plain bordering Albania, with dozens of important medieval Serb monuments and the important cities of Peć, Djakovica and Prizren — became the first provincial area ethnically cleansed of Serbs as early as August 1999. Only several surviving enclaves, apart from Orahovac and Velika Hoča, remained as small pockets (village of Goraždevac near Peć, the villages of Suvo Grlo, Banja and Crkolez east of the city of Istok). The Serbian cemeteries were in most cases desecrated or destroyed in the abandoned villages — as in Belo Polje, near Peć, or in the other rural communities of Seča, Brestovik and Šakovica in their vicinity. Throughout Kosovo, the Serbian Christian cemeteries were either desecrated or totally destroyed, in order to evict any trace of previous Serbian presence in the area, and to discourage any potential return of expelled Serbs.

The worst inter-ethnic crime that took place within several first weeks of large-scale terror and violence against Serbs committed by the Kosovo Albanians was the "Harvest Massacre". On 23 July, 1999, fourteen Serbian farmers of the village of Staro Gracko in the Lipljan area of central Kosovo were killed by local Albanians while harvesting their crops in the early evening hours. The UNHCR official report stressed that "a wave of arson and looting of Serb and Roma homes throughout Kosovo has ensued. Serbs and Roma remaining in Kosovo have been subject to repeated incidents of harassment and intimidation", while "more seriously, there has been a spate of murders and abductions of Serbs since mid-June, including the late-July [Staro Gracko] massacre of Serb farmers." Despite official scaling-down of the level of discrimination and persecution against Kosovo Serbs, it was the *Philadelphia Inquirer* that reported "a sinister pattern of violence

and intimidation" where "Serb houses are bombed and set ablaze" and where the scale of violence amount to "systematic ethnic cleansing."[31]

The Albanian perpetrators of the "Harvest Massacre" were never identified, apprehended or tried, as in thousands of other similar cases of ethnically motivated crimes against the Kosovo Serbs. The only Kosovo Albanian, strongly encouraged by the Americans, who dared to condemn the orchestrated crimes of Albanians against Kosovo Serbs already in August 1999 was Veton Surroi, editor of influential Albanian daily *Koha Ditore*:

> "Those Serbs who carried out Belgrade's orders and committed atrocities against Albanians have already fled, as have others fearing reprisals from relatives of the thousands who are buried in mass graves. Today's violence — more than two months after the arrival of NATO forces — is more than simply an emotional reaction. It is the organized and systematic intimidation of all Serbs simply because they are Serbs and therefore are being held collectively responsible for what happened in Kosovo. Such attitudes are fascist. Moreover, it was against these very same attitudes that the people of Kosovo stood up and fought, at first peacefully and then with arms, during the past ten years. The treatment of Kosovo's Serbs brings shame on all Kosovo Albanians, not just the perpetrators of violence. And it's a burden we will have to bear collectively. It will dishonour us and our own recent suffering which, only a few months ago, was broadcast on television screens throughout the world. And it will dishonour the memory of Kosovo's Albanian victims, those women, children and elderly who were killed simply because of their ethnic origins. The international community will probably not punish us for failing to defend multi-ethnicity in Kosovo. After all, even before the war, the number of non-Albanians in Kosovo was akin to that of non-Slovenes in Slovenia, yet nobody talks today of a multi-ethnic Slovenia. However,

[31] *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Philadelphia, 18 November 1999.

from having been victims of Europe's worst end-of-century persecution, we are ourselves becoming persecutors and have allowed the spectre of fascism to reappear."[32]

Nevertheless, it should be observed that Veton Surroi, while condemning the ethnically-motivated crimes, did not miss the opportunity to label the Kosovo Serbs as a minority in Kosovo, despite the provisions of 1244 UN Security Council Resolution and other acts related to the status of the UN-administered Kosovo. Surroi's comparison of non-Albanians in Kosovo with non-Slovenians in Slovenia, suggested that Kosovo (with allegedly a two million-strong Albanian community, in fact, there were roughly 1.3 to 1.5 million Albanians out of less than 1.9 million population of the Province, before the 1999 war), suggested that Serbs are not only a minority, insignificant in both number and influence, but that there is no real prospect of mass return of roughly 248,000 internally displaced persons with at least 200,000 Kosovo Serbs among them to Kosovo with equal rights as the Kosovo Albanians.

Despite the fact that UNMIK had introduced both Albanian and Serbian languages as the official ones in this newly established UN protectorate implying that Serbs are a constituent nation in Kosovo as elsewhere in Serbia, and that Albanians will not be treated as the majority nation in Kosovo. However, in practice, it soon became obvious, not only in regard to treatment in everyday life, but also through official statements of various UNMIK administrators, that Serbs are considered, after being massively cleansed from the Province to the end of 1999, just as another Kosovo minority. The Kosovo Albanians, famous for waving only flags and coat-of-arms of the Republic of Albania, were started regularly to be labelled as *Kosovars*, suggesting that they belong to another, if now new nation, although *Kosovar*, is the expression in the Albanian language that describes solely Albanian inhabitant of Kosovo. (Serbian term

[32] Veton Surroi, "Kosovo Fascism, Albanian's Shame. The systematic intimidation of Kosovo's Serbs brings shame on the province's Albanians and will have far-reaching and long-term consequences", *Koha Ditore*, August 1999.

referring to the Serb from Kosovo is *Kosovci)*. The first UN administrator Bernard Kouchner, was frequently using the term *Kosovar Serbs*, that was an absurd calling the Kosovo Serbs de facto as the Albanian Serbs. Moreover, the whole new political narrative was referring more frequently to the Kosovo inhabitants as allegedly the "Kosovo nation", although neither of the two main national communities (Albanians and Serbs) nor the other minority groups knew anything, and had nothing in common with this newly invented identity.[33] It was a typical case of the "invention of tradition", as vividly described earlier for other cases of nation-building by Eric Hobsbawm.[34] If there was a distinct Kosovo nation, that will eventually finalize the state-building under the aegis of UN and NATO, than the Serbs cannot be anything else but a minority.[35]

Emptied Serb Villages, Ethnically Cleansed Towns

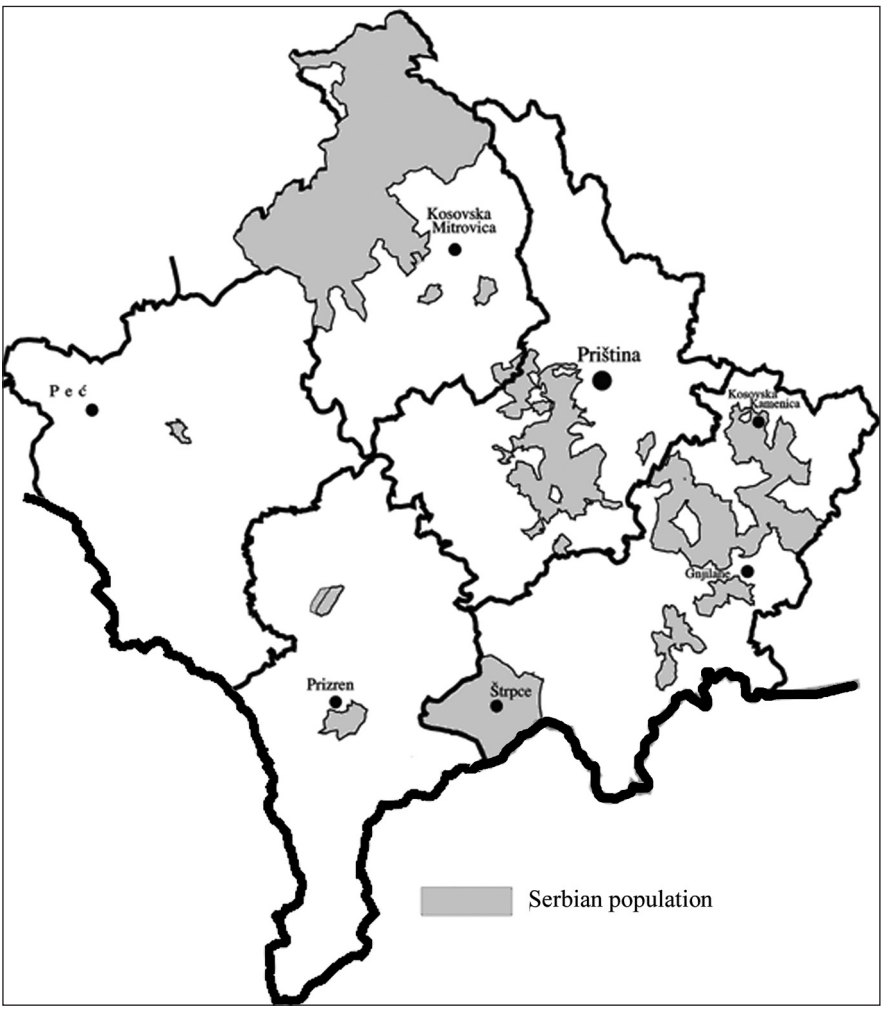
Within several months of late 1999, at least 40,000 Serbs, pre-war urban (30,000) and suburban (10,000) residents of Priština, the provincial capital, decreased to less than 1,000 only to continue to diminish rapidly. They remaining Serbs were additionally reduced, within several months to barely 120 remaining inhabitants, confined to a single apartment building (YU Program Building), heavily guarded by KFOR, but deprived of freedom of movement throughout the city. Priština previously the main economic, cultural and

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[33] See the failed political attempt to define allegedlly new Kosovar nation: *Who is Kosovar? Kosovar Identity (a Debate)*, Migjen Kelmendi & Arlinda Desku (Prishtine: Java 2005). *Cf*. also: *Albania and the Albanian identities*, Antonina Zhelyazkova, ed. (Sofia: International Center for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations, 2000).

[34] Eric Hobsbawm & T. Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

[35] *Cf.* more details in: D. T. Bataković,"Srpska zajednica na Kosovu i Metohiji 1999–2005. Od konstitutivnog naroda do nametnute minorizacije", in: *Položaj nacionalnih manjina u Srbiji*, Vojislav Stanovčić, ed., Scientific Conferences, vol. CXX, Department of Social Sciences, t. 30 (Belgrade: Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 2007), 227–243.



Kosovo and Metohija in 2002

university centre for the Kosovo Serbs (comprising of at least 8,000 students and professors) remained completely deprived of Serb intellectuals.[36] Furthermore, the roughly ten thousand-strong Roma population of both urban and suburban Priština, a distinct urban component of the provincial capital, practically disappeared under orchestrated persecution by the Albanian extremists in the first few months after 10 June 1999. Both Serbs and Roma in the urban areas of Kosovo capital were replaced mostly by rural Kosovo Albanians. They rapidly settled in Priština, moving with their extended families into the houses, apartments and other property of expelled Serbs and other non-Albanians. In addition, a significant, still undetermined number of Albanians from Albania moved illegally into Kosovo and settled permanently in Priština, attracted by both housing vacancy and business opportunities, lacking any legal control by both UNMIK and KFOR.[37]

Furthermore, within the last several months of 1999, urban Kosovo Serbs were first reduced and eventually completely evicted from all other major Kosovo towns such as Peć, Prizren, Djakovica, or Uroševac. In the place of thousands of Serb inhabitants, only few dozens of them, mostly elderly persons remained, surviving by hiding in the churches, or in the Serbian Orthodox Theological School

[36] In June 1999, various departments with Serbian-language students of University of Priština, according to official Serbian data had 1,500 professors, associate professors and staff employed. With roughly 16,000 Serbian-speaking students, all the Serbian and Serbian-speaking professors were expelled by the Albanian extremists, and found refuge in Kosovska Mitrovica. The subsequent transfer of Serbian-sections of the University of Priština to Kosovska Mitrovica as a temporary seat of the University became official by the decision of the Government of Serbia in late 2001. (*Službeni Glasnik Srbije*, No. 60/01).

[37] The similar were the cases with Serbs employed in state-owned companies: *Stradanja radnika Elektroprivrednih preduzeća sa Kosmeta (Suffering of the Workers of Serbian Electric Power Industry in Kosmet* [Kosovo and Metohija]: 1998–2001), Dragan R. Cerović, ed. (Belgrade: Obilić: Gajić, 2001) [bilingual, Serbian/English edition].

(*Bogoslovija*) in Prizren, as elsewhere owing to the protection of KFOR units.[38] At least 200 Serb, Roma and Muslim residents found refuge in the Serbian Theological School in Prizren under German guard, as well as a group of Kosovo Albanians who were threatened to be killed by their compatriots for supporting Serbs.[39]

The formerly prosperous community of 12,000 Serbs and Montenegrins in the city of Peć, successful in trade, the construction business and crafts, was completely gone by the first few months of the year 2000, while the number of Serbs in Prizren, previously reduced by forced expulsion to less than 200 residents in 2000, further declined to sixty-eight residents consisting primarily of elderly people in 2002. After the area of Metohija was virtually cleansed of the Serbian population, similar developments took place in eastern Kosovo. The first wave of attacks by the Albanian extremists on Serbs in Gnjilane started on 24 July 1999. The first wave of destruction targeted the monument to Holy Prince Lazar (*Sv. Knez Lazar*), a Serbian hero of medieval Kosovo, while six mutilated bodies of Serb civilians were found in the dumpsters of the local hospital. A detailed report by OSCE for the Gnjilane area the scale of violence was the following:

> "[…] The period of the most intense and widespread violence in the Gnjilane/Gjilan region began on 1st July and lasted some three weeks. It was characterised mainly by house burning and looting. With the exception of mortar attacks, all the forms of violence seen since in the Gnjilane/Gjilan area were already apparent by the beginning of July: killings, abductions, harassment including shooting, grenade attacks and threats. Not until 21st July did

[38] The Prizren Theological School (*Prizrenska Bogoslovija*) that survived all the challenges of terror and persecution since 1870, eventually was forced to evacuate permanently from southern Kosovo and find shelter in central Serbia, in Niš.

[39] More details in: Dušan T. Bataković, "The Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija. War, International Protectorate and National Catastrophe", *Eurobalkans*, N° 36–37, Athens, autumn/winter 1999, 23–40.

KFOR report the first mortar attack. The violence had its greatest effects on the Kosovo Serb and Roma communities: large outflows of both were witnessed from early July onwards. In the period from 10th to 18th July, no day or night went by without a house burning somewhere in Gnjilane/Gjilan town. People fled from these attacks. In Zitinje/Zitinje, at that stage 50% Kosovo Serb, 50% Kosovo Albanian, the former Mayor's house was burned on 1st July. On 2nd July, the OSCE tried without success to speak to the remaining Kosovo Serbs in the village. On 1st August, 330 Kosovo Serbs, including the former Mayor, left the village.

In Rogotovo, Zegra/Zheger and Prilepnica/Prilepnica, on 2nd July, houses were set alight. By 3rd July, the entire Kosovo Serb population had left Prilepnica/Prilepnica. On 4th July, the first of the houses in the Roma quarter of Gnjilane/Gjilan were set alight. On 7th July, it was reported that nine Krajina Serbs had been evicted from Novo Brdo/Novo Berde by the UCK and had moved to Bostane/Bostan. On 11th July, four fires were reported from the centre of Gnjilane/Gjilan: the following day, nine other houses were set alight in a six-hour period. On 18th July, a Roma leader reported that his community had shrunk from 8,500 before the conflict, to just 130 people: no Roma were left in Ogoste/Ogoshte, few remained in Koretin/Koretin, Roma were starting to leave Berivojce/Berivojce.

On 5th July a convoy of 13 Kosovo Serb vehicles left Zegra/Zheger for Presevo with a KFOR escort, while UNHCR escorted 15 Krajina Serbs to Bujanovac. UNHCR reported on 12th July that it would resettle Krajina Serbs in Western Europe and would arrange travel to Croatia for those wishing to go there. On 15th July, the former President of Kosovska Kamenica/Kamenice reported that Kosovo Serbs had left 11 villages in the Municipality. On 15th July, a bomb exploded in the market in Vitina/Viti: the market closed the following day and on 18th July, a convoy of 100 vehicles left Vitina/Viti for southern Serbia. The KFOR Summary on the Vitina/Viti area for 1st August 1999 stated: 'Exodus of all Serb residents of Zitinje/Zitinje. Massive wave of looting

follows. At least 80 homes burnt in the past week. Burning continues.'[…]"[40]

Once numerous, strong and prosperous, Serb urban residents of both Gnjilane in eastern Kosovo and Orahovac in lower Metohija, lacking continuous protection, were eventually forced to flee from the Province in 2000: in early 2001 their number was reduced from 12,000 in the pre-war period to 400 remaining residents in Gnjilane and approximately 450 residents in Orahovac, protected by barbed wire.

The monastery of Devič, the burial place of St. Joanikije Devički in the Albanian-inhabited area of Drenica was for centuries a privileged target of Albanian extremists: the monastery was set ablaze in 1941 and reconstructed after 1945. In the middle of June 1999, the monastery of Devič, was held for three days under KLA siege and restored to its sisterhood only after nuns from Kosovo's northernmost medieval monastery, Sokolica, brought French KFOR forces to establish military protection of this oldest medieval Serb monastery in the Drenica area. The monastery of Devič, famous throughout medieval Serbia and Ottoman rule, attracting numerous pilgrims from all neighbouring areas, remained to be venerated for the relics of the local, highly revered saint — St. Joanikije Devički, was once more desecrated by the KLA in 1999, only to be fully destroyed in March pogroms of 2004 by Albanian extremists.

The revengeful wave of ethnic cleansing, carried out by Albanian extremists against Serbs and the other non-Albanian population became a by-product of the new political landscape dominated by Kosovo Albanians and controlled by extremists: "Amid this anarchy, the question has to be asked: can the shameful campaign of 'ethnic cleansing' and murder of Serbs that continues under KFOR's eyes still be explained away as revenge attacks, as retaliation for the mass atrocities committed against Albanians by Serb forces before and during

[40] "Regional Overviews of the Human Rights Situation in Kosovo. Gnjilane/Gjilan: Where Once There Was Calm", in: *OSCE Kosovo/Kosova. As Seen as Told*, Part II 1999.

the Kosovo war? A growing number of Albanian intellectuals, including several courageous journalists on the [Albanian] daily *Koha Ditore* newspaper, fear that the murders and dispossession of Serbs are now being organized."[41]

Regrouping into Enclaves as Imposed Solution: The Mitrovica Exception

The imposed regrouping of the remaining Serbs into several KFOR-protected enclaves has kept around 130,000 Serbs in four separate zones:

1. The strongest and most protected was northern Kosovo, due to the direct territorial link to the rest of Serbia: it spreads to the north of the river Ibar and Severna [Northern] Mitrovica (encompassing Zubin Potok, Zvečan and Leposavić municipalities) to which the citizens of the region around Vučitrn resorted. The main contribution in preventing the ethnic cleansing of the Serbs in northern Kosovo was the muscle action of the French KFOR troops, with their section of Kosovska Mitrovica, north of the bridge on the Ibar River. The bridge on Ibar, separating northern from southern Mitrovica was, as reported:

> "[…] the scene of recent clashes between KLA-inspired demonstrators and French KFOR troops. Beginning on August 6, crowds of up to 1,000 Albanians, many of them

[41] "Armed Albanians take revenge with campaign of murder, house-burning and intimidation that has driven out thousands Serbs murdered by the hundred since 'liberation'."(*The Independent* of London, 24 November, 1999, a report by Robert Fisk in Pristina). Additional eye-witnesses that have published their reports: "Rebel Terror Forcing Minority Serbs Out of Kosovo", *New York Times*, 31 August 1998 by Mike O'Connor; "Kosovo Rebels Make Own Law", *Washington Post*, 24 November, 1999, by R. Jeffrey Smith; "NATO's Reputation a Casualty of War", *The Toronto Sun*, 18 November, 1999, by Peter Worthington. *Cf.* also: "U.N. Discovers Colonialism Isn't Easy in Kosovo", *The Wall Street Journal*, New York, 2 November, 1999, commentary by Max Boot.

> young men wearing KLA scarves, have attempted to force their way across the Ibar bridge into the [northern] section of Mitrovica housing several thousand Serbs. French soldiers erected a barbed wire barrier across the bridge after three days of clashes that left several Albanians and one French soldier seriously injured. French Lieutenant Meriadec Raffray was in no doubt as to who organised the demonstrations. "The KLA leaders are only interested in keeping up the pressure," he told the media. "They want to provoke an incident." Kosovo Mitrovica (Kosovska Mitrovica) is a mining centre, some 20 miles north of Pristina, and has been a centre of ethnic tensions since the end of the war. The purpose of the demonstrations is firstly to further intimidate Serbs living in the town and to force them to leave, and secondly, to put pressure on the French troops. Demonstrators taunted the French soldiers with chants of "terrorists" and demanded, "Frenchmen go back to France, Americans come here!"[42]

In this, the largest Serbian-inhabited area, north of River Ibar, under UNMIK, but still out of reach of Albanian-dominated Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in Priština, life of the Kosovo Serbs is closer to normal than in any other Serb-inhabited or mixed Serbo-Albanian enclaves. The Serbian section of the University of Priština was relocated in Northern Mitrovica (*Severna Kosovska Mitrovica*) in 2001, and currently employs 746 professors and 350 staff with roughly 10,000 students from Kosovo, Metohija and other regions of Serbia. The curricula are mostly harmonized with programs of other universities of Serbia, and in compliance, in general with the Bologna process. However, despite the fact that relocation of Serbian section of the Priština University to Mitrovica was the only way to avoid the total eradication of university education for the Kosovo Serbs in their own language, UNMIK is calling this institution "The University of North Mitrovica" and treats the whole university campus, although completely legal and in compliance with UNSC 1244 and other related

[42] www.kosovo.net

documents, including those signed between Belgrade and UNMIK, as a "parallel institution". Among similar "parallel institutions" are the re-established National and University Library "Ivo Andrić" from Priština, currently in northern Mitrovica (the main National and University Library, as well as the other facilities of the University went under Albanian control after June 1999). The same was the case of the "Institute for Serbian culture", relocated to northern Mitrovica (*Severna Mitrovica*) and Leposavić as well, after all the Serb institutions were closed in Priština.

In spite of the fact that Mitrovica is usually presented as a symbol of the ethnically divided city, the northern, Serbian-controlled part is still multiethnic, while the southern, Albanian-controlled part of Kosovska Mitrovica is mono-ethnic, as testified by the French legionnaire in 2003:

> "For many who pretend to know something about the Kosovo post-war situation Mitrovica is an ethnically divided city, a symbol of ethnic division in the Province. But the reality is quite different. In the northern, so called, "Serbian quarter" still live 4.000 non-Serbs, primarily Albanians, Slav Moslems and Roma, while in the southern, Albanian part, of the city almost primarily Kosovo Albanians live. All Serbs in this part of the city, a dozen of them, are concentrated in a little ghetto around the Serbian Orthodox church, heavily guarded by KFOR. Roma community was almost completely exterminated, their quarter was thoroughly ignited after the war and the Albanian municipal administration plans to erect a recreation center on the location on which they lived. In fact, while the North [Mitrovica] has remained more or less as multiethnic as it was before the war in 1999, the South [Mitrovica] looks nothing different than Pristina, Urosevac, Pec, Djakovica and other major Kosovo cities in which freedom still exists for only one ethnic group — Kosovo Albanians."[43]

[43] A French legionnaire on the bridge over the Ibar River, dividing North and South Mitrovica, summer 2003 (www.kosovo.net/default2.html).

In contrast to the Kosovo Serbs living in the north of the Province who managed to escape the discrimination and isolation, the Serbs confined in other areas of Kosovo, south of the Ibar River in particular, were, without a single exception, deprived of basic security provisions, lacking freedom of movement and other fundamental civil rights.

2. The second important zone was the central area of Kosovo, which encompassed the territory between the Čaglavica, Gračanica and town of Lipljan with thirteenth Serb-inhabited villages, to which a certain number of Priština Serb citizens and of neighbouring villages fled after 1999. The monastery of Gračanica, situated in the centre of the Gračanica village, was under KFOR control, and served as the provisional seat of the Serbian Bishop, after his residence was burned by the Albanian extremists in Prizren.

3. The third region was the zone from Kosovska Kamenica to Gnjilane and Novo Brdo, where the Serb majority exiled from Gnjilane area had found temporary shelter, and the whole area, at least for several years in Novo Brdo municipality, remained with a Serbian majority.

4. The fourth area was the zone of Štrpce municipality (*Sirinićka župa*) with the Brezovica Mountain where a certain number of the Prizren Serbs as well as the members of the neighbouring Muslim Slav inhabited areas fled from violence and persecution by Albanian extremists.

Remaining Serb-inhabited enclaves covering the areas of Kosovska Vitina, Ranilug, Parteš or Vrbovac in eastern Kosovo, as well as other smaller enclaves scattered in Metohija (Osojane, Goraždevac, Djurakovac, Orahovac and Velika Hoča) or restricted survival in the enclaves in the central area (Prilužje, Bresje, Obilić, etc.), remained highly vulnerable to ethnically motivated violence: random attacks, arson and abduction of Serb civilians by Albanian extremists, in spite of significant KFOR presence, numerous check-points or

enhanced patrolling in the areas with mixed Serb-Albanian population.[44]

Internally Displaced Persons from Kosovo and Metohija

Ethnic communities	Serbia	Montenegro	Total
Serbs	207,500	18,500	226,000
Roma	30,000	7,000	37,000
Muslim Slavs	13,500	1,500	15,000
Others	6,500	2,500	9,000
Total	257,500	29,500	287,000

As noticed by a relevant American analyst in 2002, "today there are more refugees from Kosovo than there were prior to the 1999 NATO human rights bombing campaign. The province is now virtually mono-ethnic, with more than 90 percent of its non-ethnic Albanian population forced to leave out of fear of murder, arson and intimidation. At the end of 2000, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan estimated that around 200,000 Kosovo Serbs and 30–40,000 other ethnic minorities had fled. The UN High Commission for Refugees estimates that those figures will remain constant at around a quarter-of-a-million people. Few were expected to return in 2001, due to the inhospitable security situation in the province. For those minorities that do remain in Kosovo, violence and attacks are almost a daily occurrence. In February 2001, the UNHCR reported that the situation was still so bad that Serb and Roma live in a virtual state of siege in mono-ethnic enclaves under the heavy guard of the NATO-led Kosovo Force. The UN Mission in Kosovo, UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies sustain these isolated communities with food and other basic assistance. The ongoing violence aimed at Serbs and other minorities and the apparent general lawlessness in Kosovo, however,

[44] *Cf.* more details in: Ombudsperson Institution in Kosovo, *Fourth Annual Report 2003–2004,* Priština, 2004; Ombudsperson Institution in Kosovo, *Fifth Annual Report 2004–2005*, Priština, 2005. *Cf.* also, Alexis Troude, *Géopolitique de la Serbie*, 228–236.

has done little to discredit the international administration of the province. [...] Still international administrators speak out against interethnic violence and speak of crime as if it were not occurring under what is essentially their watch."[45]

The ethnically motivated crimes that went unpunished in Kosovo since mid-1999 were gradually turned into a standard practice. The continuous harassment, discrimination and random killings, additionally discouraged the remaining Kosovo Serbs, still struggling to survive in the openly hostile mixed or predominantly Albanian-inhabited areas, with extremists who were forcing them to leave the UN-administered Kosovo. In spite of a huge international civilian and military presence, Kosovo remained almost completely deprived of the rule of law. Ruled by the criminal gangs that emerged from the highest ranking officials of the KLA guerrilla (Ramush Haradinaj, Fatmir Limaj, Hashim Thaçi, Xhavit Haliti, and dozens of others), Kosovo was turned into a law-free area for all sorts of criminal activities and illegal trafficking, including organ-trafficking of abducted Serbs, while its dominant political agenda remained to be both the ethnic and religious discrimination, followed by abductions, property usurpations and random killings of Serbs and non-Albanians.[46] In 2005, sixty percent of Kosovo Serbs were still internally displaced persons in other areas of Serbia, at least sixty-six percent of all Kosovo Roma, as well as seventy percent of Goranis — Serbian-speaking Muslim Slavs with Albanized names.[47]

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[45] David Chandler, "Making the World Safe for Human Rights: A Closer Look to Kosovo", in: Gary T. Dempsey, ed. *Exiting the Balkan Thicket* (Washington D.C.: Cato Institute, 2002), 34–35.

[46] Organ-trafficking with organs detached from at least 400 Kosovo Serbs, abducted and afterword killed during the 1999 war first revealed by UNMIK but made public in: Carla Del Ponte & Chuck Sudetic, *Madame Prosecutor. Confrontations with Humanity's Worst Criminals and the Culture of Impunity: a Memoir* (New York: Other Press, 2009).

[47] D. T. Bataković, "Serbs and other non-Albanian Communities in Kosovo and Metohija: Appalling Conditions and an Uncertain Future", *Review of International Affairs* LVII/1122 (2006), 13–15.

As assessed by the main church spokesman in Kosovo, Fr. Sava Janjić, hieromonk of Visoki Dečani monastery, the overall situation of the Serb population and non-Albanian minorities, was almost cataclysmic: "After 10 June 1999 the KLA looted, destroyed and usurped more than 40,000 estates owned by Serbs and other non-Albanians. In a systematic campaign of terror, these groups took power in all the towns and cities of Kosovo in order to empty them of their Serb and non-Albanian population. These systematic attacks on Serbs and non-Albanians were often branded by UNMIK and KFOR as 'spontaneous acts of revenge by frustrated Albanian civilians'[…] No one has been found guilty for the crimes against Serbs. Some local KLA leaders and individuals have been indicted and sentenced for killing fellow Albanians, but crimes against Serbs have generally remained unpunished. […][48]

KLA-related paramilitary Albanian structures have orchestrated the destruction of more than 150 Serbian Orthodox churches and monasteries in peacetime (some irreplaceable medieval heritage sites). By the time KFOR put the most important heritage sites under military protection, almost all Serb churches and cemeteries in Albanian majority areas (i.e. those from which Serbs were previously cleansed) had been devastated and desecrated. Particularly brutal was the destruction of Serbian Orthodox cemeteries, many of which were turned into garbage dumps, dozens of tombs opened and the bones scattered around. The destruction of the Serbian sacral heritage and cemeteries had two goals: to eradicate the centuries-old traces of Serbian culture and tradition (which Kosovo Albanian extremists see as an obstacle to their revised history of an ethnically pure, Albanian Kosovo) and to discourage returns. The major Serbian Orthodox sites have been preserved only thanks to KFOR protection although the Prizren Cathedral of Bogorodica Ljeviška, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, was burned during the 2004

[48] Fr. S. Janjić, "Kosovo and Metohija at the Crossroads", in: *Kosovo and Metohija. Living in the Enclave*, D. T. Bataković, ed. (Belgrade: Institute for Balkan Studies SASA 2007), 299–300.

March riots despite KFOR presence in the city. Other Prizren churches which had survived the first post-war years were burned and desecrated, turning the historic core of the city into rubble."[49]

From June 1999 until December 2000, all the judges and prosecutors within provincial judiciary were Kosovo Albanians, while seven Kosovo Serb judges appointed later were forced to leave their posts and fled to inner Serbia after being threatened by Albanian extremists. The appointment of international judges, although welcomed, proved to be insufficient due to both constant pressures and the reluctance of the predominantly Albanian environment to cooperate in finding the perpetrators of ethnically motivated crimes. According to the report of 26 June 2003 of the Secretary-General on UNMIK, there were only fifteenth international judges and ten international prosecutors serving in the local justice system capable of dealing with only three percent of the criminal cases. The inevitable consequence of inefficient judiciary was the emergence of a culture of impunity surrounding violence against the non-Albanian population and Serbs in particular.[50]

In addition, thousands of houses, apartments (approximately 45,000 units) and land properties owned by non-Albanian residents of Kosovo are still under the occupation of squatters after usurpation by local Albanians, while an additional 30,000 dwellings and other properties were either robbed or damaged. In comparison to approximately 70,000 Albanian properties that were burned, damaged or destroyed during the fighting in 1998 and the NATO bombing campaign in 1999, this post-war record of Kosovo under UNMIK administration is an obvious evidence of a large-scale revenge, a nineteenth-century-style collective vendetta against the Serbs, the Albanians' main rivals, as well as against other non-Albanian ethnic communities, such as Gorani and Roma, con-

[49] Fr. Sava Janjić, *op. cit.*, 301.

[50] *Ethnic Communities in Kosovo 2003 and 2004*, (Belgrade: Humanitarian Law Center, 2004).

sidered as the allies of the Kosovo Serbs in their conflict with ethnic Albanians.[51]

The Goranies, a 17,000 Muslim Slav Serbian-speaking community loyal to Serbia are inhabiting the mountainous region at Šar planina, located south of Prizren, in an area squeezed between Albania and Macedonia, the Gora region, covering more than 500 sq km that is located in Serbia (385,6

[51] An OSCE report of 2001 highlighted the following crimes committed only within one month: **October** was characterized by numerous attacks on minority properties across the province targeting occupied and empty properties alike. On 1 October two explosions just north of Viti/[Kosovska] Vitina destroyed a Kosovo Serb owned house and damaged two others. All three properties were in the process of being sold to Kosovo Albanians, the original owners having already fled Kosovo. The following day, five Kosovo Serb men were injured in Pasjan/Pasjane, Gjilan/Gnjilane municipality, when shots were fired and a hand grenade was thrown at them from a passing car. On 4 October two explosions targeted an abandoned Kosovo Serb property in Zhiti/Zitinje, Podujeve/Podujevo municipality. On 7 October a hand grenade was thrown at a Roma house in Shtime/Stimlje. On 10 October small arms fire and an explosion targeted a Kosovo Serb home in Kamenice/Kosovska Kamenica. On the same day a Kosovo Serb was shot at whilst tending his sheep near Gornja Bitinja/ Biti e Eperme in Strpce/Shterpce. On 14 October a Roma family in Shtime/ Stimlje was again targeted in a hand grenade attack (there had been an earlier attack only the previous week). On 15 October a Kosovo Serb man and his son died when their tractor struck a land mine near Palaj/Crkvena Vodica in Obiliq/Obilic municipality. On 18 October a Roma family in Shtime/Stimlje suffered their third grenade attack in the space of ten days. On this occasion, a woman and a young child were injured. Shortly afterwards the family fled Kosovo in fear of their lives having been subjected to unrelenting attacks over the course of the previous months. On 20 October two hand grenades were thrown at a Kosovo Serb shop in Viti/Vitina. On 23 October a rocket was fired at an apartment building in Prishtina/Pristina housing Kosovo Serbs. Despite structural damage to the building no serious injuries resulted. On 24 October an abandoned Roma home in Rahovec/Orahovac was set alight following an earlier arson attempt on 21 October. On 25 October a hand grenade was thrown at the house of a Kosovo Serb in Binaq/Binac, Viti/Vitina. On 26 October three hand grenades were thrown at the house of a Roma in Vushtrri/ Vucitrn. Overall the number of deaths occurring during the month was very low considering the number of attacks involving the use of weapons of war." (www.osce.org/kosovo/documents/reports/minorities/min_rep_07_eng.pdf)

sq km), comprising of 19 villages. However, during the 1920s, roughly 150 sq km of Gorani-inhabited area remained in present-day Albania, with nine villages and approximately 40 sq km, while after 1945, two additional Gorani villages stayed within the boundaries of present-day FYR of Macedonia. Goranies are a fully recognized and respected minority in Serbia, while in Albania their minority rights were not recognized and they were submitted to forced assimilation. After being severely persecuted by the Kosovo Albanians, the displaced Goranis have founded Civil Initiative of the Goranies (*Gradjanska inicijativa Goranaca*) in 2002 in order to preserve the identity of Goranies in Serbia.

The Goranies have met with a similar fate as that of the Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Romany minority. During the NATO bombing in 1999, at least 23 members of the Gorani minority members were killed by defending Serbia. Their municipality, Gora, was administratively enlarged after June 1999 against their will. The Albanians abolished the Gora municipality and merged it with the predominantly Albanian-inhabited area of neighbouring Opolje. This municipality was consequently renamed into Dragaš, in order to enhance the imposed Albanization of the whole Gorani community. According to data provided by Gorani community, and confirmed by the UN and the OSCE, out of roughly 17,000 members of this distinct ethnic group in 1999, only 7,000 still lived in Gora in 2007, while around 10,000 of them are internally displaced persons, living mostly in Belgrade and other parts of central Serbia.[52]

According to the relevant Gorani analyst, numerous crimes have been committed since the invasion by the KLA paramilitaries and gangs of bandits that came from neighbouring from Albania in the second half of 1999:

[52] *Cf.* more: Harun Hasani, „Migrations of Goranis" in: *Kosovo and Metohija. Living in the Enclave*, 143–152.

"1. Albanians have ill repaid our [Gorani] kindness in protecting and defending [Albanian-inhabited] Opolje area at the time of the NATO aggression;

2. Albanians have abolished the municipality of Gora and sacked all Gorani employees;

3. Albanians have fired as well all those working in state-owned [i.e. Serbian-state-owned companies and [Serbian-financed] institutions;

4. Albanian have banned the use of the Serbian language in public and forbidden people to declare themselves as Goranies;

5. Albanians are seeking to introduce Albanian or "Bosniak" language instruction in [Gorani, Serbian-language speaking] schools;

6. Albanians are preventing the delivery of humanitarian aid;

7. Albanians have torched a number of [Gorani] homes;

8. Albanians have plundered a large number of houses;

9. Albanians they have murdered, abducted or beaten up a dozen Goranies;

10. Albanians have forced sixty percent of the Gorani population to flee the area."[53]

Although the Serbs, along with the Roma and Gorani community remained to be the main targets of ethnically-motivated violence, the international reports were often drafted in a way to somehow distribute the scale of interethnic violence to all minorities and ethnic groups, and to highlight minimal if any progress in interethnic reconciliation.

A series of renewed attacks on civilian convoys took place in February 2001 in order to reinforce fear and insecurity within the Serb-inhabited Kosovo enclaves. The most criminal, among several others, occurred on 14 February, 2001

[53] Behadin Ahmetović, "Autonomous Municipality Of Gora as a Guarantee of the Ethnic Autonomy, Entity and Identity of Goranies", in: *Goranies, Muslim and Turks in the Šar Mountain Župas of Serbia. Problems of the actual living and surviving conditions* (Belgrade: Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts), 57–58.

between Merdare and Podujevo, when Albanian extremists, following Sicilian-mafia methods, planted a strong explosive beneath the road and destroyed the whole Niš Express bus with 56 Serb civilians travelling home escorted by Swedish KFOR. Among 44 heavily injured victims, fourteen Kosovo Serb passengers perished, including two children. KFOR and UNMIK played down the whole incidents not naming the ethnic origin and number of the civilian victims of the "bus bombing massacre" near the village of Livadice.[54] However, as reported by local UNMIK officials, "the perpetrators of this terrorist attack were identified by KFOR almost immediately. NATO intelligence officers, privy to powerful eavesdropping system and information from hundreds of paid informers, had concluded months before that 'a Kosovar Albanian terrorist cell, approximately nine in number' had been responsible for the attack. The bombing was carried out by the three people to create 'personal insecurity in the Serb population'. Intelligence reports stated that the group's leader and some of its members belonged to the Kosovo Protection Corps."[55]

The 2001 OSCE report on situation regarding the worsening security position of both the Serbs and the non/Albanian minorities stressed the following:

> "[...] from late 2000 onwards, starting more or less in the period immediately after the municipal elections, *the pattern of violence has changed***.** There has been an overall deterioration in the security situation and all minority groups to one degree or another have borne the brunt of this. The number of incidents directed at minority groups appears to be on the increase and judging by the events of February

[54] A detailed report by retired Bishop Atanasije Jevtić in the Diocese archive in Gračanica Monastery describes the attempt of UNMIK to scale-down the number of Serbs killed in this Albanian-organized attack. Although it was immediately known that eleven passengers died on the scene, UNMIK claimed that only seven were killed. The reason was the following: less than ten killed victims are considered a crime, while more than ten is considered an act of terrorism.

[55] Ian King & Whit Mason. *Peace at any Price. How the World Failed Kosovo*, 98

> 2001 in particular, the attacks are more highly organised, co-ordinated and carefully targeted than was previously the case. Roma communities along with Kosovo Serbs continue to figure disproportionately among the victims of ethnically motivated crime but other groups have not been left unaffected. The reporting period was punctuated at its beginning by the execution-style killing of four Ashkaelia returnees in Skenderaj/Srbica, and at its end by a series of attacks on transport routes used by minorities to travel in and out of Kosovo, culminating in the 16 February attack on the 'Nis Express' bus service which killed ten Kosovo Serbs and seriously injured a number of others. The effect of this unrelenting violence has been to instill terror and outrage in the minority populations. The fears and frustrations of the Kosovo Serb community in particular were clearly evidenced by the widespread protests in the wake of the fatal bus attacks of mid-February. […].[56]

Furthermore, in April 2003 BBC of London, quoting Amnesty International report under the telling title *The Prisoners in Our Own Homes* informed the wider public of the worsening living conditions for the Serbs and non-Albanians in Kosovo, concerning in particular their appalling security and human rights situations:

> "Serbs and other ethnic minorities in Kosovo remain at serious risk of death or injury despite almost four years of peace and the presence of UN and NATO peacekeepers, a new report by Amnesty International says. Tuesday's report, titled *Prisoners in our own homes*, says beatings, stabbings, abductions, drive-by shootings and the use of hand grenades to intimidate and kill members of these minorities are common in the province. As the vast majority of these crimes remain unsolved, perpetrators are free to commit further attacks contributing to a climate of fear and the denial of basic human rights, it adds. Ethnic minorities in Kosovo, of which the largest are the Serbs and Roma, make up about 8% of the predominantly Albanian population. The

[56] www.osce.org/kosovo/documents/reports/minorities/min_rep_07_eng.pdf

report describes the daily lives of children living in mono-ethnic enclaves who are forced to have a K-for armed escort to school. It says that discrimination in healthcare has led to an increase in mortality rates among minority communities, and up to 90% unemployment among the Serb and Roma communities […]. Of more than 230,000 Serbs, Roma and other minorities who fled Kosovo in 1999, only 5,800 have returned.

Amnesty is calling for proper resources for the UN civilian police force (UNMIK) and local authorities to ensure the thorough investigation of ethnically motivated human rights abuses. To begin with, UNMIK must extend witness protection to the witnesses of such crimes. After the end of the conflict in July 1999 more than half the pre-war minority population fled to Serbia or Montenegro or took refuge in mono-ethnic enclaves in Kosovo guarded by K-for and UNMIK. About a third of the 100,000 Serbs and Roma in Kosovo live in three predominantly Serbian municipalities in the north of Kosovo. Others live in mono-ethnic villages or under K-for protection in majority Albanian urban areas. More than half the pre-war Slavic Muslim community of 67,000 fled in 1999. Now about 3% of the population, they are mainly concentrated in and around Prizren town.[57]

Italian journalist Marilena Veca who spent many months in Kosovo reporting for various Italian media, wrote a dramatic testimonies on the Serbs in Cernica and attack on the Serbian kids in the Goraždevac respectively.

"Arriving in Cernica [January2003] on a snowy and icy afternoon, I enter the village, which has seen some of the bloodiest fighting and numerous instances of cruel hate crimes, to be greeted by an eerie site: a monument being built to honor the KLA. They have already completed the marble stairs, and the top will be a black star in memory of their 'fighters', terrorists that died in the service of the 'Kosovo Liberation Army'. Around me, a new mosque is being worked on, as well as a new, state of the art school.

[57] Kosovo minorities 'under threat' — BBC, Monday, 28 April, 2003.

> Shame that such an institution is open only to Albanian children, and closed specifically to all non-Albanian children. It also a shame that the central place in the principal's office is occupied by a picture of supposed KLA martyrs, in full battle uniforms with their Kalashnikovs. A very good lesson for the [Serbian] children, and also a very big step towards peaceful co-existence. In a police 'land rover' I continue to the poorer part of the village, where the surviving Serbs live. Life here is drastically different than in the other part of the village. A barn provides a makeshift school for the children, consisting of one blackboard, a few chairs and a heater. The principal of this school does not hold pictures of fallen 'heroes' in his office, but those of his four year old son, who was killed in 1999. He was shot in the head, his brains blown all over the wall of their house. His dying body was picked up by an American soldier, who held him and wept over him until he died, at which point he pulled his gun on his commanding officer and told him: 'Look. Look what the Albanians are doing, and we are protecting them.' Soon after that he was sent back to his homeland."[58]

In the isolated enclave of Goraždevac near Peć in Metohija, the armed attack of Albanian extremists on the Serbian teenagers was one of those random killings aimed to discourage the remaining Serb population to leave the Kosovo province forever. Attacks on the children proved to be the most effective one in discouraging Kosovo and Metohija Serbs to stay in the Albanian-dominated environment:

> "It's the afternoon of 13 August 2003, Western Kosovo, 500 meters from the enclave of Gorazdevac. […] A veritable open-air prison. For a group of Serbian children the only opportunity for refreshment and entertainment (so to say, though only in Kosovo) is to sit on the bike, move a few feet of them (although the risk is high when you cross the "boundaries of Indian reserve" which is, In fact,

[58] "Tre storie di 'normale', quotidiano, infinito orrore. Dal Kosovo, Gennaio 2003", in: Marilena Veca, *Il Kosovo Perduto?* (Belgrade : Hrišćanska Misao, 2004), 233 [bilingual Italian-Serbian edition]

an enclave) and go to the Bistrica River to swim, the river that flows near the enclave of Goraždevac, the only Serbian village (800 people) in Western Kosovo, a territory that is completely mono-ethnic Albanian since the 'end' the war and 'humanitarian' intervention of NATO. Cycling, swimming in the river ... quite "simple" ideas. But in Kosovo nothing is simple for the Serbs. There are no laws and no prohibitions, as well as ethical dilemmas, regarding to the Serbian population. The lack of precaution by the innocent children swimming in the Bistrica that day resulted in their collective deaths. Albanian extremists open fire on them from the other side of the river. Two Serbian children, 11 and 19 years of age, were killed on the spot (Pantelija Dakić and Ivan Jovović), while three others were seriously injured. Bogdan Bukumirić, 15, is in a coma.

Hospitals run by Albanian doctors received them, but they purposefully misdiagnosed, to disguise the gunshot wounds. The wounded were transported to the VMA [Medical Military Hospital in Belgrade], while the monks and nuns from the Dečani and Peć monasteries were allowed to visit them only later that afternoon. […]"[59]

The Kosovo Albanian journalists were trying to cover the whole process of orchestrated persecution of Serbs by reporting in a way that would, at least immediately after some regretful event, channel the focus to possible Serbian involvement and their alleged responsibility: "When the recent massacre of Serb children in Goraždevac occurred, a chorus of Albanian language newspapers wrote that the Serbian children were playing with "a bomb that exploded". Albanian physicians in Peć, seeing multiple gunshot wounds of children before them, nonchalantly diagnosed them as bone fractures and proceeded to put casts on children whose arms and legs still contained machine gun bullets. When the truth could not be hidden after all, the journalists and politicians who had been the lamenting the demise of Kosovo's image more than

[59] "Strage degli innocenti nell'enclave di Gorazdevac, Ovest Kosovo, 13 agosto 2003", in: M. Veca, *op. cit.*, 266.

the loss of a young life began to sing in chorus how the Serbs had in fact shot their own children because, as one Albanian journalist wrote: "They are ready to kill their own children if necessary to prevent the independence of Kosovo.' On the same day the Serbian children were massacred the world also received news of a young Albanian girl who was allegedly wounded in the attack. Later it was 'explained' that she was not injured in the attack but in fact 'stoned by angry Serbs'. In the end no one was able to give the name of the Albanian girl or confirm that she was hurt anywhere nearby."[60]

Belgrade: Repeated Attempts to Build Cooperation with both UNMIK and the Kosovo Albanians

Although there was no progress in the political dialogue with the Kosovo Albanian leadership, the Yugoslav government in Belgrade, through its *Coordinating Centre for Kosovo and Metohija*, established a closer cooperation with UNMIK. International representatives had become increasingly aware that there could be no solution for the Kosovo crisis without involving the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, as a missing link, in the process of the full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1244. Despite serious complaints of the Yugoslav government regarding the *Constitutional Framework for Interim Self-Government in Kosovo*, approved by the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative Hans Haekkerup — regarding the protection of Kosovo Serbs and other non-Albanians — the Yugoslav authorities encouraged Kosovo Serbs (including internally displaced persons in central Serbia and Montenegro) to register for the general elections in Kosovo that took place on 17 November 2001. Roughly 170,000 Serbs (probably eighty percent of the eligible Kosovo Serb population) agreed to be registered. After a special agreement on institutionalized cooperation was signed between the FRY and UNMIK in Belgrade on 5 November 2001, the Yugoslav and

[60] Fr. Sava, *op cit.*

Serbian authorities had called on the Kosovo Serbs to participate in the general elections in order to promote reconciliation and foster further cooperation with UNMIK.[61]

Nevertheless, only a month later, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative Hans Haekkerup decided to leave Kosovo after heavy pressure from the Albanians, who were angered by the signing of an UNMIK agreement with Belgrade. The Serbian coalition 'Return' that entered the provisional institutions of self-government in Kosovo, including the Kosovo Parliament, was rewarded for its cooperation by constant efforts of the Albanian deputies to disregard, by a majority vote, any of the proposals of the Serbian deputies aiming to rebuild inter-ethnic confidence and implement measures important for the protection of basic human rights for the Serbian community. For the Kosovo Albanians, the only question they were ready to discuss both with the Kosovo Serbs and the Belgrade government was a date for the proclamation of the independence of Kosovo.

In parallel, a wide range of options for possible final status of Kosovo-Metohija have been discussed, although the main preconditions, as envisaged by UNSC Resolution 1244 have not been met, but on the contrary, significantly neglected.[62] This was confirmed by different human rights monitoring groups, including Amnesty International.[63]

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[61] All documents regarding the cooperation between the Belgrade government and UNMIK are available in a bilingual edition of *Documents on Kosovo and Metohija/Dokumenti o Kosovu i Metohiji* (Belgrade: Liber Press 2002). FRY — UNMIK document was signed in Belgrade on 5 November 2001, 171–177.

[62] A good review of these options is available in: *Kosovo Final Status. Options and Cross-Border Requirements*, United States Institute for Peace, Special Report, July 2002.

[63] Amnesty International's concerns for the human rights of minorities in Kosovo/Kosova.

"Vandalism with a Mission": The Orchestrated Destruction of Serb Cultural Heritage

In parallel with the persecution of the Serb civilian population, the target of Albanian retaliation were numerous Serbian Orthodox churches and monasteries, ranging from medieval Byzantine-type monuments to more recent churches dating from the sixteenth to the twentieth century. Until the end of 1999, over seventy Serbian Orthodox churches and monasteries were plundered, desecrated, in most cases levelled to the ground. One third of these churches were important cultural monuments dating from the medieval period with invaluable frescoes, sculptures, and icons.[1] As stressed by a Western eyewitness "[…] this demolition cannot be just 'revenge' — NATO's usual excuse for the destruction under its auspices. You do not just fill with rage and spend days gathering explosives to blow up churches. This is vandalism with a mission".[2]

A prominent war correspondent from Great Britain reported that "the Serb church has issued its own list of destroyed or partly demolished buildings. Between 13 June — when NATO

[1] *Cf.* bilingual Serbian-English publication: *Crucified Kosovo. Destroyed and Desecrated Serbian Orthodox Churches in Kosovo and Metohija* (June — August 1999), Belgrade 1999, edited by Fr. Sava Janjić. Revised and updated Internet English edition, as well as French, Greek and Russian editions are available at: *www.kosovo.net*.

[2] *The Independent*, London, 20 November 1999, "NATO turns a blind eye as scores of ancient Christian churches are reduced to rubble", by Robert Fisk in Djakovica.

troops entered Kosovo — and 20 October, they say, seventy-four churches have been turned to dust or burnt or vandalized. The fifteenth-century monastery of the Holy Trinity (*Sveta Trojica*) above Mušutište, begun in 1465, has been levelled with explosives. The monastery of the Archangel near Vitina, built in the fourteenth century, has been looted and burnt. So have the church of the [Holy] Archangels in Gornje Nerodimlje; and the church of St. Paraskeva (*Sv. Petka*) near Peć: and the church of St. Nicholas in Prekoruplje — razed and its nine sixteenth-century icons lost, including that of the apostle Thomas. The rubble of Orthodox churches across Kosovo stands as a monument to Albanian vandalism. After declaring that Kosovo must remain a 'multi-ethnic society', 40,000 troops from K-For cannot, it seems, look after its historical heritage against the violence of those whom its spokesmen treated as allies in the war against Yugoslavia's President, Slobodan Milosevic, only five months ago."[3] Further destruction continued in the Suva Reka area where the Serb parish church in the town as well as the impressive medieval church (in brick and stalagmite with beautiful frescoes), dedicated to the Mother of God in Mušutište (built in 1315 immediately after Gračanica Monastery) were both levelled to the ground.

During the second half of 1999, an additional number of centuries-old Serb monasteries were destroyed in a highly orchestrated action, focusing primarily on living Serb communities around certain churches and monasteries. The church of Petrič near Peć, Nerodimlje near Uroševac and the monastery of Binča near Vitina, were destroyed or levelled to the ground, while another fifty churches and monasteries were destroyed, as well as the dozens of Serb cemeteries desecrated or devastated, in addition to an unknown number, mounting to thousands, of abandoned Serb homes routinely looted, torched and destroyed, in order to prevent the return of their rightful owners.[4]

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[3] *The Independent*, London, 20 November, 1999.

[4] More in: D. T. Bataković, *Kosovo i Metohija. Istorija i ideologija*, 2nd revised edition (Belgrade: Čigoja štampa, 2007).

From June 1999 to June 2003 the number of destroyed and desecrated Serb Orthodox churches — at least one-third of them important medieval Serbian monuments — amounted to 117, while the most important medieval monasteries, from the Patriarchate of Peć and Visoki Dečani Monastery to Gračanica Monastery and Bogorodica Ljeviška Cathedral in Prizren, since June 1999 were put under continuous KFOR protection. The general impression is that after the establishment of the UN administration there was an orchestrated attempt by Albanian extremists to evict not only all of the Serbs, but also to remove all traces of their cultural and historical heritage, something perceived by them as an important precondition for obtaining independence for an Albanian-dominated Kosovo.

As stressed on many occasions by representatives of the Kosovo bishopric of the Serbian Orthodox Church (*Eparhija Raško-Prizrenska i Kosovsko-Metohijska*), this is a strategy of cutting Kosovo Serbs off from their historical and religious traditions. Only in November 2002, for instance, a day before UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's visit, two separate explosions blew up two Serbian Orthodox churches in western Kosovo: a church in Ljubova was levelled to the ground, whilst the interior of a church in nearby Djurakovac sustained serious damage. In addition, during the same month, several Serb graveyards in the Dečani and Kosovo Polje areas were vandalized by Albanian extremists, raising the toll of desecrated Serbian graveyards to aseveral dozen all over the Kosovo province.

In May 2003, Spanish and Greek soldiers of KFOR were attacked with the use of hand grenades while protecting Serbian churches in Istok (Monastery of Gorioč) and Uroševac respectively. The discovery of a powerful explosive device, found in the vicinity of the Monastery of Holy Archangels near Prizren, prevented a massacre of at least one thousand Serbian pilgrims who came, under heavy KFOR escort, to celebrate the 650th anniversary since its foundation on 26 July 2003. A detonation rang out on the hillside above the monastery during

the Divine Liturgy. Nine kilograms of powerful explosive was planted in the hillside in order to bring the huge cliff down on the gathered Serb pilgrims and destroy the whole Monastery of the Holy Archangels:

> "We finally greeted the 650th anniversary of the founding of the Holy Archangels Monastery near Prizren. I remained in Dečani this time, impatiently awaiting the arrival of the brethren and the bishop, who were scheduled to come to the monastery with their escorts after the festivities. The bishop arrived late because the UNMIK police driving him in an armored vehicle took a wrong turn at Djakovica and apparently went as far as the Albanian border. I would not be surprised to learn that they entered Albania proper undetected since there is no longer any border between the province of Kosovo and Albania. Abbot Teodosije arrived with the Dečani brethren only four hours later because Italian military transporters took them on an alternate route by way of Brezovica and Priština due to the anti-Serb demonstrations in Prizren. We gathered together that evening and exchanged impressions from the celebration which, despite the rain, took place with great dignity and spiritual joy. Especially noteworthy were comments regarding the explosion heard in the Holy Archangels Monastery immediately after liturgy as many people still hovered in the church entrance. Later we learned that the Albanians had planted strong explosives some one hundred meters above the monastery in order to invoke the collapse of a part of the hill with a huge cliff directly on the monastery yard, thus burying the attendants. It is not difficult to imagine the extent of the tragedy had more than a mere one hundred grams of the total of 9 kilos of highly volatile explosives planted on the hillside actually detonated. We praised God who, in answer to the prayers of the Holy Archangels, prevented yet another tragedy and spared many human lives."[5]

[5] *Kosovo. The Serbian Archipelago*, Diary of a Monk, July 26, 2002, taken from: www.kosovo.net/diary.html)

Although reports from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the UN High Commission for Refugees stressed that 2002 saw a continued fall in ethnically motivated crime, it was only due to the fact that many Serbs simply disappeared from many previously ethnically mixed areas after continuous threats, attacks and assassinations perpetrated by Albanian extremists. Since May 2002, KFOR has begun to scale down its presence in so-called 'minority areas', which was a signal to Albanian extremists to continue with their strategy of ethnic cleansing: persecuting Serbs from all parts of Kosovo and Metohija, through a new series of ethnically motivated crimes, in order to force them to leave the province, and, additionally, discourage those willing to return. The whole problem of continuous persecution, ethnically-based discrimination, and obstructing the survival of Serbian communities in the remaining ethnically-mixed areas, out of KFOR-protected regions, was considered as a wider problem of protecting minorities in Albanian-inhabited Kosovo, thus, openly treating the diminishing Serbian community to the status of one of several Kosovo minorities.[6]

The freedom of movement, after three years of KFOR presence remained unviable for the Serbs and non-Albanians. Among dozens, if not hundreds of examples, this is a striking one: a group of some fifty retired Serbs transported by UNMIK bus from Osojane to Peć were heading to the local bank on October 11th 2002, but experienced a brutal attack by over 600 Albanians in the streets of Peć. Their bus was stoned and additionally demolished by Molotov cocktails, while at least fifteen elderly Serbs were injured and subsequently evacuated by Spanish KFOR to a temporary refuge in the nearby building only to be hastily escorted back to their village.

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[6] Marie-Janine Calic, "Standards and Status. Violence against minorities a year ago scared everyone", *Internationale Politik*, München, 2005.

The decreased percentage of ethnically motivated killings in 2002, has, however, shown that the targets were not any more large Serbian communities, but mostly smaller and vulnerable ones, mostly in ethnically mixed areas (Kosovska Kamenica, Lipljan, Klokot, Cernica, etc.) The number of attacks that did not end up in killings was considerably higher. The number of ethnically motivated attacks against Serbs, resulting in serious injuries has increased from 274 in the year 2001 to 454 in the year 2003.

As rightfully stressed by Fr. Sava Janjić of Dečani in 2004 Serbs of "multiethnic" areas such as Obilić and Vitina were particularly vulnerable to persecution by the Albanian extremists:

> "In these areas systematic pressures, attacks and murders have left the remaining Serbs without true perspective of normal life. Everywhere around the Province Kosovo institutions and settlements are decorated with flags of the Republic of Albania and posters of [terrorist group leader] Adem Jashari; monuments to new heroes from 'the war of national liberation' are springing up everywhere, along with kitschy statues of new Kalashnikov armed 'Albanian heroes'. At the same time, Serb cemeteries are being transformed into public garbage dumps and the ruins of destroyed churches are overgrown with weeds. Everywhere signs in the Serb language have been obliterated, and towns are being given new fangled names which have never existed before in history. History itself is being falsified with the goal of creating a new artificial identity in order to destroy centuries of history and cultural development. Once known as the cradle of Orthodox Christianity, medieval churches and frescoes, Kosovo resembles now more to Afghanistan."[7]

The ghetto-like situation was typical for the smaller Serb communities (villages, parts of villages or groups of villages): the village of Cernica in Gnjilane area previously had eighty-

[7] Fr. Sava Janjić, "Chaos and Disorder: Kosovo and Metohija Four Years Later" in*: Kosovo and Metohija. Living in the Enclave*, 270–272.

five Serb households among 400 Albanian ones. From year 2000 to 2003, remaining Serb residents were frequently attacked by the local Albanian extremists. During this period five Serbian families lost their members, including a child; dozens were wounded, their houses were burned or destroyed, while St. Elijah's Church was largely devastated. After four years of international rule, at the end of 2003, in 6,391 ethnically motivated attacks by Albanian extremists, 1,192 Serbs were killed, 1,303 kidnapped whilst another 1,305 wounded. Nevertheless, only several of the perpetrators of these ethnically motivated crimes have been either identified or arrested and sentenced.[8]

On April 12, 2003 Albanian extremists planted forty kilograms of explosive device under the railroad bridge of Ložište near Banjska and Zvečan. Due to a mistake made during placement and activation, the explosive only slightly damaged the railroad bridge but killed both Albanian perpetrators, members of the "Kosovo Protection Corps" and the "Albanian National Army". An UNMIK police investigation established that the point of the attack was to blow up the train carrying Serbs from the central Kosovo enclaves to Leposavić in the northern municipality, on its way to Belgrade, its final destination.

Number of returnees by years, according to UNMIK data:

2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	Total
906	1,453	2,756	3,801	2,302	12,218

[8] *Cf.* also the excellent report of *Le Figaro Magazine's* special envoy Jean-Lous Tremblais, *Kosovo : La terrible agonie des Serbes*. Tremblais stressed the following: "Ici, les violences antiserbes se multiplient. L'ONU, qui administre la province depuis 1999, se montre incapable d'empêcher ces exactions. C'est une victoire pour les extrémistes albanais qui rêvent d'une 'purification ethnique' dans les enclaves serbes, où les habitants vivent — et meurent — tels des condamnés". (*Le Figaro Magazine,* Paris, 27 septembre 2003, 39–42).

The property of Serb and other non-Albanian communities — in particular in urban centres, has been since June 1999 usurped by local Albanians. Approximately 40,000 flats and houses were registered by UNMIK as being illegally-occupied, yet they remain so. Out of about 17,000 lawsuits concerning usurped property that have been filed by IDPs, mostly Serbs, very few have been resolved in a manner consistent with the impartial application of the rule of law. The economic situation for the Serb and for non-Albanian communities remained to be bleak. UNMIK's model of privatization has, for example, legalized the discrimination of 50,000 banished workers that are also mostly internally displaced persons. Over 700,000 cadastre Serb owned and non-Albanian owned units have been illegally occupied, as well as an unknown number of business facilities.

Furthermore, the previous destruction of at least 150 Serbian cultural sites by the Albanian extremists, mostly churches and monasteries, passed almost unnoticed, or mildly criticized anywhere except in Serbia, Russia or Greece. Ethnic purity, as envisaged by Kosovo Albanian extremists, is nevertheless a concept that cannot be considered as the legitimate basis for either democracy or state independence. After several post-war years it became evident that none of the values of the West would eventually take root in the lawless, illegal trafficking paradise of a mafia-ruled Kosovo, a "Balkan Colombia", as it was named by international experts for drug trafficking routes to Western capitals. Thus, the 'Republic of Kosovo', as wished for by ethnic Albanians, has been turned to the 'Republic of Heroin', as labelled by several relevant international analysts that monitor illegal trafficking in the Balkans.[9]

[9] "International agencies fighting the drug trade are warning that Kosovo has become a "smugglers' paradise" supplying up to 40% of the heroin sold in Europe and North America. Nato-led forces, struggling to keep peace in the province a year after the war, have no mandate to fight drug traffickers; and — with the expulsion from Kosovo of the Serb police, including the "4th unit" narcotics squad — the smugglers are running the "Balkan route" with complete freedom." ("Kosovo drug mafia supply heroin to Europe", *The Guardian*, 13

An international humanitarian worker, Mary Walsh, an Irish international development specialist with a decade of experience on development projects in the Balkans, wrote an impressive testimony on prejudice and hate that surrounded the helpless Serbs living in the isolated enclaves. The case she described was Goraždevac, a 1,500 strong Serb enclave in Metohija, near Peć in the aftermath of the 1999-war: "I was working on a social development project in Peć. In my first six months I worked only in Albanian villages as that was the area of responsibility designated to us by UNHCR. We were not working in the last Serbian village near Peć to have survived the onslaught after June 1999. [...] We were told that the inhabitants of Goraždevac were thieves and killers and very dangerous as they were all armed...I first travelled there in February 2000 as a private individual...What I found was exat the opposite of what I have been told. People were poor, very poor. [...] Despite their difficulties people were very hispotable towards me. [...]"[10]

Shocked by the striking difference in treating the Albanian and Serbian civilians in UN-administred Kosovo, Mary Walch embarked on a new project related to social housing in March 2000, but the response of her colleagues was unexpected: "I encountered great hostility from my colleagues both international and local Albanian. They threatned me, bullied me and one even pushed me down the stairs of our office but I perserved and, then as now, saw nothing wrong in trying to help these poor, unfortunate people who had done nothing wrong to enyone." Eventually, working during the weekends (her own free time) to help the Serbs in Goraždevac, Mary Walsh has found support only among colleagues for a project

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March, 2000, Maggie O'Kane in Belgrade). *Cf.* also: "Kosovo 'mafia' strikes", *The Guardian*, 13 September, 2000, Nick Wood in Pristina.

[10] Mary Walsh, "An Observer at a Crow's Court: A Personal Memoir of Kosovo, 1999–2009.", *Kosovo. The Score 1999–2009* (Washington D.C., Chicago & Ottawa: American Council for Kosovo & The Lord Byron Foundation for Balkan Studies, 2009), 56.

aimed at the rehabilitation of the cultural centre in the village square of Goraždevac. Nevertheless, the general approach of those sent to Kosovo was full of ethnic prejudices: "This was the type — stressed Mary Walsh — of blind prejudice that one encountered if one tried to be fair in one's work in Kosovo and especially when a development project for Serb recipient was put forward: Social exclusion was the order of the day. It was a prejudice that was unrelenting, that led to hatred and ultimately to a completely bigoted outlook on the situation in Kosovo."[11]

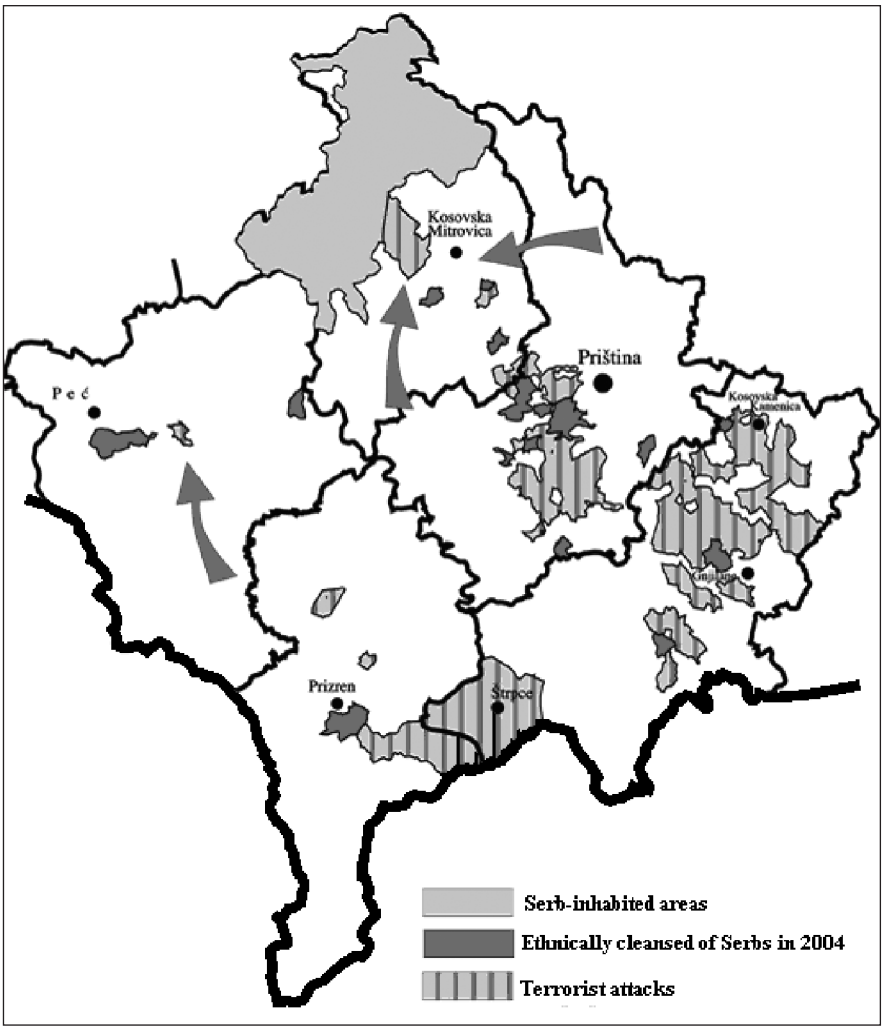
On many occasions, as witnessed by the experiences Irish humanitarian worker, "the hatred against these people, the Serbs, was palpable, intense and shocking to me. There was nothing hidden about it: the hatred was overt and encouraged. This was one of the reasons that I decided to stay on Kosovo and to try do something to redress the balance. [...] I had stumbled across a situation in modern Europe, on the eve of the twenty-first century, where there was a systematic denial of basic human rights, where one section of the population had overnight become less than second class citizens — and all this in a place that, theoretically at least, was UN and NATO protection. One question kept coming to my mind: how could there be such violation of basic human rights in a UN Protectorate? Who was UN actually protecting? Who was indicted for repeatedly violating human rights: No one! And when one mentioned the violations and difficult situation of the Serbs, one was threatened and nearly beaten up."[12]

Mary Walsh moved to Priština in October 2000 to work with an international aid agency. During the frequent field trips she came to the following conclusion: "Throughout Kosovo, Serbs and other non-Albanians were suffering similar discrimination. It became increasingly clear to me that international aid in Kosovo from the West reserved for those who were judges to be allies of the West and whom the media had

[11] *Ibid.*
[12] Ibid., 57

branded as the victims. Serbs and other non-Albanians were the guilty ones and the international effort in Kosovo clearly followed the line. [...] There was a systematic, one might say almost regimented, effort on the part of our Albanian colleagues to present a very one-sided picture, in which the Serbs were quite clearly the culprits and the Albanians the victims."[13]

[13] Mary Walsh also emphasized several other important points: "Many measures were taken to give the semblance of upholding law and order and justice and human rights; but these, without exception, proved to be part of the smokescreen, the appearance of everything and the substance of nothing. I remember one day meeting the UN regional administrator for Mitrovica outside the UNMIK offices in Priština who told me that Kosovo would be better off if all the Serbs were gone, I thought that was an amazing statement for any person to make, but especially for a person in his position. […] Another story doing the rounds was that all the beautiful medieval monasteries and religious sites dotted around Kosovo for which it is justly famous, were originally Albanian edifices which had been usurped by the Serbs. […] The fact that these monasteries were endowments of the Serbian kings given to the Serbian people for posterity is easy to verify. The claim that monasteries were originally Albanian was invariably curtailed when I asked the simple question: 'If that is so why then do the Albanians keep trying to blow them up?' I never got an answer." (*Ibid.*, 58–59)



Kosovo and Metohija: March pogrom 2004


KOSOVO REGION
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
HUNGARY
CROATIA
ROMANIA
Belgrade
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO
BULGARIA
KOSOVO
ADRIATIC SEA
ITALY
ALBANIA
THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA
GREECE
S E R B I A
MONTENEGRO
ALBANIA
THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA
Kosovska Mitrovica
Vučitrn
Peć
Banja
Devič
Obilić
Priština
Kosovo Polje
Bresje
Donja Slapašnica
Belo Polje
Piskote
Djakovica
Brnjak
Štimlje
Gnjilane
Uroševac
Vitina
Prizren
Skopje
Tetovo
Kumanovo
Gostivar
Veles
Usce
Grčak
Rataje
Aleksandrovac
Jošanicka-Banja
Brus
Zlatari
Pawlica
Lepenac
Raška
Blace
Beloljin
Prokuplje
Banja
Lešak
Dren
Kuršumlija
Leposavić
Socanica
Žitni Potok
Tutin
Bojnik
Baniska
Podujevo
Lebane
Gazivodsko Jezero
Ibar
Zubin Potok
Zvečan
Lapaštica
Glavnik
Lece
Batlava
Orlane
Vučitrn
Belo Polje
Rožaj
Istok
Rakoš
Rudnik
Nevoljane
Vrela
Kladeraica
Srbica
Propaštica
Ravna Banja
N. Selo
Durakovac
Zlokućane
Marevce
Sičevo
Klina
Ogošte
Barane
Iglarevo
Komorane
Janjevo
Lapušnik
Lipljan
Dečani
Rznić
Vlaški Drenovac
Dobrčane
Jablanica
Krajmirovce
Mališevo
Zegra
Rajince
Biljač
Bajram Curri
Zrze
Rogovo
V. Kruša
Delekare
Preševo
Paci
Mušutište
Grebno
Gatnje
Šašare
Miratovac
Koriša
Vrbeštica
Brod
Strpce
Kačanik
Vaksince
Tabanovo
Slupčane
Mušnikovo
Brodosavce
G.-Lubinje
Tearce
Dukagjin
Kalimash
Kukës
Dragaš
Šipkovica
Golema-Rečica
Želino
Dračevo
Brod
Restelica
Vrapčište
Brodec
Čajle
Trešková
Pčinja
Lepenac
Toplica
Morava
Ibar
Sitnica
Drin
Lumbardhi
Erenik
Liqeni i Prizrenit
Jablanica
Krajmirovce
Toplica
Vardar
Treska
Pčinja
National capital
Regional capital
Town, village
Airport
International boundary
Republic boundary
Autonomous province boundary
Major road

The March Pogrom 2004

In March 2004 it became obvious, at least for international observers, that certain leaders of Kosovo Albanians believe that by several orchestrated waves of ethnic cleansing of all the remaining Serb population from the UN-administered Province of Kosovo they can eventually present the international community with a *fait accompli*. The incentive for the next wave of ethnic cleansing was the mild international reaction to the previous ethnic cleansing of two-thirds of Kosovo's Serbs since middle of the June 1999. Although Kosovo's Serbs have for years been warning of the real nature of Albanian nationalism in Kosovo, both the U.N. and the West have assumed they were exaggerating, only to receive a confirmation of almost all Serbian claims in just three days of orchestrated violence — the March Pogrom — Kosovo's *Kristallnacht*.

The official pretext for the three day campaign of violence against the Serb-inhabited enclaves that was triggered on 17 March 2004 was the tragic drowning of several Albanian children in the Ibar River near Kosovska Mitrovica. Nevertheless, the allegations that the Albanian boys drowned after being chased by the local Serbs turned to be the false ones, later confirmed by UNMIK. Quite the opposite, as observed by Derek Chappell, the U.N.'s Kosovo mission spokesman, "the wave of violence has been too coordinated to be a spontaneous, popular reaction to rumours […] It was planned in

advance."[1] More than 51,000 Albanians participated in the thirty-three areas where there was a mass ethnically motivated violence, while 163 of them were arrested, as reported by UNMIK on 22March for arson, murder and other criminal acts.

According to the reliable sources, busloads of Albanians were transported to Serb-inhabited areas, clashing occasionally with KFOR units on the way, while targeting in particular those enclaves that stood in the way of controlling the main transport and railway routes in Kosovo. For this reason, whole Serb villages were razed in central and eastern Kosovo, while approximately 4,000 Serb civilians became homeless within two days of uncontained violence. The U.N. evacuated its missions from at least three cities in Kosovo. In two of those cities, Serbian Orthodox churches were set aflame. The only functioning Serb Orthodox Church in Priština, St. Nicholas (*Sv. Nikola*), dating back to 1830s, was eventually set ablaze, as another act of denying the very possibility to Serbs to live and return to provincial capital of Kosovo and Metohija.[2]

Whilst insisting they are capable of governing an independent state, the Albanian leadership in Kosovo and Metohija also claims that they were unable to control their compatriots and halt the pogrom against the Serbs. Hence, while the most influential Albanian party leader in Kosovo, Hashim

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[1] *Cf.* reports and analysis of Raška-Prizren Diocese, ERP KIM 17–19 March 2004. *Cf.* Also Special report on violence on Kosovo by B92 (*Specijal B92: Nasilje na Kosovu. Hronologija dogadjaja (16–22. marta 2004).*

[2] Upon hearing the news of the pogrom and the burning of churches in Kosovo, a small but aggressive crowd surrounded the Bairakli mosque in Belgrade. In retaliation, the windows were broken, and a fire was started. (The similar retaliation against the local mosque took place in Niš, second largest city of inner Serbia). In contrast to the scene in Kosovo and Metohija, the Serbian government dispatched police forces that were not entirely successful in dispersing the angry mob. A Serbian Orthodox bishop joined his fellow Muslim clerics in Belgrade trying to prevent the crowd from attacking the mosque. These were few isolated incidents in reaction to Kosovo March Pogrom perpetrated by the Kosovo Albanians against Kosovo Serbs, not a systematic campaign of destruction as was the case in Kosovo and Metohija.

Thaçi, travelled overseas preaching the virtues of multi-ethnicity and a civic-based identity, the five most important medieval Serbian sites in his hometown of Prizren were burned or heavily damaged by his supporters in the raging Albanian mob, in front of a passive German KFOR contingent, lacking orders from Berlin to act against the perpetrators.[3]

The March Pogrom of March 2004 was labelled by Admiral Gregory Johnson, NATO commander for South-eastern Europe, the "ethnic cleansing", while he was still sending additional troops to halt the two-day outburst of violence against Serbs.[4] As confirmed by the General Alberto Primiseri from the Italian contingent of KFOR, the whole campaign of ethnic cleansing in March 2004 was carefully planned in advance, forcing Kosovo into blood and fire.[5] Furthermore, UN ombudsman in Kosovo, Marek Antoni Nowicki, called this pogrom a real "drama of the Serbs", while the correspondent of *Le Figaro Magazine* gave to his detailed report a following

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[3] "Murder upon murder, kidnapping upon kidnapping, arson upon arson, and now finally this pogrom, have led the Serbs to the realization that they are at the mercy of barbarians. This is ethnic aggression of the worst sort "in the heart of Europe" (as Madeleine Albright famously called Kosovo before she bombed Serbia). Today, we see the true face of the 'multiethnicity' of which all spoke so highly. And all this is happening under U.N. and NATO administration. Imagine how bad it could get if Kosovo becomes independent."
"Senator Sam Brownback (R., Kan.), after having met Bishop Artemije of Kosovo several weeks ago [before March 2004] in Washington, wrote a letter to President Bush in which he concluded: 'We should not consider advancing the cause of independence of a people whose first act when liberated was to ethnically cleanse a quarter of a million of their fellow citizens and destroy over a hundred of their holy sites.' This week's dismal events have proved him all too right. Perhaps this pogrom will force the Bush Administration to take seriously the warnings of Belgrade, and help stop the rivers of Kosovo from flowing red with blood." (Quoted from: "Kristallnacht in Kosovo.The burning of churches raises questions about independence", 19 March, 2004, by Damjan Krnjevic-Miskovic, on: www.nationalinterest.com).

[4] *Voice of America* News, 19 March 2004. *Cf.* also: IWPR (Institute for War and Peace Reporting), London, report of 19 March 2004; *Danas,* Belgrade, 20 March 2004.

[5] *Italijanski general: Albanci imali smisljen plan [Italian General: Albanians had a premeditated plan]*, 19 March 2004, FoNet & B92.

title *Kosovo Serbs: Suitcase or Coffin* (*Les Serbes du Kosovo : la valise ou le cercueil*).[6]

The first-hand report of *Le Figaro Magazine* on persecution of the Kosovo Serbs in March 2004 had stressed the tragic consequences of ethnically motivated violence in the post-war period as well as despair of the Kosovo Serb community facing orchestrated cycles of persecution by Albanian extremists guided by KLA veterans. They targeted Kosovo Serb civilians and burned their churches and monasteries, the spiritual and cultural heritage that symbolize the centuries-long Serb presence in this part of Serbia. It became obvious to Western observers as well that the Serbs in Kosovo are confined to a kind of "soft apartheid", in spite of presence of numerous multinational NATO-led forces, international administration and numerous non-governmental and humanitarian organizations.

As the witness to anti-Serb pogrom, Tremblais summarized his article as following : « 28 morts, 600 blessés, 3 200 réfugiés, 30 églises ou monastères incendiés : au Kosovo, les pogroms anti-Serbes ont repris avec une violence accrue. Pour la première fois depuis 1999, des fonctionnaires internationaux évoquent publiquement un 'nettoyage ethnique'. Objectif des extrémistes albanais : se débarrasser des 100 000 derniers Serbes de la province. Reportage chez les damnés de la guerre. » Tremblay develloped the following analysis:

> "Des exactions n'ont pas agi au hasard, sous le coup de l'émotion. Il suffit de voir leurs cibles. Outre les particuliers, les activistes albanais (les vétérans de l'UCK, l'ex-armée de libération du Kosovo, sont fortement soupçonnés d'avoir téléguidé les opérations) ont visé des monuments emblématiques, symboles de la « Jérusalem serbe », ainsi que l'Eglise orthodoxe désigne le Kosovo. Trente églises ou monastères orthodoxes, dont plusieurs joyaux de

[6] Jean-Lous Tremblais, *Le Figaro Magazine*, le 9 avril 2004. *Cf.* also Marek Waldenberg, "Why Kosovo should not be Independent", in *Kosovo and Metohija. Past, Present, Future,* Kosta Mihailović, ed. (Belgrade: Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 2006), 428.

l'architecture médiévale, ont été incendiés en moins de vingt quatre heures. A Prizren, pour ne citer que cette ville : les églises du Christ-Sauveur, Saint-Nicolas, Saint-Cosmas et Damian, le monastère des saints Archanges, tous monuments du XIV[e] siècle. Depuis 1999, 145 lieux de culte ont ainsi été détruits. La plupart avaient résisté à cinq siècles d'occupation ottoman ; ils n'ont pas supporté cinq ans d'administration onusienne. […] Fait nouveau : c'est la première fois depuis 1999 que de hauts responsables du Léviathan multinational qui préside aux destinées du Kosovo parlent de « *nettoyage ethnique* ». C'est l'expression utilisée par l'amiral Gregory Johnson, commandant de l'Otan pour le sud-est de l'Europe. Pour le général italien Alberto Primiceri, qui commande l'une des cinq brigades de la Kfor, « *ce plan pour mettre le Kosovo à feu et à sang était prêt de longue date* ». Il faut dire que ce printemps tragique illustre une escalade dans la violence. [...] Pour les Serbes, la prise de conscience des « internationaux » est aussi timide que tardive. 250 000 d'entre eux ont quitté la province depuis l'intervention de l'Otan. Sur deux millions de Kosovars, ils ne sont plus que 100 000. Doublement punis : par l'épuration ethnique qu'ils endurent au quotidien et par la ségrégation sociale (ne restent au Kosovo que les Serbes les plus pauvres, ceux qui n'ont ni les moyens ni les contacts pour s'établir ailleurs). Le problème, c'est que si des personnalités isolées commencent à ouvrir les yeux, ce ne semble pas être le cas au sommet des organismes internationaux qui régissent le monde. En témoigne ce communiqué surréaliste du Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU, en date du 18 mars (soit après les événements) : « *La création d'une société multiethnique, tolérante et démocratique dans un Kosovo stable demeure l'objectif prioritaire de la communauté internationale*» A mourir de rire ? « *Non, à mourir tout court* », répondent les Serbes."[7]

The overall political damage of the March pogrom, displacing and making homeless an additional 4,000 Serbs was harder to remedy: "The Kosovo [Albanian] institutions failed

[7] Jean-Louis Tremblais, "Les Serbes du Kosovo. La valise ou le cercueil", *Le Figaro Magazine*, Paris, le 9 avril 2004, 41–42.

to investigate and sanction central and municipal authorities which contributed to the violence. With the internationale community unwilling or unable to investigate or prosecute the riot masters themselves, nationalist figures who had orchestrated a pogrom enjoyed effective impunity. "[8]

The UN humanitarian worker, Mary Walsh as the eye witness, left the following testimony:

> "What ensued in June 1999 and culminated in March 2004 was a war of terror against an innocent civilian population, including Albanians who did not see eye to eye with the UCK and their masters. This violence was directed solely at the civilian targets, men, women and children, regardless of age or infirmity. It was an intermitting war, a war of terror and intimidation intended to drive the non-Albanians out, in some cases aided and abetted by certain contingents of KFOR. ... Despite the sustained assault against them, there were still some Serbs and Roma residing in the town of Obilić by March 2004. They were targeted by the mobs on March 17 that year as a part of the Kosovo-wide drive to cleanse areas south of Ibar, especially in central Kosovo near Priština. The international community failed to protect ordinary people. During the attack on Obilić, in which many Serb houses were burned, the entire female population of the Roma settlement in the town — dozens of girls and women of all age — were stripped naked and marched through the streets by the mob, many of whom were armed. There were soldiers from the British KFOR contingent in the town that day who witnessed the incident but did not intervene. They may have been under orders not to. Whatever the reason, their inactivity was mirrored elsewhere in Kosovo by the inaction of KFOR. They did not turn out to protect those being attacked but in most cases simply stood by and watched. Others scurried off to their bases. There were some exceptions. During the March 2004 pogrom soldiers from the Irish KFOR contingent left their

[8] Ian King & Whit Mason. *Peace at any Price. How the World Failed Kosovo*, 192–193.

base in Lipljan, acting on their own initiative and saved the lives of the non-Albanians in Obilić."[9]

The renowned French analyst, Jean-Arnault Dérens, who closely follows the Kosovo situation, confirmed that the anti-Serb riots were carefully planned and gave his own assessment on March Pogrom in 2004, in particular with different attitudes of various KFOR contingents:

> « La violence s'entend à travers tout le Kosovo : Des combats ont lieu à Caglavica tandis que l'enclave centrale est attaquée de toute part : Des institutions essentielles pour la communauté serbe, comme le centre de santé et la poste de Kosovo polje, sont détruits. Les violences atteignent également Lipljan/Lipjan, Pec/Peja, Djakovica/Gjakove, Orahovac/Rahovec et Prizren, dont tous les Serbes furent chasée. L'attitude des militaires italiens, dont le secteur comprend Pec, Djakovica et Decani, fut très différente de celle des Allemands, basés à Prizren. L'armée italienne a pris toutes les mesures nécessaires pour assurer la protection de la patriarchie de Pec et du monastère de Visoki Decani, elle a oppose une résistance résolue aux émeutiers dans Djakovica, pour essayer de sauver la dernière petite église serbe et les cinq vieilles femmes qui y étaient refugiées. Par contre, les Allemands n'ont pris aucune mesure pour bloquer les accès au monastère des Saints-Archanges, situes a trois kilomètres de la ville de Prizren, ils n'ont pas assure la protection des très anciennes églises de la ville, notamment la cathédrale de la Vierge Marie, édifiée au début du XIV^{e} siècle. On sait cependant qu'avant même le début des émeutes, les militaires allemands ont évacué la soixantaine de civils serbes, souvent des vieillards, qui vivaient encore dans le centre de Prizren.
>
> L'exemple de Prizren prouve trois choses : les émeutes étaient parfaitement planifiées et organisées, les services de renseignements occidentaux étaient au courant de l'imminence de ce qui allait se produire, et le choix politique de ne pas s'opposer à ces émeutes a été pris. De même, le

[9] Mary Walsh, *op. cit.*, 59–60.

soir du 18 mars, la ville de Pristina semblait abandonnée : il était impossible de voir un seul policier de l'ONU ou un seul militaire de la KFOR, alors que ceux-ci étaient normalement très présents. C'est ce soir-la que l'église Saint-Nicolas, la dernière église orthodoxe [serbe] ouverte a Pristina, fut incendiée.

Si le scenario des émeutes semble à l'évidence relever d'un plan bien maitrise, les responsables et les instigateurs de cette flambée de violence ne sont pas clairement connus. Début décembre 2005, l'OSCR a communique un rapport très critique envers la justice du Kosovo qui n'a pas tenu ses responsabilités pour identifier et punir les fauteurs des troubles. Alors que l'on estime qu'environ 50 000 personnes ont pris part aux émeutes, seules 424 inculpations et 211 condamnations ont été prononcées à la fin 2005. Le plus souvent, il s'agit de condamnations légères (amendes, prison avec sursis), car elles frappent des participants de second ordre, les véritables stratèges et responsables des émeutes restant inconnus. Pratiquement partout les émeutes ont en effet implique de très jeunes gens, encadres par des militants plus âges. [...] ».[10]

The comprehensive analysis, offered by Fr. Sava Janjić, hieromonk of Visoki Dečani monastery written in 2004 underscored the following phenomenon:

"The willingness of Kosovo Serbs to participate in building of multiethnic institutions within the lines stipulated by the UNSC Resolution 1244 has only been exploited in order to give false legitimacy to the [Kosovo provisional] institutions which in reality remain under complete control of Kosovo Albanians and have become tools of institutional repression. If such policy of UNMIK is continued in future and if there is no constructive revision of the Constitutional framework, which would return the process of institutionalization within the limits of the UNSC Resolution 1244, Kosovo may not only become an independent state but also a state in which all traces of the Serbian people

[10] Jean-Arnault Derens, *Kosovo, année zéro* (Paris: Méditerranée 2006), 239–242.

and its culture will be completely eradicated. Four years of the internationally granted peace with a terrifying record of crimes and destruction of cultural heritage present only a shadow of what the Province might look once Kosovo Albanians are given full and unrestrained power. The last but not least, this "state" may become a main destabilizing factor for the entire SE Europe, which will seriously obstruct the process of European integration and democratization of the Balkans. As a focal point for future ethnic Albanian integrations independent Kosovo may act as a dangerous precedent for redrawing political maps of Europe according to the ethnic lines."[11]

The series of subsequent reports of Kosovo ombudsperson Marek Antony Nowicki about negative trends in multiethnic relations, as well as the detailed October 2005 report of UN Special Envoy in Kosovo, Norwegian Ambassador Kai Eide about the situation in the province have shown that very little, or no tangible progress has been recorded in the last seven years i. e. after June 1999.

UN Special Envoy Kai Eide, after changing his drafts several times, eventually reported that the position of Serbs, tacitly treated in his report as a Kosovo minority and thus compared with the other non-Albanians in Kosovo remained

[11] A similar case involved the arrest of a Serb, Vladimir Jovanovic of Ibarska Slatina, who was arrested during the same period with great fanfare under suspicion of having killed an UNMIK policeman from India. Some of the foreign media went so far as to triumphantly explain to their readers that there was not only Albanian extremism in Kosovo but also 'Serbian terrorists.' The news of Jovanovic's release because of the fact that since the very beginning there was no evidence against him went almost unnoticed. The balance of crime had already been achieved and a concerned Berlin Institute for International Relations published an obscure analysis on how Serbian and Albanian extremists rule in Kosovo using the vacuum of the interregnum. The biggest problem lies in the fact that neither Kosovo Albanians nor the international community can clearly state who these 'Serbian extremists' really are and publish at least a few names. But this hardly matters because any Serb who loves his country and does not want to see it divided cannot be anything but "an extremist advocating a Greater Serbia." In the end, stereotypes from another time and reality must be distinguished." (Fr. Sava Janjić, *op. cit.*).

to be grim, which was a usual euphemism for total failure in rebuilding tolerant, democratic and multi-cultural society in the province:

> "With regard to the foundation for a multi-ethnic society, the situation is grim. Kosovo leaders and the international community should take urgent steps in order to correct this picture. The overall security situation is stable, but fragile. The level of reported crime, including inter-ethnic crime, is low. However, on the ground, the situation is complex and troubling, especially for minority communities. There are frequently unreported cases of low-level, inter-ethnic violence and incidents. This affects freedom of movement in a negative way. To correct this situation, it will be important to prosecute crime more vigorously. When perpetrators remain at large, a sense of impunity prevails."[12]

Denouncing the fact that Kosovo Serbs have chosen to stay outside the PISG of Kosovo and to maintain direct ('parallel') links with Belgrade for both health and educational services, Ambassador Eide has described the Kosovo Serbs feared that they will, as before, remain to be simply a decoration to any PISG of Kosovo, with little ability to yield tangible results in legal protection of their rights. In turn, Eide confirmed that the Kosovo Albanians have done little, if nothing to dispel this widespread fear. He has noticed as well that the cultural and religious heritage owned by the Serbian Orthodox Church in Kosovo and Metohija needs urgent protection:

> "The Serbian Orthodox religious sites and institutions represent a critical element of the spiritual fabric of Kosovo Serbs. They are also part of the world cultural heritage. There is a need to create a "protective space" around these sites, with the involvement of the international community, in order to make them less vulnerable to political manipulation".[13]

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[12] Kai Eide, A Comprehensive Review of the Situation in Kosovo, 2005 (www.un.org/docs/journal/asp/ws.asp).

[13] *Ibid*.

In contrast to internationals that despite diplomatic caution were clearly criticising the attitude of Kosovo Albanians, their leader' condemnation of ethnically-motivated violence against the Serbs during the whole period after June 1999 has always arrived very late, made public reluctantly and mildly phrased. These official statements issued exclusively under strong pressure from and by the ultimate requests of UNMIK or Contact Group representatives, who demanded public condemnation from the Kosovo Albanian leaders of orchestrated campaigns of ethnically motivated crimes perpetrated by Albanian extremist.[14]

Carla Del Ponte, the chief prosecutor at the Hague tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), complained to the KFOR commander, general Fabio Mini, in October 2002, regarding problems with indictments against KLA leaders and repeated reports on at least 300 missing persons, predominantly Serbs that were taken to Albania and killed there, specifically for the traffic of human organs:

> "We also spoke of missing persons, indications that there were mass graves in three areas of northern Albania, and the possible involvement of Albania's secret service. Mini instructed his people to make immediate arrangements, including infrared scanning of possible mass grave locations before the winter snow arrived. At UNMIK we learned that one source had demanded 50,000 euros to identify each of two graves in northern Albania. Only months later did tribunal and UNMIK investigators travel to central Albania and visit the yellow house the journalists' sources had identified as the place where captives had been killed for their organs. […] The investigators' findings, combined with the anecdotal information the journalist had provided, were tantalizing…"[15]

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[14] J. Chadbourne, *Not on the Agenda: The Continuing Failure to Address Accountability in Kosovo Post-March 2004* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2006). *Cf.* also UNESCO report on damaged Serbian monuments: *Cultural Heritage in South-East Europe. Kosovo: mission report 26–30 April 2004* (Venezia: UNESCO, 2004).

[15] Carla Del Ponte (with Chuck Sudetic), *Madame Prosecutor: Confrontations with Humanity's Worst Criminals and the Culture of Impunity*,

The absence of witness-protection programmes, with Albanian witnesses who were usually harassed or killed when interrogated about indictments against KLA leaders, remained the main obstacle for further investigations of crimes against the Kosovo Serbs and other Non-Albanians, including the organ traffickers:

> "The rampant violence against witnesses in criminal cases, whether this violence was connected with unrelated criminal activity or vendettas, clearly created an atmosphere of fear that struck dumb other Albanians who might have been willing to provide information and testify. The absence of credible law-enforcement agencies and witness-protection programs were only part of the problem… I am sure some UNMIK and eve KFOR officials feared for their lives and the lives of members of their mission" — stressed Carla Del Ponte — "I think some judges at Yugoslavia tribunal [at Hague] feared the Albanians' reach. Swiss compatriots warned me to be careful of retaliation… But the impunity that shrouds powerful political and military figures feeds upon fear-driven reluctance to apply the law. Impunity also thrives when perceived political imperatives obstruct the administration of justice. I think UNMIK officials would eventually deceive into believing that they could rely upon former KLA leaders with dubious backgrounds to help develop functioning institutions and the rule of law. This is obviously like squaring the circle."[16]

(New York Other Press 2009), 284–285. As stressed by *The Economist* of London on 22 January 2009, "most disturbing is Ms Del Ponte's tale of how her team investigated allegations that in the summer of 1999 up to 300 people were kidnapped with the involvement of men, some very senior, from the Kosovo Liberation Army, a guerrilla group. From Kosovo they were taken to Albania where all were murdered, a small number after their organs had been harvested. The investigation failed to provide enough evidence to form the basis of a case, however. That may not be surprising: one Albanian prosecutor told her team, "If they did bring Serbs over the border from Kosovo and killed them, they did a good thing".

[16] Carla Del Ponte, *op. cit.*, 280, 287.

Thus, it is not surprising that the return of initially 248,000 internally displaced persons, expelled from Kosovo and Metohija between June and December 1999, within the environment of impunity for former KLA leader indicted for war crimes remains to be an unresolved question. The main obstacle for a sustainable return was strong opposition from both local Albanian communities and the Albanian-dominated transitional institutions (PISG). According to UNCHR the return was quite symbolic: only 7,100 IDP's returned in eight years of UN administration, (June 1999—June 2007), most of them elderly peasant families. In Peć, for instance, a return of a single Serbian family (in fact an aging couple), out of 12,000 expelled Serbs and Montenegrins, was presented in both the local and international media as a huge success. Furthermore, despite joint efforts by both KFOR and UNMIK, the systematic persecution of the Kosovo Serb and in general of non-Albanian population by extremists, having tacit approval of the majority of Albanians, has continued to be the main impediment to any viable progress to rebuilding a tolerant multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious Kosovo society that would function under the rule of law. According to UNMIK office for returnees, out of 4,100 Serbs forcibly displaced in March 2004 more than 1,467 were still out their previous households.[17]

As reported by Belgrade-based agency, Beta-Press report, quoting UNHCR representative in Belgrade from mid-2005, there were still 226,000 Serbs and members of other non-Albanian communities and ethnic groups still living as the internally displaced persons in central Serbia as well as additional 25,000 within Montenegro.[18] Most of the internally displaced persons from Kosovo and Metohija have found shelter in central Serbia, with the highest number in Belgrade, Kraljevo, Kragujevac, Niš,

[17] Beta-Press, Belgrade, 16 June, 2005.

[18] Beta-Press, Belgrade, 21 June 2005 reported the following: "roughly 220,000 Kosovo citizens are still living as the internally displaced persons in other parts of Serbia and Montenegro". According to UNHCR after the arrival of international peacekeeping forces in 1999 230,000 Serbs and Roma left Kosovo, while 800,000 ethnic Albanians went back to Kosovo.

Smederevo, Kruševac, Leskovac, Vranje and Kuršumlija. The industrial towns of Kragujevac, Kraljevo and Smederevo, for instance, were the obvious choice, as during the late 1970s and 1980s these cities of central Serbia were the preferred location for settlement of Serbs that fled Albanian pressure, harassment and discrimination during the closing years of Titoist order and the early years of the post-Titoist period.

As warned on various occasions by Serbian Orthodox Church representatives from Kosovo, "the bloody drama of Kosovo continues. The Kosovo Serbs, with an Albanian knife at their throat on the one hand and the 'grave concerns' and hypocrisy of Western peacemakers around them on the other, continue to suffer and perish. Their [Serbian] government in Belgrade can do little to assist them because the smallest gesture of solidarity and concern for Kosovo is immediately interpreted as a form of new Serbian territorial hegemony. For many Albanians Kosovo Serbs are only a minority that will hopefully leave eventually and leave Kosovo solely to the Albanian people. Members of UNMIK and KFOR regularly ask them how they see their future, as if to indirectly say: Why don't you leave and make life easier for both yourselves and for us? Truthfully, the mission that has completely failed and lost all sense continues only because of 'a handful of stubborn Serbs' who refuse to leave. If only they would leave so everyone could shed the obligatory tear of sympathy and finally turn over a new page by proclaiming a new ethnic state of Albanians whose borders are already under discussion by leading politicians in Priština, Tetovo and Tirana, and in the process of being carved out in the field by terrorists of the so-called *Albanian National Army*, *Kosovo Liberation Army*, *Liberation Army of Preševo, Medvedja and Bujanovac* and who knows what other bands of opportunists. In the end it appears that the fistful of Serbs and the few Macedonians who remain in the western parts of this southern republic are the chief obstacle to the realization of the centuries-old Albanian dream of building the only ethnically pure state in the Balkans."[19]

[19] Fr. Sava, *op. cit*., 301.

The Aftermath (2007–2009): 'Little Short of Disastrous'

The orchestrated ethnic cleansing against Kosovo Serbs organized and implemented in several waves after mid-1999 has continued with occasional attacks, bombing the churches and random killings throughout 2006 and 2007. The final goal of the Albanian extremists was to radically scale-down the percentage of Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija from eighteen to less than ten percent, in order to present them to internationals as a tiny and therefore insignificant minority, with no rights of a constituent nation as elsewhere in the Republic of Serbia. The 60,000 strong Serb-inhabited areas in northern Kosovo (in four Serb-majority municipalities, Zvečan, Zubin Potok, Leposavić, and Northern Mitrovica, with roughly 95 percent of Serbs), still operating within the legal system of Serbia, due to the KFOR-troops were the only areas relatively safe and protected. They represent roughly thirty-five or several percent more of the remaining Kosovo Serb population in the Province.

In contrast to northern Kosovo, further south of the Ibar River, and within KFOR-guarded, there are several variously sized isolated enclaves scattered throughout the Province, the larger (Prilužje, Gračanica, Novo Brdo, Štrpce) as well as the smaller ones (Parteš, Kusce, Klokot, Velika Hoča, Osojane, Goraždevac), worth at least sixty percent of Serbs, with the overall number of approximately 130,000 to 146,000 Serbs. The majority of the Kosovo Serb population, nevertheless,

still lives outside Kosovo and Metohija, mostly as internally displaced persons. Consequently, roughly sixty percent of the Serbian population has been expelled from Kosovo and Metohija during the years of international rule; most of the expelled Serbs still live as internally displaced persons (IDPs), mostly in central Serbia. The official figure of registered displaced and expelled persons in 2007 was the following: 212,781 in Serbia, and 29,500 in Montenegro.[1]

All of the province's towns, with the exception of the Serb-controlled northern part of Kosovska Mitrovica, were ethnically cleansed of Serbs in 1999, and remain so today. There are practically no Serbs living in large cities such as Priština, Prizren, Uroševac or Peć. In Priština, there were about 40,000 Serbs prior to 1999, while today there are less than a hundred of them living in a single building, under appalling conditions, constantly guarded by KFOR. The conditions in the various Serb enclaves with respect to personal security and freedom of movement are still precarious. There is rampant unemployment among Serbs (up to ninety-three percent) and extreme poverty, while the living standards in general remain far below the average in the region and the province itself. The number of returnees, despite many written agreements with UNMIK and frequent promises by both UNMIK and the Albanian-dominated provisional institutions, is still insignificant. In 2007 only 5.5 percent of the total number of internally displaced Serb and non-Albanians have returned to the UN-administered province, eight after the June 1999, but in practice, very few among returnees have been permanently settled.

The Report on the Minority Rights in Kosovo under International Rule, issued by the Minority Right Group International in the middle of 2006 was presented with a following summary: "After seven years of international administration — the

[1] D. T. Batakoviċ, "Serbs and other non-Albanian Communities in Kosovo and Metohija: Appaling Conditions and an Uncertain Future", *Review of International Affairs*, vol. LVII, No 1122, Belgrade 2006, 13–15.

longest and most expensive since the creation of the UN — Kosovo remains one of the most segregated places in Europe, with thousands of displaced persons still in camps, and many 'ethnically pure' towns and villages. The report discusses the failure on the part of the international protectorate to learn lessons from the past and to draw on the minority rights expertise available within the UN and other bodies. It shows how decision-makers have been unaccountable, and how the Constitutional Framework they have produced treats minority rights in a way that encourages segregation rather than integration. As the future status of Kosovo is negotiated, the report calls for radical change away from the acceptance of patterns of segregation that lead to ethnic cleansing and towards minority rights guaranteed by the rule of law."[2]

The export of the Kosovo war model of ethnic domination, first to mixed Serbo-Albanian municipalities in southern parts of Serbia in Preševo valley (2000) and later on to predominantly Albanian-inhabited areas of neighbouring Slavic Macedonia (FYROM) in 2001, demonstrated that the aspirations of the concept of ethnic domination over a certain territory is the key to understanding the hidden agenda of Albanian nationalism in the region: thus, their ultra-nationalism is not motivated, as usually presented to internationals, by the noble struggle for human, civil, collective or any other, internationally sanctified rights, but by a narrow-minded long-term projected attempt for full and unrestricted ethnic domination over a certain territory through systematic persecution, pressure and discrimination of all other, numerically smaller ethnic groups.

In essence, the Albanian war concept of 1998–1999 meant making life impossible for members of every other national group or ethnic community, until they become numerically and politically so negligible, reduced to a single digit percentage, such that they no longer present a tangible threat to the whole strategy of exclusive ethnic domination. As the insignificant minority, discriminated in both the political and

[2] *Minority Rights in Kosovo under International Rule*, by Clive Baldwin (London: Minority Rights Group International, 2006).

economic sense, the Serbs, after mass expulsion, usurped property, destruction of the patrimonial sites and obstruction for return, were, in fact, deprived of their basic human rights. The concept of gaining full control over a certain territory was combined with the seemingly democratic political demands which, however, pave the way for an independent Kosovo and, in the next stage, most probably, a single, ethnically unified Greater Albania, if not *de iure*, at least *de facto*.

For years the extremists among Kosovo Albanians have been finding crucial logistic support in the extended, and within Europe dominant, Albanian-controlled illegal trade of drugs, arms and human trafficking. Thus, organized crime gave the whole war concept of Kosovo Albanians a strong economic stimulus, while chronic lawlessness additionally supported the flourishing of illegal business, especially drug smuggling.[3]

According to reliable data gathered by the German Intelligence Service (BND), filed in a sixty-seven pages long confidential report of February 22, 2005, that has recently been partly published by the Swiss weekly *Weltwoche*, leading political figures among Kosovo Albanians, former KLA warlords Hashim Thaçi, Ramush Haradinaj (indicted at the ICTY tribunal at the Hague) and Xhavid Haliti, are, for years already, deeply involved in organized crime in the province, from arms and drugs smuggling to human trafficking and money laundering.[3]

The same report includes the statement of Klaus Schmidt, chief of the *European Mission for Police Assistance* of the EU Commission in Albania (PAMEC), that "through Kosovo and Albania 500 to 700 kilos of drugs are smuggled daily, and that a part of it is refined in Kosovo laboratories." The lack of control over borders and the movement of people and goods

[3] Xavier Raufer (avec Stéphane Quéré*), Une menace pour l'Europe. La mafia albanaise. Comment est née cette superpuissance criminelle balkanique?* (Lausanne: Editions Favre 2000). *Cf*. also *Kosovo, lo stato delle mafie sulle spalle dell'Europa, una secessione modello, effetto domino fino al Caucaso,* testi di Paolo Quercia et al., (Roma: L'Espresso, 2006).

between UN-controlled Kosovo and Albania additionally strengthen organized crime, which further increases the concerns of the international community.[4]

The KLA war commanders, who are doubtlessly involved in criminal activities and are accused of war crimes, have become within the last eight years the leaders of the most influential Kosovo Albanian political parties. They continue to be the main representatives of the war concept as the only effective method of resolving the Kosovo status problem, by harassing and discriminating Serbs, in order to change the pre-war ethnic structure and thus delegitimize all the claims of Serbia for Kosovo and Metohija.

Within this context, the Serbs and non-Albanians in Kosovo and Metohija, sharply diminished in number, fully or partially assisted in schooling, medical care and social protection by the government of Serbia, are surviving under the strong, permanent and highly discriminating pressure of extremist Albanians, most often fully deprived of basic security, individual and collective rights, legal and ownership protection and the right to maintain and further develop both their national and cultural identity. The protection of their identity, including the right to return, as stressed not only by UN Security Council Resolution 1244, but by the *eight standards* of international community as well, the standards set to develop the rule of law, inter-ethnic tolerance, return, democracy and provide for the Province's sustainable development. Thus, Kosovo and Metohija remained to be very far from the minimal standards needed for a modern, tolerant and civilized society that functions according to the most fundamental European values.

The scale of violence against the Serbs, somewhat diminished due to the UN-sponsored negotiations on Kosovo's future status in Vienna (2006–2007), which turned to be mostly formal, in order to fulfil the demand for bilateral negotia-

[4] Jürgen Roth, "Rechtstaat? Lieber nicht!", *Die Weltwoche*, nº. 43/05, 48–50. *Cf*. also 25 page BND Kosovo Intelligence Report of 22 Feb. 2005 (www.wikileaks.info, of 9 December 2008).

tions.[5] Nevertheless, the general trends of both silent or open pressures, aimed to make Albanian-dominated Kosovo ethnically cleansed of Serbs, was still under way. Nevertheless, on European soil, under the UN flag, the members of one of the oldest European nation, temporarily administered by the UN — as is the case with Kosovo Serbs — still lives in the ghetto-like conditions, in the areas guarded by international military forces, their armoured vehicles and in some places, by barbed wire, while their main patrimonial sites were, and still are, for nine years of UN administration under foreign military protection.

Kosovo's record is at best disappointing after years of supposed tutelage in democracy by the "international community". The ethnic Albanian leadership has been implicated in an explosion of organized crime, including drug dealing, money laundering and sex trafficking. Some have referred to Kosovo as the "black hole" of Europe. At a 2006 congressional hearing, Charles English of the State Department stated: "Discrimination remains a serious problem. Access to public services is uneven. Incidents of harassment still occur. Freedom of movement is limited. And too many minorities still feel unsafe in Kosovo." Similarly, Joseph Grieboski of the Institute on Religion and Public Policy argued that "the present record of rule of law, protection of the rights of religious and ethnic

[5] Despite a series of Western reports that Kosovo remained a major centre of drug-smuggling and women-trafficking in Europe, and that it made no progress in fulfilling the standards regarding democracy, tolerance, minority protection and the rule of the law, set as by the UN as prerequisites for talks on the final status of the province, negotiations on the future status of Kosovo were launched under the pressure of the Western powers. Initially postponed due to the death of Kosovo's provincial president, Ibrahim Rugova, in January 2006, the status negotiations commenced under UN auspices several months later. As reaffirmed by the Contact Group in January 2006, "the Contact Group Guiding Principles" of November 2005 make clear that there should be no return in Kosovo to the pre-1999 situation, no partition of Kosovo, and no union of Kosovo with any or part of another country". Apparently promised independence prior to the beginning of the negotiating process, the Kosovo Albanians did not feel obliged to engage seriously in the Vienna status talks.

minorities, and the return/resettlement of internally displaced people by the Provisional Authority of Kosovo — all of which are indispensable for democratic governance — have been gravely unsatisfactory."[6]

From UN-led Negotiations in Vienna to Unilateral Declaration of Independence

At the end of the eighteen month-long UN-sponsored talks on the future status of Kosovo, the UN-appointed mediator, former Finnish president Martti Ahtisaari, submitted to the negotiating parties in March 2007 a plan under the title *The Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement*. The main provisions of the proposal were that Kosovo, after a period of international supervision, will eventually become independent, while the Serbs will obtain a status of a minority. The Ahtisaari plan offered roughly sixty percent of solutions that had not even been discussed by the involved parties, including crucial provisions regarding basic security, freedom of movement and international military protection for Serb main patrimonial sites, but classified Kosovo Serbs as one of several, usually tiny, Kosovo minorities, offering unsustainable self-government for tiny Serb-inhabited municipalities, and severing their vital ties with Belgrade.[7]

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[6] Doug Bandow, "Kosovo a Year Later", *The American Spectator*, 23 February 2009.

[7] The UN Envoy for Kosovo status in Vienna, Martti Ahtisaari stated, prior to one of many unsuccessful meeting between representatives of Belgrade and Pristina negotiating teams in Vienna, in August 2006, that the Serbs "are guilty as a nation", referring to the 1999 Kosovo war and practically announcing that this perspective will decisivly influence his final proposal after the parties failed to find a mutually acceptable compromise regarding the future status of Kosovo.
Cf. official report by Serbian News Agency Tanjug and Radio Television of Serbia: "Serbian negotiating team member Dusan Batakovic has said that the UN envoy for Kosovo status Martti Ahtisaari 'literally' told him "you are guilty as a nation". In a response to the statement of Ahtisaari's spokeswoman Jua Xiang, Batakovic added that his response to the UN envoy was that there is no collective but

Therefore, the whole Ahtisaari plan was resolutely rejected jointly by Belgrade officials and the Kosovo Serbs as being both biased and unsustainable. The Ahtisaari plan, in addition, lacked the approval of the UN Security Council to be legally implemented, as wanted by Kosovo Albanians. The time-limited extension of status talks under UN Troika (USA, Russia, EU) between late August and early December 2007, provided no tangible results, despite Serbia's renewed offers of largest possible autonomy (including the Hong-Kong model) to Kosovo Albanians, apart from UN seat and armed forces for Kosovo.[8]

Furthermore, the unilateral proclamation of Kosovo's independence by the parliament session of 17 February 2008 was boycotted by Kosovo's non-Albanian MPs, including dozens of self-appointed Serbs and legitimate representatives of the Gorani and Romany community. Their boycott thus

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only individual guilt. The advisor to the Serbian president said that Ahtisaari said this before a meeting between negotiating teams on the rights of the communities on August 8 in Vienna in a meeting that included him and two other members of the Serb [negotiating] team, Aleksandar Simic and [Swiss Professor] Thomas Fleiner, and the Serbian ambassador to OSCE, Ms. Miroslava Beham. 'I tried to explain to the UN special envoy the reasons for the absence of representatives of the Kosovo Serbs in this round of talks,' said Batakovic in a written statement. 'Among other things, I emphasized that for the Kosovo Serbs it is unacceptable to negotiate with a person whom the entire Serb community considers to be a war criminal, alluding to Fatmir Limaj,' he added. To which Martti Ahtisaari literally answered, 'Yes, but you are guilty as a nation,' said Batakovic, citing the quotation in the English original. 'To our horror,' added Batakovic, 'Mr. Ahtisaari confirmed this, saying that he wasn't thinking of those of us present but of the Serbs as a nation.' 'I responded with the view that there is no collective but only individual guilt, and that this is the job of the Hague tribunal,' said the advisor to the Serbian president in his statement. ("Batakovic: Ahtisaari literally Said That We Are Guilty As A Nation", Radio Television Serbia, Belgrade, Wednesday, August 30, 2006). For more on Vienna negotiations and their continuation after June 2007 see D. T. Bataković, *Kosovo. Un conflit sans fin?* (Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 2008), 273–287.

[8] James Ker-Lindsay, *Kosovo. The Path to contested Statehood in the Balkans* (London: I. B. Taurus & Co. 2009).

underlined that the declaration of independence approved by a *de facto* mono-ethnic Kosovo provisional parliament has no legitimacy among Kosovo's non-Albanian communities. The unilateral declaration of independence, lacking consent of both Belgrade and Kosovo Serbs and non-Albanians, was not considered as a basis for the establishment of a tolerant, multiethnic, and democratic society, despite any lip service paid to such ideals.[9]

Deficient for legitimacy and parliamentary approval from any of Kosovo's significant non-Albanian communities (including 140,000 remaining Serbs as well as 204,000 displaced Kosovo Serbs who are a constitutive nation, in Kosovo as elsewhere in Serbia, not a minority like other ethnic groups), the decision of mono-ethnic Kosovo provisional parliament obviously did not represent the will of a multiethnic society in the Kosovo as the UN-protectorate. On the contrary, it turned to be solely ethnic Albanian project, based on false promises on democracy, tolerance and peaceful coexistence, in order to satisfy Western demands with words but not deeds. The whole Albanian project of independent Kosovo was during the nine years since the 1999 war founded primarily on brutal and irrevocable ethnic discrimination and continuous orchestrated reprisals against other national and ethnic communities, as was confirmed on many occasions by the international Kosovo Ombudsman, various field reports to the UN and relevant insights of international human rights groups.

As far as Serbia was concerned, after Serbian Parliament annulled the 17 February 2008 illegal act of Kosovo provisional institutions, she committed herself to reject as unacceptable any kind of *fait accompli*, that violates both international law and basic human rights, disregard the UN Charter, the Final Helsinki Act, the Constitution of Serbia and UNSC Resolution 1244, latter being the only valid document that defines the present status of Kosovo before the new, mutually

[9] D. T. Bataković, "Kosovo and Metohija. Serbia's Troublesome Province", *Balcanica*, vol. XXXIX (2008), Belgrade 2009, 270–276.

acceptable solution for the status is agreed between Belgrade and Priština.

The celebration of Kosovo's independence on 17 February 2008, as reported by the Serbian media, was marked by an attack of three Albanians extremists on an 83-year-old Serb woman in the Gnjilane area in eastern Kosovo.[10] Since then, during the next several weeks, the Serbs in their enclaves all over Kosovo, including high school and university students (University of Priština, Serbian section, which is displaced to Northern Mitrovica and Leposavić), doctors and policeman (suspended for recognizing UNMIK as the only legal authority in the Province) have been protesting on a daily basis against this illegal and imposed independence, considered by them as an attempt to essentially extend Albania into the historic heartland of Serbia. The independence of Kosovo was proclaimed and embraced solely by the Kosovo Albanians against the will of other nations and ethnic groups in the province, lacking legal authorization of both the United Nations and Serbia. The repeated statements of Serbian officials that since it's unilaterally proclaimed independence Kosovo has remained a failed state, based on discrimination and denial of both human and property rights have been duly confirmed by numerous independent monitoring groups.[11]

In protest against the illegal, unilateral proclamation of independence of Serbia's southern province by the Kosovo Albanians, Serbia recalled its ambassadors from all the states that have recognized Kosovo as an independent state.

The situation on the ground, as reported by the Canadian military expert, Scott Taylor, shortly after the unilaterally proclaimed independence of Kosovo, as confirmed by numerous

[10] B92, Belgrade, 17 February 2008. (www.b92.net)

[11] See, e.g., Ian Bancroft, "The flight of Kosovo's minorities: the EU insists that Kosovo is a tolerant and multi-ethnic society. So why are its minorities leaving?", *The Guardian*, 5 June 2009: See also the similar conclusions in: *Rapport 2008 sur le Kosovo-Métochie* du Collectif Citoyen pour la Paix au Kosovo-Métochie au Parlement Européen, avec le Groupe Independence et Démocraties, Bruxelles, Groupe Independence et Démocratie 2008, 115 p.

UN reports, remained to be a matter of serious concern: "One of the most alarming assessments in the UN field officers' report is that the criminal leadership of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) guerrilla force, which was supposed to be disbanded, has instead assumed positions of power at all levels of Kosovo society. According to their summary, the KLA has simply 'transformed into criminal structures, carrying out organized crime activities of drugs and weapons trafficking and prostitution'. As one field officer stated, those guerrillas 'are the real power in Kosovo and many of their leaders are now politicians at all levels — including Prime Minister (Hashim Thaçi).' The Kosovo police service is described as 'poorly competent' and that, in turn, has resulted in a 'culture that promotes intolerance with little or no moral obligation to non-Albanians'."[12]

The Serbs living north of Ibar defied the unilaterally proclaimed independence by the Kosovo Albanians:

> "Multi-ethnic Kosovo does not exist, except in the written pronouncements of the international community. (From a study by the International Commission on the Balkans)
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> Students at the technical university in North Mitrovica [*Severna Mitrovica*} wear T-shirts reading "Kosovo is Serbia." The administration of Kosovo's recalcitrant north, funded by Belgrade, now resides in a small, cobalt blue house along the river. North Mitrovica is a planet with its own orbit …and perhaps 30,000 Serbian residents, who are being used as spearheads in the struggle over Kosovo's future.
>
> Those who work in North Mitrovica's hospital, court system, schools and university are paid two to three times the standard salary, as compensation for living here. By simply

[12] The assessment of life in Kosovo for ethnic minorities is one of limited freedom of movement and constant fear. Also cited in the report is the fact that the international community has failed to protect non-Albanian language rights and that they have allowed the flag of the Republic of Albania to fly on most public institutions since 1999. (Scott Taylor, Mitrovica, 12 April 2008).

> persevering, the idea is, they embody Belgrade's legal claim to Kosovo. …Experts from the Institute for European Politics consider the dreams of a multiethnic Kosovo a "grotesque denial of reality in the international community," triggered by a "politically mandated pressure to succeed." It is not difficult to reconstruct the source of this pressure.
>
> Washington's influence has been decisive, from the NATO attack on Serbian targets in 1999 to its leadership role in the peace negotiations in Rambouillet, France, and the road map for Kosovo's declaration of independence. "The Spaniards didn't want a decision before March 2008, because of their upcoming elections, but the Americans wanted February" says a UNMIK employee. "So February 17 it was."[13]

After the unilateral declaration of independence in February 2008, all kinds of frequent obstructing were used against the defiant Serbian community in Kosovo, in order to certify the "independence". Thus, even the health protection in Serbian inhabited areas, provided by Serbia, was put in danger by the Albanian-dominated institutions on numerous occasions. Only in 2008, there were several confinements of medical shipment, intended for the Serb hospital and health centres:

- On 3 March 2008, Kosovo Police Service and UNMIK Customs seized the shipment with medical supplies sent to the health care institution in central Kosovo and kept it for 10 days;
- On 23 March 2008, the shipment with medicaments sent to the clinics in Dobrotin and Gušterica in Lipljan municipality was seized;
- On 9 May 2008, Customs Service and Police kept for a while an extremely valuable and urgent shipment of medications;
- On 20 May 2008, Kosovo Customs Service seized medications that were a donation from the Serbian phar-

[13] Quoted from: *Der Speigel*, 25 April 2008.

maceutical company "Jugoremedija" to the students of the primary Serbian school in Lipljan;
- On June 17 2008, a medical shipment was kept for five days due to the detention of the vehicle transporting the shipment;
- On 28 August 2008, a shipment with medications was kept for twenty days in inadequate conditions at customs point in Kosovska Mitrovica... etc.

Only due to the persistent engagement of the UN Office and the Red Cross of Serbia, supported by the World Health Organization, this appalling practice of preventing the distribution of Serbia-sponsored humanitarian aid to their co-nationals in Kosovo was eventually halted, and further distribution allowed.[14] The similar obstruction of basic human rights of the Kosovo Serbs was noticed in other areas, vital for their very survival, from health care and higher education, to cultural and other ties with the rest of Serbia.

In spite of the collaboration of several Serbian political groups (consisting mostly of several dozens of families, often with dubious legal records or with business ties with Kosovo Albanians) with the Kosovo government after February 2008, less than six percent of Kosovo Serbs living in the isolated enclaves south of the Ibar River, were participating in the local or general elections called by Priština, in contrast, the Serbs north of Ibar still reject any legal ties with Priština-based Albanian-dominated institutions.

The position of the Kosovo Serbs a year after the unilateral, self-proclaimed independence of Kosovo, as reported by Western observers, remained unchanged, as well as the position of the members of the non-Albanian minorities: "The report of Minority Rights Group International (MRG) maintains that members of minority communities are beginning to leave Kosovo over a year after its unilateral declaration of

[14] *Implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in Kosovo and Metohija* (Belgrade: Government of Serbia, October 2008), 55–56.

independence, due to persistent exclusion and discrimination ... The report, *Filling the Vacuum: Ensuring Protection and Legal Remedies for Minorities in Kosovo*, concludes that Kosovo 'lacks effective international protection for minorities, which is worsening the situation for smaller minorities and forcing some to leave the country for good'. These minorities include not only Kosovo's Serbs, but also Ashkali, Bosniaks, Croats, Egyptians, Gorani, Roma and Turks, who together make up around 5% of the population of Kosovo according to local estimates [...] a 2006 report, *Minority Rights in Kosovo under International Rule*, describing the situation of minorities as the worst in Europe and 'little short of disastrous'; the international community having allowed 'a segregated society to develop and become entrenched'. Despite these and other warnings from human rights organisations, the international community has continued to not only ignore the difficulties faced by minority communities in Kosovo, but to regularly proclaim success with respect to minority rights protection."[15]

With regard to the condition of the still threatened Serbian patrimonial sites after unilateral proclamation of independence, an interview of Fr. Sava Janjić, Archimandite of Visoki Dečani Monastery to *Le Figaro Magazine*, summarized the situation 2010 the situation regarding the appalling situation of Serbian cultural heritage in Kosovo did not change for the better:

> « … les violences antiserbes au Kosovo ont baissé d'intensité, mais elles persistent, dans une région d'où 70%

[15] Ian Bancroft, "The flight of Kosovo's minorities. The EU insists that Kosovo is a tolerant and multi-ethnic society. So why are its minorities leaving?", *The Guardian*, 5 June 2009. See also appalling record on minorities within Kosovo in: *Rapport 2008 sur le Kosovo-Métochie* du Collectif Citoyen pour la Paix au Kosovo-Métochie au Parlement Européen, avec le Groupe Indépendence et Démocratie, (Bruxelles : Groupe Indépendence et Démocratie 2008, 115 p. The worsening situation regarding Serbian Christian heritage in Albanian-controlled Kosovo after unilateral proclamation of independence in February 2008 was repeatedly reported by certain French media.

de la population serbe ont été chassés depuis 1999. [...] L'atmosphère générale est plus apaisée, mais il existe de nombreuses discriminations contre les Serbes restés au Kosovo: menaces verbales, blocages administratifs, etc. Lors de la prise de fonction du nouveau patriarche de notre Église [orthodoxe serbe], Irinej, en octobre dernier, à Pec, des dizaines de voitures appartenant aux pèlerins venus y assister ont été attaquées à coups de pierre. Il y a eu aussi une recrudescence de destructions de stèles et de tombes chrétiennes dans les environs. Le Kosovo demeure une société instable pour les non-Albanais et, sans une vraie démocratie, les Serbes et les autres communautés resteront la cible des extrémistes locaux. ».[16]

On the difficult conditions regarding the protection of Visoki Dečani monastery in particular, Fr. Sava stressed that the occasional post-war shelling of the KFOR-protected monastery by the Albanian extremists is still not a distant past. The Kosovo Albanians, Muslims in particular, cannot accept the very existence of the Serbian patrimonial sites that are clearly showing that in historic retrospective, the whole area of Kosovo and Metohija was strongly marked by both religious and historic existence of the Serbs. This fact remains totally unacceptable especially for those Albanians who want nothing short of an ethnically pure Kosovo:

« Fondé en 1327, il est un des monastères orthodoxes serbes les plus importants des Balkans. Il abrite 30 moines et novices. En 1999, durant la guerre du Kosovo, nous avons accueilli de nombreux réfugiés albanais. Malgré cela, et en dépit de la présence de troupes de protection internationales, le monastère a été attaqué à quatre reprises par des extrémistes albanais: trois fois au mortier et une fois au fusil lance-roquettes! La raison en est que ce monastère, comme d'autres lieux chrétiens sacrés du Kosovo, symbolise la présence historique et religieuse des Serbes dans la région

[16] *Cf.* Jean-Christophe Buisson, Kosovo : «L'héritage chrétien risque de disparaître», *Le Figaro Magazine*, le 30 décembre 2010.

depuis plusieurs siècles. Ceux qui souhaitent un Kosovo purement albanais et musulman ne le supportent pas. »[17]

The Score 1999–2009 and after: A soft Apartheid?

The attitude of Kosovo Albanians towards the Serbian Orthodox Church — as a centuries-old mainstay of the Kosovo Serbs' identity — tellingly reveals their attitude towards the very existence of Serbs in Kosovo. Since June 1999, 150 Serbian churches, monasteries and other religious structures (of which 61 are designated cultural monuments under the Cultural Heritage Protection Act), have been destroyed, vandalized or damaged beyond repair. Since June 1999, at least 9,000 priceless icons, as well as precious gold and silver religious objects, many dating back to the medieval period, have been looted and sold freely by local Albanian traffickers on the ever growing black market in art and antiquities in Europe and the world.

Along with the systematic destruction of churches and monasteries, many of the still remaining Serbian cemeteries have been desecrated. In 256 Serbian cemeteries across Kosovo and Metohija 5,260 gravestones have been heavily damaged, and in fifty cemeteries not a single monument has been left standing. All cemeteries in the parts of Kosovo and Metohija where the Serbian population has been either completely expelled or reduced to an insignificant minority have been repeatedly desecrated, the gravestones pulverized, and the bones removed from their final resting place and scattered. In 1999, as well as ten or even fifteen years later, the expelled Serbs who wish to visit the graves of their ancestors on Soul Saturdays are able to do so only with armed escort of KFOR soldiers or Kosovo police officers, for fear for their safety.

The trauma that the 2004 March Pogrom caused to the Serbs could not be overcome in the following. Its effect

[17] *Ibid*.

calculated to obliterate the telling presence of Serbian culture, of the Serbian material and spiritual heritage, and, above all, to further discourage the already very modest return of the expelled Serbian population into the UN-administered Province has been quite successful. Entire libraries, monastic and private, are gone, hundreds of Christian icons and religious objects were set on fire or ended on black markets, the paintings of renown Serbian painter Uroš Predić at Štimlje were destroyed, the gospel books donated by the Russian Empress Catherine the Great were consumed by flames, carved wooden iconostases, of which the most famous was the one from Priština, carved by famous 19th-century Debar craftsmen , were reduced to ash, medieval fresco paints melted in torched churches, church bells were dismantled and sold as scrap, old embroideries and church records destroyed, cemeteries and gravestones ruined, churches turned into sources of building material, townscapes and distinctive urban settings disfigured…[18]

Ten years after the 2004 March Pogrom, one of the few remaining Serbian intellectuals in central Kosovo, Živojin Rakočević, rightfully wonders: Can all the destruction inflicted to the Serbs be compensated for in any way? How can the cultural context, which has been created for centuries and which is a matter of survival for the Kosovo Serbs, be restored? Can money make up for the tragic material and spiritual consequences of the March Pogrom? Is the possibility of a normal life irrevocably shattered?

"What remains after it all is unrelieved fear, as an imprint and a symbol, and the fact that the Pogrom took place in times of peace, that it is one of the worst peacetime crimes in recent

[18] See the report of three international missions in Kosovo Metohija on the scale of destruction of Serbian patrimony in 2004, that included the representatives of Serbian government and Serbian Church as well. (Emergency Action Plan 2004 for Kosovo in the field of Cultural Heritage, Council of Europe, Internet, 15/08/04, http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural_Cooperation/Heritage/Technical_Cooperation_and_Consultancy/1._Emergency_Action_Plan_for_Kosovo_2004/coe_response.asp).

European history, and that it took place right before the eyes of tens of thousands of foreign soldiers and administrative officials has given rise to an attitude among the Serbs which comes down to patient endurance and a single phrase: no one wants to protect us."[19] The lack of will to protect endangered Serbs and find the victims of the KLA became again obvious during the international investigation regarding the Dick Marty report on the organ trafficking and other crimes against the Serbs and non-Albanian minorities, by former KLA leadership.[20]

Yet, much to the surprise of the Albanian extremists and dominant political structures, who believed that the destruction of the Serbian heritage was an irrevocable *fait accompli* that will erase the remaining traces of centuries-long presence of the Serbs in the area, the Serbian Orthodox Church has proved itself resistant to the disheartened feelings that overwhelmed people. The Serbian Church has managed, despite internal opposition, to turn the Kosovo Serbs' understandable indignation at the international community's insipid reaction to the 2004 March Pogrom into the will to rebuild their demolished churches and monasteries. The first, if insufficient, step was made at the initiative of the international community, in particular the Council of Europe.

On 24 March 2005, a memorandum of understanding concerning the reconstruction of the destroyed or damaged Serbian Orthodox churches in Kosovo and Metohija was signed by the Serbian Patriarch Pavle, on behalf of the Holy Synod of the Serbian Church, and Astrit Haraqija, Minister of

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[19] Quoted in *Pečat*, Belgrade, 12 July 2013.

[20] On kidnapped ans missing persons more in: Jean-Arnault Dérens, "Au Kosovo, la 'salle guerre' de l'UCK", *Le Monde diplomatique*, Mars 2011; "Trafic d'organes au Kosovo : un rapport accablant", par Jean-Arnault Dérens, *Le Monde diplomatique*, 4 janvier 2011; Kosovo's organ-trafficking scandal. Is the mud sticking?, *The Economist*, London, February 24, 2011, by Tim Juda;
Rade Maroević, « Kušner je morao da zna », *Politika*, le 21 décembre 2010, et R.S.V., « Trafic d'organees : Kouchner savait », *Le Courrier des Balkans*, le 29 décembre 2010; Dick Marty : "L'indépendance du Kosovo n'a pas été décidée à Pristina" , voltairenet.org, 12 mars 2008.

Culture of the Kosovo Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (and in the presence of UNMIK representatives acting as mediators). On the other hand, devastated by the scale of violence wrought by the March Pogrom, Artemije, Bishop of Raška-Prizren and Kosovo-Metohija, was adamant in opposing this project, arguing that the rebuilding of Serbian churches cannot be entrusted to the very ones who had burned them to the ground (i.e. to Albanian extremists).[21] However, the opinion that even a slightest progress towards rebuilding the destroyed churches and monasteries is important, providing that the Council of Europe is also in favour of the project, has eventually prevailed in the Serbian Orthodox Church.[22]

The Council of Europe set up the Reconstruction Implementation Commission for Orthodox Monuments in Kosovo (RCI), according to the official report of which the Kosovo government allocated six million euros and the European Agency for Reconstruction two million euros.[23]

Russia's donation of two million US dollars is being used for the restoration of the priceless medieval wall-painting in the church of the Mother of God of Ljeviša in Prizren, which was set on fire in March 2004. There is no official information about the exact sum of money supplied by the government of Serbia, since funding for this purpose has been provided by different ministries and institutions, usually through the Ministry for Kosovo, but it no doubt amounts to millions of euros.

On 15 September 2008, the restored Bishop's residence and the Serbian Orthodox Seminary in Prizren (built in 1870 from the funds donated by Sima Andrejević Igumanov) were handed over to the Serbian Orthodox Church. By 2009, dozens of buildings were restored and returned to their rightful owner, the Serbian Orthodox Church, inhabitable and ready for use. Apart from the cathedral church of St. George in

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[21] Cf. analysis of Bishop Artemije: "Gorki plodovi obnove", *Novosti*, Belgrade, 3 May 2007.

[22] "Mali, teški koraci", *Vreme*, Belgrade, No 743, 31 March 2005.

[23] http://www.radiokim.net/vesti/?AID=69300

Prizren, these include the church of St. Nicholas in Priština, the church of St. John the Baptist with the parish house in Peć, the church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul in Istok, the church of St. Elias in Vučitrn, and the monastery of Devič in the Drenica area.[24]

The latest example of common Serb effort dates from 2012, when the restoration has begun of the monastery of the Holy Archangels near Prizren, funded initially by the Office for Kosovo and Metohija of the Government of Serbia, Serbian communities from other parts of Serbia, Montenegro and Republika Srpska, Serbian diaspora organizations in the USA, Canada, Australia and Europe, and a growing number of companies and private donors from the country and abroad.

Several important, but still insufficient steps have been made to restore the religious heritage of the Serbs, that remains still unprotected frome being vandalized, in spite of restoration.[25] Furthermore, there is no visible progress in any other field, particularly when it comes to the issue of property: the property of the Republic of Serbia, the private property of Serbs and members of other non-Albanian communities (Gorani, Roma, Ashkalia etc.), and the land of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

According to the data compiled by the Serbian Ministry for Kosovo in 2012, since 10 June 1999 more than 20,000 Serb-owned houses have been destroyed, while the value of the illegally appropriated land (arable land, forests and meadows) of Serbian owners amounts to hundreds of millions of euros.

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[24] Nevertheless, certain renown experts, engaged by the Serbian Orthodox Church to monitor the process of reconstruction of churches, were criticizing the poor quality of restored objects destroyed in 2004 March Pogrom. (*Cf.* "Propusti na obnovi porušenih svetinja", *Politika,* 17 March 2008).

[25] The restored Church of St. John the Baptist in Peć was desacrated in Peć already in 2007, as well as the Serbian churches in Podujevo, Priština and Prizren in the previous months of the same year. (http://www.spc.org.yu/Vesti-2007/03/pec1-v.jpg). Furthermore, the Serbian Church of Saint Archangel Gabriel in Štimlje, destroyed in March 2004 also partially restored was looted again by the Albanian extremists in July 2012 (*Press online*, 19 July 2012).

The property owned by the Republic of Serbia has been illegally appropriated as well, mostly through unlawful privatization. It should be noted that, according to the cadastral records, prior to the 1999 war roughly fifty-eight percent of the land in Kosovo and Metohija was owned by Serbs.

The real property in Kosovo and Metohija owned by the Republic of Serbia includes 24,500 hectares of agricultural, forest and building land, and more that 2.2 million square metres of various structures (1.4 million sq m of government buildings, 145,000 sq m of commercial space, 25,000 sq m of dwelling space, 4,000 sq m of special-purpose buildings, and about 750,000 sq m of civil engineering structures). The Development Fund of the Republic of Serbia has controlling interest in 150 companies in Kosovo and Metohija, whose value is assessed at 140 million euros, and the liabilities of the companies from Kosovo and Metohija to entities outside Kosovo and Metohija exceed 190 million euros.[26]

As far as the land of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Kosovo and Metohija is concerned, 5,255 hectares of its land were confiscated during and after the Second World War (3,077 ha from the monastery of Devič, 846 ha from the Patriarchate of Peć, 728 ha from the monastery of Dečani, 207 ha from the monastery of Draganac, and 100 ha from the monastery of Gračanica). In 1997, the monastery of Visoki Dečani obtained the restitution of roughly 13 hectares, a small portion of the land it had owned before the establishment by the communist dictatorship in 1945.

The property of 1,358 companies in the ownership of the Republic of Serbia in Kosovo and Metohija, the privatization of which under the Kosovo Privatization Agency is almost over, is assessed at 1.5 billion US dollars. The assessed value of the property of the Electric Power Company of Serbia alone in Kosovo and Metohija is three billion euros. The book value of the infrastructure and rolling stock of the Serbian Railways in Kosovo and Metohija exceeds 200 million euros.

[26] *Politika*, Belgrade, 26 June 2012.

The estimated reserves of zinc and lead in Kosovo and Metohija are about 46 million tonnes, of magnesite 8 million tonnes, of bauxite more than 1.6 million tonnes, of lignite 15.7 million tonnes, and there are also considerable water and geothermal energy resources, as well as 580,000 hectares of agricultural land.[27]

Even before the Kosovo Trust Agency was established in 2006, about 76,000 parcels of land owned by Serbs were illegally appropriated in four municipalities alone (Peć, Istok, Klina and Orahovac), and about one million cadastral parcels of arable land, meadows and forests in all of Kosovo and Metohija. But the illegal seizure of Serb-owned property and the ethnic cleansing that took place in March 2004 have not changed essentially the land ownership structure. According to the data compiled by the Serbian Economic Team for Kosovo and Metohija, Serbia owns more that 2.2 million square metres of buildings and structures (as specified above). This portion of state-owned property alone, not including the airport in Priština, is assessed at more than 200 billion euros. The Kosovo, Drenica and Metohija basins have lignite reserves which are enough to last for two centuries, and the property of 1,358 Serbian companies, most of which has been illegally privatized, is assessed at more than 1.5 billion US dollars. Moreover, 24,500 hectares of agricultural, forest and building land are in Serbia's ownership. This, from the Albanian perspective inconvenient fact has led the separatists to pass from the phase of sheer robbery to the phase of re-titling and selling the robbed. Namely, after the war in Kosovo and Metohija, the *Provisional Institutions of Self-Government* chose not to comply with the decision concerning land ownership. So, for example, some inhabitants of the village of Batuse were simply notified that the fields they had sown with wheat were no longer theirs, that the Kosovo Privatization Agency (which replaced the Kosovo Trust Agency) had leased the land for a term of 99 years to "Victoria", a company which unofficially has the top

[27] *Ibid.*

ranks of the Kosovo government behind it.[28] This company is behind the project for a private town, Marigona Residence, which is growing in the predominantly Serbian Municipality of Gračanica, between the villages of Preoci and Lepina. It is a settlement of some two hundred residential buildings with complete community infrastructure, a small town for Albanian population on the Serb-owned land. The unlawful construction of residential buildings on Serb-owned crop fields is not just a clever way of making money, given that the price of the properties ranges between 100 and 500 thousand euros; its purpose is to change the demographic structure of the Municipality of Gračanica and to deprive the Serbian population of their most powerful weapon — farming.[29]

Life in Serbian-inhabited Kosovo enclaves, south of Kosovska Mitrovica, as witnessed by French journalist Jean-Lous Tremblais during his visit on Orthodox Christmas, in January 2012, remains difficult, with separation that often resembles apartheid; still far below the level of living standards and community rights throughout Europe:

> "Au sud, éparpillés dans des villages-enclaves, cernés par les Albanais, les Serbes n'ont plus voix au chapitre depuis longtemps. Ces îlots chrétiens dans un océan musulman se contentent de survivre. Tant bien que mal, et plutôt mal que bien! C'est le cas de Velika Hoca, une bourgade de 500 habitants, située à un jet de pierre de l'Albanie. Une douzaine d'églises et de chapelles en guise de souvenir (la plupart sont en ruines ou fermées à la suite d'un exode massif), quelques hectares de vignoble pour unique ressource. «Ici, on est loin de tout, explique un autochtone qui tient à rester anonyme. Dès qu'on sort du village, la sécurité n'est plus assurée. La liberté de mouvement, c'est une vue de l'esprit. Pour faire des courses ou aller à l'hôpital, c'est un véritable casse-tête.[...]

[28] Cf. more on the Kosovo Privatization Agency site: http://www.pak-ks.org/

[29] Nataša Jovanović, "Srbin seje, Šiptar žanje", *Pečat,* Belgrade, 12 July 2013.

Niant cette réalité, la communauté internationale continue de promouvoir l'idée d'un Kosovo multiethnique, où les religions cohabiteraient harmonieusement. Même si personne n'y croit plus vraiment. Officieusement, un fonctionnaire occidental en poste dans la capitale, Pristina, l'admet à contrecœur: «Depuis 1999, on a tout misé sur les autorités kosovares, issues de l'UCK (Armée de Libération du Kosovo, organisation séparatiste et anti-serbe). En pensant que les Serbes auraient leur place dans ce nouvel Etat. Reconnaître qu'on s'est trompés serait un constat d'échec. Le mieux qu'on puisse espérer si nous nous retirons, c'est un système d'apartheid, de développement séparé, avec supervision du patrimoine orthodoxe par une entité étrangère, car les deux peuples se détestent. C'est un fait."[30]

"Douze ans de protectorat onusien-otanien pour en arriver là! Où sont passés les 4 milliards d'euros (2 000 euros par habitant) d'aide internationale injectés au Kosovo albanais? Pas dans le développement économique, puisque le taux de chômage atteint 40 % et que le pays est classé parmi les plus pauvres du continent. Peut-être dans les stations-services qui ont poussé comme des champignons le long de routes qui ne mènent nulle part (blanchiment d'argent par l'or noir?)? Ou dans les cylindrées germaniques (Audi ou BMW, de préférence) qui doublent les charrettes tirées par des chevaux et que peu de cadres supérieurs pourraient s'offrir en France. A moins que ce ne soit dans les clinquants hôtels de verre - sans clients - de Pristina?

Mais la cécité volontaire a des limites. Le temps faisant son œuvre, il est de plus en plus difficile de cautionner un pays où plusieurs responsables politiques de haut vol (ex-commandants de l'UCK à l'époque de la guerre contre la Serbie, en 1998-1999) font l'objet de poursuites judiciaires, comme l'ancien ministre Fatmir Limaj, accusé de meurtres et de tortures durant le conflit. Ou alors sont cités dans des affaires sordides, comme l'actuel Premier ministre Hashim Thaci, soupçonné d'avoir couvert un trafic d'organes

[30] Jean-Louis Tremblais, « Noël sous surveillance au Kosovo », *Le Figaro Magazine*, le 13 janvier 2012.

(prélevés sur des prisonniers, serbes ou opposants politiques) par le sénateur suisse Dick Marty dans un rapport du Conseil de l'Europe.

Vraies ou fausses, ces allégations n'ont pas de quoi rassurer les Serbes du Kosovo, on en conviendra. L'Histoire passablement mouvementée des Balkans leur a appris que le pire y est souvent certain..."[31]

The post-1999 war suffering of the Kosovo Serbs and other non-Albanian communities have turned UN-administered Kosovo, into a mono-ethnic, intolerant society despite international military and UN protectorate. The waves of forced expulsions, ethnically motivated crimes and continuous ethically-based discrimination of the rapidly diminishing Serb community serves as an appalling record of the first decade of twenty first century Kosovo. Enjoying political support in various influential centres of political power, Kosovo Albanians thought that formal allegiances to the democracy, rule of law and other Western values, will suffice as a cover up for all kinds of nationalist and criminal activities, ranging from ethnic cleansing and organ trafficking to the destruction of the Christian Orthodox Churches in order to erase any trace of both historic and contemporary Serb presence in the Province. Thus, endangered the Serb patrimony in Kosovo remains to be a paradigm of failure of an Albanian-dominated Kosovo —unilaterally proclaimed independent in February 2008 — as a tolerant and sustainable society, acceptable for all the citizens in this troublesome province of Serbia.

[31] *Ibid.*

Appendix I

SERBIA'S WORLD HERITAGE SITES IN KOSOVO AND METOHIJA

Notes:

The lists were complied on the basis of the Central Register of the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of the Republic of Serbia

* Further information: *Project* Urgent Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage in Metohija: *Final Report*, Belgrade: MNEMOSYNE, 2003, 370–384; Coordination Centre for Kosovo and Metohija

** Further information: *Project* Urgent Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage in Metohija: *Final Report*, Belgrade: MNEMOSYNE, 2003, 370–384.

♦ — Interventions by the Reconstruction Implementation Commission for Orthodox Religious Sites in Kosovo; source: Serbian Orthodox Church

CC — Coordination Centre for Kosovo and Metohija; MC — MNEMOSYNE Center; IPCMRS — Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of the Republic of Serbia; SOC — Serbian Orthodox Church; CoE — Council of Europe

* prepared by M. Menković

UNESCO World Heritage Sites

No	Object	Municipality	Date of construction	Protection category	Owner	Proof of ownership	Documentation after 1999.	Interventions	
								Implemented 2001–2006.	Planned
1	Monastery of Dečani	Dečane	1327–1335	SK 1368 Extraordinary importance UNESCO World Heritage List	SOC	Cadastre extract*	Archaeological research; Construction project for a kitchen; Reconstruction project for Leontije's Dormitory **	Archaeological research Construction of the kitchen Construction of Leontije's Dormitory (pending)	Rearrangement of the churchyard Reconstruction of the heating facility Fire-fighting measures
No	Object	Municipality	Date of construction	Protection category	Owner	Proof of ownership	Documentation after 1999.	Interventions	
								Implemented 2001–2006.	Planned
2	Patriarchate of Peć	Peć	13th c.	SK 1370 Extraordinary Importance UNESCO World Heritage List	SOC	Cadastre extract*	**	Geodetic survey Partial conservation of frescoes in the church of the Holy Virgin *Hodegetria* (Pilot project in cooperation with INTERSOS)	Damp sanation project; Consolidation of the perimeter wall Consolidation of ancillary buildings Reparation of the water-supply and the construction of a well Fire-fighting measures
3	Holy Virgin of Ljeviška Pogrom, March 2004	Prizren	11th / 13th / 14th c.	SK 1369 Extraordinary Importance UNESCO World Heritage List	SOC	Cadastre extract*	Rearrangement of the ancillary building in the churchyard **	♦ Reparation of the lead roofing Consolidation of the belfry, exonarthex and the gallery (pending)	To complete the restoration of the belfry
4	Monastery of Holy Archangels Pogrom, March 2004	Prizren	1343–1352	SK 1366 Extraordinary Importance UNESCO World Heritage List	SOC	Cadastre extract*	**	Construction of a heating facility in the dormitory	

Appendix Ia

DAMAGED AND DESTROYED CULTURAL PROPERTIES

A) In Albanian-Populated Areas

No.	Object	Municipality	Date of Construction	Protection category	Owner	Proof of ownership	Documentation after 1999
1	Mušutište Church of the Holy Virgin Hodegetria Destroyed in 1999	Suva Reka	1315	I SK 1414 Extraordinary importance	SOC	Cadastre extract*	Reconstruction project for the church Photographs**
2	Monastery of Zočište Destroyed in 1999	Orahovac	14th / 16th c.	III Protected	SOC	Non-existent*	Reconstruction project for the church Photographs**
3	Djurakovac Church of St Nicholas Destroyed in 1999	Istok	16th c.	I SK 1381 Extraordinary importance	SOC	Cadastre extract*	Photographs**
4	Dolac Monastery of the Presentation of the Holy Virgin in the Temple Destroyed in 1999	Klina	14th / 17th c.	I SK 1383 Extraordinary importance	SOC	Cadastre extract*	Photographs**
5	Gornje Nerodimlje Monastery of Holy Archangels Destroyed in 1999	Uroševac	14th / 17th c.	I SK 1420 Extraordinary importance	Public Company "Srbija šume" SOC	Cadastre extract*	Photographs**

No.	Object	Municipality	Date of Construction	Protection category	Owner	Proof of ownership	Documentation after 1999
6	Dobra Voda Monastery of SS Peter and Paul Damaged in 1999	Klina	14th / 16th c.	I SK 1382 Extraordinary importance	Public Company "Srbija šume" SOC	Cadastre extract*	Photographs**
7	Čabići Church of St Nicholas Destroyed in 1999	Klina	Late 15th or early 16th c.	I SK 1386 Extraordinary importance	Municipality of Klina SOC	Cadastre extract*	Photographs**
8	Drsnik Church of St Paraskeve Damaged in 1999	Klina	16th c.	I SK 1384 Extraordinary importance	SOC	Cadastre extract*	Photographs**
9	Kijevo Church of St Nicholas Destroyed in 1999	Mališevo	14th c.	I SK 1385 Extraordinary importance	SOC	Cadastre extract*	Photographs**
10	Mlečane Church of St Nicholas Destroyed in 1999	Mališevo	14th c.	I SK 1385 Extraordinary importance	Municipality of Klina SOC	Cadastre extract*	Photographs**
11	Loćane Danilović's Log Cabin Destroyed in 1999	Dečani	1710s	I SK 1386 Extraordinary importance	Branko Danilović	Existent*	
12	Prizren Kaljaja Fortress Pogrom, March 2004.	Prizren	11th c.	I SK 1399 Extraordinary importance		Cadastre extract*	Photographs**
13	Prizren Church of St Savior Pogrom, March 2004	Prizren	c 1330	I SK 1401 Extraordinary importance	SOC	Cadastre extract*	Photographs**
14	Prizren Church of St Nicholas ("Tutić's") Pogrom, March 2004	Prizren	1331–1332	I SK 1402 Extraordinary importance	SOC — Monastery of Dečani	Cadastre extract*	Photographs**
15	Monastery of Devič Pogrom, March 2004	Srbica	1434	I SK 1413 Extraordinary importance	SOC	Non-existent*	Photographs**

No.	Object	Municipality	Date of Construction	Protection category	Owner	Proof of ownership	Documentation after 1999
16	Mušutište Monastery of the Holy Trinity Destroyed in 1999	Suva Reka	Before 1465; 1837.	I SK 1414 Extraordinary importance	SOC	Non-existent*	Photographs**
17	Rečane Church of St George Destroyed in 1999	Suva Reka	Second half of the 14th c.	I SK 1415 Extraordinary importance	SOC	Cadastre extract*	Photographs**
18	Šajkovac Church of the Dormition of the Holy Virgin (Monastery of Holy Emperor Uroš) Destroyed in 1999	Uroševac	Late 14th c.	I SK 1419 Extraordinary importance	SOC		
19	Buzovik Monastery of Holy Archangel Michael Destroyed in 1999	Vitina	16th c.	III Protected	SOC		
20	Vučitrn Church of St Elias Pogrom, March 2004.	Vučitrn	1834	III Protected	SOC		
21	Samodreža Church of Holy Prince Lazar Destroyed in 1999	Vučitrn	1932	III Protected	SOC		
22	Žegra Church of St Elias demolished in 1999	Gnjilane	1931.	III Protected	SOC		
23	Koš Tomić's fortified house (kulla) Destroyed in 1999	Istok	Late 19th c.	III Protected		Existent*	Photographs**

No.	Object	Municipality	Date of Construction	Protection category	Owner	Proof of ownership	Documentation after 1999
24	Kačanik Church of St Elias demolished in 1999	Kačanik	1929	III Protected	SOC		
25	Sićevo Church of St Nicholas Destroyed	Klina	1452	III Protected	SOC		
26	Kosovo Polje Church of St Nicholas Pogrom, March 2004	Kosovo Polje	1940	III Protected	SOC		
27	Kosovska Mitrovica Church of St Sava Pogrom, March 2004	Kosovska Mitrovica	1896–1912	III Protected	SOC		
28	Brnjača Church of St Cyriaca Pogrom, March 2004	Orahovac	First half of the 14th c..	III Protected	SOC	Non-existent*	Photographs**
29	Peć Mira Protić's House Destroyed in 1999	Peć	c. 1860	III Protected	Inheritors of the Protić family	Cadastre extract*	
30	Peć Stara čaršija (Old marketplace) Devastated in 1999	Peć	16th / 18th / 19th c.	III Protected		Non-existent*	Photographs**
31	Siga Church of St George Damaged in 1999	Peć	1937	III Protected	SOC		
32	Podujevo Church of St Andrew (St Elias) Pogrom, March 2004	Podujevo	1930	III Protected	SOC		
33	Rakitnica Church of Holy Archangel Michael Damaged in 1999	Podujevo	15th c., 1936.	III Protected	SOC		

No.	Object	Municipality	Date of Construction	Protection category	Owner	Proof of ownership	Documentation after 1999
34	Koriša Monastery with St Mark's Church Destroyed in 1999	Prizren	15th c., 1882.	III Protected	SOC		
35	Ljubižda Church of St Nicholas Destroyed in 1999	Prizren	16th c.	III Protected	SOC	Non-existent*	Photographs**
36	Prizren Church of St George — ("Runović") Pogrom, March 2004	Prizren	14th–16th c.	III Protected	SOC	Non-existent*	Photographs**
37	Prizren Theological seminary of ss cyril and Methodius Pogrom, March 2004	PRIZREN	1872	III Protected	SOC		
38	Prizren Potkaljaja, Pantelija and Potok mahala complex Pogrom, March 2004	Prizren	19th c.	III Protected		Non-existent*	Photographs**
39	Prizren Church of St Cyriaca Pogrom, March 2004	Prizren	1371; 1966	III Protected	SOC	Non-existent*	
40	Prizren Church of St Nicholas ("Rajkova") Damaged in 1999	Prizren	First half of the 14th c.	III Protected	SOC	Non-existent*	Photographs**
41	Priština Stara čaršija (Old Marketplace) Devastated in 1999	Priština	19th–20th c.	III Protected			
42	Priština Church of St Nicholas Pogrom, March 2004	Priština	1830	III Protected	SOC		

No.	Object	Municipality	Date of Construction	Protection category	Owner	Proof of ownership	Documentation after 1999
43	Popovljane Church of St Nicholas Destroyed in 1999	Suva Reka	1626	III Protected	SOC	Non-existent*	Photographs**
44	Donje Nerodimlje Remains of a fortress and the Church of St Nicholas Destroyed in 1999	Uroševac	1983 (on earlier foundations)	III Protected	SOC		Photographs**
45	Štimlje Church of St Nicholas DEvastated in 1999	Štimlje	1926	III Protected	SOC		
46	Štimlje Church of Holy Archangel Michael Pogrom, March 2004	Štimlje	1920–1922	III Protected	SOC		

b) In Serb-Populated Areas

No.	Object	Municipality	Date of Construction	Protection Category	Owner	Proof of Ownership	Documentation After 1999
1	Gnjilane Church of St Nicholas	Gnjilane	1861	III Protected	SOC		
2	Cernica Church of St Elias	Gnjilane	1933	III Protected	SOC		
3	Kosovska Kamenica Church of St Nicholas	Kosovska Kamenica	1862	III Protected	SOC		
4	Slovinje Church of St Nicholas	Lipljan	16th c; 1997	III Protected	SOC		
5	Belo Polje Church of the Presentation of the Holy Virgin in the Temple Damaged in 1999 Pogrom, March 2004	Peć	1866–-1868	III Protected	SOC	Unavailable*	Consolidation project Photographs**
6	Novake Lodgings Destroyed	Prizren	Mid-19th c.	III Protected			

Appendix I b

RELIGIOUS OBJECTS WITHOUT HERITAGE STATUS: DAMAGED AND DESTROYED CHURCHES AND CEMETERIES

A) In Albanian-Populated Areas

No	Object	Municipality	Date of construction	Protection category	Owner	Proof of ownership	Documentation after 1999
1	Binač Cemetery church of St Paraskeve	Vitina	1973	-	SOC		
2	Grmovo Church of the Holy Trinity	Vitina	Late 20th c.	-	SOC		
3	Grnčar Church of St Nicholas (St Paraskeve)	Vitina	1976	-	SOC		
4	Žitinje Church of the Holy Trinity	Vitina	1980	-	SOC		
5	Podgorce Church of the Holy Virgin	Vitina	Before 1996	-	SOC		
6	Banjska Church of St Nicholas	Vučitrn	14th c.; reconstructed	Recognized heritage	SOC		
7.	Velika Reka Church of the Holy Trinity	Vučitrn	1997	-	SOC		
8.	Gornji Livoč Church	Gnjilane		-	SOC		
9.	Dobrčane Church of St Paraskeve	Gnjilane	After 1918	-	SOC		

No	Object	Municipality	Date of construction	Protection category	Owner	Proof of ownership	Documentation after 1999
10.	Donji Ratiš Church of the Holy Trinity	Dečani	1935	-	SOC		
11.	Bistražin, Church of St Elias Pogrom, March 2004	Djakovica	1918–1941	-	SOC		
12.	Djakovica Holy Trinity Cathedral Pogrom, March 2004	Djakovica	1994–1999	-	SOC		
13.	Djakovica Church of the Dormition of the Holy Virgin Pogrom, March 2004	Djakovica		-	SOC		
14.	Piskote Cemetery church of Holy Prince Lazar	Djakovica	1991–1994	-	SOC		
15.	DJurakovac Church of all Serbian Saints	Istok	1997	-	SOC		
16.	Istok Church of Holy Apostles Peter and Paul Pogrom, March 2004	Istok	1929	-	SOC		
17.	Koš Church of Holy Prince Lazar	Istok	1969	-	SOC		
18.	Ljubovo Church of St Vasilije Ostroški	Istok	1939	-	SOC		
19.	Grebnik Chursh of St Jeremiah	Klina	1920	-	SOC		
20.	Klina Church of St Mark	Klina	Late 19th c.	-	SOC		

No	Object	Municipality	Date of construction	Protection category	Owner	Proof of ownership	Documentation after 1999
21.	Bresje Church of St Catharine	Kosovo Polje	After 1945	-	SOC		
22.	Petrovce Church of Holy Apostles	Kosovska Kamenica			SOC	-	
23.	Obilić Church of Holy Archangel Michael Pogrom, March 2004	Obilić		-	SOC		
24.	Zočište Church of the Presentation of the Holy Virgin in the Temple	Orahovac	20th c.	-	SOC		
25.	Opteruša Church of St Nicholas	Orahovac	1934	-	SOC		
26.	Opteruša Church of St Savior	Orahovac	1925	-	SOC		
27.	Retimlje Church of the Dormition of the Holy Virgin	Orahovac		-	SOC		
28.	Veliko Kruševo Church of the Presentation of the Holy Virgin in the Temple	Peć	1980–1981	-	SOC		
29.	Vitomirica Church of St Luke	Peć	1912	-	SOC		
30.	Naklo Church of the Holy Virgin	Peć	1992	-	SOC		
31.	Petrič Church of the Holy Trinity	Peć	1992	-	SOC		
32.	Peć Church of St John the Baptist	Peć	1982	-	SOC		

No	Object	Municipality	Date of construction	Protection category	Owner	Proof of ownership	Documentation after 1999
33.	Peć Church of St Paraskeve	Peć	1912	-	SOC		
34.	Pećka Banja Church of St John the Baptist Pogrom, March 2004	Peć	1998	-	SOC		
35.	Gornja Pakaštica Church of Holy Apostles Peter and Paul	Podujevo	1925	-	SOC		
36.	Gornja Srbica Church of St Basil the Great	Prizren	1863	Recognized heritage	SOC		
37.	ŽiviNjane Church of St Cyriaca Pogrom, March 2004	Prizren	1936	Recognized heritage	SOC	Unavailable	
38.	Koriša Church of the Veil of the Holy Virgin	Prizren	16th or 17th c.	Recognized heritage	SOC		
39.	Ljubižda Church of St Paraskeve	Prizren	Late 20th c.	Recognized heritage	SOC	Unavailable*	Photographs**
40.	Ljubižda Church of St Elias	Prizren	1979	-	SOC		
41.	Ljubižda Church of St Cyriaca	Prizren	19th c.	Recognized heritage	SOC	Unavailable*	Photographs**
42.	Prizren Edifice of the Episcopate Pogrom, March 2004	Prizren	c. 1960	Recognized heritage	SOC		
43.	Prizren Cathedral of St George Pogrom, March 2004	Prizren	1856–1857	Recognized heritage	SOC	Unavailable*	Photographs**

No	Object	Municipality	Date of construction	Protection category	Owner	Proof of ownership	Documentation after 1999
44.	Prizren Church of St Panteleimon Pogrom, March 2004	Prizren	1937	Recognized heritage	SOC		
45.	Prizren Church of Holy Doctors Cosmas and Damian Pogrom, March 2004	Prizren	Late 19th c.	Recognized heritage	SOC	Unavailable*	Photographs**
46.	Rudnik Church of St George	Prizren	14th / 16th c.	Recognized heritage	SOC		
47.	Smać Church of St Elias	Prizren	1994	-	SOC		
48.	Pomazatin Church of St Elias	Priština	1937; 1964	Recognized heritage	SOC		
49.	Priština Church of St Savior (Cathedral)	Priština	Late 20th c.	Recognized heritage	SOC		
50.	Dvorani Church of St Savior	Suva Reka	Late 20th c.	-	SOC		
51.	Mušutište Church of St Paraskeve	Suva Reka		-	SOC		
52.	Mušutište Church of St Savior	Suva Reka		-	SOC		
53.	Mušutište Church of Holy Archangel Michael	Suva Reka		-	SOC		
54.	Suva Reka Church of the Holy Virgin	Suva Reka	1938	Recognized heritage	SOC	Unavailable*	Photographs**
55.	Baljak Church of the Holy Trinity	Uroševac	1996	-	SOC		
56.	Gatnje Church of St Nicholas	Uroševac	1985	-	SOC		

No	Object	Municipality	Date of construction	Protection category	Owner	Proof of ownership	Documentation after 1999
57.	Gornje Nerodimlje Church of the Holy Virgin	Uroševac	1925	-	SOC		
58.	Donje Nerodimlje Church of St Stephen	Uroševac	1996	-	SOC		
59.	Zaskok Church of St Paraskeve	Uroševac	Late 20th c.	-	SOC		
60.	Nekodim Church of St Elias Pogrom, March 2004	Uroševac	1975	-	SOC		
61.	Softović Church of the Nativity of the Holy Virgin Pogrom, March 2004	Uroševac	1918–1941	-	SOC		
62.	Srpski Babuš Church of the Holy Trinity	Uroševac		-	SOC		
63.	Talinovac Church of Holy Apostles Peter and Paul Pogrom, March 2004	Uroševac	1840	Recognized heritage	SOC		
64.	Uroševac Church of Holy King Uroš Pogrom, March 2004	Uroševac	1926–1933	Recognized heritage	SOC	Unavailable*	Photographs**
65.	Šarenik Monastery of Holy King Uroš with the church of the Dormition of the Holy Virgin	Uroševac	Second half of the 14th c.	Recognized heritage	SOC		

Appendix II

THE KOSOVO SERBS IN INTERNATIONAL PRESS

Serbs And Roma Flee KLA Terror In Kosovo

By Michael Conachy
20 August 1999

Propaganda claims that the US-NATO war against Yugoslavia was conducted in a humanitarian effort to halt "ethnic cleansing" in Kosovo lie in tatters as Serbs and Roma (gypsies) continue to flee the province to escape harassment, intimidation, beatings and murder at the hands of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA).

As many as 170,000 Serbs of a pre-war population of 200,000 have left the province since the withdrawal of Yugoslav troops. Less than 7,000 Roma are estimated to remain of a population of 30,000 to 40,000. Most of those are confined to enclaves, surrounded by NATO's Kosovo Force (KFOR) troops and living in constant fear of KLA attack.

Speaking last week in the Kosovo capital Pristina, where the number of Serb residents has decreased from 40,000 to less than 2,000 in the past eight weeks, KFOR spokesman Major Jen Joosten described the atmosphere of intimidation. "Serbs cannot go to hospitals, shop, or even receive humanitarian assistance. There must be many of whose existence we are not even aware." After acknowledging that they cannot leave their homes for fear of violence he tried to excuse the failure of NATO's military to protect them. "Everything is being done to keep the Serbs here, but KFOR can't be on every street corner or in every house," he said lamely. Head of the United Nations mission in Kosovo, Bernard Kouchner, revealed the extent of the KLA's campaign in a statement to an Athens newspaper this week. "In the future, I will not allow the homes of 10 or 15 Serbs to be burnt down every night, even if it means confrontation with the KLA. I have told [KLA leader Hashim] Thaci that my patience has run out." Kouchner, however, outlined no planned steps to halt the attacks on Serbs and other ethnic groups.

There have been a series of killings in Pristina. On June 23, for example, the bodies of three men were found in the basement of the economics' faculty of Pristina University. They were Milenko Lekovic, a Serb professor of economics, Miodrag Mladenovic, a Serb guard in the building, and Jovica Stamenkovic, a Serb waiter from the café in the faculty. They had been beaten with a blunt instrument before being shot. Most of the Serbs remaining in the capital are the elderly and disabled who have no means of leaving or no place to go. Two elderly women were murdered in the first week of August; both were shot through the doors of their apartments. A Serb woman and her four-year-old child were reportedly shot on August 11. The woman staggered with her child to a KFOR checkpoint where she died, the child was taken to hospital. On Monday, two Serb teenagers were killed and five other Serbs injured during a mortar attack on the village of Klokot, south-east of Pristina.

A documented reign of terror

The US-based Human Rights Watch organisation released a report at the beginning of August, entitled "Abuses against Serbs and Roma in the new Kosovo", which documents an apparently coordinated campaign of abductions, beatings, house-burning and murders of Serbs and Roma by the KLA. In addition to the widely publicised killings in Gracko and Prizren, the report describes many other little known atrocities. Researchers viewed the bodies of three Serbs killed on June 19 in the village of Belo Polje, near Pec. Villagers claim that 10 uniformed KLA soldiers entered the village and executed Radomir Stosic, aged 50, his uncle Steven Stosic, 60, and their friend Filip Kosic, 46. Each of the men was killed by a shot between the eyes at point-blank range. According to the Serbian Orthodox Church in Pec, 30 Serbs were killed in the municipality during June and July. KLA soldiers in the village of Pones in the Gnjilane municipality abducted six cowherds on June 19. The men were beaten and interrogated, and two of them—Momcilo Dimic, 60, and Cedomir Denic, 50—were later found dead. KFOR officers in the town of Obilic reported that eight Serbs have been killed there since early June in what are described as "organised attacks" in which "KLA units were implicated". In the town of Lipljan, KFOR officers reported that a male Serb was decapitated in the middle of the busy town market on July 9, between 11 am and 3 pm. One week later, four grenade attacks were carried out against Serb homes in the town in the early afternoon, killing one person. The attacks were carried out within the space of one hour and at regular intervals.

Four elderly Serb men in the village of Slivovo were reportedly abducted and killed in the third week of June. Two Roma men, Bajram Berisha, 34, and Vesel Berisha, 24, were killed by unknown assailants in Mitrovica in late June. Three Roma are believed to have been murdered in the town of Djakovica and three families burned in their homes in the village of Dubrava, also in June.

Researchers also document the abduction, interrogation and torture of numerous Serb and Roma civilians—mostly elderly men. The purpose of abductions and beatings appears to be to terrorise people into leaving Kosovo, as most are subsequently released. Many victims exhibited extensive bruising and knife cuts when interviewed by Human Rights Watch researchers. Those reported abducted by the KLA but not released are "presumed dead".

The report describes the following testimony of 71 year-old S. B. as typical: "[KLA soldiers] grabbed me, brought me down to the cellar and took turns hurting me. There were several of them, all in uniform... While they were beating me, they Insulted me, called me 'Chetnik,' and told me to leave forever."

House-burnings are a commonplace occurrence. Thirty Roma homes were torched in the Brekoc neighborhood of Djakovica within the space of three hours on July 12. Uniformed KLA soldiers told the families to leave their homes a few days before. The Roma neighbourhood in Pec was almost entirely looted and burned in late June.

Most Serb and Roma homes in the village of Slovinje suffered a similar fate, as did the local Orthodox Church. Other targets of arson include the Serb areas of the villages and towns of Lipljan, Magura, Dolac, Drenovac, Brestovik, Vitomira, Istok, Belo Pojle, Veric, Srbobran and Obilic. There has also been widespread burning and looting of former Serb and Roma areas of Pristina. Recent reports tally at least 200 villages and 41 Serbian churches have been destroyed since KFOR established control over the province.

Human Rights Watch observed: "The most serious incidents of violence... have been carried out by members of the KLA. Although the KLA leadership issued a statement on July 20 condemning attacks on Serbs and Roma, and KLA political leader Hashim Thaci publicly denounced the July 23 massacre of 14 Serb farmers, it remains unclear whether these beatings and killings were committed by local KLA units acting without official sanction, or whether they represent a coordinated KLA policy..."

The report concluded: "The intent behind many of the killings and abductions that have occurred in the province since early June appears to be the expulsion of Kosovo's Serb and Roma population rather than a desire for revenge alone. This explanation is borne out by more direct and systematic efforts to force Serbs and Roma

to leave their homes." It cites the fact that large numbers of Serbs and Roma report being directly warned by ethnic Albanians, under threat of violence, to leave Kosovo and never return.

In light of this evidence, US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's declaration in Pristina on July 29 that "Never again will people with guns come in the night" in Kosovo, sounds like a cruel joke.

International response to KLA inspired "ethnic cleansing". Like all of the nationalist militia groups in the Balkans, the KLA's program is based on ethnic separatism. Its aim over the past four years has been to sever Kosovo from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and establish an independent state as part of the long term goal of establishing an ethnically pure Greater Albania—encompassing Albania, Kosovo and the Albanian-populated areas of Macedonia and Montenegro. This program requires the expulsion of the non-Albanian population. The Human Rights Watch report makes clear that the KLA has a history of attacks on minority ethnic groups. It states in part: "It is also important to note that the KLA has been linked to earlier abuses against Serbs, Roma and Kosovar Albanians during 1998 and during the first three months of 1999. Specifically, reports by the Humanitarian Law Center, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and Human Rights Watch's own research indicate that dozens of Serbs, and a smaller number of Roma and Albanians, were detained by the KLA between mid-1998 and March 1999. At least 130 Serbs went missing during this time and are presumed dead."

This assessment underscores the fact that a bitter civil war was raging in Kosovo between the Yugoslav army and the KLA in 1998 and early 1999, before NATO intervention. Both sides were engaged in destroying the lives and property of civilians from "opposing" ethnic groups. The US and NATO elected to support the KLA and bomb Yugoslavia, because it suited their own political, economic and strategic interests in the Balkans, not out of altruistic opposition to human rights abuses.

Since KFOR's occupation of Kosovo, the public position of US-NATO leaders has been to favour the creation of a "multi-ethnic" and "democratic" Kosovo. But their policy on the ground has been to turn a blind eye to the KLA expulsion of Serbs and Roma. Human Rights Watch made the following assessment of the role of KFOR during the months of June and July. "KFOR's overall record on preventing the abduction, detention, and murder of Serbs and Roma is also poor. A KFOR officer in eastern Kosovo told a Human Rights Watch researcher that his unit did not even try to keep track of the abductions because of their frequency. In many cases, KFOR officers

from all contingents expressed the view that the commission of such crimes was inevitable. Efforts by a Human Rights Watch researcher to report an incident of harassment in Ljubizda village on June 30 to the German KFOR contingent required multiple visits to local posts and then to the contingent headquarters in Prizren, where a civilian-military implementation cell officer appeared uninterested in the details of the case."

KFOR has dismissed warnings by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) that it may be necessary to evacuate the remaining Serbs in Kosovo. "It is not our policy to assist people to leave. That is their own decision and they must make their own way," KFOR spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Robin Hodges said this week. But as UNHCR representative Dennis McNamara noted, the agency had experienced instances where it had chosen not to help people to leave and they had then been killed.

Clashes with KFOR

Most of the Serbs remaining in Kosovo are concentrated in a few towns including Kosovo Polje, Dobrotin, Gracanica, Velika Hoca, Gorazdevac, Orahovac and the section of Kosovo Mitrovica north of the Ibar river—the scene of recent clashes between KLA-inspired demonstrators and French KFOR troops. Beginning on August 6, crowds of up to 1,000 Albanians, many of them young men wearing KLA scarves, have attempted to force their way across the Ibar bridge into the section of Mitrovica housing several thousand Serbs. French soldiers erected a barbed wire barrier across the bridge after three days of clashes that left several Albanians and one French soldier seriously injured. French Lieutenant Meriadec Raffray was in no doubt as to who organised the demonstrations, "The KLA leaders are only interested in keeping up the pressure," he told the media. "They want to provoke an incident."

Kosovo Mitrovica is a mining centre, some 20 miles north of Pristina, and has been a centre of ethnic tensions since the end of the war. The purpose of the demonstrations is firstly to further intimidate Serbs living in the town and to force them to leave, and secondly, to put pressure on the French troops. Demonstrators taunted the French soldiers with chants of "terrorists" and demanded, "French go back to France, Americans come here."

Speaking at a news conference on August 8, KLA political chief Hashim Thaci denied responsibility for the Mitrovica clashes and said the demonstrators "gathered by themselves." But he then went on to launch a tirade against French troops, accusing them of behaving in "an undemocratic way, and a very arrogant way." Thaci

claimed that by protecting the Serb enclave, the KFOR contingent was violating the UN resolution authorising its presence and that it wished to divide Kosovo on ethnic lines. "Kosovo means Mitrovica and Mitrovica means Kosovo. We are not going to allow the separation of the city," he warned. Thaci also denounced the Russian contingent on August 1, after its soldiers briefly detained KLA military commander Agim Ceku at a checkpoint for failing to produce a KFOR identity card authorizing him to carry weapons and travel with an armed security detail. Thaci accused the Russians of a "premeditated political act" that "verifies our doubts about the ability of Russian troops to bring stability to Kosovo."

Since the withdrawal of Yugoslav Army units, the KLA has declared itself a "provisional government" and sought to establish political control of the whole province. It has taken over former state-owned property, requisitioned hotels, homes, apartments and vehicles and assumed local leadership positions. Aid agencies complain they must deal with the organisation to get anything done. "We talked to the mayor's office and we had to deal with the local police, but it was one and the same—KLA," said one Norwegian aid worker.

There are signs of tension between the Albanian nationalists and the KFOR forces. On August 7, KFOR troops raided a house where KLA "interior minister" Rexhep Selimi and others were meeting. They discovered weapons, ammunition, radio frequency scanners, and a very large quantity of German marks. They also discovered a number of identity cards labelled "Ministry of Public Order". The cards, signed by Selimi, authorised the bearer to carry weapons, confiscate property and make arrests.

NATO immediately issued a statement describing KFOR as the "sole legitimate armed force in Kosovo." It warned that "any attempt by any group to usurp this authority is not acceptable to the international community and will not be tolerated."

KFOR's actions and statements are not motivated by "humanitarian" concerns for the Serb and Roma refugees any more than the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia was a response to the plight of Albanians. Having spent billions to force the capitulation of Yugoslavia, and to occupy Kosovo as a long-term base of operations in the region, the major powers have no intention of ceding control to the KLA.

NATO's plans for a virtual military protectorate in Kosovo are coming into collision with the KLA's political ambitions for an independent Kosovo and ultimately Greater Albania. In the past the KLA has proven a useful political tool for NATO, so much so that at the Rambouillet conference in February that set the stage for the war, the US elevated the KLA to the status of a legitimate participant.

As far as the future is concerned, however, the only role that NATO has for the KLA is as a compliant and subordinate participant in its administration.

Old Serbs Become Terror Target

The Guardian, Monday August 23, 1999
Chris Bird in Podujevo

Jelica Cemburovic, 87, is waiting to die. She wants to die in Kosovo so that she can be laid to rest next to her husband in a Serbian Orthodox cemetery in Kosovo's northern town of Podujevo — a banal enough wish. But Mrs Cemburovic is not to be allowed a peaceful old age and a dignified death. The hatred felt by Podujevo's ethnic Albanians, thirsty for revenge against the Serb minority here for the horrific excesses of the Serbian security forces during this year's war in Kosovo, has seen to that.

The frail old woman, with inflamed blue eyes and a heart condition, is now a prime target for groups of armed ethnic Albanians who have carried out a spate of murders of the Serb elderly to terrify the handful of Serbs, Montenegrins and gypsies still left in Kosovo into leaving. At the weekend Nato peacekeepers found an elderly couple shot dead in their apartment in the south-western town of Prizren. "We presume they are Serbs," said a spokesman for K-For yesterday.

Brutality characterises these murders, intended to act as an example to those who refuse to leave. Belgrade's media reported that a 62-year-old Serb woman was found dead in the village of Landovica, near Prizren, last week. An elderly Serb woman was found beaten to death in her bath in Pristina earlier this month.In a report this month detailing abuses against Serbs and other minorities in Kosovo, the US-based Human Rights Watch recorded how two elderly Serb neighbours had their throats slit in June.

One of the victims, Marica Stamenkovic, was found by German peacekeepers to have been almost decapitated. The victims had ignored repeated warnings to leave issued by ethnic Albanians wearing the uniforms of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). "We sit here," said Mrs Cemburovic, an enamel plate of bitter walnuts on her dining room table accenting her still life. "We do not go out anywhere."

Across the table sat her friend Jelica Miljanovic, in her 70s. After threats from ethnic Albanians telling her to "Go to Serbia!", she

fled her apartment to join Mrs Cemburovic. They are two of three elderly Serbs not to have left the town when British peacekeeping troops arrived in June.

Then, the town popped and crackled with gunfire between departing Serbian forces, defeat in their eyes, and ethnic Albanian KLA fighters who stole into the town behind the British troops. Now, red Albanian flags, martial songs glorifying the KLA, and crowds clogging the streets make a frightening din below her cramped, concrete balcony. The two old women are now under constant protection from a unit of British peacekeepers from the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, red and white feather hackles on their berets. Corporal Alan Lovett, stood standing at the entrance to Mrs Cemburovic's apartment block with an assault rifle, was a little deflated by "granny patrol". "I thought I'd be fighting my way through towns," said the corporal, "not guarding metal factories and old ladies."

To Mrs Cemburovic and Mrs Miljanovic, the British soldiers outside their door are mnogo fino, "very fine", despite the frightening time people had earlier this summer under bombardment by Nato jets. "If I was younger..." mused Mrs Miljanovic, a kittenish look on her face, lined like the walnuts on the table.

Mrs Cemburovic — the more serious of the two characters — said that without the soldiers she would not be able to stay in Podujevo. The glass in the windows of her apartment overlooking the street were smashed when unidentified attackers threw rocks. She whacked her palms on her cheeks, saying this was how ethnic Albanians had slapped her in the street. "The KLA have told our neighbours not to talk to us," she said. "The KLA run everything here," she said. When she ventured out to the post office to collect her pension last week — escorted by Corp Lovett's men — the ethnic Albanian clerks told her there was no money for her, for which she blames the KLA. The smiles on the ragged children playing around the entrance to her apartment block hide a disturbing malevolence. On the rare occasions Mrs Cemburovic leaves the flat, the children run their fingers across their throats to mock her.

"I said to one of their mothers once, 'Why do you let them behave like that?'" she said. "She wasn't in the least sorry, just said they were 'politicised'. I think someone's stirring them up to do it."

Relations between the Serb and ethnic Albanian communities in Kosovo have seethed for decades, but she still finds it hard to understand the hatred now ranged against her. All across Kosovo, peacekeepers are keeping similar vigils. Irish Guards are parked outside my elderly Serb neighbour's house in Pristina in a large armoured vehicle. "We're here as long as they [the old Serbs] want to

stay," said one of the guardsmen yesterday. "But many are deciding to leave."

International officials here are asking how long they can afford to keep the Serbs and gypsies inside Kosovo. "You just can't protect everyone 24 hours a day," said Ron Redmond, spokesman for the United Nations refugee agency (UNHCR) in Kosovo.

"There is a question: how long are K-For and the other international agencies going to be able to provide this kind of protection?" Mr Redmond estimates that 180,000 Serbs have left Kosovo, of whom he thinks 50,000 had gone before Nato started bombing in March. About one-tenth of the original Serb population remain. Even if she wanted to leave, Mrs Cemburovic seems to have nowhere else to go. The last she saw of her two adopted children was when they drove to Podujevo from the provincial capital, Pristina, during the Nato bombardment to see if she was alive. She speaks vaguely of a relative in Belgrade. Like their counterparts from Croatia in 1995, Serb refugees are not welcome in northern Serbia. "My husband's at the cemetery," said Mrs Cemburovic. "I have a place next to him, I just want to be buried next to him. That is all."

Reuters
UNHCR says Kosovo nearly "emptied out" of Serbs

August 24, 1999

GENEVA (Reuters) — Kosovo is being "emptied out" of Serbs with only 30,000 remaining in the province, the United Nations refugee agency said on Tuesday. "We are pretty much approaching the line of an almost Serb-free Kosovo, which is an extremely sad phenomenon," spokesman Kris Janowski told a news conference. "One exodus is following another," he added. Yugoslav authorities have told the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) that 195,000 ethnic Serbs and other non-Albanians have fled from Kosovo to Serbia and Montenegro, a rise from 180,000 two or three weeks ago, he said.

Most ethnic Serbs and Gypsies left during or immediately after NATO's 11-week bombing campaign which ended in early June. Ethnic Albanians in the province have carried out scores of retaliatory attacks on Serbs over the past two months since thousands returned to Kosovo after being driven out by Belgrade forces. "We've not had reports over the last 10 days or so that we used to have of murders or other atrocities almost every day," Janowski said. "It is

slowly getting better, but most Serbs are gone," he said. "The latest fgures from the Federal Yugoslav government indicate that Kosovo is emptying out of its Serbs and only three municipalities in the extreme north of Kosovo have sizeable Serb populations," Janowski said. "We can't vouch for the accuracy of the figures. Nevertheless, the trend is there," he added.

The UNHCR was evacuating 28 "vulnerable elderly Serbs" on Tuesday from the southern Kosovo town of Prizren to Serbia, where they will be reunited with their families. "Virtually all of the 28 have received verbal threats and begged to be evacuated," Janowski said.

Asked how many ethnic Serbs might remain in Kosovo, Janowski replied: "Maybe up to 30,000...It has been a continuous exodus."

Yugoslavia: Beatings Of Goran[ie]s Heighten Ethnic Tensions

Radio Free Europe,24–08–99
By Jolyon Naegele

There is wide knowledge of the harsh treatment facing Serbs and Roma in Kosovo. But RFE/RL's Jolyon Naegele visits the southwestern Gora region and reports that the local Goran[i] minority is also facing harsh treatment at the hands of ethnic Albanians. He files this report from the district capital, Dragash.

Dragash, Kosovo; 24 August 1999 (RFE/RL) — Gora is one of the least populated and most inaccessible districts in Kosovo. The area encompasses a cluster of mountains and steep valleys wedged between Albania and Macedonia that are home to two ethnic groups — the Albanians and the Goran[ie[s.

The Gorans are a small minority who, according to the last census in 1991, numbered about 20,000 in Gora and a further 25,000 elsewhere in the former Yugoslavia. They speak a transitional Serbo-Macedonian dialect and were largely converted to Islam from Orthodoxy in the early 18th century. The Gorans have their own customs and traditions, but share some folk customs with their Albanian neighbors. At the outset of the NATO airstrikes against Yugoslavia last March, Serbian authorities launched a selective campaign of expulsions and retentions. In the local Albanian villages, mainly in the northern parts of Dragash district, Serbian forces expelled all the Albanians on March 30, giving them 30 minutes to pack and leave. The Serbs forced most of the Gorans to stay by issuing their men mobilization orders.

But some Gorans also went to Belgrade to demonstrate against NATO air strikes and in support of the regime of Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic. This did not endear them to their Albanian neighbors in exile in Macedonia and Albania. The Turkish KFOR commander in Dragash, Izzet Cetingoz, says that when his forces arrived in the district, anger among ethnic Albanians toward the Gorans was pronounced. "When we arrived here more than one month ago it was said among the [Albanians] that some of the Gorans had supported the Serb military here during the war. They alleged that some of them had taken part with the Serb paramilitary forces in their activities. ....There was a very strong repression against these people and the Albanians were saying that the Gorans were all Serb collaborators and were putting a lot of pressure on them. We managed to stop this repression and bring these two groups together and start a dialog."

Cetingoz notes that the Gorans insist they are innocent of any collaboration with the Serbs or wrongdoing against the Albanians. He says the Albanians should accept that whatever crimes were committed were individual rather than collective.

A Gora intellectual, speaking to RFE/RL on condition of anonymity for fear of retribution, says there is no evidence that Goran[i] s killed, raped or burned down anyone's house during the war.

German KFOR troops, who control southwestern Kosovo, gave the Dragash district low priority on the grounds that ethnic relations, though difficult, were nowhere near as tense as elsewhere in the German zone such as in Prizren, Suva Reka, and Orahovac. Several weeks after KFOR began moving into Kosovo in June, Turkish KFOR troops were deployed in Dragash.

A German KFOR spokesman in Prizren told RFE/RL over the weekend that all minorities in Kosovo regardless of their size are under pressure to leave the province.

The spokesman says the ethnic Albanian Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK) appears to be building up pressure to create an ethnically pure Albanian Kosovo — first by chasing out the Serbs and Roma and subsequently the Turks and Gora. As a result, the area has experienced what Gora residents say were several dozen ethnically-based incidents. These included redistribution in Dragash of Goran-owned apartments in one building to Albanian families.

Many Goran[i]s have emigrated this year to other parts of Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Italy, and Austria. The outflow began the day the air strikes started on March 24 but turned into a flood after the fighting ended. More than half the estimated 20,000 Goran[i]s in Gora have left. The massive outflow is caused

by economic as well as security reasons. Most Goran[i]s are now unemployed.

The Goran[i] intellectual says he will not flee and would prefer to share a common life with Kosovo's Serbs and Albanians. But his bloodshot eyes and tense face all betray his fear of what lies ahead.

He and other remaining Goran[ie]s say they are not satisfied with how they are being protected by KFOR. In his words, German KFOR troops sit in bars in Dragash and Prizren and ridicule how their French counterparts in Mitrovica are unable to resolve the Serb-Albanian divisions in Mitrovica in northern Kosovo while they themselves are failing to prevent ethnic harassment in their own zone.

As in many other parts of Kosovo, UN police have been slow in taking up their duties in Gora. Although 50 UN police officers are supposed to be patrolling Gora, only one has arrived so far.

Last Friday was market day in Dragash. A number of Albanians dressed all in black descended on the town from nearby villages and in the course of the day beat up some seven Goran[i]s.

One UN official, speaking on condition of anonymity, says the UCK organized Friday's assaults in Dragash, sending people into bars and shops to stir up trouble by accusing Goran[ie]s of being paramilitaries" or of having collaborated with the Serbs. Turkish KFOR troops intervened in at least two instances, questioning but releasing those involved and telling them not to return to Dragash. However, at UN insistence Turkish soldiers detained four men — two Albanians and two Goran[i]s and took them for further questioning.The UN and KFOR called a meeting that evening with ethnic Albanian and Goran [i] representatives in a bid to cool tensions and asked the UCK to keep its men out of Dragash.

The UCK rejects the allegations made by UN staffers. A local UCK spokesman, squad commander Ymredin Halimi, tells RFE/RL that Friday's incidents were between civilians and had nothing to do with the UCK. But asked what reassurance the UCK can offer the Gorans, Halimi says the Gorans must decide their own fate: "We lived together with the Gorans for centuries. But they did not flee with us when we fled. We were pushed to flee from our homes. But they remained and supported the Serb regime."

Some UN officials criticize the Turkish KFOR soldiers in Dragash for failing to stop many incidents or crack down on crime. As with most other KFOR units throughout Kosovo, the Turkish battalion lacks police training to deal with such incidents.

But the UN officials say that had the Turkish soldiers not been present in Dragash on Friday the violence would have been far

worse. As one UN official put it, international forces must quickly provide better security for minorities. Otherwise, he says, "more terror will come."

Criminal "Strongmen" Leave Tropoja

"Gazeta Shqiptare", August 26

Most of the criminals in police uniforms have already left the northeastern district of Tropoja after the arrival there of special police forces from Tirana, reported independent daily 'Gazeta Shqiptare'.

In a Tuesday report from that region, the paper highlighted as significant the fact that the so-called strongmen of Tropoja had fled as soon as special forces arrived and that some had found reclusion in remote villages to escape the state. It said there were some who might have gone to various towns in Kosovo or the Albanian capital, Tirana, so as not to fall into police hands.

Following are excerpts from the report: Tropoja had become a shelter for the majority of Albanian criminals, who found there a safe base from where they could commit their crimes, turning the town into a symbol of the rebellion and non-functioning of the state. Now, the duels between the clans of Haklaj, Hoxhaj and Haxhia are infamous throughout the country. They have been accused of various crimes, from the ordinary to participation in the uprising of September 14, 1998.

Since 1997, the town of Bajram Curri and its environs have become a fortress for the wanted. The town where most killers wore police uniforms or signed the pay-slips of the commissariats only began to breathe again after August 5th this year, when some dozens of troops sent from Tirana were sufficient to cause the local strongmen to disappear. Within three weeks the special forces succeeded in covering the whole district of Tropoja from Pac to Kam, and Lekbibaj to Fierza and Kamenica. They have arrested some of the most wanted persons, while the revenging clans have either left Tropoja or gone into hiding in their villages. Most of the wanted went to Gjakova, Peja and Prishtina, while some have gone to Tirana, biding their time.

Targets Of Terrorism, Pristina's Jews Forced To Flee

The Globe And Mail,
Tuesday, August 31, 1999

Members of centuries-old Kosovo community mistaken for Serbs or Serb collaborators by vengeful Albanian paramilitaries

Belgrade —In a seedy hotel across the street from Belgrade's Jewish Museum, the head of Kosovo's tiny Jewish community recalls the day two months ago when Albanian paramilitaries armed with submachine guns came to the door of the Pristina apartment where he and his family lived.

"He told us to get out," said Cedomir Prlincevic, 61, a small, white-haired man who worked as director of the Pristina regional archive. "We asked him why. He said, 'My house was burned.' I said, 'But I'm not the one who did it.' He said, 'I'm not interested. Get out or I'll slaughter you.'"

By the end of June, four generations of the Prlincevic family and other Jews were forced to flee Pristina, almost bringing to an end five centuries of Jewish settlement in Kosovo.

While this flight of about 40 people represented but a drop in the sea of an estimated 300,000 non-Albanians who have fled Kosovo — mostly Serbs, Gypsies, and Montenegrins — their departure diminishes the former multi-faith character of the region.

Many Jews thought they would be spared. When ethnic-Albanian refugees fled Serb attackers this spring, Israel was among the first countries to dispatch mobile hospital units to help the sick. Israeli officials spoke of being able to relate to the plight of refugees driven from their homes for ethnic reasons.

Because Mr. Prlincevic and his family had good relations with Albanians and had protected Albanian neighbours during the ethnic cleansing of Kosovo by Serb forces, they believed they had no reason to flee when Serb forces withdrew. They also believed in the guarantees of the international community and the promises of KFOR, the peacekeeping force in Kosovo led by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, to protect Serbs and other minorities.

"I had trust in the world," Mr. Prlincevic said. "I never believed for a minute that I'd be the target of a primitive mass."

But when heavily armed Albanian paramilitaries arrived, apparently from Albania, the Jews of Pristina found themselves targeted and terrorized by men who either assumed they were Serbs or had collaborated with them.

"It's a real inquisition down there. It's not like you can talk to someone and explain things. Those are wild people."

The Prlincevics' ethnic-Albanian neighbours were unable to protect them from the paramilitaries.

"I saved two or three Albanian families during the war. When we were leaving Pristina, my neighbour called to me. He said, 'Neighbour. Forgive me. I couldn't help you. You helped me, but I can't help you.'"

An envoy of the U.S. Jewish Joint Distribution Committee met with Kosovo Liberation Army leader Hashim Thaci to seek protection for Kosovo's Jews. Mr. Prlincevic himself wrote to Mr. Thaci seeking protection. Mr. Thaci issued a letter ordering "the entire Kosovo Liberation Army under my control to respect and protect all the Jews of Kosovo." But the intimidation of Jews by paramilitary vigilantes continued unabated.

Efforts to obtain protection from KFOR also proved fruitless. Mr. Prlincevic sought personal protection, as president of the local Jewish community, from a British major. The officer told him he was too busy to talk to him that day.

"I'm not saying that KFOR encouraged this violence," Mr. Prlincevic said, "but the forces which were supposed to protect all nationalities didn't do their job."

Almost all of Pristina's Jews left the city during a 10-day period in late June, with the assistance of the Joint Distribution Committee. They are now living in Belgrade and Vranje, where the Federation of Jewish Communities in Yugoslavia helped them settle. The JDC supports them.

A historian by training, Mr. Prlincevic did research in Ottoman archives in Istanbul on Jewish settlements in Kosovo going back to the 15th century. He says the history of Kosovo Jewry until the Second World War was one of good relations with Albanians, Turks, and Serbs, and that there was a high rate of intermarriage with these groups. His father was Serbian, and his wife, Vidosava, is a Serb.

In April, 1944, Albanian fascists, acting on Gestapo orders, interned and plundered the belongings of 1,500 of Pristina's Jews, most of whom were sent to Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. Mr. Prlincevic's mother, Bea Mandil, was one of the few who escaped being deported, but her large extended family was almost wiped out in the Holocaust.

Now in her 80s, Mrs. Mandil is proud she can still speak the Spanish she learned in her parents' home, a remnant from her ancestors who were expelled from Spain in 1492.

Her large family's eight apartments and three houses in Pristina have reportedly been looted and damaged. She now lives in a

crowded Belgrade apartment with Mr. Prlincevic and other family members.

"It's terrible," said Mrs. Mandil, who was married in 1938. "Sixty years later, having to start again."

Less than half of Kosovo's pre-Second World War Jewish population of 1,700 survived the Holocaust, Mr. Prlincevic said. Most of those that did emigrated to Israel from 1948 to 1952.

The continuation of more than 500 years of Jewish presence in Kosovo now comes down to four Jews living in the environs of Pristina — one of Mr. Prlincevic's sons, a daughter-in-law, and two grandchildren — and two Turkish-Jewish families in Prizren, which comprise 22 or 23 members.

Aca Singer, a 76-year-old Auschwitz survivor who is president of the Federation of Jewish Communities in Yugoslavia, is pessimistic about the chances for survival of the Kosovo Jewish community. He is disappointed that the Pristina Jews were forced to leave "at a time of peace, with international troops present, and when the international community's representative in Kosovo, Bernard Kouchner, is a Jew from France."

Although a few Jewish families from Kosovo fled to Israel on the eve of the NATO's bombardment of Yugoslavia and five young Kosovo Jews are on a paid excursion to Israel to explore living and studying there, efforts by Mr. Singer's organization to get Israel to accept all the Kosovo Jews have been stymied thus far.

He blames Orthodox Jews within the Israeli ministries of religion and the interior for thesituation, saying that they are applying purely religious criteria in defining Jewishness.

Mr. Singer is disappointed that the Kosovo Jews were left out of Israel's efforts to helprefugees during the Kosovo war, when Israel sent its army hospital and humanitarian aid,and took planeloads of ethnic Albanians to Israel.

He was visiting Israel at the time, and pressed interior-ministry officials to relocate Kosovo's Jews to Israel as well. "I said, 'If there's a problem, then accept them as Albanians, and sort out later whether they're Jews or not.' They got mad at me."

For Mr. Prlincevic, however, the prospect of going to Israel — a region, as he says, with its own ethnic conflicts — is not heartening. If he must emigrate, he would prefer Canada, but most of all he would like to be able to return home with his family.

"I can't comprehend in my 60th year, or my mother in her 81st, having to start a new life elsewhere. I'd look upon that as a moral death. This doesn't have to do with the Jewish community, it has to do with the right of a citizen to live where he belongs. I belong there, however primitive or undeveloped it is."

Serbs Driven From Kosovo Live Bitterly in Exile

The New York Times, September 2, 1999
By Steven Erlanger

KURSUMLIJA, Serbia — Srbislav Bisercic, a competent, bluff and imposing figure who always wore a pistol when he ran the Podujevo municipal administration in Kosovo, is now a broken man, ashamed to be in a jobless exile and hunting for a cheap apartment. "Yes, I'm depressed," he said. "How could I not be? I left everything down there, everything, my flat, my house, 20 acres of land, my cattle, pigs and tractor." Stopped on the street, Bisercic is all smiles at first, but his mood quickly darkens, and at one point his eyes become red and wet. "My biggest problem is being jobless, not having work," he said. "I get my salary, late like everyone else, but I don't know what the state will do with us, since they haven't made it possible for us to go back" home to Kosovo.

Kursumlija, a southern Serbian town of 14,000 people just 15 miles north of Podujevo, is now struggling to absorb 7,000 displaced Serbs from Kosovo. With the school year starting, Serbs who had been living in Kursumlija's schools are being moved to a tattered local cultural center; thousands more live with host families or relatives or in any apartment they can find. "Eighty percent of Podujevo's Serbs are looking for a flat here," Bisercic said. Most Kosovo Serbs are getting only 60 percent of their regular salaries from a state with a severe shortage of cash, its industry smashed by NATO bombs and 10 years of sanctions. "Everyone is depressed," said Milivoje Mihajlovic, a Serbian journalist from Pristina whose parents now live here. "My wife says, 'I dream every night, and my dreams are in Pristina.' And I'm the same. I spent my whole life, 40 years there, and psychologically that's the biggest problem. Everyone asks everyone else, 'When can we go back?' " Bisercic, humiliated and distraught, vows to return to Kosovo soon. Mihajlovic knows better. "It will take years, if ever, for the pressure to go out of Kosovo," he said. "Everyone needs to calm down, the Serbs and the Albanians." And both need to find less aggressive leaders, he conceded.

According to Vesna Petkovic of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, by last Friday 133,737 displaced Serbs and Gypsies from Kosovo were registered in Serbia, having left Kosovo since February, but the agency estimates the true total was 173,000. In all of Yugoslavia, including Montenegro, 157,259 people were registered as displaced, and the total was estimated at 196,500.

With 500,000 to 700,000 other Serbs displaced from Bosnia and Croatia, Yugoslavia has more refugees and displaced people than any other country in Europe.

The policies and nationalist wars of Slobodan Milosevic have been the prime source of the refugee burden, which the United Nations refugee agency is working to relieve. This year, it will spend some $60 million to help those in Yugoslavia.

Mira Nikolic, Deputy Minister of the Yugoslav Ministry for Refugees, Displaced Persons and Humanitarian Affairs, said in a telephone interview that the refugees "need almost everything: food, shelter, beds, blankets, hygiene products — it's better to ask what don't they need." She said that the agency was providing important help, but the biggest problem now would be fuel for heating in the winter.

Host families, with whom some 85 percent of the displaced are living, cannot afford the burden, Ms. Nikolic said, so Belgrade is looking more toward collective housing. The United Nations is ready to help prepare buildings for the winter with construction material, beds and heating fuel. Ms. Nikolic and Ms. Petkovic agreed that Belgrade's policies toward the Kosovo Serbs had softened. At the beginning, they were urged to return immediately to Kosovo, and Belgrade refused to register them or let them enroll their children in local schools. That has changed, with nearly all students registered for school, but the displaced are encouraged to live near Kosovo and are actively discouraged from trying to settle in Belgrade, where they would be more visible.

Kursumlija is a pleasant but isolated town in the middle of an agricultural area. There is one large company, Drvni Kombinat, making wood products, but salaries average only 200 dinars a month, or $20 at the official rate of exchange. A beer at a cafe costs 50 cents, a sixth of the price in Belgrade. There is no cellular telephone service as there is in bigger towns. At the shops, people buy 200 grams, or 7 ounces, of meat at a time. "If you buy a kilo," or 2.2 pounds, Mihajlovic said, "they think you're a millionaire."

If anything, the influx of Kosovo Serbs has pushed up prices a little here, especially for housing, and because the new arrivals are generally better educated they are often seen as a threat to the jobs of the locals. In the small main square, surrounded by parking, there are many cars with license plates indicating that they are from Pristina and Podujevo and Pec and Prizren.

"I'm lost," said Caslav Bojovic, 44, who was the principal of a school for 367 children in Podujevo. "I feel terrible. I don't know who I am, where I'm going, what I'll do tomorrow." "We are 'temporarily dislocated people,'" he said bitterly, "and no one cares very much for us, and there is no chance to go back."

He shrugged and said: "We all feel like this. Whatever I had was in my work of 20 years, and it's gone. I was on good terms with my Albanian neighbors. That hurts me, because my neighbors call me and say I should not come back, and I know they are right." Still, he is angry that Kosovo's Albanians are driving out Serbs, no matter the provocation by others, under the eyes of NATO. "Why don't they indict Thaci as a war criminal?" he demanded, referring to Hashim Thaci, the leader of the Kosovo Liberation Army.

Bojovic is now looking for a building here to try to reopen his school, and says the local authorities are open to the idea. "I can't leave the kids," he said. "And we need to work." Down the street, at the shabby Evropa Restaurant, the Kosovo Serbs line up, shamefaced, for a free lunch organized by the local Holy Trinity Church, with help from Belgrade and international organizations like the World Food Program. A section of the restaurant is set aside for the refugees, and Radovan Rajovic, the chef, provides a balanced meal, usually a meat and vegetable stew of some kind, salad and bread. Today, the choice was paprikash, a Hungarian-style veal stew that actually had chunks of veal.

The restaurant serves 1,000 meals a day to the Kosovo Serbs in a program that began Aug. 16, said Radoje Milanovic, the restaurant manager.

Registered refugees have cards that entitle them to the meal, and their names are checked off. But 80 percent take the food away with them rather than sit and eat in a group, Milanovic said. As they leave, their heads are down.

"I wouldn't come at first, but we have to eat," said a woman in her 50's who asked to remain anonymous. "Of course I'm ashamed." Bisercic, the Podujevo official, had insisted that he would stay in Podujevo. But in the end, he left, on June 21, 11 days after Yugoslav forces pulled out in long columns from the city, creating a vacuum that NATO forces did not move in to fill. "Those Serbs who stayed there are dead," Bisercic said. "I took three of the last out with me." United Nations officials in Kosovo confirm that only three Serbs remain in all of Podujevo, women too old and alone to leave.

Bisercic faults NATO for the vacuum of power, but he also considers the Belgrade Government erred in allowing one. "They should not have signed anything until they filled the territory with international forces," he said.

But asked if he blamed President Milosevic, Bisercic bristled even more upset. "I voted for Milosevic," he said. "Don't touch me there."

Velisa Malevic, 37, was head of the Podujevo tax police. On the square, wearing shorts and flip-flops and a two-day beard, he said

he and his mother and brother and their families — 14 people — had all moved here, where his wife was born. In Podujevo, they had two houses and an apartment, with 10 acres. But the apartment has been taken by Albanians and the two houses burned, he said. "I get a salary but I'm not working," Malevic said. "That's the worst thing." He said he dreamed about his life before. "It's the biggest wish in my life to go back." He laughed, then said sardonically of Kosovo's new rulers, "I believe in the United Nations and the United States."

He, like the others, insists that the Albanians of Podujevo were his finest friends and that he protected them as best he could. "The K.L.A. attacked the Serbs, and the Serbs defended themselves with guns, and then NATO came and disarmed the Serbs but not the Albanians, and that's the whole story," Malevic said. When told how ridiculous his version would seem to an Albanian whose family was murdered by Serbs or who was driven out of Kosovo by force, Malevic laughed bitterly. "The Albanians are no angels," he said. "You in the West will find out soon enough." His wife, Sladjana, worked at the Fagar factory in Podujevo. Here, she is back to being dependent on her father while trying to care for three young children. "I feel ashamed," she said. "It's very unpleasant." She said the people from Kosovo were overwhelming the town. "The people here are more kind to us, since I was born here," she said. "But they are very distant with the others."

She buried her nose in the hair of her son, Lazar, 4, named after the Prince who led the Serbs in the famous battle of Kosovo in 1389. She lifted red eyes and said softly, "We had everything, and now it belongs to someone else."

Albanian Mafia Moved Into Kosovo On Nato's Heels

Albanian Economic Tribune
(www.albaniannews.com)
September 3, 1999

TIRANA — Albanian criminals wanted by the police have moved into Kosovo on the heels of the deployment of NATO troops to escape justice, police sources confirmed on Thursday. A police spokesman said that investigators have compiled a list with the names of the 72 most wanted criminals believed to have found safe haven in Kosovo.

"When the border checkpoint at Morina was opened, dozens of criminals moved into Kosovo together with hundreds of thousands

of Kosovo refugees," an official at the Ministry of Order said. He asked not to be identified. Sources of the Albanian anti-Mafia investigation body reported that the criminals seeking refuge in Kosovo admitted most of the notorious criminal attacks against the state institutions, and were involved in gang warfare.

Reports from Kosovo say that Albanian gangs are already running lucrative operations, smuggling drugs, cars, petrol and cigarettes.

On the Kosovo roads the mobsters' are easy to spot in their glossy black Mercedes with tinted windows and no number-plates, and in the flashy four-wheeled drives registered in Vlora, southern Albania.

Nermin Bashi, the former owner of a bar in the northern Kosovo town of Mitrovica said Albanian organised crime was already established in the town. "I have already been contacted by Albanian criminal types about reopening my bar," he said. "The mafia bosses are laying plans for the future even though everything is destroyed for now," he added. Nermin pointed to a row of cars with no registration plates. "You see... the KFOR thinks those are vehicles belonging to refugees and that the number plates were ripped off (by the Serbs), but everyone here knows they are smuggled stolen cars."

"The Kosovar population is simply trying to survive but the Albanians from Albania are coming to exploit our misfortune," he charged. "When they have unloaded their wares here, the Albanian smugglers go back carrying drugs," said Nermin, whose views were confirmed by other inhabitants of Mitrovica.

Since 1998, because of military operations in Kosovo, international drug networks smuggling heroin from Afghanistan to western Europe had temporarily abandoned the so-called "Balkans route" via Bulgaria, Macedonia, Kosovo, Albania and Italy.

But with the opening of the Albania-Kosovo border, the absence of proper political institutions and a police force in Kosovo, could encourage a revival of drug trafficking in the province, experts warn.

KFOR reported last month its soldiers had detained many Albanians citizens charged with looting private property and intimidation. Albanian prosecutors said that notorious criminals may have been already arrested by KFOR, but the lack of an extradition agreement makes it impossible for these criminals to be returned to Albanian justice.

Albanian Mafia Pounces On Kosovo Power Vacuum

Profiting from Serb flats: Europe's most feared criminals targeting well-financed aid community

National Post, Monday, September 6, 1999
Julius Strauss

PRISTINA — The Albanian mafia, among Europe's most feared, is consolidating its grip on Kosovo, imposing taxes on trucks, taking over flats and houses, running drugs and targeting the burgeoning and well-financed aid community. Taking full advantage of Kosovo's open border with Albania, the gangsters have swiftly filled the power vacuum left by Serb police and militia, setting up operations in cahoots with local criminals. Albania has long been an incubation house for organized crime. The north is controlled by Rival heavily-armed gangs who operate out of village bases.

During the NATO air strikes they grew fat by fleecing the huge number of international aid workers, journalists and government officials who moved into the area as Kosovar refugees fled over the border.

Once Serb forces pulled out, the streets of the capital, Pristina, and other large towns, teemed with swarthy men in big four-wheel drive vehicles with number plates from Tirana and the gangster towns of Vlore and Bajram Curri.

The mafia is thought to have made a huge profit taking over Serb flats, using ethnic retribution as a convenient cover. Soaring property prices have multiplied their gains. A good flat in Pristina can now cost $75,000. With most Serb flats now occupied and their contents looted, the organized criminals have begun to target ethnic Albanians and internationals. Last week two workers for the Danish branch of Caritas, a Catholic charity and aid organization, setting up an office in the western town of Klina were bound and had hoods put over their heads by masked gunmen thought to be from Albania. One was beaten in the chest with a rifle butt and a large sum of money was stolen.

The Albanian mafia is perhaps Europe's fastest growing. With both Kosovo and Albania economic deadspots, young men head West on false papers to join networks in Switzerland, Germany and Italy. The mafias control many of the people-smuggling routes into Europe, as well as running drugs from Asia.

When war broke out between NATO and Yugoslavia in March, the Kosovo Liberation Army, which had always used Albania as a supply point, poured most of its resources into a cross-border

campaign against the Serbs. Links between KLA elements and the Albanian mafia were strengthened, and there are reports that some KLA commanders promised gangsters concessions in a post-war Kosovo in exchange for guns.

A KLA intelligence chief based in Pristina said: "We are criticized for rising crime rates, but we cannot decommission, transform and fight the mafia all at the same time."

The woeful inadequacy of the United Nations police force — now responsible for law and order in Pristina and set to take over other parts of the country — is apparent to even the casual observer.

There is no system of fines or other effective deterrence. International and local residents of Pristina alike openly flout traffic laws and there are few identity cards.

Plans to open a police academy in Mitrovica where UN staff will train locals are fraught with controversy: Last week its official opening was once again postponed.

While the NATO peacekeeping force is generally respected, UN officers are despised for their inefficiency, while their huge salaries, often more than $150,000 (Cdn) tax-free, are a source of widespread envy.

These conditions provide the mafia with easy pickings. Near the Albanian border, trucks have been made to pay "fines" to gunmen who melt away as soon as a NATO patrol approaches. Ethnic Albanians looking after Serb flats for their owners have been told to hand them over.One ethnic Albanian student commented: "We didn't want to be in Serbia, but we certainly don't want to become part of Albania."

NATO's KLA Problem

By Michael Radu
Foreign Policy Research Institute
Wednesday, September 8, 1999

Michael Radu is a Senior Fellow at FPRI. His previous E-Notes on this subject are: "Don't Arm The KLA," April 6, 1999; "Bombs for Peace? Misreading Kosovo," March 26, 1999; "Dangerous Incoherence in Kosovo," October 21, 1998, and "Who Wants a Greater Albania?" July 10, 1998.

The war in Kosovo ended a few months ago, but the practice of "ethnic cleansing" is flourishing, this time perpetrated by ethnic

Albanians who are proving even more adept at it than the Serbs. Whereas Serbian brutality and the war itself pushed only about half of the Albanian population into temporary exile, fully 90 percent of the non-Albanian minority (which numbered about 200,000 at the beginning of the year) have now left the region — this, during three months of "peace" and under the oversight of the United Nations and NATO. Simply and undiplomatically put, the Kosovo Force (KFOR) and the United Nation's viceroy in Kosovo, France's Bernard Kouchner, are losing their half-hearted struggle to maintain the myth of a "multinational" Kosovo.

The reason: the behavior of the Albanians led by the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). First, the KLA and its supporters claimed, probably with some justification, that the Gypsy minority of 30,000 participated in the looting of Albanian property during the war. As a result, the entire Gypsy population was successfully hounded out of Kosovo. The larger Serbian minority has been subject to murder, harassment, and destruction of Serbian historic monuments, churches, and other property. Almost 300 Serbs have been killed by Albanians since the end of the war.

And yet somehow, in the face of incontrovertible evidence of these crimes, the KLA-led Albanians have succeeded in maintaining the widespread perception that they are merely the "victims" of Serbian brutality, and as such, must be beyond reproach.

The problem is that the KLA wants to have it both ways — it seeks international recognition as the effective government of Kosovo while simultaneously denying any responsibility for ethnic cleansing. On the one hand, the organization claims to be in control, and its unelected government claims to be the legitimate authority in Kosovo. It has appointed "mayors," has established what it calls a "police force," and generally acts as if it is the government of a sovereign state of Kosovo — which has been its stated goal ever since Albania's collapse in 1997 made unification with that country an unattractive option in the short term.

On the other hand, the KLA military commander, Agim Ceku, claims that whatever abuses against non-Albanians have taken place are the work of rogue elements over which his organization has no control. His political boss, the self-proclaimed Prime Minister of the "Kosovo government," Hashim Thaci, even sheds crocodile tears over the fate of minorities. No matter that KLA commanders were directing "spontaneous" Albanian demonstrations and attacks on French KFOR troops in Mitrovica. KLA commanders are in tight control of most, if not all, armed Albanian groups in Kosovo and thus directly responsible for the killings of Serbs and Gypsies.

Nor has the Albanian leadership earned any credibility for its adherence to agreements it signed. On June 21, 1999, Hashim Thaci signed an Undertaking of Demilitarization and Transformation by the UCK (the Albanian acronym of the KLA). Since then, it has violated each and every provision of that document. According to point 10 (a), it was to cease firing allm weapons, and yet Albanians even in Pristina fire at will. Point 10 (d) states that the KLA is not to attack, detain or intimidate civilians; nor is it to attack, confiscate or violate the property of civilians. But the KLA "police" are doing nothing but encouraging and participating in the veritable pogroms that now terrorize the Serbs. Article 23 provides for the KLA to surrender its heavy weapons. It has not, and mortar attacks on Serbian peasants have killed dozens.

What should be obvious is that these violations are not emotional outbursts by isolated individuals. Rather, they are part and parcel of a long-standing KLA policy of emptying Kosovo of non-Albanians, a policy unchanged since ethnic Albanians enjoyed political autonomy in Kosovo from 1974 to 1989. Consider that when the KLA had temporary control over the Drenica area in 1998, its first decisions were to ban political parties and expel non-Albanians.

None of this is surprising, and in fact the KLA's deeds are fully consistent with its ideology of authoritarianism and ethnic exclusionism. What is completely inexcusable, however, is the response of the international community. Mr. Kouchner said that he was shocked at what he chose to call "Albanian revenge attacks," as if history began with the Serbian expulsion of Albanians. And how could General Wesley Clark's willfully ignorant claim that there is no evidence of KLA involvement in ethnic cleansing be interpreted as anything but permission to finish the job?

True, KFOR and Kouchner have few choices at this point, and certainly no pleasant ones. Once NATO went to war portraying Serbs as evil and Albanians as angels, it became impossible to admit that there are no angels in Kosovo, but only a shifting balance of evil against evil. To hope, as President Clinton did, for a "multicultural and multiethnic" Kosovo, or to lament the zero-sum game played by both Serbs and Albanians, as Kouchner did, is nonsensical.

The Western powers' misplaced good-vs.-evil dichotomy was already evident last October, when the United States and NATO imposed a de facto capitulation upon Serbia by requiring it to cease counterinsurgency operations against the KLA. It continued with the June 1999 agreement ending the war, which eliminated all Serbian administrative, police, and military presence in Kosovo — everything, in short, but the pretense that the region was still part of Serbia.

NATO's misjudgment was compounded by the fact that, after it eliminated the Serb presence, it was unprepared to replace it. The porous border with chaotic Albania is left to Italian troops — tantamount to making it even more open. And there is virtually no international police presence to challenge the KLA, the promised Fijians (!) notwithstanding. But most egregious is the lack of any long-term strategy to deal with the KLA.

The cold reality is that, except for a few tenuous Serbian enclaves (parts of Mitrovica being the largest), Kosovo is on the way to becoming a purely Albanian area under the de facto control of a profoundly antidemocratic, duplicitous and violent organization. And Thaqi and co. are non doubt aware that as the minority exodus from Kosovo nears completion there will be even less incentive for KFOR to crack down on the KLA. Worse still, the growth of this totalitarian cancer is being encouraged by KFOR's inability or unwillingness to stop it, and paid for by West European and American taxpayers.

But the costs of the "humanitarian" intervention advocated by Clinton, Blair, and Albright will be measured in more than just dollars. The credibility of NATO, the United States, and the United Nations have all suffered severe damage. And within Serbia itself, the Serbian refugees from Kosovo will join those who left Croatia and Bosnia to create a volatile and vengeful mass of some 800,000 — 10 percent of the electorate — that will be unlikely to support any Serbian government prepared to accept a more democratic and less nationalistic government. Whether Milosevic or the nationalists of Vojislav Seselj will be able to take advantage of these people's frustrations remains to be seen. What is clear, however, is that they have left their homes behind, but not their grievances.NATO's bombs are only as smart as its leaders, and victory in Kosovo has so far gone to the tyrants.

Serbs Live In Fear In Kosovo's Kidnap Capital

Reuters, Sep 15, 1999
By Andrew Gray

GNJILANE, Serbia, Sept 16 (Reuters) — Until recently an unremarkable place, this town of 40,000 people is in danger of making a name for itself as Kosovo's kidnapping capital. More than 50 Serbs in and around Gnjilane, in Kosovo's U.S. sector, have been abducted since NATO-led forces arrived less than three months ago, according to local community groups. At the town's Serbian Orthodox Church, volunteers staffing a help centre for the local Serbs present a neatly

printed, numbered list of alleged victims. They blame ethnic Albanians from the Kosovo Liberation Army, which denies any involvement.

"This is a system to scare those who have remained here, to make them leave," said a Serb electrical engineer who, like all the other volunteers, will not reveal his name because he fears he could be a kidnapping target himself for speaking out.

At least one international agency monitoring the problem sees the church group's figure as 95 percent accurate. Another, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, has registered 19 cases — still more than one abduction for every week since the peacekeepers came — and acknowledges it can't match the church's network of local information. International observers agree the incidents of kidnapping seem particularly high in the Gnjilane region, in southeastern Kosovo and close to the border with the rest of Serbia, although collecting crime statistics here is still a sketchy business. Getting to the bottom of who might be responsible is a task which appears to have largely stumped U.S. military investigators and fills many locals with fear. The KLA, in the midst of a demilitarisation process after waging a 16-month campaign against Serbian rule, insists it is not to blame. "Actions like this would hurt the KLA most of all," regional commander Ahmet Istufi, known as Rexha, told Reuters at his headquarters in the town centre. "There are people doing this on purpose to create a negative image for the KLA."

Istufi says he cannot rule out, however, that individual Albanians may have sought revenge for years of Serb repression. A wave of retribution has swept across Kosovo in the wake of the withdrawal of Serb forces, driven out by NATO bombing.

Ethnic Mix Remains In Gnjilane

The Gnjilane area was one of the most peaceful parts of Kosovo during the KLA's guerrilla campaign and the NATO bombardment. In theory at least, locals here should have far less cause for vengeance than other parts of Kosovo. But Gnjilane is also a rare example of an area in postwar Kosovo where Serbs and Albanians still live in close proximity, although not in mixed communities. "This is one of the few areas with a lot of Serbs left," said Atle Solberg, head of the local office of the U.N. refugee agency UNHCR. "If you're a troublemaker, then you know that."

While 180,000 Serbs across Kosovo have fled in fear, leaving many areas 100 percent ethnic Albanian, Gnjilane offers a stage where the old ethnic rivalries can still be acted out. A quiet area in wartime has become a dangerous one in peacetime. Several rocket

or mortar attacks have taken place around the region over the past few weeks. Russian peacekeepers shot dead three Serbs earlier this month who had attacked a group of Albanians in the village of Ranilug.

The kidnappings are one more sign of how crime has invaded ordinary lives in the town of dusty streets and featureless buildings whose biggest claim to fame until recently was the presence of a large battery factory. The Serb church centre's list details the case of a man who went to buy cigarettes and never came back. In another case just a couple of weeks ago, kidnappers stopped the car of two Serbs on their way to work at the local water purification plant. An ethnic Albanian man travelling with them was badly beaten.

"Each case is a story in itself," said a silver-haired lawyer at the church centre. International officials agree at least some of the kidnappings look like they have been coordinated. "It does require a certain degree of orchestration if you do it without five or six thousand American troops noticing," one said. But who is doing it and why remain a mystery. Outsiders doubt the church group's claim that not one of the victims is linked to Serb atrocities but find it unlikely that all the abductions are cases of summary justice. The International Committee of the Red Cross has expressed concern about the abductions and made its own enquiries, but to no avail so far. "We're trying to explore all channels to provide families with information," the local head of office James Reynolds said.

Old Serb Pair Live In A State Of Siege

The Daily Telegraph, 16, September 1999
By Julius Strauss in Podujevo

SOLDIERS from the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers are having to mount a 24-hour guard to protect two elderly Serb women, the only survivors of an ethnic Albanian purge of their home town.

The women, in their 80s, are besieged in a flat above the high street of the northern town of Podujevo. Looters and scores of children throw stones at their windows and spit at them in the street. Three or four times a week the soldiers take Jelica Cimburovic and Jelica Milanovic under armed guard to the local shops, but most storekeepers refuse to serve them.

Mrs Cimburovic, 87, said: "We are living in a jail. We don't know anything about what has happened to our relatives since the phones were cut three months ago." Hundreds of Serbs lived in the town then but now the two women — one almost deaf and the other

with high blood pressure — are all that stands between Albanian nationalists and their dream of an ethnically pure town.

Six months ago Serbian interior ministry troops backed by Yugoslav army armoured personnel carriers and tanks roamed the deserted streets of Podujevo, barely five miles from Serbia. Most of the 120,000 ethnic Albanians who lived in the area eked out a miserable existence in the shadows in constant fear of arrest, torture or even death at the hands of the Serbian authorities.

That changed when the British arrived. Today the streets teem with traders, shoppers and children. But for the ladies living at 5 JNA Ulica (Street of the Yugoslav National Army) life has all but ended.

To add to the ladies' woes they have now fallen out. Mrs Cimburovic, who took in Mrs Milanovic when she was chased from her own home, now wants her to leave. As the two ladies sat together, Mrs Cimburovic said: "At the beginning it was OK and we even shared a bed. But now I hate her. All she does is smoke and talk a lot. I want her out."

A British military policeman said: "I'm afraid the old dears are having a bit of a domestic." But if Mrs Milanovic moves to her home that will mean more British soldiers and another 24 hour guard.

Albanian Mafia, KLA and Kosovo Aid

THE EXPRESS (UK)
September 16, 1999

Scandal of aid crates left on the dockside Kosova refugees were denied vital supplies of food, medicine and blankets as a result of theft, inefficiency and mafia corruption By John Laughland In April, readers of The Express joined donors from around Europe in a wave of sympathy for the refugees from the Kosovo war. Food, clothes, medicines and other goods were sent. But now, in a scandal which is rocking Italian politics, some of that aid appears to have been sucked into the morass of criminality from which the Kosovo Liberation Army and its mafia allies in Albania emerged to fight Yugoslav rule in the first place.

I have recently returned from a fact-finding mission to Italy with the British Helsinki Human Rights Group. We found that for months now, more than 900 shipping containers full of aid have been lying on the docks in Bari, Italy's major port on the Adriatic coast opposite Albania. They contain medicine, food, blankets and other items donated by British, Italian and other organisations. There are

a further 1,000 containers lying in Vlore, the Albanian port some 50 miles away.

While there is no doubt that large quantities of aid did get through, there is some that never reached the refugees who have now returned home anyway. British donors, who sent aid in the spring, were promised that it would be in Albania within days. The Italian military had said it would ensure an air bridge from a military base near Milan straight to the Albanian camps. Arcobaleno, the organisation responsible for shipping the aid, is theoretically a non-governmental body but in reality it operates out of the Italian prime minister's office in Rome. As a result, the prime minister, Massimo D'Alema, has been severely embarrassed by the scandal and has had to write entire articles in the Italian press excusing himself.

Mr D'Alema has now promised that the aid will be sent to help earthquake victims in Turkey instead. But a date has still not been fixed for its transport. Questions are being asked in Italy by the public prosecutor about the nearly £50 million which Italians donated in cash and which remains unspent. Meanwhile, the Italian social security department is paying thousands of pounds every day in rental for the containers which are lying idle on the dockside. It is possible that the aid was left at the port simply through negligence. Certainly, so much flooded into Albania during the Kosovan war that there was simply not enough space for any more of it in Vlore. But there is also evidence that organised crime may have been responsible for diverting some of the aid that did leave Italy. Many of the clothes and medicines were stolen by the Albanian mafia and can now be purchased — at market prices — in ordinary shops in Albania. Indeed, according to Sokol Kociu, a prosecutor in Albania, the millions of pounds worth of aid became part of an ugly deal between the Albanian and Italian mafias, in which the Italian mafia paid off the Albanian mafia for various favours, including the supply of prostitutes.

The scandal demonstrates two things. The first is that the war against Yugoslavia continues to generate severe fall-out, affecting innocent people. Because Western governments needed to maintain public support at fever pitch for their attacks on Yugoslavia, they used the media to dramatise the humanitarian situation to the fullest possible degree. This meant that the amounts of cash and goods donated turned out to be vastly in excess of requirements.

By the same token, western governments — especially our own — systematically played down the fact that the KLA was in fact controlling the refugee camps we saw on our television screens every night. Away from the cameras, during the war, pimps kidnapped girls from the camps to sell into prostitution in Italy; and once the

war was over, refugees had to pay the KLA a fee to be allowed to leave the camps and go home. It is inconceivable, under such circumstances, that aid could have got to the refugees without the KLA stealing it. The second point highlighted by the scandal is the stranglehold the Albanian and Kosovo mafia wields over the Adriatic region. The Strait of Otranto and the east coast of Italy are its springboards into Europe. Every evening you can see the motor boats on the beach in Albania waiting to make the short night hop across the Adriatic into Italy. The strength of the extended family structure in Albanian society — it is divided into elaborate "clans" — makes it well suited to mafia activities. In recent years the Albanian and Kosovan mafias have made great strides in displacing even the biggest Italian mafia organisations.

The Albanian and Kosovan mafias now control the traffic of migrants, prostitutes, cigarette smuggling and drugs into Europe. Interpol confirms that 80 per cent of the heroin market in central Europe has been in the hands of Kosovo Albanians for years: control of the brothels in Brussels (where Nato and the EU are based) has also fallen into their hands.

The power of these mafia gangs will be boosted further by the Albanian victory in the Kosovan war because Kosovo has long been a central transition point for the heroin and cocaine trades.

As the chief Italian prosecutor with responsibility for the Albanian mafia in Italy told me, "Europe is being submerged by a tidal wave of organised crime from Albania" — a sentiment confirmed by the British National Criminal Intelligence Service, which warned that Albanian mafia gangs were preparing to move over here too.

The power of the Albanian mafia is also relevant to the current influx of asylum seekers into Britain — more than 200 people a day are now coming here as refugees. Those who cross the Adriatic have all paid the mafia smugglers between £300 and £500 for the short trip. I have visited a number of these "asylum seekers" in Dover, Calais and in southern Italy in recent weeks: not one of the Kosovo Albanians I met said he or she was a victim of political persecution; they all wanted to come to Britain to work.

Amassive 80 per cent of those who make an initial application for asylum in Italy never see it through because they travel on immediately to Germany and Britain instead. Because the European Union has abolished border controls on the Continent they can be in Calais within 24 hours. The only significant groups suffering real persecution are the Kosovar gypsy refugees, chased out of their homes by Albanians on the rampage. While there is nothing wrong with wanting to go to a richer country like Britain to seek your fortune, it is certainly wrong for the present mass influx to be occurring

thanks to an abuse of an asylum process which was set up to help genuine victims of persecution.

The Yugoslav war was fought on the basis that the Serbs were diabolical beasts and that the Albanians were passive victims. Both visions were exaggerated for the purposes of propaganda. During the war, this led to civilian deaths on both sides and to the impoverishment and disruption of the lives of hundreds of thousands of civilians. But now it has also led to the swindling of thousands of well-meaning Britons as well.

KLA Units "specialised in hunting down Serbs"

Agence France Presse

PRISTINA, Yugoslavia, Sept 19 (AFP) — The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), which officially disbands Sunday, had special "Serb-hunting" units operating even after international peacekeeping troops arrived here in June, according to two KLA members. The special KLA units "forced the Serbs out of their homes and took them off to kill them in discreet places as far as was possible," said one of the KLA special unit members. "But, if they put up any resistance, they moved them down on the spot." said the rebel officer, whose nom de guerre is "the teacher". "Our group of seven men would go to the Serbs, house by house, and give them between 15 and 30 minutes to get out," the 'teacher' explained. "Then in came the mopping-up team, 13 of them, with the job of executing those who stayed behind," he added. The mopping-up team were "real professionals," said the burly 46-year-old with a Colt 45 pistol protruding from a jacket pocket. The Kosovo capital of Pristina was "split into four zones, each with four units that are still at work today. We have been working in the eastern districts. But now the job has become more complicated because of KFOR which is protecting the Serbs," he said. On June 21 the KLA signed an agreement with NATO to "demilitarise". This forced the KLA to change its tactics to more covert action. "We go to see the neighbours of any recalcitrant Serb and they pass on the ultimatum. Whatever happens, they end up coming out of their homes. Even if we can't kill them, we can give them a good beating," the KLA fighter said. KFOR, he added, "will never be able to protect the Serbs 24 hours a day and it has never picked up any of our men." Another KLA officer in the eastern Kosovo town of Urosevac admitted that his mission was to intimidate Serbs but refused to give any details. The second man added that

any Albanian helping the Serbs "deserves the death sentence". This account of systematic intimidation by ethnic Albanians was confirmed by members of the NATO-led KFOR peacekeeping force that moved into Kosovo following the end NATO's bombing campaign against Yugoslavia on June 12. Sergeant-Major Brian Johnson of the 1st Battalion of the Royal Irish Regiment contingent in KFOR, which is responsible for protecting minorities, confirmed the KLA officers' stories. There were "small elements of the KLA groups who pretend to be police, who have forged police cards, who are armed and even have offices," he said. Added to this were "many criminals who claim to belong to be KLA". Out of a Serb population of some 5,000 in Pristina before the NATO strikes began in March, only 1,000–2,000 remain, according to the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). KFOR estimates that two to three families pack up and leave Pristina every day. Out of 170 Kosovar Albanians jailed by KFOR since it arrived to bring peace, "more than half were put away because of intimidation or violence against Serbs," Johnson said, describing cases of kidnapping and of elderly Serb women beaten or raped. Johnson, who said his battalion received an average of 30 distress calls a day from Serbs just after the war, compared with five now, summed up the KLA intimidation methods in much the same way as "the Teacher" 'The teacher' now lives with his eight children in the home of a Serb whom he said he had threatened to kill. "My KLA commander said that might be a bit noisy and said 'if you want to kill him, do it with a knife, it'll be more discreet.' "As I don't really know how to do that, I let him go," he said. 'The teacher' also took possession of a restaurant of a Serb neighbour who, he laughed, "made me promise not to damage anything as he handed over the keys". He, like many KLA officers, says openly that he dreams of a Kosovo without Serbs. Meticulously, he entered into his little red teacher's notebook the names of the 79 Serbs killed by his unit from the beginning of the war, noting their dates of birth and details of the arms and money, in marks and dinars, taken from their bodies. "When I found a mass grave in Lescovac," in the east of the province "with 46 Albanians who had been decapitated or had limbs cut off, I decided to kill every next Serb I met," he recalled grimly. At the beginning of September he left the KLA. It was time for him to back to his old job, educating children as a teacher. The deadline for full demilitarization of the KLA is midnight (2200 GMT) Sunday.

Shots Fired over French Peacekeepers in Kosovo

Agence France Presse, December 24, 2000

PRISTINA, Dec 24, 2000 — (Agence France Presse) Unidentified gunmen fired warning shots over a patrol of French troops investigating an arson attack on two Serb owned barns in northern Kosovo, a military spokesman told AFP Sunday. "The shots were fired to intimidate, over the heads of the troops, but they could have easily have fallen on them," Captain Herve Sandel said. The peacekeepers, in two light vehicles, had been called at 8:30 p.m. (1930 GMT) Saturday to the outskirts of Banja, a Serb village just to the north of the Drenica valley, a stronghold of ethnic Albanian guerrilla activity. Near the burning buildings, the troops saw two men, believed to be armed with assault rifles, who fired a volley of shots before making their escape, Sandel said. The French, soldiers serving with Kosovo's NATO-led KFOR peacekeeping force, did not fire their own weapons and none of the patrol were hurt in the incident, he added. Sandel branded the gunmen "extremists" and said their actions were designed to destabilize the "delicate co-existence" between Kosovo's rival Serb and ethnic Albanian communities. Saturday was the day of Serbia's legislative elections, in which many Serbs in the breakaway province voted, provoking some small street protests from Kosovo Albanians who reject Yugoslav sovereignty. Kosovo's Serb minority has been the victim of a series of ethnically motivated attacks since KFOR and the United Nations took over the running of the province after a NATO bombing campaign forced Belgrade to abandon a campaign to put down an armed separatist uprising. Recent weeks have also seen an upsurge in tension between Serbs and the international administration, and two UN police stations in Serb-majority areas of northern Kosovo have been attacked.

UN asks Kosovo Albanians to stop hunting down Serbs

AFP, February 19, 2001
PRISTINA, Yugoslavia, Feb 19 (AFP) —

UN officials charged Monday that Serbs were being ruthlessly hunted down in Kosovo and warned Albanians in the province they risk losing international support if the killing does not stop. Thousands of Serbs protested at the weekend against the killings of seven of their compatriots when a bomb allegedly placed by Albanian extremists hit a Serbian bus convoy on Friday. They demanded that

UN-led peacekeepers do more to ensure their safety and freedom of movement. But freezing weather and snowfall dampened the protests Monday, with only 200 people turning out briefly and peacefully in the Serbian half of the ethnically divided northern town of Kosovska Mitrovica, KFOR peacekeepers said. Other enclaves where the 100,000 or so Serbs still in Kosovo live under heavy guard were quiet, officials said. In the provincial capital Pristina, UN officials said their patience with the unrelenting violence — and with the Albanians' persistant reluctance to help investigations — was wearing thin. "It seems the minority community is being hunted down one by one and extreme members of the society will not rest until the province is ethnically cleansed," said Eric Morris, head of the UNHCR refugee agency here. "These incidents committed by few will lead to the erosion of the support of the international community for Kosovo and ultimately affect everyone," he warned. He expressed "great concern for the future of the province, which day by day is losing the sympathy of the international community." Friday's bomb blast killed at least seven Serbs, including a two-year-old baby, and injured 43. The toll is expected to rise as pathologists piece together bodies blown apart by the 100 kilo (220 pound) bomb. It was the second attack on a KFOR-escorted convoy in a week. On Tuesday unknown gunmen killed a Serb man and injured three others in the south. Serbs make the risky journeys to visit relatives in Serbia proper, buy provisions and see doctors. The killings have been denounced by international administrators as a bid to empty the province of non-Albanians, more than 800,000 of whom were driven out by former Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic in 1999. "Extremist Albanians want an ethnically cleansed Kosovo," KFOR commander General Carlo Cabigiosu told reporters last week. Hunting down the killers has been made difficult by Albanian reluctance to help police, a wall of silence put down to fear of reprisals but also to a perceived indifference to the fate of Serbs. "We have not seen outrage or indignation except in the words of the Albanian political leaders. There is a tacit apathy that in some way encourages the men of violence, and that must change," said UN police spokesman Derek Chappell. While most of the Serbian protests were peaceful vigils, several have turned violent, with UN police targetted by stone throwing and petrol bombs, Chappell said. Violence also erupted around Kosovo's borders this weekend. Police in southern Serbia on Sunday shot dead a commander of ethnic Albanian rebels fighting for the border region to be joined to Kosovo, a rebel spokesman said. Two others were injured trying to retrieve the body in the village of Lucane. The shooting came just hours after three Serb police were killed by a landmine nearby. Belgrade blamed

the rebels for the deaths, and said the killings in Kosovo were a bid to derail its proposed peace talks in the tense region, where about 70,000 Albanians live. […]

Rebels' Greater Albania Plan Could Spark Balkans War: UN Envoy

AFP, March 17, 2001
NOVI SAD, Yugoslavia, March 17 (AFP)

The struggle by ethnic Albanians across the Balkans for a "Greater Albania" is threatening to ignite a new war in the region, UN rights envoy for the Balkans Jiri Dienstbier said Saturday. "There is a danger of a new war in the Balkans. My hope is that the international community finally understands what it is all about," said Dienstbier during a visit to the northern Serbian town of Novi Sad. The fighting by the guerrillas was ideologically driven, aiming at the creation of major Albanian state based on ethnic principles alone, he added. The international community was wrong if it thought the various rebel groups was just trying to protect poor people, as it assumed in Kosovo, said the diplomat. NATO intervened to end a civil war between the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and Belgrade. But Dienstbier said that in attacking Macedonia — an ethnically mixed state and the only former Yugoslav republic to gain independence peacefully — the rebels had "made a big mistake." The offensive by the self-proclaimed National Liberation Army — whose Albanian acronym, UCK, is the same as the KLA's — had "helped people in Europe and America to understand what they really want," he said. "The international community has to implement the UN resolution 1244, which means creating a multi-ethnic society, and to disarm the province of Kosovo and not to watch the ethnic cleansing of non-Albanians," he said. In the 20 months that Kosovo's NATO-led security force KFOR has been in the Yugoslav province, Albanian extremist attacks have succeeded in driving at least 200,000 non-Albanians, most of them Serbs, out of Kosovo. Skopje says the rebels attacking its borders and the northern town of Tetovo are former KLA fighters, crossing from the UN-run province in spite of increased KFOR patrols. Dienstbier echoed these charges. KFOR had not disarmed the extremist Albanians two years ago. "Now they have to deal with the consequences," he added. "Albanian demands for their own federal unit in Macedonia are the same as in the Presevo Valley." Hundreds of Albanian gunmen have taken over a narrow buffer zone

on the border between Kosovo and the rest of Serbia. They want the majority-Albanian Presevo Valley incorporated into Kosovo, or at very least to win autonomy from Belgrade. "We should understand this finally: these are not demands for autonomy," said Dienstbier. "Their demands are to create conditions for the extension of the Kosovo problem to surrounding regions and to create a greater Kosovo, a greater Albania."

The US' Balkan Quagmire Becomes More Problematic

The Taipei Times, May 23, 2001
By Doug Bandow

Fighting has burst anew in the Balkans, only this time in Macedonia. The government in Skopje is at war. President Bill Clinton's foolish humanitarian warmongering two years ago sowed the wind; unless the Bush administration quickly disengages, it will reap the whirlwind. The collapse of the Soviet Union reduced the outside pressure that helped hold together multi-ethnic Yugoslavia. The country disintegrated bloodily as Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia successively split off. By 1998 guerrilla war was overrunning Kosovo, an integral part of Serbia. The ambitions of ethnic Albanians were not limited to Kosovo; many wanted to establish a greater Albania, incorporating ethnic kin living in Albania, Greece, Macedonia, Montenegro and even elsewhere in Serbia.`Not that Washington's disastrous bungling in the Balkans should surprise anyone. All of America's recent experiences with so-called nation-building have been chaotic failures.' For help in defeating Serb forces, ethnic Albanians looked west. One Kosovar leader with whom I spoke, Alush Gashi, was explicit: NATO intervention is necessary, and "it depends on how we look on CNN. People need to see victims in their living rooms." The Clinton administration was happy to oblige. Although Washington would ignore murder and mayhem around the globe — be it the countries of Rwanda or Sierra Leone or the regions of Kashmir or Kurdistan — white Europeans it was determined to save. The US had an "inescapable responsibility," opined Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, "to build a peaceful world and to terminate the abominable injustices and conditions that still plague civilization." In the name of peace mighty NATO initiated war against a minuscule state that had neither harmed nor threatened any of the alliance's members. Seventy-eight days of bombing later, Yugoslavia yielded control of Kosovo. Alas, the succeeding two years have not generated a peaceful world. East Timor came and went; violence

is spreading across Indonesia. The Congo is in flames. Kashmir remains a violent flash-point. But Washington has not threatened to bomb any of them. Then there's Kosovo. A quarter of a million Serbs, Jews, Gypsies and even non-Albanian Muslims have been ethnically cleansed. As my Cato Institute colleague, Ted Galen Carpenter, notes in a devastating new study, "the cleansing has been accompanied by hundreds of murders. In addition to those confirmed deaths, nearly 2,000 people simply disappeared." That's more than the number who died during Serb rule. Moreover, former Kosovo Liberation Army members have turned to new pursuits. When not running lucrative organized criminal enterprises in Kosovo, or rubbing out their opponents to gain control of those operations, they have launched new insurgencies both in the Presevo Valley in south Serbia and in Macedonia, where a third of the population is ethnic Albanian. Explains Michael Radu of the Foreign Policy Institute: "We are simply witnessing Albanian expansionism under the very nose of NATO troops." Not that Washington's disastrous bungling in the Balkans should surprise anyone. All of America's recent experiences with so-called nation-building have been chaotic failures. In a new book, Fool's Errands: America's Recent Encounters with Nation Building, Gary Dempsey, another Cato scholar, and Roger Fontaine, a former Reagan administration staffer, review the cases of Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia as well as that of Kosovo. None have led to the promised world of peace and justice. Advocates of international social engineering remain unphased. Observe Dempsey and Fontaine: Nation builders "seem to have chronic trouble distinguishing between what they aspire to attain through their policies and the real world." That problem is evident in the Balkans today. So far NATO has largely ignored the KLA's brutality within Kosovo. But the KLA's move outward forced the West to act. NATO has allowed Serb forces into the buffer zone in the Presevo Valley and offered verbal support for the Macedonian government. Unfortunately, with backing from forces in Albania and use of Kosovo as a sanctuary, ethnic Albanian guerrillas will continue to undermine both Serbia and Macedonia. In turn, both states will feel increasing pressure to escalate. If NATO does nothing, war will spread, inevitably entangling the alliance. If the US and its allies instead confront the KLA directly, involvement will come sooner and be bloodier. In either case, Western forces will be killing the very people they came to save two years ago. There is no easy solution. But Washington does have an out. It can pass what Carpenter calls the "poisoned chalice" to the Europeans. Stability in the Balkans may or may not be judged to be a vital interest for the leading states of Europe. It is not for America, however. The region is tragic, not strategic. Getting out would anger the Europeans, but

staying will not avoid the necessity of making tough decisions. The fundamental issue is America's national interest: there is none that justifies staying in the Balkans. The whirlwind is stirring; the only way to escape it is an early exit. [Doug Bandow is a senior fellow at the Cato Institute and a former special assistant to former US President Ronald Reagan.]

Two Thousand Serbs Protest in Gracanica

Deutsche Presse-Agentur, July 24, 2001

GRACANICA, Jul 24, 2001. Some 2,000 ethnic Serbs protested again Monday afternoon in Gracanica, a Serb enclave in Kosovo, requesting a broader international investigation in 1,300 cases of Serbs gone missing since a NATO-led peacekeeping mission deployed in the province in June 1999.

Carrying pictures of missing relatives, the demonstrators walked through the main street in Gracanica, which is near Pristina, before returning to an improvised tent, set up as the central point of the two-weeks-old protest. Some 100 people from Serbia proper, whose family members have gone missing, have later joined what has become the largest rally yet in the enclave. Around 50 of the protesters started hunger strike eight days ago. An elderly woman, who collapsed during Monday's protest was taken to a local hospital, Serb sources said.

Families of missing Kosovo Serbs rally in Belgrade

Ananova (UK), November 09, 2001

Hundreds of relatives of missing Kosovo Serbs have blocked traffic in downtown Belgrade. They were appealing for information about their loved ones. The wives and mothers denounced the United Nations mission and NATO troops now running Kosovo. The crowd chanted, "Why are you silent, Serbia?" as police looked on. No violence was reported. The relatives want an investigation into some 1,300 cases of Serbs missing since the conflict in Kosovo ended in June 1999, when Yugoslav troops pulled out after 78 days of NATO airstrikes. The bombing was launched to punish then-Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic for his crackdown against Kosovo's ethnic Albanians. After NATO took over Kosovo, as many as 200,000

Kosovo Serbs and other non-Albanians fled in fear of persecution. Hundreds of non-Albanians were killed in revenge attacks. Families of missing Serbs have stepped up their protests before November 17 elections in Kosovo. The first province-wide vote will elect delegates for a legislature and government to govern Kosovo together with UN officials and NATO peacekeepers.

Concentration Camp Conditions In Strpce, Say Serbs

B92, January 31, 2002

Ten thousand Serbs from the southern Kosovo Serb enclave of Strpce have been unable to leave the area for nine days because KFOR has refused to provide escorts for convoys travelling either to Serbia or to Macedonia. International peacekeepers are withholding the escorts until the majority Serb population allows the UNMIK-appointed Albanian mayor to enter the local council building. UNMIK police have surrounded all Serb residential areas in the region throughout the nine-day standoff, as Serbs block Mayor Bahri Hiseni and his associates from entering their offices. The escorted convoys are the Serbs only means of obtaining supplies of food and medicines and their only transport to hospitals. International administrators have directed Serbs needing medical treatment to the closest hospital in Gnjilane, which has all Albanian staff. "We are living in Strpce as if we're in a concentration camp," one local Serb told media. (Beta)

'The Most Dangerous Place On Earth´

The Ottawa Citizen, June 22, 2002
Scott Taylor

Secret guerrilla armies. Neighbours stoning schoolbuses. Two peoples living in terror and hatred: Three years later, war-ravaged Kosovo remains a powderkeg.

Monuments and tributes to the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), like this mural in the village of Kline, have been erected all across Kosovo. For the Serbs living in NATO-protected enclaves, this militant Albanian nationalism is viewed as intimidation. In Kosovo-Polje, formerly a Serbian suburb of Pristina, Albanians construct a 'monster' home. Many humanitarian aid workers in Kosovo question the scale of accommodations being provided to these former

refugess as a 'basic human necessity.' Throughout the Albanian sectors Albanians are building these large homes, many of which are larger than 7,000 square feet. Following NATO's 1999 entry into Kosovo, Albanian extremists embarked on a large-scale 'revenge campaign' aimed at forcing Serbs from the province and preventing their return. Since the 14th century, Kosovo has been the religious heartland of Serbia, and many of the historical landmark Orthodox churches — like this one near Pec — were destroyed.

On April 8 of this year, international police from the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) attempted to apprehend Slavoljub Jovic, a Serb suspected of ethnic hate crimes. From the outset, the arrest in the northern town of Mitrovica went awry. Believing him armed, UNMIK police used force to subdue Mr. Jovic, prompting a large crowd of Serbian onlookers to stone the 10 police officers. As Mr. Jovic was dragged away and taken into custody, the outnumbered UNMIK force fired tear gas and summoned a riot squad. Meanwhile, the Serbs had mobilized their unofficial defence force, the Bridgewatchers. Within hours, a full-scale confrontation had developed and several Serbs were injured by rubber bullets. The clash escalated when the Bridgewatchers fired rocket-propelled grenades and small arms after the UN force attempted to rush the Serb barricade. The fusillade wounded five UNMIK policemen, and the security force finally withdrew.

Although an uneasy calm has since been restored, Kosovo's destiny remains hotly disputed. During NATO's entry into Kosovo in June 1999, fleeing Serb refugees and local residents declared a Serbian territory north of the Ibar River, which divides this small city. After the 1999 peace agreement came into effect, it was here that mobs of rock-throwing Serbian civilians prevented Kosovar Albanian refugees from returning. And in February 2000, Canadian and British troops barely managed to quell a riot during which Albanians tried to storm the Serbian enclave. Such clashes have become increasingly symbolic of the United Nations' failure to resolve the Kosovo crisis.

"Ironically, the international community, including Canada, is pumping millions of dollars into Kosovo, allegedly to help build a democratic, multi-ethnic and civil society. Yet the opposite has happened," says James Bissett, a Balkan analyst and Canada's former ambassador to Yugoslavia. "With the exception of several thousand Serbian citizens who live in NATO-protected enclaves, Kosovo remains essentially a lawless society, completely intolerant of ethnic minorities and one of the most dangerous places on Earth."

One of the most overlooked aspects of NATO's proclaimed "liberation" of Kosovo was the fact that the resolution of one

humanitarian crisis simply created another. As the 800,000 Albanian refugees who had fled Kosovo when hostilities broke out swept back into their homeland on the heels of the NATO troops, more than 200,000 Serbs and other indigenous minorities fled to the north.

The majority of these refugees were Serbs who fled back into Yugoslavia under the control of then-president Slobodan Milosevic, and the Western media have been largely unaware of their plight. To this day, most are still at crowded collection centres throughout Serbia. A report in April 2002 by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) noted that, while "the vast majority of Albanians who fled during the Kosovo crisis have returned home and only few of them experienced individual protection problems," things were not so well resolved for minority groups. "Non-ethnic Albanian persons originally from Kosovo continue to face severe security threats which place their lives and fundamental freedoms at risk, and continue to compel some to leave the province," the report stated. In terms of rebuilding this war-ravaged province, the international community has made incredible progress. When the first British tanks rolled across the Kosovo border, thousands of smoke columns rose from the already devastated landscape. Many homes had been destroyed during the 1998 civil war between Albanian guerrillas and Yugoslav security forces. This destruction escalated drastically during NATO's 78-day bombing campaign and continued through the summer of 1999, when Albanian extremists re-entered areas of the province formerly controlled by the Serbs. The UNHCR estimates 120,000 houses have been rendered uninhabitable.

These shattered dwellings remain scattered throughout the countryside, but new houses and construction sites are now the predominant features of the region. "Unfortunately, the rapid reconstruction of private homes and shops gives a false impression of Kosovo's actual level of recovery," said a senior European Union official, speaking on condition of anonymity. "The international community has sunk between 15 billion and 18 billion Euros (about $27 billion) into Kosovo over the past three years and we haven't established a basic utility infrastructure — without which we cannot even contemplate initiating the industrialization necessary to create a sustainable economy."

Power outages and water shutoffs are still a part of daily life and foreign aid constitutes the major source of revenue. In addition to direct humanitarian donations, Kosovo residents have become heavily dependent on employment created by the presence of the nearly 40,000 NATO troops — translation and service jobs as well as spin-off employment. "We have created a completely false economy in Kosovo," said the EU official. "This was clearly shown

by the economic downturn which occurred here after Sept. 11, when the foreign aid worker community suddenly plunged from 40,000 to 15,000 as everyone here rushed off to Afghanistan." Few of those aid workers returned, leaving a gaping hole in Kosovo's fragile new economy. The housing program also illustrates the vast discrepancy between the allocation of funds to Albanian Kosovars and other ethnic minorities. Throughout the Albanian sectors "monster" homes — many larger than 7,000 square feet — are being built. Along the main roads are dozens of new hotels and service centres, complete with car washes, supermarkets and cafes. By contrast, inside the isolated minority enclaves there has been little reconstruction, and the residents buy their gas from black marketeers who sell it in plastic bottles from their car trunks.

Until mid-May, the majority of about 100,000 remaining non-Albanians were clustered in 12 centres throughout Kosovo, protected by NATO troops. In an effort to encourage their re-integration, UNMIK recently replaced its barricades with roving patrols. But the psychological barriers remain.

"We are afraid to enter the Albanian areas — with good reason," said Miroslav Kisic, the director of the small Serbian community centre in Pristina. "We dare not speak in public or we will be identified as Serbs and assaulted." Mr. Kisic recounted a recent incident at his bank when he dropped his cellphone and instinctively uttered a Serbian expletive. "I was lucky that my NATO escort intervened to save me from the crowd," he said.

Before the 1999 conflict, an estimated 35,000 Serbs lived in the Kosovo capital. Now there are only 170, living in a ghetto of two apartment blocks. A mining engineer by trade, Mr. Kisic was a director at the Trepca mines in northern Kosovo. Now he administers the few community resources in the ghetto. "We have a gym, a billiard table, a grocery store, and a tiny courtyard," said Mr. Kisic. "We are escorted by soldiers everywhere we go in the city, and guarded at the ghetto night and day. We live in a prison."

For the 30 Serbian children in the Pristina ghetto, life is even more difficult. Every day they make their way by bus to a school eight kilometres outside Pristina, in one of the larger enclaves. A detachment of Greek soldiers rides with them, with an armoured vehicle escort. Despite these measures, the bus is routinely pelted with stones by Albanian neighbours.

Vukosava Cvetkovic works in the ghetto's only grocery store, but she lives in a small apartment a few blocks away. NATO troops used to pick her up and drive her home, but under the integration policy, she is supposed to get to work on her own. Nevertheless, the British guard commander sends a six-man foot patrol along to

ensure her safety. The 55-year-old widow has grown children and lives alone, yet she won't consider leaving Kosovo because of *inat* (a Serbian word meaning defiance). "I will not let the Albanians chase me away, even if I could live a better life somewhere else," she said.

Police statistics show a marked decrease in ethnic violence since NATO arrived (675 murders in 1999 compared with 136 last year), but the numbers are misleading, said Derek Chappell, the local spokesman for UNMIK and a former member of the Ottawa-Carleton police force. "Over that period, the population has been polarized to the point where interaction has become rare."

Even with the recent reduction in reported crime, the figures for Kosovo remain shockingly high given its relatively small population of barely two million. "Let's be honest. Law and order simply do not exist in Kosovo," said ex-ambassador Mr. Bissett. "There are 40,000 troops, 5,000 international police and 5,000 local police, yet the UN and NATO have proven totally unable to prevent murder, assassination, rape, robbery and intimidation from happening on a daily basis."

One of the methods used by Albanians to intimidate minorities is through the constant commemoration of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), recognized in 1998 as a terrorist organization by the CIA. As part of the 1999 peace agreement, this guerrilla army was to have been disbanded within two months.

Although most of the KLA fighters then enrolled in either the new Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) or the Kosovo police service, unofficially the KLA remains in existence. It was this cadre of veteran terrorists who first mounted incursions from Albania into southern Serbia in November 2000, and then launched the offensives into northern Macedonia during the summer of 2001.

On June 6, in the western Kosovo town of Klina, ex-KLA soldier Nusrat Kadriu and his comrades organized a three-day music festival to honour their former commander, Muje Krasnigi, who was killed by Yugoslav security forces while attempting to smuggle guns into Kosovo in 1998. Mr. Kadriu explained that his festival might serve "to remind Serbs of their crimes against Albanians."

Albanian Kosovars have also renamed landmarks and built tributes to the NATO leaders who led the 1999 military action. The road to Racak, for example, has been renamed William Walker Way in honour of the American special envoy who proclaimed this village a massacre site in January 1999. Although the allegation was eventually disproved by a UN forensic team, the Racak massacre was nevertheless the galvanizing event that prompted NATO to intervene.

As well, a high school in Pristina has been renamed after former U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright and a local construction

firm is now known as Bill Clinton Marble Works. Later this summer, Albanian officials are to unveil a full-size statue of British Prime Minister Tony Blair in downtown Pristina. "These people are in our hearts as heroes," said Asem Sahiti, a 47-year-old former immigrant who has returned to Kosovo from Germany.

While such gestures can be dismissed as petty provocation, the continued covert military support of the U.S. for the Albanians remains disturbing.

Under the peace pact, the KLA was to be demilitarized into the TMK, a civilian emergency assistance organization with generous funding from U.S. sources: One Kosovo-based official at a nongovernmental organization admitted his agency had forwarded $14 million U.S. to the TMK under a program deceptively titled Information Counseling Referral Service, administered through an umbrella group, the International Organization for Migration.

But under former KLA commander Gen. Agim Ceku, the TMK remains an armed force, using much of its foreign-aid funding to buy weapons and bankroll military training.

And much of the military aid provided to the UN-supervised TMK has ended up in the hands of the unofficial KLA guerrillas. At the height of last summer's KLA offensives in Macedonia, Gen. Ceku dismissed — but did not arrest — nine of his senior officers for collaboration with the guerrillas.

In addition to his authorized strength of 600 full-time personnel, Gen. Ceku has resisted pressure from UNMIK to release the nearly 3,000 TMK reservists he has permanently mobilized. In a recent interview with local media, he was quoted as saying, "I'm not here to please the international community. Ultimately, I'm responsible for the protection of my people." Mazlom Kumnova, a former KLA commander who returned to Kosovo to become the mayor of the southern town of Djakovica, has since been accused of attempted extortion by several international aid agencies. While the UNMIK police are cracking down on terrorism and organized crime, the perception remains that a pro- Albanian agenda is being orchestrated at senior international political levels.

On Feb. 16, 2001, Albanian terrorists detonated a remote-controlled bomb directly beneath a Serbian bus on the Nis-Gracanica route. The blast killed 11 and injured 40. The UNMIK criminal investigation unit handled the case. "Although we were accused of being too slow, the Nis bus was actually an excellent bit of police work," said Mr. Chappell. "We collected DNA samples from the crime scene and compiled enough evidence to secure a conviction."

Although four men were arrested — two of them officers in the TMK — only one, Florim Ejupi, was detained. Fearing militant

Albanians might try to force his release, UNMIK police transferred Mr. Ejupi from the Pristina Detention Centre to Camp Bondsteel, the American military base in Kosovo.

Located atop a low ridge, the massive installation — 40 square kilometres in size — is a virtual fortress. Ringed by three rows of barbed wire, the perimeter defences are formidable, complete with observation towers and floodlights. Yet Florim Ejupi managed to escape last May before his trial.

He remains at large.

"We were told by the Americans that Ejupi had received a metal file hidden inside a spinach pie, and that was how he effected his escape," said Mr. Chappell, adding, "I'm not making this up."

Gorica Scepanovic, a 25-year-old journalist who survived the bus attack, was angry but not surprised at the news of Mr. Ejupi's escape. "How does a prisoner wearing a fluorescent orange jumpsuit escape from 5,000 American soldiers, unless they let him go?"

Meanwhile, the fate of the roughly 231,000 refugees from Kosovo within Yugoslavia remains an explosive issue, and the failure of Belgrade to negotiate their return has undermined support for President Vojislav Kostunica's regime. Before last November's parliamentary elections in Kosovo, which were seen by some as the first step toward independence, UNMIK officials negotiated a trial project with Nebojsa Covic, Yugoslavia's special envoy for Kosovo affairs. About 100 Serbian families were to be allowed to rebuild homes in the western Kosovo valley of Osojane. In exchange, it was hoped Mr. Covic and Mr. Kostunica could convince Kosovar Serbs to participate in a UN-sponsored election. The result was a disaster for the Serbian refugees.

Beginning construction in late August, they had no way of completing even rudimentary shelters before winter. With minimal aid from international agencies and Belgrade, the families spent the winter in tents donated by the UNHCR. The Spanish infantry unit assigned to protect them endured the harsh conditions — temperatures often dipped below –20 C — alongside the returnees and earned the Serbians' lasting respect. "If it wasn't for the Spanish soldiers, none of us could have stayed in Osojane," said Vlastimir Vukovic, spokesman for the community. "As it turned out, not one Serb family gave up and quit." Conditions in the enclave remain among of the worst in Kosovo. Surrounded by extremely hostile Albanian neighbours, these Serbs live in tiny three-metre by two-metre plywood shacks, waiting until more permanent dwellings can be constructed. They can expect little help from the local administration: The Albanian-dominated parliament of Kosovo has made its position on returning Serbs very clear. Earlier this year, Ethem Ceku, a

cousin of the TMK commander and minister for the environment and spatial planning, warned that "Serbs attempting to return to Kosovo (without UN authority) will be repelled by force of arms if necessary."

As for the future, Mr. Vukovic is under no illusions. "When we left in 1999, they came in here and destroyed everything we have and poisoned the wells to prevent our return," said the 64-year-old former teacher. "If the international protection force ever leaves Kosovo, then we will have to leave with them."

Everett Erlandson, a retired Chicago police officer serving with UNMIK in Pristina for the past 27 months, shares Mr. Vukovic's concern. "When the internationals leave here, they're going to kill everybody who's left," Mr. Erlandson said. "That's not something that (the Albanians) say in anger, they just state it as a fact."

In the short term, however, it is becoming increasingly clear that Michael Steiner, the special representative heading UNMIK, is intent on breaking the continued defiance of the Serbs in Mitrovica who are still blocking the return of Albanian refugees. Although the number of Albanians displaced from the north is relatively small (some 5,000 villagers), UNMIK and the Albanian-dominated administration have made their safe return the top priority.

In support of Mr. Steiner's position is a new report tabled on June 3 by the International Crisis Group (ICG), chaired by Martti Ahtisaari, former president of Finland. The group includes such high-profile players as Gen. Wesley Clark (NATO commander during the crisis) and Canada's Supreme Court Justice Louise Arbour, who is also the former prosecutor for The Hague War Crimes Tribunal. The ICG concluded that Mitrovica's "continuing de facto partition, with parallel structures run by Belgrade operating north of the River Ibar, is a black mark on the international community's record in Kosovo."

The ICG recommended that "UNMIK and NATO-led KFOR troops must act vigorously to establish their jurisdiction in Mitrovica," and called the Mitrovica Serbs "pawns in the nationalist game ... (and) hostages to organized crime." The ICG said the Bridgewatchers' defiance "unites and strengthens Serb extremists" and has contributed to the continuing crisis in the city.

Father Sava, a well-known Orthodox priest, has become a central figure in the Kosovo Serbs. "We have always emphasized that the Serbs of Mitrovica and north Kosovo have the full right not to allow the same thing that happened to them that happened to Serbs in other areas of the province," he said.

Based at the monastery in Decani, Kosovo, Father Sava has been dubbed the "cyber monk" for his prolific Internet messages. In

1999, he won international acclaim as a humanitarian when he offered sanctuary to hundreds of Albanians fleeing Yugoslav security forces.

"Being labelled a radical is something new for me," says Father Sava. "I'm certainly not advocating violence. I simply believe people have the right to defend their lives."

Michael Steiner and the UNMIK police have already warned that more arrests of Serbs in Mitrovica are "imminent." Only this time, UNMIK will not just be targeting the individual perpetrators of the April 8 riot, they intend to seize the senior leadership of the Bridgewatchers as well. While obviously no specific timetable can be released, Barry Fletcher, a New Orleans police officer serving as a press officer with UNMIK, advised that the "individuals involved should carry a toothbrush with them at all times."

"Of course, we know their intentions," said Milan Ivanovic, the 47-year-old leader of the Bridgewatchers. Knowing he is UNMIK's primary target does not stop him from attending his regular day job: A cardiovascular specialist, Dr. Ivanovic is also the deputy director of the Mitrovica hospital.

"We (the Bridgewatchers) have established a 24-hour security vigil and our top personnel take the precaution to sleep in different houses every night," says Dr. Ivanovic. "However, we are not so naive to think we will not eventually be seized, and when we are, our people will react."

Oliver Ivanovic was one of the Bridgewatchers' founders, and has since been elected to Kosovo's parliament. To bring attention to the plight of the Serbs in the enclaves, he has begun organizing a series of demonstrations in Serbia "to remind the Belgrade government and the international community that the Serb (refugee) situation has never been resolved."

He also believes any wave of arrests in Mitrovica prior to an agreement on the future of Serbian municipalities will spark a violent reaction. "The people will not accept this. They will force UNMIK completely out of the north with whatever means are necessary," he warned.

As a showdown looms, Serbs are looking ahead to June 28, the Serbian national holiday of Vidovdan. It was here in 1389 that the Serbs fought a valiant but one-sided battle against a superior Turkish invasion force, and first lost their claim to Kosovo.

Many here are wondering whether history is set to repeat itself.

Albanians Charged Over Family's Murder In Kosovo

Reuters, February 09, 2003

PRISTINA, Serbia and Montenegro, (Reuters) — Kosovo's U.N.-led administration said on Saturday 11 ethnic Albanians had been charged over the murder of a Kosovo Albanian family known among locals for collaborating with Serbian authorities.

In a separate incident in the province, NATO-led troops arrested a Kosovo Albanian on suspicion of wounding four Serbs in a drive-by grenade attack, a U.N. spokesman said.

Kosovo has been the scene of sporadic incidents since the United Nations started running it in June 1999 following NATO's 11-week bombing campaign to halt Serb repression of the ethnic Albanian majority.

U.N. spokesman Andrea Agneli said 11 men were indicted in connection with the killing of five members of the Hajra family, which happened in the central town of Glogovac 18 months ago.

He said the 11 included four members of the Kosovo Protection Corps, the civilian force created from disbanded units of the ethnic Albanian Kosovo Liberation Army that battled Serb forces from 1998 to 1999.

The U.N. mission gave no detail of the motive for the killing, but statements given by people in Glogovac say the father was known as a "close collaborator of the Serbs" and a witness of massacres of Albanians in the province.

In the drive-by attack, four men were wounded when a grenade was thrown at a Serb shop on Friday evening in the southeastern village of Moglia, two of them seriously, Agneli said.

"A 26-year-old Kosovo Albanian was arrested shortly after by KFOR as a suspect," Angeli told Reuters, referring to the NATO-led peacekeeping force deployed in Kosovo.

Most Kosovo Serbs, roughly 180,000, fled the province as Yugoslav forces withdrew in 1999 after the NATO bombing. Many of those remaining live in enclaves guarded by NATO peacekeepers, saying they are unable to move around freely.

Kosovo is part of the union of Serbia and Montenegro, formed on February 4 after the Yugoslav parliament voted to bury what remained of a threadbare federation. Kosovo's Albanians demand independence.

Children Come Under Attack In Kosovo

AFP, August 18, 2003

Belgrade: Unknown assailants opened fire on a group of Serbian children in the UN-administered province of Kosovo on Sunday, causing no injuries, the Serbian news agency Tanjug reported.

The incident occurred less than a week after two young Serbs were killed and four injured in a similar attack in the same area, and comes on the eve of an emergency UN Security Council debate on Kosovo.

The shots targeting the village of Gorazdevac on Sunday afternoon allegedly came from the direction of a neighbouring Albanian village, Tanjug said.

Gorazdevac is a Serb enclave in western Kosovo which is ringed in by ethnic Albanian villages.

Residents of Gorazdevac say five children from the village were targeted, but all escaped unharmed. They reported the case to the UN police, submitting a bullet as proof of the attack.

Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Zivkovic immediately condemned the latest attack, calling it "a slap in the face for Belgrade and the international community".

The prime minister said he hoped the Security Council would enforce a new resolution on Kosovo, that would force people in the region to give up illegal weapons, of which he claims there are 700,000 in circulation. He said such a resolution would mean "everyone in Kosovo, whether Serb or Albanian, could send his child to buy bread without fearing that some crazy person, for one reason or another, would not fire at him". On Sunday morning, about 30 Serbs in Gracanica, near the provincial capital Pristina, clashed with five Albanians, the Beta news agency reported.

The incident threatened to get ugly, but was defused by the arrival of NATO-led peacekeepers (KFOR).

Also on Sunday, the rebel Albanian National Army (ANA) in Kosovo claimed an attack on a Serbian police station in which no one was hurt. The ANA is campaigning for the creation of a greater Albania including Kosovo, which has a huge majority of ethnic Albanians, and parts of southern Serbia and western Macedonia. UN investigators have launched an inquiry into the August 13 attack just outside the Gorazdevak, which they have blamed on Albanian "terrorists", and following which Zivkovic declared a national day of mourning.

Following the shooting, angry Serbs had poured into the streets leading Belgrade to call for an urgent Security Council meeting to

discuss the issue. Serbia's Deputy Prime Minister Nebojsa Covic left Belgrade for New York Sunday to attend the meeting.

On Friday, more than 1,000 people attended a religious service for 11-year-old Pantelija Dakic and 19-year-old Ivan Jovovic, the two Serbs who were killed in the attack. Their funeral coincided with a brief visit of the new head of the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), Harri Holkeri, who is due to take over in September.

Although still legally part of Serbia, Kosovo has been administered by a United Nations mission since the end of the 1998–99 war pitting Belgrade forces against separatist ethnic Albanian guerrillas.

Ethnic Albanian forces officially surrendered in 2001, but armed clashes have continued between Serbian security forces and Albanian fighters and relations remain fraught with the province's 80,000-strong Serbian minority.

Serbs Lament British Withdrawal As Killing Returns To Kosovo

The Telegraph, September 21, 2003

Villagers say the replacement of Nato troops will lead to violence, write Neil Barnett in Pristina and Jeta Xharra in Gorazdevac

The popular swimming spot at a bend in the river beneath the Prokletije, or Accursed Mountains, was filled with village children when a gunman stepped on to the bank and sprayed the surface with bullets.

By the time the sound of automatic fire faded into the hills, two young Serbs lay dead and six others were seriously injured. As quickly as he appeared, the assailant, thought to have been an Albanian nationalist, vanished.

Nine-year-old Nemanja Dakic stood in the river and watched the water run red as his playmates lay dead and wounded. "I heard a machinegun and when I turned round, my brother's head was covered in blood," he said. Pantelija Dakic, 11, and Ivan Jovovic, 20, were killed. As Gorazdevac mourned its young, the beleaguered Serbian community, surrounded by ethnic Albanians, was left to absorb a chilling warning from the local bishop of further grief to come. Bishop Artemije, the Orthodox bishop of Raska-Prizen, travelled to Gorazdevac to offer his condolences, but in a meeting with Pantelija's father could offer only cold comfort to the villagers: "He is not the first and he won't be the last."

In the past four months in Kosovo, eight Serbian adults and children have been murdered — leaving Gorazdevac seething with

a barely supressed desire for violence and revenge. Many of the protective Nato troops, including British soldiers singled out by Serbs for particular praise, have been withdrawn, raising fears of renewed inter-ethnic bloodshed.

Nato's Kosovo Force (Kfor) had defended them against vengeful Albanian neighbours since Milosevic's troops were driven out. Now, however, most of those troops had been withdrawn for operations in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Kfor numbers have more than halved to 21,000 since 1999 but it is the drop in British soldiers from 11,000 to just 200 that is most keenly felt.

"We feel a big handicap that the British troops have left Kosovo because their experience with similar missions is far beyond that of many armies that are now in charge of security in Kosovo, perhaps for the first time out of their country," says Ramush Tahiri, an adviser to a leading Kosovan politician.

"The British troops dealt with the tense situation immediately after the war very well and they did this by establishing excellent co-operation with the population, while still being firm. Their experience from Northern Ireland was a valuable asset because it made the Brits one of the rare armies that had experience of how to operate in an unconventional conflict."

In the aftermath of the shooting, the atmosphere in Gorazdevac has become increasingly thuggish. With residents losing faith in the international force, self-appointed local defenders have thrown up barricades around the village. "We do not feel safe, we want more security, so Albanians must not pass through the village," says Zoran, a burly figure who holds court in the local cafe with a dozen glowering henchmen. "There have been many murders against Serbs but no one has been arrested."

As he speaks, two Italian soldiers roar past on motorcycles, throwing up clouds of dust, but they patrol a large area, passing only occasionally. It was very different when Kfor was at full strength. "The troops would escort us to the shops and guard us while we worked in the fields," Zoran recalled. "Now we have to apply three days in advance if we want an escort. The Albanians are using this security vacuum to drive us out of Kosovo."

The upsurge in inter-ethnic violence in Kosovo comes as Muslims and Serbs in neighbouring Bosnia yesterday participated in a reconciliation ceremony attended by the former US president, Bill Clinton. A Đˆ3 million memorial to the 7,000 Muslim victims of the 1995 Srebenica massacre by the Bosnian Serb militia was inaugurated in the town. Moderate Albanian leaders lament the re-emergence of a polarised society. Ramush Haradinaj, the leader of the Alliance

for the Future of Kosovo, said: "I understand that the US and British armies have activities elsewhere, but I continue to be convinced that their authority is vital to Kosovo."

Nato leaders, however, claim that the alliance must wind down to allow the province to take over responsibility for its security. Lt Gen Fabio Mini, the commander of Kfor, said: "The Serbs lament that they do not receive the level of security that they received in the past. But we did not want to stay with physical security for every community.

"We want to build confidence that Kosovo is not under military occupation. Nato has approved an 'unfixing' strategy, with more efficiency and less visibility."

Two Serbs Shot Dead In Kosovo, U.N. Source Says

Reuters, February 21, 2004

PRISTINA, Serbia and Montenegro, (Reuters) — Two Serbs were shot dead in majority Albanian Kosovo, but it was not immediately known whether the attack was ethnically motivated, a United Nations source said on Friday.

NATO peacekeepers found the bodies of a man and a woman in a car on Thursday evening after receiving reports of gunfire in an area of Kosovo where both Serbs and ethnic Albanians live, the U.N. source said.

"No arrest has been made," the source said, adding that the motive for the killings was not known.

Serbs were targeted in numerous revenge attacks after Kosovo was placed under U.N.-led administration in 1999 following NATO's bombing campaign to halt Serb repression of the province's independence-seeking ethnic Albanians.

About 180,000 Serbs fled Kosovo after the war. Roughly 100,000 remain, either living in Serb areas in the north or in enclaves. Violence has declined sharply in recent years, but beleaguered Serbs say Kosovo remains unsafe.

Killers Draw Kosovo Map

The Observer (London), March 21, 2004

Tim Judah reports on another 'victory' for ethnic cleansing

With NATO now pouring reinforcements into Kosovo and taking back control, the immediate crisis may be ending. Taken off guard, the troops and the UN — which has the final say in the administration of the province — have had their credibility damaged by the violence in recent days that has left 31 dead.

Immediately after the Kosovo war in June 1999, large numbers of Serbs fled or were expelled by ethnic Albanians in revenge for their treatment by the Serbian regime. But at least 100,000 Serbs remained, among a population of perhaps 1.8 million hostile Albanians.

About half of the Serbs lived in enclaves dotted across the province, the rest in the northern part of the divided city of Mitrovica and the almost solidly Serb area, which runs from the town to the north.

Since 1999, ethnically motivated killings have become rare. So the question now is why the wounding of a Serb followed by the drowning of three Albanian children — chased to the water by Serbs, say Albanians — has prompted this new round of violence.

The last year had seen a real improvement in inter-ethnic relations, with Serbs and Albanians losing their fear of being seen talking to one another. A plan to solve the question of how Mitrovica should be run had been endorsed by Kosovo's top Serb and Albanian politicians. Likewise talks on issues such as energy between Kosovo's Albanian-dominated devolved government and the Serbian government in Belgrade were said to be going well. Indeed, last year US Under Secretary of State Marc Grossman said it could soon be time to discuss the province's final status.

UN officials say violence against Serbs was well planned. And while Albanian politicians condemn it, they say that it would never have happened if Kosovo had been independent. The province remains part of Serbia and Montenegro although under temporary UN jurisdiction.

The UN had just announced elections in Kosovo. It and Nato-led forces had clearly no inkling of what was to happen. Several small enclaves of Serbs have been 'ethnically cleansed'. The distinguished Kosovo Albanian publisher, Veton Surroi, said: 'The aim is to expel [Serbs] from central Kosovo by destroying their homes and churches.'

More Serbs will now leave and refugees in Serbia will not return.

Vojislav Kostunica, the incoming Serbian Prime Minister, had just said Serb areas in Kosovo should be given legal autonomy. Now there are fewer of them. Albanians believe that when Serbs talk of autonomy this could well be a prelude to the physical partitioning of the province. In any partition the north would stay with Serbia. The status of the enclaves would be uncertain. It looks as though Albanian extremists have tried to snuff them out.

This may prove again the old Balkan belief that violence is the only way to get things done. Denisa Kostovicova, a specialist at the London School of Economics, believes a solution to the Kosovo issue may now be 'easier than before'. By clearing the map, as was done by the Srebrenica massacre in Bosnia, and leaving the only major concentration of Serbs in the north, a compromise may be possible — independence, with autonomy for the north, which would remain physically part of Kosovo but de facto part of Serbia.

UN Slams Kosovo Leaders' Weak Response To Attacks

Reuters, April 14, 2004

NEW YORK — A senior U.N. official accused Kosovo's leaders on Tuesday of a tepid response to last month's ethnic violence in the Serb province and urged them to confront extremism and pursue those behind the outbreak.

Some leaders at first issued statements condoning or justifying the violence after it broke out on March 17, said Jean-Marie Guehenno, the U.N. peacekeeping chief.

While Prime Minister Bajram Rexhepi called for an end to the violence, an initial statement issued by the provisional Kosovo government focused on the earlier drowning of Kosovo Albanian children, assuming without evidence that it was a result of interethnic hatred and caused by Serbs, Guehenno told the U.N. Security Council.

Only later, after pressure from the international community, did the Kosovo leadership "come to realize that attempting to justify the violence was unacceptable," he said.

While government representatives ultimately condemned the violence, "their statements largely failed to expressly condemn the attacks on the Kosovo Serb community," he said.

Guehenno urged the leaders to "leave no doubt of their wholehearted commitment to tackle and confront extremism and extremist positions, including within their own ranks."

Politicians and civil servants who may have played a significant role in the violence or used the events to promote intolerance must be identified and punished, he said.

Kosovo, a landlocked Serbian province of 2 million people, has been under U.N. administration since June 1999 after an 11-week NATO bombing campaign to halt Serb repression of its ethnic Albanians.

While the international community weighs whether to make Kosovo independent or leave it a part of Serbia, Albanian mobs last month attacked Serb villages and churches in two days of bloodshed in which 19 people were killed and 954 civilians were injured.

The attacks, blamed by NATO on Albanian extremists bent on driving remaining Serbs out of Kosovo, dealt a severe setback to Western hopes of bridging the province's ethnic divide.

Some 4,100 people were driven from their homes by the violence and 36 Serbian Orthodox churches and religious or cultural sites were looted, burned or destroyed by mobs in "an organized, widespread and targeted campaign," Guehenno said.

NATO Head 'Disappointed' With Kosovo Leadership In Face Of March Violence

AFP, April 23, 2004

PRISTINA, Serbia-Montenegro (AFP) NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer said Thursday he was "disappointed" with the reaction of Kosovo's ethnic Albanian leaders to last month's violence that left 19 dead.

"I am disappointed, because it is simply not good enough to condemn the violence after it has happened," Scheffer told journalists at NATO's mission headquarters in Kosovo's capital Pristina.

"It is not good enough to show a wait-and-see approach ... We simply cannot accept that," said Scheffer, who will hold talks with local and international officials in Kosovo.

"Being a political leader means you have to lead, you have to take decisions, you have to take responsibilities and I don't see that unfortunately. And I think the only way for Kosovo to go forward, to progress politically, economically is taking that responsibility," Scheffer said.

Last month's violence was condemned by the province's ethnic Albanian leaders, but they were then criticised by international officials for failing to identify the province's Serb minority as victims in the rampage by ethnic Albanians.

During two days of rioting, mobs of Albanians targeted Serbs and 19 people, including eight Kosovo Serbs, were left dead and more than 900 injured in clashes.

Some 800 houses and 29 Serb Orthodox churches and monasteries were torched during the unrest, according to the UN mission here, known as UNMIK. The violence subsided after NATO rushed some 2,000 extra troops to the province.

The NATO mission in Kosovo, known as KFOR has some 17,000 troops who are responsible for securing the UN-administered province.

The province's government has set aside some five million euros for the reconstruction of the destroyed houses, churches and monasteries.

German Troops 'Hid Like Rabbits' In Kosovo Riots

The Telegraph, May 09, 2004
By Tony Paterson in Berlin

German troops serving with the Kfor international peacekeeping contingent in Kosovo have been accused of hiding in barracks "like frightened rabbits" during the inter-ethnic rioting that erupted in the province in March [2004]. A hard-hitting German police report sent to the Berlin government last week criticises the troops for cowardice and for their failure to quell the rioting in which 19 people died and about 900 others were injured. The charges — the most serious made against the German army since the Second World War — have been levelled by police officers serving with Unmik, the United Nations civil administration in Kosovo.

During the two-day riots between Albanian and Serbs, an Albanian mob burnt and looted 29 Serb churches and monasteries in the southern city of Prizren, and caused several thousand Serbs to flee their homes. Leaked excerpts from the report on the conduct of the 3,600-strong German contingent based in Prizren disclose that Unmik police were left to fend for themselves at the height of the rioting.

"Despite continuous appeals for help from Kfor, nobody from the military appeared to back up the police," the report said. "Kfor proved to be incapable of carrying out the duties to which it has been assigned."

Further damning evidence, based on interviews with Unmik officers, Serb church leaders and unnamed UN officials in Prizren, was published in *Der Spiegel* magazine. The magazine concluded: "The

German soldiers ran away and hid like frightened rabbits in their barracks. They only reappeared in armoured vehicles after the Albanian mob had wreaked its havoc and left a trail of destruction."

Col Dieter Hintelmann, who heads the German Kfor contingent in Prizren, insisted that his men had simply obeyed Kfor rules of engagement. They prohibit troops from protecting buildings and allow the use of firearms only in self-defence. "We were acting exactly according to the rules," he said.

However, the Unmik officers claim that the Kfor troops had breached their rules of engagement because they failed to protect them even though they were legally bound to do so. The allegations have come as a severe embarrassment to Gerhard Schroder's government, which in the past has gone out of its way to praise the German Kfor contingent for the role it played in the troubled province through its excellent contacts with local people.

After the rioting, Serb Orthodox church leaders in Kosovo described the German deployment in the region as a mistake, and demanded the troops withdraw.

So far, the German government has refused to acknowledge publicly the complaints made in the police report. However, the defence ministry is believed to be recommending that the law be changed, allowing soldiers to use tear gas grenades for riot control.

Teenager's Drive-By Murder Raises Fears Of Turmoil In Kosovo

The Independent (London), June 07, 2004
By Marcus Tanner in Belgrade

Hundreds of outraged Serbs gathered yesterday in the village of Gracanica in Kosovo to protest against the murder of a Serb teenager amid fears of more ethnic turmoil in the United Nations-governed territory. UN police announced they had detained two Kosovo Albanians in connection with the drive-by shooting of 17-year-old Dimitrije Popovic in Gracanica, near Pristina. Ms Popovic was buried yesterday.

The protesters demanded an end to random attacks on Kosovo's tiny Serb community, already trapped in isolated "enclaves", and threatened to resume road blocks of vital highways — a move bound to inflame tension with Kosovo's restive Albanian majority.

[…] Moderate Serbian parties also used the incident to condemn the UN's administration of Kosovo — in place since Nato ousted

Serb forces in 1999 — and to attack the retiring UN chief in Kosovo, Harri Holkeri.

Milan Ivanovic, the leader of the Serbian National Council for North Kosovo, a lobby group, told Belgrade's Radio B92 that the killing was "one more systematic and organised crime committed against Serbian children". The remark referred to the brutal shooting dead by an Albanian gunman of two young Serbs swimming in a river in the south-western enclave of Gorazdevac last August.

While protesters in Gracanica demanded that the UN take action to stop Albanian attacks, there is little they can do short of sealing off the remaining enclaves entirely behind barbed wire and watchtowers.

The Serb threat to resume road blocks on the main highway connecting Pristina to neighbouring Macedonia, meanwhile, is likely to raise tensions even further.

After Serbs in nearby Caglavica blocked the main road in mid-March in protest against an earlier non-fatal drive-by shooting, Albanian nationalists stormed into the enclave to dissolve the road block by force.

The two days of chaos that followed saw Serb churches and houses burned not only in Caglavica but all over Kosovo. The riots dealt a severe blow to the UN's prestige in Kosovo, not to mention its stated goal of recreating a multicultural society. Mr Holkeri resigned shortly afterwards, citing ill health.

As well as drawing attention to the ailing state of the UN administration, known as Unmik, the latest killing will focus minds on the shadowy Albanian extremist groups which encourage random attacks on Serbs.

Rejecting the Kosovo Albanian establishment's deference towards the UN authorities, these hardliners, composed often of disgruntled veterans of the guerrilla war with the Serbs in the 1990s, have an interest in keeping the racial temperature high, to wean the moderate majority over to their views.

Mainstream Albanian leaders are aware that continued violence has damaged their credibility and delayed their chances of securing an independent state in Kosovo, the cherished goal of all the Albanians. Keen to drawn a sharp line between themselves and the extremists, Bajram Redzepi, the Prime Minister of Kosovo, insisted on Saturday that all those responsible for the killing would be brought to justice. On a similar note, President Ibrahim Rugova, veteran leader of the independence struggle against Serbia, warned that such acts "were directed against the future independence of our country".

Kosovo Still Reeling From Riots

Reuters, June 24, 2004

PRISTINA — About 1,500 Serbs and other Kosovo minorities have still not returned to their homes three months after ethnic Albanian riots ripped through the province, the United Nations said yesterday.

The mid-March violence, in which 19 people were killed and more than 800 Serb homes set ablaze, has also been followed by a 35 per cent drop in the rate of return to Kosovo by refugees who fled Albanian revenge attacks in 1999 after NATO forces moved in.

"The March violence dealt a devastating blow to returns," said Peggy Hicks, head of the UN Office for Returns and Communities. "It destroyed trust and confidence between communities," she told a news conference.

Dag Sigurdson, who heads the UN refugee agency's Kosovo project, said just 645 people had come back in the first half of 2004, compared with 992 over the same period last year.

The proportion of Serbs among returnees was also down.

In 1999 tens of thousands fled Kosovo, mainly for Serbia, when NATO bombing drove Serb forces out and Albanians took revenge for the violent repression they had suffered under Belgrade's rule.

The West says the return of up to 180,000 Serbs and other minorities is crucial to Kosovo's future and is one of eight conditions that the province must meet before discussion of whether it becomes independent.

The Kosovo Albanian provisional government has pledged to rebuild the razed homes by mid-November. But the European Union and NATO have criticized it for being too slow.

Since the guerrilla war and NATO bombing five years ago, more than 10,000 non-Albanian refugees have come back to Kosovo, a figure Serbia's government says is unacceptably low.

Serbia's Commission for Refugees says Serbia is still sheltering half a million Serb and other refugees from Bosnia, Croatia and Kosovo, including 155,000 Kosovar Serbs and 60,000 other non-Albanians from the province.

The 80,000 Serbs who chose not to flee Kosovo live mainly in enclaves guarded by troops of the NATO-led peacekeeping force. Belgrade has recently proposed the creation of autonomous cantons for them.

Kosovo shows folly of force to resolve conflicts

Asahi (Japan), August 14, 2004

Now that an Iraqi interim government is in place, can the Iraqi people, who have put up with more than 20 years of war and sanctions, finally put their fears to rest and live in peace? I hardly think so.

As Iraq is now, the former Yugoslavia was once the target of violent airstrikes carried out without the approval of the U.N. Security Council. An international force attempted to enforce peace in the troubled Kosovo region. When I look at the current Kosovo situation, I cannot help but worry that Iraq, too, may one day be forgotten by the rest of the world as it wrestles with many serious problems.

Once again, I'm compelled to point out the folly of using force to try to bring a crisis under control or achieve an end, be it the settlement of humanitarian problems or democratization.

The International Citizens' Network, of which I am president, has been supporting refugees in the former Yugoslavia since 1993. In late May, I visited Mitrovica in the Kosovo autonomous province, which is monitored by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).

Serb refugees, who had fled from across Kosovo, were living in shelters set up in school gymnasiums and classrooms, inside which thin mattresses were placed side by side. The bombings by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 1999 did nothing to bring Albanian residents, who make up the majority within the autonomous province, and Serbs closer together. On the contrary, the ethnic confrontation has intensified since then.

According to UNMIK, the bodies of two ethnic Albanian brothers who lived in the village of Cabra, near Mitrovica, were recovered from a river on March 16. The Albanian media in Kosovo incited the public with reports that the brothers had drowned after they had been chased into the river by Serb youths.

Enraged Albanian residents attacked and destroyed Serbian Orthodox churches and Serbian homes and cemeteries, causing 5,000 Serbs to flee. The next day, Albanians rushed to Mitrovica, where many people were killed or injured in bloody interethnic clashes between Albanians and the Serb minority.

Although UNMIK repudiated the allegation that the boys had drowned because they were chased by Serbs, it failed to ease tensions. As a result, I had no choice but to rely on UNMIK police vehicles to visit the scenes of destruction.

According to local reports, a 16-year-old Serb boy was shot to death by two Albanian youths on the night of June 4. Although the

NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) is stationed there, the rule of law has yet to take root in Kosovo as a whole. While 95 percent of Albanian refugees have been repatriated, only 2 percent of their Serb counterparts, who are estimated to number between 200,000 and 300,000, have been able to return home.

What followed the NATO bombings was the persecution of Serbs and other minorities, including Roma, by Albanians. At least 135 churches were destroyed and 3,000 people were killed, abducted or went missing. But the international community, which once made such a fuss over "the oppression of human rights of Albanian residents by Serbs," is virtually indifferent to the plight of Kosovo minorities and the violation of their human rights, which continues even now.

The amount of aid from the international community has also dropped to one-fifth what it was four years ago. Historically significant churches and monasteries that date back to the 11th to 13th centuries have also been destroyed. The unemployment rate in Kosovo jumped to 57 percent from between 30 and 40 percent before the civil war in the former Yugoslavia. Drugs, smuggling, human trafficking and prostitution are also rampant.

Iraq is not the only country that has come under fire from tens of thousands of cluster bombs and depleted uranium shells in airstrikes undertaken without the approval of the international community. The same thing happened in Kosovo and Afghanistan.

UNMIK advocates the advancement of "ethnic harmony" and "democratization" in Kosovo. Like the slogans advocated in Iraq, they are pleasing to the ear. But once force is used as a means to resolve a conflict, reconciliation becomes extremely hard to achieve.

The only way to create hope is for the international community, by once again reflecting on the outcome of military action, to avoid triggering another chain of violence.

Serbs "Driven Out Of South- Kosovo"

September 01, 2004

PRISTINA — The situation in south-eastern Kosovo is so drastic that it is driving Serbs out of the province into Serbia, the province's ombudsman, Marek Antoni Nowicki, said today.

Nowicki described the circumstances of Serb residents in Vitina and Cernica as "far from encouraging".

Speaking after a visit to Kosovo Pomoravlje, the ombudsman said that the question of survival was more important than the restoration of homes destroyed in the March violence in the province.

If the UN governor of the province, Soeren Jessen-Petersen, wants to see what remains of certain Serb settlements, he should visit the Serb community in Vitina, said Nowicki.

UN Digs Up Kosovo Graves In Search For Missing Serbs

Reuters, August 25, 2005
By Matthew Robinson

PRISTINA, Serbia and Montenegro, Aug 24 (Reuters) — U.N. forensics experts have begun exhuming 41 graves in the Kosovo capital believed to contain the remains of Serbs who went missing after the arrival of NATO troops six years ago. Marked with sticks or scrap metal, the graves were located within the grounds of a seemingly abandoned Serbian cemetery, overrun with weeds and next to a railway line.

The head of the U.N. missing persons and forensics office said he believed they were the victims of a spate of kidnappings and murders in the majority Albanian province at the time of the withdrawal of Serb forces and NATO's deployment in June 1999.

"A number of Serbs went missing upon the arrival of KFOR troops, about 50 in the Pristina area alone," Jose-Pablo Baraybar told Reuters at the grave site, referring to the NATO-led Kosovo Force that still patrols the province. "It is highly likely that people ended up dead in the street. They were collected, taken to the hospital, went through the mortuary and were then simply disposed of in this place."

Behind him, forensics experts in white body suits looked on as a digger scraped awkwardly at the edges of a large pit. Seventeen graves were marked with Serb names, including those once listed as residents of a local retirement home. Some were found wrapped in body bags or hospital sheets. One grave was marked with a scrap of metal from a washing machine. Around 500 Serbs and 2,400 ethnic Albanians are still missing from the 1998–99 war in the southern Serbian province, now governed by the United Nations.

NATO bombed for 78 days to drive out Serb forces accused of killing and expelling thousands of ethnic Albanian civilians as they fought to crush a rebel insurgency. But the deployment of 60,000 NATO soldiers failed to prevent a wave of revenge attacks by ethnic

Albanians, who account for 90 percent of the province's 2 million people. Kosovo's Albanians expect to win formal independence from Serbia in talks the West hopes to open this year. Serbia says the mountain-ringed province was the birthplace of the Serb nation and can never become independent.

U.N. Lays First Murder Charge After Kosovo Riots

Reuters, September 30, 2004
By Matthew Robinson

PRISTINA, Serbia and Montenegro, Sept 29 (Reuters) — A group of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo have been charged with killing a Serb man and beating his 77-year-old mother during riots that shook the U.N.-run enclave in March. "It is one of the first serious cases dealing with March," Kosovo's director of justice, Thomas Monaghan, an American, told a news conference. "There will be further indictments."

Nineteen people died and up to 800 homes were torched during a two-day spasm of violence when mobs of majority Albanians attacked Serbs and other minorities.

The Serbian government in Belgrade has frequently complained that crimes against Kosovo's Serb minority — committed under the noses of 18,000 NATO-led peacekeepers — invariably go unpunished.

It has encouraged Kosovo Serbs to boycott the province's general elections on Oct. 23 over concerns about security and fair political representation.

Monaghan, a former FBI investigator, said that of the six suspects, three had been charged with the murder of the 51-year-old man and five with the brutal beating of his mother.

The woman died two months later in hospital. Police have been unable to establish a direct link to the beating. Prosecutors are investigating more than 260 cases stemming from the March riots, the worst violence to hit the province in five years as a de facto U.N. protectorate.

The United Nations took control of Kosovo in June 1999 following a 78-day NATO bombing campaign to halt a crackdown by Serb security forces against the Albanian majority.

Serbs have since been the target of revenge attacks by Albanians angry that the province still formally remains part of Serbia and Montenegro.

In a separate case, Monaghan said police had laid charges against seven men in a drugs case involving the smuggling of more than 100 kg of heroin to various European countries.

"This is one of the biggest drugs rings we've seen in this area," Monahgan told reporters, adding that the case involved law enforcement agencies from Bulgaria, Switzerland, Austria, Germany, Italy, Serbia and Montenegro, Turkey and Albania.

Kosovo Reflects on Bloody Riots

VOA, March 17, 2005

Thursday, March 17, 2005, marks the first anniversary of anti-Serb rioting throughout Kosovo. Several ethnic Albanians and Serbs were killed, hundreds of Serbian homes were destroyed and some centuries-old orthodox churches and monasteries were damaged.

It began when three ethnic-Albanian children drowned in the Ibar river that divides the predominantly Serb and Albanian parts of Mitrovica in the north of Kosovo. A fourth boy, aged 13, survived. He told the news media that the boys had walked past a house and that two Serbs appeared. There was a dog. The boys ran into the river. Three of them drowned.

Bob Gillette, an American media executive, heads the United Nations unit responsible for the media in Kosovo. Mr. Gillette says Kosovo's public television sensationalized the tragedy.

"Public television took this story and said, therefore it is clear that Serbs attacked these children and caused them to drown. They turned this vague story, in which the boy never said there was an attack, into an assumption that became a fact in their reporting. And then they hammered away at it through the evening of the 16th, a year ago today, stopped all normal programming, shifted to symphony orchestras to emphasize the gravity of this tragedy," said Mr. Gillette.

As Albanian anger rose throughout the territory and with citizens glued to their television sets, Mr. Gillette says the reporting continued to be distorted.

"And then they brought the father of one of the boys who had drowned, just as the body had been found, on to the screen, who said the Serb Chetnik [nationalist] hordes have killed my child in the most horrible way. We are way beyond fact [now]. This is journalism at its worst," he added.

Within hours there were anti-Serb protests in Mitrovica and Pristina. They quickly turned violent.

"Two or three days later, 19 people were dead," said Bob Gillette. "Four-thousand people, mostly Serbs, have been driven out of their homes. Thirty-some churches, historic, mostly Serb churches, have been burned."

In April, a month after the violence, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, blamed reckless and sensationalized reporting for the rioting. A subsequent judicial report by the U.N. administration found no evidence that Serbs were in any way connected with the tragedy at the Ibar river.

A law student at Pristina University, Behlul Zeka, is among a minority of Albanians willing to say publicly that the rioting may have had nothing to do with Serb provocations. "Well actually those scenes were shameful for everybody in Kosovo. Because burning and attacking of civilians and innocent people, I mean, it was not good. Those people who went on the streets, I do not know, it was terrible," he recalled.

The ferocity of the events one-year ago shocked both the U.N. administration and the outside world. Ethnic Albanians, victims of Serbian repression less than a decade ago, were now seen in a different light. Passions have cooled in the past 12 months but March 17th is an anniversary that brings pride to no one.

Albanians, Serbs Look To Kosovo's Fate

Boston Globe, May 01, 2005

GRACANICA, Kosovo — This small town perched on rolling hills is just a 20-minute drive from Pristina, Kosovo's capital, but the two might as well be in different countries.

In Pristina, signs are in Albanian written in the Roman alphabet, and the currency is the euro. Here in Gracanica, the signs carry the Cyrillic letters of the Serbian language, and the currency is the Serbian dinar.

These two worlds symbolize the hopes and fears of ethnic Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo, a majority-Albanian province of Serbia that has been under UN control since the 1999 NATO bombing campaign to stop ethnic cleansing by Serbian forces.

The ethnic Albanians want Kosovo to gain independence from Serbia by the end of the year. And international politicians, diplomats, and specialists on the region indicate that is likely, with strings attached.

For Serbian political leaders, who recognize that Kosovo's future is largely out of their hands, the subject is incendiary. Even

mentioning the possibility that the province someday might become independent is viewed as political suicide.

Their unwillingness to entertain alternative policies all but ensures that the Serbs will be the losers in Kosovo, exerting little influence over the futures of people who still live in the province and reducing their country's role as a force in the region.

For the Serbs who live in Gracanica and the 240 other isolated enclaves in Kosovo, such an outcome would be a disaster, leaving them as a defenseless minority in a hostile sea of ethnic Albanians.

"We would be absolutely less safe if Kosovo were an independent country," said Dragan Josifovic, 41, a Serb who sells clothing in a makeshift store lighted by bare bulbs and who, like most Gracanica residents, never visits Pristina, let alone considers living there. "The police, the security would be less for us, the taxes would be higher, there would be even fewer jobs; they would give the jobs to their friends," Josifovic said.

Today, nearly 95 percent of Kosovars are ethnic Albanian. Barely half of the 200,000 Serbs who lived in the province in 1999 are still here; the rest have fled, mostly to neighboring Serbia proper.

Over the past six years, there has been a reversal in Kosovo's power structure. In 1999, it was ethnic Albanians who were fleeing the fertile, mountainous land when Serbian forces under the command of Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic forced nearly 800,000 to flee to neighboring Macedonia and Albania. The fragility in the region was apparent last month when the prime minister of Kosovo voluntarily resigned and surrendered to the war crimes tribunal at The Hague. He pleaded guilty the next week to 37 counts of war crimes against Serbs.

This summer, the United Nations will evaluate the ethnic Albanian government's success in achieving the goals laid out by UN administrators. If the world body deems the province to have made sufficient progress, talks will begin on Kosovo's status.

Kosovars will have the option to become a sovereign country, remain a province of Serbia, or stay under UN control.

A consensus among US and other Western diplomats seems to be emerging around a scenario in which Kosovo would become independent but the international community still would contribute officers to its police force and judges to the judiciary, especially for help in cases involving ethnically motivated crimes. "The focus is now on the theme of sustainable multi-ethnicity — this is central for the international community," a senior Western diplomat in Pristina said.

In Kosovo, antipathy between Serbs and ethnic Albanians runs deep. The two communities are separated by language and religious

barriers. Serbs are Serbian Orthodox, a branch of the Eastern Orthodox Church, and most of the ethnic Albanians are Muslims.

When President Boris Tadic of Serbia visited Kosovo in February, he thrilled local Serbs by handing out Serbian flags. Whole towns turned out despite bitter, subzero weather and knee-deep snow.

Serbian papers covered the two-day visit with headlines that read "No Independence" and "Consolation to the Endangered." The papers showcased pictures of Serbian villages and churches encircled by barbed wire. Captions described them as "camps" — playing on older Serbs' memory of World War II, when Yugoslavia was occupied by the Nazis.

Some of the Serbian enclaves are cordoned off and guarded by NATO troops as well as local police because of the risk of violence against the Serbs. Last March, ethnic Albanians burned and vandalized 4,000 Serbian homes after three Kosovo Albanian boys drowned and a story circulated that Serbs with dogs had chased them into the river. Nineteen people were killed during the riots. International investigators later concluded that there was no evidence Serbs were involved in the boys' death.

Killing of 2 Serbs Raises Fear of Ethnic Unrest in Kosovo

New York Times, United States, August 28, 2005
By NICHOLAS WOOD

BELGRADE, Serbia, Aug. 28 — Two Serbs were killed late Saturday in a shooting in Kosovo, police officials said Sunday, ending a yearlong lull in attacks on the Serbian minority in the province.

The men came under attack while traveling in a car near the Serb enclave of Strpce in the south of Kosovo, which is administered by the United Nations. Two other men in the car were wounded, one of them seriously. The attack came as senior United Nations officials are preparing to rule next month whether ethnic relations have improved enough to open negotiations on the future of the province.

Kosovo has been run by the United Nations since Yugoslav troops, who were accused of committing widespread atrocities against the majority Albanian community, were forced to withdraw in 1999. Kosovo formally remains a part of Serbia, but most Albanians, who make up 90 percent of the population, want independence.

A spokesman for the United Nations, Neeraj Singh, said the men had been fired upon from another vehicle. The mayor of Strpce suggested that they had been attacked because their car had outdated

Serbian license plates, clearly identifying them as Serbs, according to Reuters.

Police officials said that they had not identified the attackers, and that it was not possible to say whether the shooting was ethnically motivated.

"There's a potential to presume ethnic motive," Mr. Singh said, but "it would be irresponsible to do that. We have to pursue our investigation to bring out the facts."

News media and Serb community leaders, however, blamed ethnic Albanian extremists.

Serbia's prime minister, Vojislav Kostunica, a conservative, said the United Nations mission was partly responsible for the deaths and implied that the attacks showed Kosovo was not ready to consider its future.

In an open letter to Soren Jessen-Petersen, the head of the United Nations mission, Mr. Kostunica said, "I want you to say clearly what standards are you talking about when youths are being killed with impunity just because they are Serbs."

Mr. Jessen-Petersen said he had called on the Kosovo Police Service "to leave no stone unturned" in its search for the attackers. "I am shocked and appalled by such a senseless and tragic crime," he said in a statement released by his office.

The shooting was the worst attack apparently resulting from ethnic discord since June 2004, when a Serb teenager was shot dead in the Serb-dominated enclave of Gracanica, again from a passing car. Two Albanian youths were charged with the killing.

The failure to resolve Kosovo's future status is widely regarded as fueling ethnic Albanian discontent. In March 2004, up to 50,000 ethnic Albanians rioted across the province, attacking Serb communities and United Nations property despite the presence of NATO-led peacekeeping troops. Nineteen people were killed and four thousand people fled their homes in the three days of violence.

Kosovo in Limbo

The Halifax Herald Limited, June 22, 2009
Scott Taylor

THIS WEEK marks the 10th anniversary of NATO's entry into the war-torn Balkan province of Kosovo.

I can still vividly recall those violent and terror-filled days as I packed up my gear and fled north amidst the Serbian refugees and the withdrawing Yugoslav security forces.

For 78 days the allied NATO air force — including Canadian aircraft — had pounded infrastructure targets throughout Kosovo and Serbia in a failed attempt to force the Serbs to capitulate and accept the terms U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright had proposed at the 1999 Rambouillet peace talks.

What the nearly $13 billion worth of explosive ordnance dropped in that campaign failed to achieve was any substantial downgrading of the Serbian military forces; more importantly, it did not diminish the will of the Serbian people to resist.

Knowing the futility of their air defences, the Serbs I interviewed had been anxiously awaiting the start of a ground invasion so they could engage NATO soldiers on more even terms in the narrow mountain passes of Kosovo. That contested entry scenario was something NATO leaders were definitely anxious to avoid and they were forced to the bargaining table in Kumanovo, Macedonia.

After days of protracted negotiations, UN Resolution 1244 was ratified by both parties on June 10, 1999. Two days later the ceasefire went into effect.

Despite NATO's proclamations of a decisive victory, the terms of 1244 conceded to all the demands which had been put forward by the Serbs at Rambouillet. During the interim, Serbia would still control the checkpoints of Kosovo and a small number of Serb security forces would remain to protect the centuries-old orthodox churches and monasteries.

The most important element of 1244 was the formal recognition that Kosovo was the sovereign territory of Serbia. When drafted and signed, Resolution 1244 rendered all the death and destruction inflicted during the 78-day bombardment absolutely unnecessary. The Serbian will to resist had forced the mightiest military alliance in history to concede to their demands. But NATO had no intention of abiding by the terms of Resolution 1244. The signing was just a ruse to get Serbian air defences out of Kosovo and NATO ground troops in without a fight. NATO planners had no intention of letting any Serbian troops remain in Kosovo, no intention to ever let them return and no intention of disarming the Kosovo Liberation Army. Incumbent in the ceasefire agreement, NATO was to provide a secure environment for both ethnic Serbs and ethnic Kosovar Albanians in the province when they assumed responsibility for security. Instead, as expected, NATO troops did little to curtail the wave of violence inflicted on Serbs by the emboldened Kosovar Albanians. Unable to protect themselves, some 200,000 Serbs fled Kosovo. Crammed aboard a Belgrade-bound bus, I witnessed first-hand the Albanian mobs assaulting our convoy with rocks and bats.

Not surprisingly, over the past decade the continued presence of NATO troops in Kosovo has not prevented inter-ethnic violence. Rather than clarifying its future, the February 2008 unilateral declaration of independence by the Albanian Kosovars only complicated things further.

Following America's lead, Canada and 50 other countries recognized that independence. Serbia refused to acknowledge that declaration and is supported by Russia, China and another 138 nations.

For now, Kosovo remains in a diplomatic limbo, unable to join the United Nations, economically dependent on foreign aid and occupied by foreign troops for the foreseeable future.

The irony is that the U.S. State Department considers the Kosovo intervention a "success" when compared to their subsequent fiascos in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Kosovo — No Return?

By Ian Bancroft, April 23, 2010

Protests by ethnic Albanians over the Easter period against the return of twenty-six Serb families to the village of Zac, near Istok in the Pec district of north-western Kosovo, have once again shed light on the problems affecting internally displaced persons (IDPs). The lacklustre return of Serbs and other non-Albanian minorities to Kosovo has long constituted a major failure of the international presence in Kosovo; one that undermines assertions of Kosovo's supposedly multi-ethnic character. Without further steps to ensure the sustainable return of Serbs and other non-Albanian minorities, the prospects for conflict transformation in Kosovo look bleak.

Eduardo Arboleda, the head of UNHCR (the UN High Commissioner for Refugees) in Serbia, insists that "the return of displaced persons literally stopped" following Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence. According to UNHCR statistics, only 631 persons returned to Kosovo last year, leaving some 205,835 registered Serb IDPs from Kosovo; with some estimates suggesting that a further 20,000 Serbs remain IDPs inside Kosovo itself. In response to these protests, Serbia's secretary of state for Kosovo and Metohija, Oliver Ivanovic, has called upon the international community to "send a clear message to Albanians about their position over this, if their statements about supporting the return of Serbs are in fact sincere".

A highly-critical report published last summer by Minority Rights Group International (MRG) detailed how members of

minority communities were leaving Kosovo due to persistent exclusion and discrimination. Entitled 'Filling the Vacuum: Ensuring Protection and Legal Remedies for Minorities in Kosovo', the report concluded that Kosovo "lacks effective international protection for minorities, which is worsening the situation for smaller minorities and forcing some to leave the country for good". These minorities include not only Kosovo's Serbs, but also Ashkali, Bosniaks, Croats, Egyptians, Gorani, Roma and Turks, who together make up around 5% of the population of Kosovo according to local estimates.

MRG's report also goes on to describe how "a lack of political will among majority Albanians and poor investment in protection mechanisms have resulted in minority rights being eroded or compromised in the post-independence period" and that Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence has left "a vacuum in effective international protection for minorities".

A spate of recent incidents have highlighted the lack of security guarantees that only provide a further disincentive for potential returnees. KFOR, for instance, recently condemned the desecration of several tombs in the village of Rabovce, near Lipljan in central Kosovo, emphasizing that "such incidents jeopardize productive and decent coexistence". The grave of an ethnic Serb woman, meanwhile, the first to be buried in Gnjilane cemetery since 1999, was also vandalized. The on-going failure to tackle deficiencies in the area of the rule of law has further contributed to the plight of Kosovo's minorities.

Mark Lattimer, the executive director of MRG, also emphasised how "restrictions of movement and political, social and economic exclusion are particularly experienced by smaller minorities". Such conditions have been further aggravated by the worsening economic situation in Kosovo, especially for the Ashkali, Egyptian and Roma communities that suffer from deeply ingrained poverty and marginalisation.

Arboleda, however, criticised some displaced persons for not accepting the conditions offered and for demanding "really new houses and cable TV with Serb channels". Arboleda added that, "we are under obligation to offer assistance to each returnee, but there are conditions — UNHCR is not a development agency, we can only repair houses that were damaged slightly".

The OSCE Mission in Kosovo recently issued a report, entitled "In Pursuit of Durable Solutions for those Displaced in the Collective Centres in Strpce/Shterpce Municipality", which described the conditions of some 700 displaced Kosovo Serbs and Serb refugees from Croatia living in collective centres and social housing as "appalling". The report called upon the local authorities — who "have

done little to encourage displaced persons to return" — to provide sustainable solutions, including the provision of better housing conditions and electricity.

The situation is such that the Council of Europe's commissioner for human rights, Thomas Hammarberg, has called on European countries to halt the forced return of refugees — primarily Roma — until the Kosovo authorities provide adequate living conditions, social services, employment and health care. Hammarberg insisted that, "a quick deportation from European countries now to Kosovo is irresponsible...the majority of those who are sent back are leaving Kosovo again and trying to reach other parts of Europe".

This latest series of protests has refocused attention on the insufficient political will to ensure the sustainable return of Serbs and other non-Albanian minorities to Kosovo. In the absence of basic security guarantees and adequate living conditions, the prospect for future returns continues to diminish, despite statements to the contrary from both domestic and international actors. The litany of failures with respect to minority rights have only been further exacerbated and entrenched by Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence. Contending with the problems faced by IDPs, however, is key to alleviating a persistent source of tension and instability throughout the entire Western Balkans.

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Appendix III

DICK MARTY: REPORT ON INHUMAN TREATMENT OF PEOPLE AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN ORGANS IN KOSOVO

Doc. 12462
7 January 2011

Inhuman treatment of people and illicit trafficking in human organs in Kosovo[1]

Report[2]
Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights

Rapporteur: Mr Dick MARTY, Switzerland,
Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe

Summary

According to the information gathered, numerous concrete and convergent indications confirm that some Serbians and some Albanian Kosovars were held prisoner in secret places of detention under KLA control in northern Albania and were subjected to inhuman and degrading treatment, before ultimately disappearing. Numerous indications seem to confirm that, during the period immediately after the end of the armed conflict, before international forces had been able to take control of the region and re-establish law and order, organs were removed from some prisoners at a clinic on Albanian territory, near Fushë-Krujë, to be taken abroad for transplantation. Although some concrete evidence of such trafficking already existed at the beginning of the decade, the international authorities in charge of the region did not consider it necessary to conduct a detailed examination of these circumstances, or did so incompletely and superficially.

The international organisations in place in Kosovo favoured a pragmatic political approach, taking the view that they needed to

promote short-term stability at any price, thereby sacrificing some important principles of justice. Insufficient investigation has been carried out into the connection of KLA members with war crimes committed against Serbians and Albanian Kosovars. The team of international prosecutors and investigators within EULEX which is responsible for investigating allegations of inhuman treatment, including those relating to possible organ trafficking, has made progress, particularly in respect of proving the existence of secret KLA places of detention in northern Albania where inhuman treatment and even murders are said to have been committed.

We must fight uncompromisingly against impunity for the perpetrators of serious human rights violations. The fact that these were committed in the context of a violent conflict could never justify a decision to refrain from prosecuting anyone who has committed such acts. There cannot and must not be one justice for the winners and another for the losers.

The member states of the European Union and the other contributing states should should set EULEX a clear objective and give it the necessary political support to combat organised crime uncompromisingly, to ensure that justice is done, without any considerations of political expediency; Albania and the Kosovo administration should co-operate unreservedly with ongoing and future investigations.

A. Draft resolution[3]

1. The Parliamentary Assembly was extremely concerned to learn of the revelations by the former Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), who alleged that serious crimes had been committed during the conflict in Kosovo, including trafficking in human organs, crimes which had hitherto gone unpunished and had not been the subject of any serious investigation.

2. In addition, according to the former Chief Prosecutor, these acts had been committed by members of the "Kosovo Liberation Army" (KLA) militia against Serbian nationals who had remained in Kosovo at the end of the armed conflict and been taken prisoner.

3. According to the information gathered by the Assembly and to the criminal investigations now under way, numerous concrete and convergent indications confirm that some Serbians and some Albanian Kosovars were held prisoner in secret places of detention under KLA control in northern Albania and were subjected to inhuman and degrading treatment, before ultimately disappearing.

4. Numerous indications seem to confirm that, during the period immediately after the end of the armed conflict, before international

forces had really been able to take control of the region and re-establish a semblance of law and order, organs were removed from some prisoners at a clinic on Albanian territory, near Fushë-Krujë, to be taken abroad for transplantation.

5. This criminal activity, which developed with the benefit of the chaos prevailing in the region, at the initiative of certain KLA militia leaders linked to organised crime, has continued, albeit in other forms, until today, as demonstrated by an investigation being carried out by the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) relating to the Medicus clinic in Pristina.

6. Although some concrete evidence of such trafficking already existed at the beginning of the decade, the international authorities in charge of the region did not consider it necessary to conduct a detailed examination of these circumstances, or did so incompletely and superficially.

7. Particularly during the first years of their presence in Kosovo, the international organizations responsible for security and the rule of law (KFOR and UNMIK) had to cope with major structural problems and serious shortages of staff with the skills to take on the tasks they were entrusted with, all this being aggravated by rapid and constant staff rotation.

8. The ICTY, which had started to conduct an initial examination on the spot to establish the existence of traces of possible organ trafficking, dropped the investigation. The elements of proof taken in Rripe, in Albania, have been destroyed and cannot therefore be used for more detailed analyses. No subsequent investigation has been carried out into a case nevertheless considered sufficiently serious by the former ICTY Prosecutor for her to see the need to bring it to public attention through her book.

9. During the decisive phase of the armed conflict, NATO took action in the form of air strikes, while land operations were conducted by the KLA, *de facto* allies of the international forces. Following the departure of the Serbian authorities, the international bodies responsible for security in Kosovo very much relied on the political forces in power in Kosovo, most of them former KLA leaders.

10. The international organisations in place in Kosovo favoured a pragmatic political approach, taking the view that they needed to promote short-term stability at any price, thereby sacrificing some important principles of justice. For a long time little was done to follow up evidence implicating KLA members in crimes against the Serbian population and against certain Albanian Kosovars. Immediately after the conflict ended, in effect when the KLA had virtually exclusive control on the ground, many scores were settled between different factions and against those considered, without any kind of

trial, to be traitors because they were suspected of having collaborated with the Serbian authorities previously in place.

11. EULEX, which took over certain functions in the justice sector previously fulfilled by United Nations structures (UNMIK) at the end of 2008, inherited a difficult and sensitive situation, particularly in the sphere of combating serious crime: incomplete records, lost documents, uncollected witness testimony. Consequently, a large number of crimes may well continue to go unpunished. Little or no detailed investigation has been carried out into organised crime and its connections with representatives of political institutions or in respect of war crimes committed against Serbians and Albanian Kosovars regarded as collaborators or as rivals of the dominant factions. This last-named subject is still truly taboo in Kosovo today, although everybody talks about it in private, very cautiously. EULEX seems very recently to have made some progress in this field, and it is very much to be hoped that political considerations will not impede this commitment.

12. The team of international prosecutors and investigators within EULEX which is responsible for investigating allegations of inhuman treatment, including those relating to possible organ trafficking, has made progress, particularly in respect of proving the existence of secret KLA places of detention in northern Albania where inhuman treatment and even murders are said to have been committed. The investigation does not, however, benefit from the desirable co-operation of the Albanian authorities.

13. The appalling crimes committed by Serbian forces, which stirred up very strong feelings worldwide, gave rise to a mood also reflected in the attitude of certain international agencies, based on the assumption that it was invariably one side which were the perpetrators of crimes and the other side the victims, thus necessarily innocent. The reality is less clear-cut and more complex.

14. The Assembly strongly reaffirms the need for an absolutely uncompromising fight against impunity for the perpetrators of serious human rights violations, and wishes to point out that the fact that these were committed in the context of a violent conflict could never justify a decision to refrain from prosecuting anyone who has committed such acts (see Resolution 1675 (2009)).

15. There cannot and must not be one justice for the winners and another for the losers.

Whenever a conflict has occurred, all criminals must be prosecuted and held responsible for their illegal acts, whichever side they belonged to and irrespective of their political role.

16. The question which, from the humanitarian viewpoint, remains the most acute and sensitive is that of missing persons. Of more than 6 000 disappearances on which the International Committee

of the Red Cross has opened files, approximately 1 400 individuals have been found alive and 2 500 corpses have been found and identified. For the most part, these were Albanian Kosovar victims found in mass graves in regions under Serbian control and in Kosovo.

17. Co-operation between international agencies on the one hand and the Kosovar and Albanian authorities on the other to find out the fate of the missing persons is still clearly insufficient. Whereas Serbia ultimately co-operated, it has proved far more complicated to carry out excavations on the territory of Kosovo, and has been impossible, at least so far, on Albanian territory. Co-operation by the Kosovar authorities is particularly lacking in respect of the search for the almost 500 persons who officially disappeared after the end of the conflict.

18. The working group on missing persons, chaired by the International Committee of the Red Cross and the EULEX Office on Missing Persons, needs the full and wholehearted support of the international community in order for the reluctance on both sides to be overcome. Knowing the truth and enabling victims' families to mourn at last is a vital precondition for reconciliation between the communities and a peaceful future in this region of the Balkans.

19. The Assembly therefore invites:

19.1. the member states of the European Union and the other contributing states to:

19.1.1. allocate to EULEX the resources that it needs, in terms of logistics and highly skilled staff, to deal with the extraordinarily complex and important role entrusted to it;

19.1.2. set EULEX a clear objective and give it political support at the highest level to combat organised crime uncompromisingly, and to ensure that justice is done, without any considerations of political expediency;

19.1.3. commit all the resources needed to set up effective witness protection programmes;

19.2. EULEX to:

19.2.1. persevere with its investigative work, without taking any account of the offices held by possible suspects or of the origin of the victims, doing everything it can to cast light on the criminal disappearances, the indications of organ trafficking, corruption and the collusion so often complained of between organised criminal groups and political circles;

19.2.2. take every measure necessary to ensure effective protection for witnesses and gain their trust;

19.3. the ICTY to co-operate fully with EULEX, particularly by making available to it the information and elements of proof in its possession likely to help EULEX to prosecute those responsible for crimes within its jurisdiction;

19.4. the Serbian authorities to:

19.4.1. make every effort to capture the persons still wanted by the ICTY for war crimes, particularly General Ratko Mladic and Goran Hadzic, whose impunity still constitutes a serious obstacle to the process of reconciliation and is often referred to by the authorities of other countries to justify their lack of enthusiasm about taking judicial action themselves;

19.4.2. co-operate closely with EULEX, particularly by passing on any information which may help to clear up crimes committed during and after the conflict in Kosovo;

19.4.3. take the necessary measures to prevent leaks to the press of information about investigations concerning Kosovo, leaks which are prejudicial to co-operation with other authorities and to the credibility of the investigative work;

19.5. the Albanian authorities and the Kosovo administration to:

19.5.1. co-operate unreservedly with EULEX and the Serbian authorities in the framework of procedures intended to find out the truth about crimes committed in Kosovo, irrespective of the known or assumed origin of the suspects and the victims;

19.5.2. in particular, take action on the requests for judicial assistance made by EULEX concerning criminal acts alleged to have occurred in a KLA camp in northern Albania;

19.5.3. start a serious and independent investigation in order to find out the whole truth about the allegations, sometimes concrete and specific, of the existence of secret detention centres where inhuman treatment was purportedly inflicted on prisoners from Kosovo, of Serbian or Albanian origin, during and immediately after the conflict; the investigation must also be extended to a verification of the equally specific allegations about organ trafficking said to have taken place during the same period, some of it on Albanian territory;

19.6. all the Council of Europe member and observer states concerned to:

19.6.1. respond without undue delay to the requests for judicial co-operation addressed to them by EULEX and by the Serbian authorities in the framework of their current investigations concerning war crimes and organ trafficking; the delayed response to these requests is incomprehensible and intolerable in view of the importance and urgency of international co-operation to deal with such serious and dangerous crime problems;

19.6.2. co-operate with EULEX in its efforts to protect witnesses, especially when the persons concerned can no longer continue to live in the region and must therefore adopt a new identity and find a new country of residence.

20. The Assembly, aware that trafficking of human organs is now an extremely serious problem worldwide, manifestly contravening the most basic standards in terms of human rights and dignity, welcomes and concurs with the conclusions of the joint study published in 2009 by the Council of Europe and the United Nations. It agrees, in particular, with the conclusion that it is necessary to draft an international legal instrument which lays down definitions of human organ, tissue and cell trafficking and stipulates the action to be taken in order to prevent such trafficking and to protect its victims, as well as criminal law measures to prosecute the perpetrators.

B. Explanatory memorandum by Mr Marty, rapporteur

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1. Introductory remarks — an overview

1. In April 2008, Ms Carla Del Ponte, the former Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), published a set of memoirs, co-authored with Chuck Sudetic, on her experiences within the Tribunal. The book was initially published in Italian ("*La caccia — Io e i criminali di guerra*"), then in translation, notably in French ("*La traque, les criminels de guerre et moi*"). In the book, almost ten years after the end of the war in

Kosovo, there appeared revelations of trafficking in human organs taken from Serb prisoners, reportedly carried out by leading commanders of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). These claims were surprising in several respects and have provoked a host of strong reactions. They were surprising, in the first place, because they emanated from someone who exercised the highest official responsibilities, at the very heart of the judicial system tasked with prosecuting the crimes committed during the conflicts that ravaged the former Yugoslavia. Furthermore, and above all, they were surprising because they revealed an apparent absence of official follow-up in respect of allegations that were nevertheless deemed serious enough to warrant inclusion in the memoirs of the former Chief Prosecutor who could hardly have been unaware of the grave and far-reaching nature of the allegations she had decided to make public.

2. Having before it a motion for a resolution (Doc. 11574) which asked for a thorough investigation into the acts mentioned by Ms Del Ponte and their consequences, in order to ascertain their veracity, deliver justice to the victims and apprehend the culprits of the crimes, the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights appointed me as rapporteur and accordingly instructed me to draw up a report.

3. The extraordinary challenges of this assignment were immediately clear. The acts alleged — by a former prosecutor of international standing, let us remember — purportedly took place a decade ago and were not properly investigated by any of the national and international authorities with jurisdiction over the territories concerned. All the indications are that efforts to establish the facts and punish the attendant war crimes had primarily been concentrated in one direction, based on an implicit presumption that one side were the victims and the other side were the perpetrators. As we shall see, the reality seems to have been more complex. The structure of Kosovar Albanian society, still very much clan-orientated, and the absence of a true civil society have made it extremely difficult to set up contacts with local sources. This is compounded by fear, often to the point of genuine terror, which we have observed in some of our informants as soon as the subject of our inquiry was broached. Even certain representatives of international institutions did not conceal their reluctance to grapple with these facts: "The past is the past", we were told; "we must now look to the future". The Albanian authorities intimated that their territory had not been affected by the conflict and that they had no reason to open an inquiry. The Serbian authorities did react, albeit rather belatedly, but so far without having achieved any significant results. For its part, the ICTY carried out an exploratory mission to the site of the notorious "Yellow House",

though proceeding in a fairly superficial way and with a standard of professionalism that prompts some bewilderment. In addition, the ICTY's mandate was restricted to a clearly defined timeframe and territory: the ICTY was enjoined to try those suspected of crimes committed only up to June 1999, marking the end of the Kosovo conflict, and its jurisdiction does not extend to Albania, except in instances where Albania expressly authorises investigations to take place on its territory.

4. The acts with which we are presently concerned are alleged to have occurred for the most part from the summer of 1999 onwards, against a background of great confusion throughout the region.

The Serbian security forces had abandoned Kosovo, and the troops of KFOR (NATO's international Kosovo Stabilisation Force) were making a rather slow start in establishing themselves; while tens of thousands of Kosovar Albanian refugees were first trying to reach Albania and then to return home, with ethnic Serbs in turn seeking refuge in the territories controlled by the Serbian Army. It was chaos: there was no functioning administration on the part of the Kosovars, and KFOR took quite some time to gain control of the situation, evidently not possessing the know-how needed to cope with such extreme situations. The NATO intervention had essentially taken the form of an aerial campaign, with bombing in Kosovo and in Serbia — operations thought by some to have infringed international law, as they were not authorised by the United Nations Security Council — while on the ground NATO's *defacto* ally was the KLA. Thus, during the critical period that is the focus of our inquiry, the KLA had effective control over an expansive territorial area, encompassing Kosovo as well as some of the border regions in the North of Albania. KLA control should not be understood as a structured exercise of power, and it was certainly far from assuming the contours of a state. It was in the course of this critical period that numerous crimes were committed both against Serbs who had stayed in the region and against Kosovar Albanians suspected of having been "traitors" or "collaborators", or who fell victim to internal rivalries within the KLA. These crimes have largely gone unpunished and it is only years later that a rather diffident start has been made to deal with them.

5. During this chaotic phase, the border between Kosovo and Albania effectively ceased to exist.

There was no form of control in effect, and it would hardly have been possible to enforce rules anyway, considering the heavy flow of refugees towards Albania and their return in similar numbers after the end of the hostilities. During a field mission on behalf of the Swiss Parliament in 1999, I was able to witness for myself the scale

of this phenomenon; I noted above all the singular solidarity shown by the Albanian population and authorities in receiving the Kosovar refugees. It was in this context that KLA militia factions moved freely on either side of the border, which, as pointed out, had by then become little more than a token dividing line. So it is clear that the KLA held effective control in the region during that critical period, both in Kosovo and in the northern part of Albania near the border. The international forces co-operated with the KLA as the local authority in military operations and the restoration of order. It was as a result of this situation that certain crimes committed by members of the KLA, including some top KLA leaders, were effectively concealed and have remained unpunished.

6. The crimes committed by the Serb forces have been documented, denounced and, to the extent possible, tried in courts of law. The frightful nature of these crimes hardly needs to be further illustrated. They stemmed from a wicked policy ordered by Milosevic over a lengthy period, including at times when he was simultaneously being accorded full diplomatic honours in the capitals of many democratic states. These crimes claimed tens of thousands of victims and disrupted a whole region of our continent. In the Kosovo conflict, the ethnic Albanian population suffered horrendous violence as the result of an insane ethnic cleansing policy on the part of the dictator then in power in Belgrade.

None of these historical events could be cast in doubt today. However, what emerged in parallel was a climate and a tendency to view these events and acts through a lens that depicted everything as rather too clear-cut: on one side the Serbs, who were seen as the evil oppressors, and on the other side the Kosovar Albanians, who were seen as the innocent victims. In the horror and perpetration of crimes there can be no principle of compensation. The basic essence of justice demands that everyone be treated in the same way. Moreover, the duty to find the truth and administer justice must be discharged in order for genuine peace to be restored, and for the different communities to be reconciled and begin living and working together.

7. Yet in the case of Kosovo, the prevailing logic appears to have been rather short-sighted: restore a semblance of order as quickly as possible, while avoiding anything that might be liable to destabilise a region still in a state of very fragile equilibrium. The result has been a form of justice that can only be defined as selective, with impunity attaching to many of the crimes that appear, based on credible indications, to have been directly or indirectly the work of top KLA leaders. The Western countries that engaged themselves in Kosovo had refrained from a direct intervention on the ground,

preferring recourse to air strikes, and had thus taken on the KLA as their indispensable ally for ground operations. The international actors chose to turn a blind eye to the war crimes of the KLA, placing a premium instead on achieving some degree of short-term stability. In effect, the new Kosovo has been built on the existing structures of the Kosovar Albanian homeland movement. It follows that the successive international administrations put in place, as well as the United States Government, which is generally regarded as playing an important role in the affairs of the new Kosovo,[4] have had to maintain good relations with their *de facto* allies on the ground, as the latter have become the new masters of the local political scene. This situation, as we emphasised above, has ultimately foiled the prospect of our getting to the bottom of the crimes committed, at least in cases where there is every indication that they were the misdeeds of persons in positions of power or close to those in power. An added problem is that the resources of the international administration under UNMIK were insufficient, both in quantity and in quality, for the task of prosecuting the crimes committed in an effective and impartial manner. The posting of most international staff to UNMIK on limited-term contracts, and the resultant perpetual rotation, was a major hindrance to the administration of justice. International officials told us that it had been impossible to maintain confidentiality of their sources — an element considered essential to the success of a criminal investigation — in particular because of their reliance on local interpreters who would often pass on information to the persons being investigated. As a result, the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) has had to bring in interpreters from other countries in order to conduct its most sensitive inquiries securely. The same sources told us that the approach of the international community could be aptly encapsulated in the notion of "stability and peace at any cost". Obviously such an approach implied not falling out with the local actors in power.

8. The EULEX mission, operational since the end of 2008, thus inherited an extremely difficult situation. Numerous files on war crimes, notably those in which KLA combatants were listed as suspects, were turned over by UNMIK in a deplorable condition (mislaid evidence and witness statements, long time lapses in following up on incomplete investigative steps), to the extent that EULEX officials stated their fears in quite explicit terms during our fact-finding visits that many files would simply have to be abandoned.[5] Some of our contacts representing Kosovo's nascent civil society did not hold back in criticising EULEX itself: it had been widely expected that EULEX would at last go after the "untouchables", whose more than murky past was common knowledge. Yet these expectations were

in vain: there had been many announcements and promises, but the tangible results remained to be seen. The case of Nazim Bllaca, the "whistle-blower" who publicly admitted to having carried out murders upon the orders of some of today's high-ranking politicians, is emblematic.

Four days elapsed before the man was arrested and placed under protection. The way in which EULEX deals with his case will be an important test of how far it is prepared to go in pursuing its mission to promote justice.

9. One must nevertheless commend the remarkable dedication of many EULEX staff — at the time of writing, some 1 600 international executives and 1 100 local employees — and their determination to confront the extraordinary challenge handed to them. Their efforts are beginning to yield tangible results, notably with regard to the cases of the detention camp at Kukës and the Medicus Clinic in Pristina. Yet it is imperative that EULEX is given more explicit and more resolute support from the highest levels of European politics. There can be no lingering ambiguity as to the need to pursue all those suspected of crimes, even in cases where the suspects hold important institutional and political positions. Similarly, EULEX must urgently be given access to the complete sets of records compiled by international agencies that previously operated in Kosovo, including KFOR files that have since been returned to the troop-contributing countries,[6] and files compiled by the ICTY.[7] According to the key practitioners working on the ground, there ought to be a common, unified database comprising the archives of all the international actors, readily accessible to EULEX investigators. One is left to wonder what might possibly be the reasons put forward for failing to fulfil such a basic demand.

10. The Kosovo Police, multiethnic in its make-up, is professionally trained, well equipped and apparently effective in fighting petty crime or less serious forms of criminality. With over 7 200 uniformed officers and more than 1 100 support staff, the Kosovo Police comprises representatives of 13 ethnic groups, including 10% of ethnic Serbs. According to recent surveys, it is second only to KFOR among all the institutions in Kosovo in the high levels of public trust it enjoys. Senior international officials have also confirmed that the police are "decent", whereas the judges are "problematic" — in the sense of being subject to intimidation, under political influence, or corrupt.

Assessments of the police nevertheless varied among the observers whom we met. The Kosovo Police still has to prove itself and to win the full confidence of its international partners, including its counterparts in the EULEX mission. We sensed lingering doubts

among internationals as to whether or not all the leaders of the police force share the necessary political resolve to go after all forms of crime in the most robust fashion possible, especially where the police are called upon to combat organised crime, and/or crimes in which highly placed political figures are implicated, and notably in ensuring truly effective protection of witnesses, a very sensitive and vital tool in the prosecution of the most notorious and dangerous criminals.

11. Corruption and organised crime constitute a major problem in the region, as several international studies have shown. The problem is aggravated by the fact that criminality, corruption and politics are so closely intertwined. The massive presence of international staff does not appear to have made things any better, and indeed has given rise to some rather perverse anomalies; for example, a driver or a cleaner working for an international organisation or a foreign Embassy invariably earns appreciably more than a police officer or a judge, which is bound to upset the scales of societal values.

12. The most pressing priority from a humanitarian perspective is to account for the fate of missing persons in relation to the Kosovo conflict. The number of disappearances is extremely high when one considers the modest size of Kosovo's population. Out of a total of 6 005 cases of missing persons opened by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), some 1 400 persons have been found alive and it has been possible to discover and identify 2 500 bodies. Most of the deceased victims were identified as Kosovar Albanians, half of whom were exhumed from mass graves discovered on Serbian territory and the other half in Kosovo. In addition, there are 1 869 missing persons who remain unaccounted for, about two thirds of whom are Kosovar Albanians. Some 470 missing persons disappeared after the arrival of KFOR troops on 12 June 1999, 95 of whom were Kosovar Albanians and 375 non-Albanians, mainly Serbs.[8]

13. In assessing these disappearances, it should be noted that many Kosovar Albanian families who lost a relative after 12 June 1999 reportedly declared an earlier date of disappearance, before this "cut-off date", out of fear that their loved ones might be deemed to have been "traitors" to the cause, punished by the KLA. It is significant that Kosovo's law on compensation for the families of "martyrs" expressly excludes persons who died after the arrival of KFOR. As to the law on compensation for the families of missing persons, which is still under discussion, the stated position of the Kosovo authorities is that the law should cover only those disappearances that occurred after 1 January 1999 and before 12 June 1999. This position serves to demonstrate just how sensitive the matter of the missing Kosovar Albanians remains to the present day. According to several

of our informants, the matter is still considered utterly taboo and continues to form a serious impediment to the discovery of the truth. The hunt for "traitors" has often overshadowed the bloody feuding between factions of the KLA, and served to cover up the crimes committed by KLA members and affiliates.

14. The current Office for Missing Persons and Forensics[9] has cited great difficulties in working with the often poor-quality documentation handed down by its predecessors;[10] it also apparently has trouble motivating and retaining its staff, who are said to be underpaid considering the qualifications required. Efforts to determine the fate of missing persons have also suffered from a clear deficit in cooperation between the various international agencies and the Kosovo authorities, not to mention with the competent authorities of Albania. While Serbia did co-operate, albeit not without initial misgivings, in efforts to excavate suspected mass graves in its territory, such investigative steps have proved far more complicated in the territory of Kosovo,[11] and up to now have been impossible on the territory of Albania.[12] The co-operation of the Kosovo authorities has been especially lacking in relation to the 470 cases of disappearances that officially occurred after the end of the conflict.[13] The lack of cooperation by the authorities of Kosovo and Albania in determining the fate of the missing Serbs, and even Kosovar Albanians thought to have fallen victim to crimes committed by members of the KLA, raises grave doubts about the current level of political will to establish the whole truth concerning these events.

15. The Working Group on Missing Persons chaired by the ICRC needs the wholehearted support of the international community to overcome the reluctance that exists on all sides. Such support should be offered not least in the interests of the missing persons' surviving relatives, whose anguish continues to form a significant obstacle to reconciliation.

16. We have already recalled the manner in which the allegations of organ trafficking were made public, assumed international dimensions, and prompted the Parliamentary Assembly to call for the preparation of this report. There was extensive discussion around the so-called "Yellow House" located in Rripe, near Burrel, in central Albania — to the point where this house appeared to have monopolised the public's attention. However, upon reflection, the house was merely one element among many in a far larger and more complex episode. It is true that the whole story seems to have begun with the revelations about the "Yellow House". In February 2004, an exploratory visit to the site was organised jointly by the ICTY and UNMIK, with the participation of a journalist. This visit cannot in fact be regarded as a proper forensic examination according to all

the technical rules. Participants in the visit whom we interviewed explicitly condemned a certain lack of professionalism, particularly regarding the taking of samples and the recording of scientific observations. Nonetheless, the demeanour of some members of the K. family, who inhabit the house, raised a number of questions, notably about the differing and contradictory explanations they offered, one after the other, as to the presence of bloodstains (detected by use of Luminol) in the vicinity of a table in the main room. The family patriarch stated originally that farm animals had been slaughtered and cut up there. Another explanation given was that one of the women in the household had given birth to one of her children in the same place.

17. Neither the ICTY nor UNMIK, nor indeed the Albanian Public Prosecutor's Office, followed up this visit by conducting more thorough inquiries. Moreover, the Albanian investigator who took part in this site visit hastened to assert publicly that no leads of any kind had been found. The physical samples collected at the scene were subsequently destroyed by the ICTY, after being photographed, as the current Chief Prosecutor of the ICTY confirmed to me in a letter.[14] We must permit ourselves to express astonishment that such a step was taken.

18. Nor did the team of the Special Prosecutor for War Crimes in Belgrade come up with very concrete results in this matter, notwithstanding their considerable efforts. The media whirlwind that surrounded the inquiry certainly did nothing to enhance its effectiveness. We thank the special prosecutor for his co-operation and readiness to assist.

19. The teams of international prosecutors and investigators in the EULEX mission charged with investigating the allegations of inhuman treatment, including those relating to possible instances of organ trafficking, have made some progress, notably towards proving the existence of secret KLA detention facilities in northern Albania, where murders are also alleged to have been committed.

However, EULEX's inquiries have so far been hampered by a lack of co-operation on the part of the Albanian authorities, who have failed to respond to the specific, detailed requests for judicial assistance submitted to them. At the time of writing, EULEX has still not had access to the complete set of records compiled by the ICTY in this area of investigation.

20. A further investigation, also carried out by EULEX, into the case of the Medicus Clinic in Pristina, has been made similarly difficult by the delays on the part of the authorities of several Council of Europe member and observer countries in responding to EULEX requests for legal assistance.[15] Considering the gravity of the acts

alleged — trafficking in human organs, no less — such delays are incomprehensible and unconscionable. It should be recalled that the initial investigation had led to several arrests of suspects in November 2008. Arrest warrants have since been issued in respect of other suspects currently at large.[16] This investigation serves as further proof of the existence in the region of criminal structures and networks, in which medical practitioners are also implicated, operating in the region as part of an international traffic in human organs, notwithstanding the presence of international forces. We believe that there are sufficiently serious and substantial indications to demonstrate that that this form of trafficking long pre-dates the Medicus case, and that certain KLA leaders and affiliates have been implicated in it previously. Certainly the indications are too strong to countenance any failure, at long last, to conduct a serious, independent and thorough inquiry.

21. We have learned at first hand how very difficult it is to reconstruct events in Kosovo during the troubled and chaotic period of 1999–2000. With the exception of a few EULEX investigators, there has been and remains a lack of resolve to ascertain the truth of what happened during that period, and assign responsibilities accordingly. The raft of evidence that exists against certain top KLA leaders appears largely to account for this reluctance. There were witnesses to the events who were eliminated, and others too terrified by the mere fact of being questioned on these events. Such witnesses have no confidence whatsoever in the protective measures that they might be granted. We ourselves had to take meticulous precautions in respect of certain interlocutors to assure them of the strictest anonymity. We nevertheless found them trustworthy and were able to establish that their statements were confirmed by objectively verifiable facts. Our aim was not, however, to conduct a criminal investigation. But we can claim to have gathered evidence compelling enough to demand forcefully that the international bodies and the states concerned finally take every step to ensure that the truth is ascertained and the culprits clearly identified and called to account for their acts. The signs of collusion between the criminal class and high political and institutional office bearers are too numerous and too serious to be ignored. It is a fundamental right of Kosovo's citizens to know the truth, the whole truth, and also an indispensable condition for reconciliation between the communities and the country's prosperous future.

22. Before going into further detail regarding our investigations, I should like to express my appreciation to all those who helped me in carrying out this difficult and delicate assignment. First and foremost, I thank the committee secretariat, assisted by an outside

expert, as well as the authorities of the states we visited, and the able, courageous investigative journalists who shared certain information with us. I also owe special gratitude to the persons who have trusted in our professionalism, not least in our earnest duty to protect their identities so as not to place them in any danger.

2. Introductory commentary on sources

23. In the course of our inquiry, we have obtained testimonial and documentary accounts from several dozen primary sources, notably including: combatants and affiliates of various armed factions that participated in the hostilities in Kosovo; direct victims of violent crimes committed in Kosovo and the surrounding territories; family members of missing or deceased persons; current and former representatives of international justice institutions with jurisdiction over the events in Kosovo [primarily the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the European Union Rule of Law Mission (EULEX), and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY)]; representatives of national justice systems, including prosecutors with jurisdiction over events related to Kosovo [Office of the War Crimes Prosecutor in Belgrade; Office of the General Prosecutor in Tirana; prosecutors, police officers and state security officials in Pristina and in three surrounding states]; humanitarian agencies [including the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)[17] and the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP)]; and various members of civil society and human rights monitoring bodies who have investigated and reported on events related to Kosovo in the material period [including the Humanitarian Law Centre].

24. Naturally we have tried wherever possible to take these testimonies directly ourselves, either through on-the-record meetings or through confidential interviews, in the course of visiting Pristina, Tirana, Belgrade and other parts of the Balkan region. However, for a variety of reasons — including their "disappearance", for security reasons, their relocation overseas, and the constraints of our official programme of meetings while on mission in the region — some of the sources who provided these testimonies have not been available to meet with us in person.

25. Moreover, we have faced the same obstacles when trying to obtain truthful testimony about the alleged crimes of Kosovar Albanians, as have other investigative bodies throughout the past decade. The entrenched sense of loyalty to one's clansmen, and the concept of honour that was perhaps best captured in expert reporting to the ICTY in its deliberations in the case of Limaj et al.,[18] rendered most ethnic Albanian witnesses unreachable for us. Having

seen two prominent prosecutions undertaken by the ICTY leading to the deaths of so many witnesses, and ultimately a failure to deliver justice,[19] a Parliamentary Assembly rapporteur with only paltry resources in comparison was hardly likely to overturn the odds of such witnesses speaking to us directly.

26. Numerous persons who have worked for many years in Kosovo, and who have become among the most respected commentators on justice in the region, counselled us that organised criminal networks of Albanians ("the Albanian mafia") in Albania itself, in neighbouring territories including Kosovo and "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", and in the Diaspora, were probably more difficult to penetrate than the *Cosa Nostra*; even low-level operatives would rather take a prison sentence of several decades, or a conviction for contempt, than turn in their clansmen.

27. Thus, out of necessity and only where appropriate, we have relied on audio and video recordings of interviews with key sources conducted by others. In such instances, we have undertaken every possible step to establish the identity, authenticity and credibility of the sources for ourselves; we have compared their testimonies with information from separate, independent sources of which they could have had no knowledge; and we have gained first-hand insights from the interviewers into the circumstances and conditions in which the interviews were conducted.

28. The interviewers who conducted these interviews include representatives of law enforcement authorities in several different countries, academic researchers, and investigative journalists of recognised repute and credibility. We have always insisted on corroboration of testimony.

3. Detailed findings of our inquiry

3.1. The overall picture

29. The overall picture that emerges from our inquiry differs dramatically in several respects from the conventional portrayal of the Kosovo conflict. Indeed, while there was certainly an intensely fought battle for the destiny of the territory of Kosovo, there were very few instances in which opposing armed factions confronted one another on any kind of military frontlines.

30. The abhorrent abuses of the Serb military and police structures in trying to subjugate and ultimately to expel the ethnic Albanian population of Kosovo are well known and documented.

31. The evidence we have uncovered is perhaps most significant in that it often contradicts the much-touted image of the Kosovo

Liberation Army as a guerrilla army that fought valiantly to defend the right of its people to inhabit the territory of Kosovo.

32. While there were undoubtedly numerous brave soldiers in the KLA ranks who were willing to go to the warfront in the face of considerable adversity, and if necessary die for the cause of an independent Kosovar Albanian motherland, these fighters were not necessarily in the majority.

33. From the testimony we have managed to amass, the policy and strategy of some KLA leaders were much more complex than a simple agenda to overpower their Serb oppressors.

34. On the one hand, the KLA leadership coveted recognition and support from foreign partners including, notably, the United States Government. Towards this end, the KLA's internationally wellconnected "spokesmen" had to fulfil certain promises to their partners and sponsors, and/or adhere to particular terms of engagement that were the *de facto* conditions of their receiving support from overseas.

35. On the other hand, though, a number of the senior commanders of the KLA have reportedly not failed to profit from the war, including by securing material and personal benefits for themselves.

They wanted to secure access to resources for themselves and their family/clan members, notably through positions of power in political office or in lucrative industries such as petroleum, construction and real estate. They wanted to avenge what they perceived as historical injustices perpetrated against the Albanian population in the former Yugoslavia. And many of them were seemingly bent on profiteering to the maximum of their potential while they had operational control of certain lawless territories (namely in parts of southern and western Kosovo), and leverage — especially in terms of financial resources — with which to negotiate footholds for themselves in other territories (for example in Albania).

36. The reality is that the most significant operational activities undertaken by members of the KLA — prior to, during, and in the immediate aftermath of the conflict — took place on the territory of Albania, where the Serb security forces were never deployed.

3.2. KLA factionalism and the nexus with organised crime

37. For more than two years after its initial emergence in 1996, the KLA was regarded as a marginal, loosely organised insurgency, whose attacks on the Yugoslav state were held by Western observers to amount to acts of "terrorism".

38. Our sources close to the KLA, along with the testimonies of captured KLA members gathered by Serb police, confirm that the

main locations at which KLA recruits congregated and trained were in northern Albania.

39. It is well established that weapons and ammunition were smuggled into parts of Kosovo, often on horseback, through clandestine, mountainous routes from northern Albania. Serb police attributed these events to criminal raids on the part of bandits who wanted to carry out terrorist acts against Serbian security forces. The Albanian Kosovars and Albanian citizens who were involved in the smuggling operations presented them as heroic acts of resistance in the face of Serb oppression.

40. The domestic strengthening of the KLA, in terms of its fighting capability as well as its credibility among the Kosovo Albanian population, seemed to play out, especially in the course of 1998, along the same trajectory as the escalating brutality of the Serb military and police.

41. Yet only in the second half of 1998, through explicit endorsements from Western powers, founded on lobbying from the United States, did the KLA secure its pre-eminence in international perception as the vanguard of the Kosovar Albanian liberation struggle.

42. This perceived pre-eminence was the KLA's most valuable, indispensable asset. It spurred the wealthiest donors in the Albanian Diaspora to channel significant funds to the KLA. It bestowed individual KLA representatives with an enhanced authority to speak and act on behalf of the Kosovar Albanians as a whole. And it cast the KLA's leading personalities as the most likely power brokers in the Kosovo that would emerge from the war.

43. Indeed, the perception of KLA pre-eminence — largely created by the Americans — was a selffulfilling prophecy, the bedrock upon which the KLA achieved actual ascendancy over other Kosovar Albanian political forces with designs on power, such as Ibrahim Rugova's Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) and Bujar Bukoshi's "Government-in-exile".

44. According to our insider sources, the KLA fought just as hard, and devoted arguably more of its resources and political capital, to maintain its advantage over its ethnic Albanian rival factions as it did to carry out co-ordinated military actions against the Serbs.

45. At the same time, it should be restated, for emphasis, that the KLA was not a single, unitary combatant faction in the manner of a conventional Army. There was no formally appointed overall leader, or "commander-in-chief", whose authority was universally recognised by the other commanders and whose orders were met with compliance among all the rank and file.

46. Rather, as the struggle over Kosovo's future governance evolved and a full-blown conflict approached, the KLA was divided by a deep-rooted internal factionalism.

47. Important sources of division included divergent political ambitions, as well as disparate notions of the acceptable parameters of violent resistance, on the part of the KLA's most prominent personalities and leadership contenders.

48. Thus there emerged in 1998 and 1999, and particularly in the wake of the death of the KLA's celebrated peasant commander Adem Jashari,[20] several different KLA "splinter groups".

49. Each of these splinter groups was led by one of the KLA's self-proclaimed founder members.

Each group comprised a loyal core of recruits and supporters, often drawn from among a few closely affiliated clans or families, and/or concentrated in an identifiable geographical territory of Kosovo. Each group identified their own leader as the brightest hope to lead the KLA's fight against the Serbs, and by extension, to achieve self-determination for the Kosovar Albanian people, whilst co-operating with the other KLA commanders on the basis of expediency.

50. Evidently it is the composition and leadership of these KLA "splinter groups", along with the pre-existing popularity of the Democratic League of Kosovo, which carried over beyond the liberation struggle and have essentially shaped the post-conflict political landscape of Kosovo.[21]

51. Incumbency of the highest executive offices in Kosovo has been shared among former leading KLA commanders for the last decade and most electoral political campaigns have been contested on the basis of the candidates' respective contributions to the liberation struggle, as well as their ability to promote the interests of the Kosovar Albanian people on an ongoing basis against known and unknown adversaries.

52. The various KLA "splinter groups" have been found to have developed and maintained their own intelligence structures, among other forms of self-preservation. Through whatever means available to them, and clearly on the fringes of the legal and regulatory systems, the keenest purveyors of this *de facto* form of continued KLA warfare have conducted surveillance of, and often sought to sabotage, the activities of their opponents and those who might jeopardise their political or business interests.[22]

53. Furthermore, we found[23] that the structures of KLAunits had been shaped, to a significant degree, according to the hierarchies, allegiances and codes of honour that prevail among the ethnic Albanian clans, or extended families, and which form a *de facto* set

of laws, known as the Kanun, in the regions of Kosovo from which their commanders originated.

54. Based on analytical information we received from several international monitoring missions, corroborated by our own sources in European law enforcement agencies and among former KLA fighters, we found that the main KLA units and their respective zones of operational command corresponded in an almost perfect mirror image to the structures that controlled the various forms of organised crime in the territories in which the KLA was active.

55. Put simply, establishing which circle of KLA commanders and affiliates was in charge of a particular region where the KLA operated in Kosovo, and indeed in certain parts of the Albania, was the key to understanding who was running the bulk of the particular trafficking or smuggling activity that flourished there.

56. Most pertinent to our research, we found that a small but inestimably powerful group of KLA personalities apparently wrested control of most of the illicit criminal enterprises in which Kosovar Albanians were involved in the Republic of Albania, beginning at the latest in 1998.

57. This group of prominent KLA personalities styled itself as the "Drenica Group", evoking connections with the Drenica Valley in Kosovo,[24] a traditional heartland of ethnic Albanian resistance to Serb oppression under Milosevic, and the birthplace of the KLA.

58. We found that the "Drenica Group" had as its chief — or, to use the terminology of organised crime networks, its "boss" — the renowned political operator and perhaps most internationally recognised personality of the KLA, Hashim Thaqi.[25]

59. Thaqi can be seen to have spearheaded the KLA's rise to pre-eminence in the lead-up to the Rambouillet negotiations, both on the ground in Kosovo, and overseas. He also did much to foment the bitter internal factionalism that characterised the KLA throughout 1998 and 1999.

60. On the one hand, Thaqi undoubtedly owed his personal elevation to having secured political and diplomatic endorsement[26] from the United States and other Western powers, as the preferred domestic partner in their foreign policy project in Kosovo. This form of political support bestowed upon Thaqi, not least in his own mind, a sense of being "untouchable" and an unparalleled viability as Kosovo's post-war leader-in-waiting.

61. On the other hand, according to well-substantiated intelligence reports that we have examined thoroughly and corroborated through interviews in the course of our inquiry, Thaqi's "Drenica Group" built a formidable power base in the organised criminal enterprises that were flourishing in Kosovo and Albania at the time.

62. In this regard, Thaqi reportedly operated with support and complicity not only from Albania's formal governance structures, including the Socialist Government in power at the time, but also from Albania's secret services and from the formidable Albanian mafia.

63. Many KLA commanders remained on Albanian territory, some even operating out of the Albanian capital Tirana, throughout the ensuing hostilities and beyond.

64. During the period of the NATO aerial bombardment, which lasted several weeks, perhaps the principal shift in the balance of power in Kosovo occurred as a result of the influx of foreigners into the region, in both overt and implicit support of the KLA cause. Unable to gain access directly to the territory of Kosovo, most of this foreign support was channelled through Albania.

65. In tacit acknowledgement of the safe harbour afforded to them by the sympathetic Albanian authorities, but also because it was more practical and more convenient for them to continue operating on the terrain with which they were familiar, several of the KLA's key commanders allegedly established protection rackets in the areas where their own clansmen were prevalent in Albania, or where they could find common cause with established organised criminals involved in such activities as human trafficking, sale of stolen motor vehicles, and the sex trade.

66. Notably, in confidential reports spanning more than a decade, agencies dedicated to combating drug smuggling in at least five countries have named Hashim Thaqi and other members of his "Drenica Group" as having exerted violent control over the trade in heroin and other narcotics.[27]

67. Similarly, intelligence analysts working for NATO, as well as those in the service of at least four independent foreign governments,[28] made compelling findings through their intelligencegathering related to the immediate aftermath of the conflict in 1999. Thaqi was commonly identified, and cited in secret intelligence reports, as the most dangerous of the KLA's "criminal bosses".[29]

68. Several further known members of Thaqi's "Drenica Group" have been indicated to us in the course of our research to have played vital roles as co-conspirators in various categories of criminal activity. They include Xhavit Haliti, Kadri Veseli, Azem Syla and Fatmir Limaj. All of these men have been investigated repeatedly in the last decade as suspects in war crimes or organised criminal enterprises, including in major cases led by prosecutors under UNMIK, the ICTY[30] and EULEX. To the present day, however, all of them have evaded effective justice.

69. Everything leads us to believe that all of these men would have been convicted of serious crimes and would by now be serving

lengthy prison sentences, but for two shocking dynamics that have consolidated their impunity: first, they appear to have succeeded in eliminating, or intimidating into silence, the majority of the potential and actual witnesses against them (both enemies and erstwhile allies), using violence, threats, blackmail and protection rackets; and second, there has been faltering political will on the part of the international community to effectively prosecute the former leaders of the KLA. This also seems to have allowed Thaqi — and by extension the other members of the "Drenica Group" — to exploit their position in order to accrue personal wealth totally out of proportion with their declared activities.

70. Thaqi and these other "Drenica Group" members are consistently named as "key players" in intelligence reports on Kosovo's mafia-like structures of organised crime.[31] I have examined these diverse, voluminous reports with consternation and a sense of moral outrage.

71. What is particularly confounding is that all of the international community in Kosovo — from the Governments of the United States and other allied Western powers, to the European Union-backed justice authorities — undoubtedly possesses the same, overwhelming documentation of the full extent of the Drenica Group's crimes,[32] but none seems prepared to react in the face of such a situation and to hold the perpetrators to account.

72. Our first-hand sources alone have credibly implicated Haliti, Veseli, Syla and Limaj, alongside Thaqi and other members of his inner circle, in having ordered — and in some cases personally overseen — assassinations, detentions, beatings and interrogations in various parts of Kosovo and, of particular interest to our work, in the context of KLA-led operations on the territory of Albania, between 1998 and 2000.

73. Members of the "Drenica Group" are also said to have asserted control of substantial funds placed at the disposal of the KLA to support its war effort.[33] In several instances, this group was allegedly able to strike deals with established international networks of organised criminals, enabling expansion and diversification into new areas of "business", and the opening of new smuggling routes into other parts of Europe.

74. Specifically, in our determination, the leaders of the "Drenica Group" seem to bear the greatest responsibility for two sets of unacknowledged crimes described in this report: for running the KLA's ad hoc network of detention facilities on the territory of Albania;[34] and for determining the fate of the prisoners who were held in those facilities, including the many abducted civilians brought over the border into Albania from Kosovo.

75. In understanding how these crimes descended into a further form of inhumanity, namely the forcible extraction of human organs for the purposes of trafficking, we have identified another KLA personality who apparently belongs to the leading co-conspirators: Shaip Muja.

76. Up to a point, Shaip Muja's personal biography in the liberation struggle of the Kosovar Albanians resembles those of other "Drenica Group" members, including Hashim Thaqi himself: from student activist in the early 1990s,[35] to one of an elite group of KLA "co-ordinators" based in Albania,[36] to Cabinet member of the Provisional Government of Kosovo, and leading commander in the post-war Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC),[37] reinvented as a civilian politician in the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) and, finally, becoming an influential office holder in the current Kosovo authorities.[38]

77. The common thread running through all of Muja's roles is his involvement in the medical sector. We do not take it lightly that he presents himself, and is accepted in many quarters, as "Dr Shaip Muja": purportedly not only a medical doctor and general surgeon, but also a humanitarian and progressive practitioner.[39]

78. We have uncovered numerous convergent indications of Muja's central role for more than a decade in far less laudable international networks, comprising human traffickers, brokers of illicit surgical procedures and other perpetrators of organised crime.

79. These indications and elements of proof have prompted us to suspect that Muja has derived much of his access, his cover and his impunity as an organised criminal from having maintained an apparently legitimate medical "career" in parallel. There is an analogy to be drawn here with the way that Thaqi and other "Drenica Group" members have used their own roles in public office, and often in international diplomacy. The difference in Muja's case is that his profile in organised crime is scarcely known outside of the criminal networks he has worked with and the few investigators who have tracked them.

80. According to the testimonies of our sources who were party to KLA operations in Albania, as well as other military and political compatriots who know Shaip Muja intimately, Muja managed to acquire and retain crucial behind-the-scenes influence over the affairs of the KLA in the defining period in the late 1990s when it was garnering international support.

81. Then, in the period of hostilities in northern Albania and around the Kosovo border, coinciding with the NATO intervention in 1999, Muja, in common with most of his fellow KLA commanders, reportedly stayed well clear of the frontlines, maintaining the KLA's operational power base in Tirana.

82. Together with Haliti and Veseli, in particular, Muja became involved in finding innovative ways to make use of, and to invest, the millions of dollars of "war funds" that had been donated to the KLA cause from overseas. Muja and Veseli reportedly also began, on behalf of the "Drenica Group", to make connections with foreign private military and private security companies.[40]

83. We found it particularly relevant that Thaqi's "Drenica Group" can be seen to have seized such advantage from two principal changes in circumstances after 12 June 1999.

84. First, the withdrawal of the Serb security forces from Kosovo had ceded into the hands of various KLA splinter groups, including Thaqi's "Drenica Group", effectively unfettered control of an expanded territorial area in which to carry out various forms of smuggling and trafficking.

85. KFOR and UNMIK were incapable of administering Kosovo's law enforcement, movement of peoples, or border control, in the aftermath of the NATO bombardment in 1999. KLA factions and splinter groups that had control of distinct areas of Kosovo (villages, stretches of road, sometimes even individual buildings) were able to run organised criminal enterprises almost at will, including in disposing of the trophies of their perceived victory over the Serbs.

86. Second, Thaqi's acquisition of a greater degree of political authority (Thaqi having appointed himself Prime Minister of the Provisional Government of Kosovo) had seemingly emboldened the "Drenica Group" to strike out all the more aggressively at perceived rivals, traitors, and persons suspected of being "collaborators" with the Serbs.

87. Our sources told us that both KLA commanders and rank-and-file members were exasperated by the heavy toll inflicted on the ethnic Albanian population of Kosovo, particularly in 1998 and early 1999 before and during the NATO intervention. As the Serb police and paramilitary forces retreated from Kosovo in June 1999, KLA units from northern Albania were deployed into Kosovo with the ostensible objective of "securing the territory", but fuelled by an irrepressible anger, and even vengeance, towards anyone whom they believed had contributed towards the oppression of the ethnic Albanian people.

88. Serb inhabitants of predominantly ethnic Albanian communities quickly became targets for revenge. Other targets included anybody suspected — even upon the basis of baseless accusations by members of rival clans or persons who held long-standing vendettas against them — of having "collaborated with" or served Serb officialdom. In a door-to-door campaign of intimidation, KLA foot soldiers were ordered to collect names of persons who had worked

for the ousted authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (in however trivial an administrative function), or whose relatives or associates had done so. Into this category of putative "collaborators" fell large numbers of ethnic Albanians, as well as Roma and other minorities.

89. Against this background, our account of abuses committed by KLA members and affiliates in Albania goes well beyond one-off aberrations on the part of rogue or renegade elements within an otherwise disciplined fighting force. On the contrary, we find these abuses widespread enough to constitute a pattern.

90. While certain acts speak to a particular brutality or disregard for the victims on the part of individual perpetrators, we find that in their general character these abuses were seemingly coordinated and covered up according to a premeditated, albeit evolving, overarching strategy on the part of the leadership of the "Drenica Group".

91. In general terms, the abuses were symptomatic of the prevalence of organised criminality inside the KLA's dominant internal faction. Holding persons captive in makeshift places of detention, outside the knowledge or reach of authority, and contriving ways of silencing anyone who might have found out about the true nature of the illicit activities in which the captors are engaged, count as tried and trusted methodologies of most mafia structures — and the "Drenica Group" was no different.

92. The "Drenica Group" itself apparently evolved from being part of an armed force, the KLA (ostensibly engaged in a war of liberation), into a conspicuously powerful band of criminal entrepreneurs (albeit one with designs on a form of "state capture"). In parallel, we have detected a transformation in the Group members' activities in one particular area of operations: detention facilities and the inhuman treatment of captives.

3.3. Detention facilities and inhuman treatment of captives

93. In the course of our inquiry, we have identified at least six separate detention facilities on the territory of the Republic of Albania, situated across a territory that spans from Cahan at the foot of Mount Pashtrik, almost at the northernmost tip of Albania, to the beachfront road in Durres, on the Mediterranean coast in the West of Albania.

94. The KLA did not have outright, permanent control of any part of this territory during the relevant time, but nor did any other agency or entity that might have been willing, or able, to enforce the law.

95. In particular, the lacuna in law enforcement was a reflection on the failure of the Albanian police and intelligence services to curb the mafia-like banditry and impunity of certain KLA units that had stationed themselves in northern and central Albania around the period of the conflict. The KLA's senior regional commanders were, in their respective areas of control, a law unto themselves.

96. The locations of the detention facilities about which we received testimony directly from our sources — corroborated by elements of proof gathered through the efforts of investigative journalists (some of which dates back ten years or more), and more recently through the efforts of EULEX investigators and prosecutors — included: Cahan, Kukës, Bicaj (vicinity), Burrel, Rripe (a village southwest of Burrel in Mat District), Durres and, perhaps most important of all for the purposes of ourspecific mandate, Fushë-Krujë.

97. We were able to undertake visits to the sites of two such KLA detention facilities in Albania in the course of our inquiry, although we did not enter the facilities themselves. Additionally, in respect of at least four other such facilities that we know to have existed, we have heard first-hand testimony from multiple persons whom we have confirmed as having visited one or more of the facilities in person, either at the time that they were actively being used by the KLA or on monitoring missions since.

98. The detention facilities in question were not resorted to independently or as self-standing entities. Rather, these detention facilities existed as elements of a well-established, co-ordinated and joined-up network of unlawful activity, of which certain senior KLA commanders maintained control and oversight. The common denominator between all of the facilities was that civilians were held captive therein, on Albanian territory, in the hands of members and affiliates of the KLA.

99. The graphic map included in this report depicts the locations at which we know such detention facilities existed, along with the transport routes connecting them.

100. There were, nonetheless, considerable differences in the periods and purposes for which each of these detention facilities was used. Indeed, it is evident that each detention facility had its own distinct "operational profile", including with regard to: the manner of the relationships formed or deals made to enable detentions and related operations to take place there at different times, the character and composition of the groups of captives held there, the means by which the captives arrived there, and the fates awaiting those captives during and at the end of their respective periods of detention.

101. We shall begin by describing some of the general characteristics of KLA detentions in wartime (some of which seem to meet

the threshold for war crimes) and post-conflict detentions carried out by KLA members and affiliates (which appear to constitute an organised criminal enterprise). Thereafter, we will examine more closely what happened at each of the detention facilities on the territory of Albania.

3.3.1. KLA detentions in wartime — First subset of captives: the "prisoners of war"

102. In the period between April and June 1999, KLA detentions on Albanian territory were discernibly based on the perceived strategic imperatives of fighting a guerrilla war.

103. During the time of war and the attendant mass movements of refugees into Albania, the KLA reportedly implemented a policy under which all persons suspected of having the slightest knowledge about the acts of Serb authorities, particularly those who were suspected of having been "collaborators", should be subjected to "interrogation".

104. We were told that this policy was supported actively on the territory of Albania by powerful elements within the Albanian national intelligence apparatus, including SHIK (now SHISH) and military intelligence, some of whose members even participated in asking questions of captives held at KLA detention camps. However, the driving force behind the policy was Kadri Veseli (alias Luli), a lynchpin of the "Drenica Group".

105. The detention facilities at which the "interrogations" purportedly took place — particularly those closer to the border with Kosovo — doubled as military "bases" or "camps" at which training exercises were performed and from which frontline troops were dispatched, or re-supplied with arms and ammunition. They included disused or appropriated commercial properties (including a hotel and a factory) in or on the outskirts of larger provincial towns, which had essentially been given over to the KLA by sympathetic Albanians who supported the patriotic cause.

106. At times these wartime camps were used simultaneously as detention facilities and other purposes, such as: parking vehicles or storing caches of military hardware, stockpiling of logistics or supplies like uniforms and rifles, conducting repairs on broken-down vehicles, treating injured comrades or for holding meetings between different KLA commanders.

107. For the most part, however, the captives were purportedly kept separate from what might have been considered as conventional "wartime" activities, and indeed the captives were largely insulated from exposure to most KLA fighters or external observers who might have visited the KLA's bases.

108. If all of the captives detained in KLA facilities on the territory of Albania were divided into subsets of the overall group according to the fates they met, then in our understanding the smallest subset of all comprises the "prisoners of war": those who were held purely for the duration of the Kosovo conflict, many of whom escaped or were released from Albania, returned home safely to Kosovo, and are alive today.

109. We are aware of there being "survivors" in this category, who have gone on to bear witness to the crimes of individual KLA commanders, who were held in facilities at one or more of the following three detention locations:

— Cahan: KLA camp close to the Kosovo warfront, also used as a "jump station" from which to deploy troops;

— Kukes: former metal factory converted into a multi-purpose KLA facility, including at least two "cellblocks" to house detainees;

— Durres: KLA interrogation site at the back of the Hotel Drenica, the KLA's headquarters and recruitment centre.

110. Based on source testimonies, along with material contained in indictments issued by the Office of the Special Prosecutor for the Republic of Kosovo, we estimate that a cumulative total of at least 40 persons, each held in one or more of the three above-named detention locations, were detained by the KLA[41] and have survived to the present day.

111. This subset comprised mostly ethnic Albanian civilians — as well as some KLA recruits — suspected of being "collaborators" or traitors, either on the premise that they had spied for the Serbs or because they were thought to have belonged to, or supported, the KLA's political and military rivals, especially the LDK and the emergent Armed Forces of the Republic of Kosovo (FARK).[42]

112. Persons in this subset were targeted primarily for interrogation and several have described being asked questions while being treated roughly by KLA and Albanian intelligence officers. However, during further periods of detention that went on to last from a few days to more than a month, most of these captives were ultimately beaten and mistreated gratuitously by their captors, in what appeared to be measures of punishment, intimidation and terror.

113. The KLA commanders accused of having been in charge of these detention locations included Sabit Geqi, Riza Alija (alias "Commander Hoxhaj") and Xhemshit Krasniqi. All three men featured prominently in previous UNMIK investigations into war crimes in northern Albania; all three have now been named in indictments of the Office of the Special Prosecutor of Kosovo and should soon stand trial in the Kosovo District Court;[43] their properties have been extensively searched.

114. The evidence gathered in the course of these processes seem to indicate that these KLA operatives — along with their Regional Commander for northern Albania, the now deceased Xheladin Gashi — were aligned with the "Drenica Group", under the direction of Hashim Thaqi, and were acting in concert with, among others, Kadri Veseli.

3.3.1.1. Case study on the nature of the facilities: Cahan

115. The camp in Cahan was the furthest north of all the facilities in Albania used by the KLA, and was accordingly most closely tied to activities at the warfront.[44] We have found no indication that captives were taken out of Cahan to other detention facilities in Albania, although we cannot rule it out.

116. It seems that the deeper into Albanian territory a facility's physical location, the less directly it related to the KLA's war effort and the more entrenched its connection proved to be with the underworld of organised crime. Cahan had largely been apprehended in an arbitrary and relatively spontaneous fashion, often in the course of KLA patrols in the vicinity of the camp itself or at checkpoints on the border crossing between Kosovo and Albania.

118. The persons in this first subset were apparently mostly released when warfront hostilities ceased and the Serb security forces had withdrawn from their positions inside Kosovo, in June 1999.

The survival of these captives in significant numbers is demonstrated not least by the listing of more than a dozen named persons with the status of "injured parties/witnesses" in criminal proceedings against the commanders of the Cahan and Kukes sites.

3.3.1.2. Case study on the nature of the facilities: Kukës

119. Among the specific sites at which civilian captives were secretly detained in the custody of the KLA, we obtained extensive details about a KLA base at a disused factory building on the outskirts of the northern Albanian town of Kukes.

120. Two first-hand witnesses explained to us how prisoners had been brought to the Kukes site, where they were thrown into makeshift cellblocks, left in insanitary conditions without food and water, and were visited periodically by KLA soldiers to be questioned under harsh treatment, or indiscriminately beaten.

121. The extent of the ill-treatment suffered by prisoners at this facility has been meticulously documented, *inter alia,* by Kosovar and international personnel working in the Office of the Special Prosecutor of Kosovo. In statements given to prosecutors in 2009

and 2010, more than ten individuals — almost all of them ethnic Albanians — described having been detained indefinitely, struck brutally with sticks and other objects, and subjected to various forms of inhuman treatment at the Kukes site.

Several witnesses stated that screams of agony from persons held in separate sets of cellblocks could be heard filtering through the corridors.

122. The Government of Albania has stated that there are no bodies of deceased persons related to the Kosovo conflict buried on the territory of Albania, and indeed that there never were. The case of Kukes proves that this claim is manifestly untrue.

123. First, there are bodies that were cast into rivers in Kosovo and have been carried downstream over the border into Albania. The exhumation of such bodies and the recovery of their remains by representatives of the Office of Missing Persons and Forensics in Kosovo would be relatively "uncontroversial" — but even intervention on these cases has been strongly resisted by the Albanian authorities.

124. Second, there are known individual cases in which the bodies of murdered Kosovars have been identified as having been interred in Albania. These cases have led — in instances documented by both Albanian and international journalists, and made known to us — to prolonged, albeit discreet, negotiations between the families of these Kosovars and the authorities administering the cemetery site(s) in Albania. Ultimately, and of particular note, in one case explained to us in detail by a firsthand source, bodies have been exhumed and repatriated to Kosovo for a proper burial by the families.

The Albanian authorities told us that they knew of no such cases.

125. Third, there are allegations of the existence of mass grave sites on Albanian territory. The Serbian War Crimes Prosecutors' Office stated to us that they have in their possession satellite photographs of the areas in which these mass graves are located — but up to now, the sites themselves have not yet been found, despite a formal request made by the Serbian authorities to the Albanian authorities to carry out searches.

126. We obtained records from the local cemetery in Kukes, which seem to carry a significant confirmation: bodies of persons from Kosovo had indeed been buried in northern Albania. The most important document was a five-page "List of deceased immigrants from Kosovo, 28 March 1999 — 17 June 1999", which was prepared by the Supervisor of Public Services in the Municipality of Kukes, northern Albania.

127. The document has subsequently been admitted as evidence in the District Court of Mitrovica, Kosovo, upon submission of the

Special Prosecutors' Office of Kosovo. One of the deceased persons on the list — Anton Bisaku, featured at No. 138 — was found to have been among the known victims of secret detention and inhuman treatment at the KLA facility located in Kukes, Albania.

128. According to an indictment issued in August 2010, Bisaku and an unspecified number of other civilians held in detention in Kukes were "repeatedly beaten and struck with sticks and batons, kicked, verbally abused and tortured". In charging the defendant Sabit Geci with "War Crimes Against Civilian Population", including "the killing of a civilian at Kukes, one Anton Bisaku who was beaten and shot", the EULEX Special Prosecutor stated that Bisaku was "killed as a result of gunfire directed at him during a session of inhuman treatment, beating and torture which occurred on or about 4 June 1999".

3.3.2. Post-conflict detentions carried out by KLA members and affiliates

129. After 12 June 1999, Kosovar Albanians continued to detain persons for a variety of motives, including revenge, punishment and profit. The perpetrators — all of whom were, according to our sources, KLA members and affiliates — thereafter fashioned their own novel means of apprehending and abusing civilians, and transporting them out of Kosovo to new detention facilities in Albania, distinct from those that had been operated by the KLA in wartime.

130. In the months directly after the declared end of the Kosovo conflict in June 1999, members and affiliates of the KLA purportedly delivered scores of persons they had abducted into secret detention on Albanian territory.

131. It is of grave concern to us, and should be a priority for investigation and resolution on the part of the Albanian authorities, that the vast majority of the persons whom we found to have been so treated remain unaccounted for to the present day, including numerous ethnic Albanians.

132. According to our information, there was not just one facility in Albania at which this postconflict form of secret detention took place — there was a whole ad hoc network of such facilities, joined up by frequent journeys between them on Albania's provincial roads, and across the porous, chaotic (especially at the time of the mass refugee movements in mid-1999) border between Kosovo and Albania.

133. We were able to access corroborated, first-hand testimony from former KLA fighters and auxiliaries who carried out multiple transports into and between the facilities named in our report, as well as transports of captives out of most of them.

134. On these journeys, KLA recruits and affiliates reportedly drove unmarked private vehicles, including trucks and vans, sometimes in convoys, between one facility and the next. They transported KLA personnel and logistics, provisions of food, alcohol or cigarettes, and groups of women who would be exploited for sex. Most significantly, in the months from July 1999 until as late as August 2000, they also transported captives.

135. The facilities in which captives were detained in the post-conflict period differed in character from the wartime facilities: we have found that they were primarily rustic private residences in rural or suburban areas, including traditional Albanian farmhouses and their storage barns.

136. There was, in addition, at least one custom-built element to the post-conflict network of detention facilities, which was unique in appearance and purpose. It constituted a state-of-the-art reception centre for the organised crime of organ trafficking. It was styled as a makeshift operating clinic, and it was the site at which some of the captives held by KLA members and affiliates had their kidneys removed against their will. According to our sources, the ringleaders of this criminal enterprise then shipped the human organs out of Albania and sold them to private clinics overseas as part of the international "black market" of organ-trafficking for transplantation.

3.3.2.1. Second subset of captives: the "disappeared"

137. The captives in this subset were victims of enforced disappearance: none has been seen, heard of or accounted for, since being abducted from Kosovo, in the weeks and months directly after 12 June 1999.

138. The orchestrators of this post-conflict criminal enterprise had apparently put in place a process of filtering, whereby a smaller number of captives was picked out selectively from each larger group and moved on to somewhere else. The evidence suggests that the rationale behind the process of filtering captives in this manner was linked to a determination of the suitability of the chosen captives for the use that awaited them.

139. Factors thought to have played into the filtering process, as recounted to us by multiple sources, included age, sex, state of health, and indeed the ethnic origin of the captives, ethnic Serbs having been targeted primarily.

140. We heard numerous references to captives not merely having been handed over, but also having been "bought" and "sold". It was as a result of these references that we tried to understand more clearly the intersection between the abductions and undeclared

detentions in the context of the conflict, and the activities of organised crime, which was and still is prevalent in many sectors of daily life in the region.

3.3.2.1.1. Case study on the nature of the facilities: Rripe

141. In the course of our inquiry, we established that at least three sources whose testimonies we obtained were unquestionably physically present at the house of the K. family in Rripe near Burrel (the much-cited "yellow house") in the context of KLA criminal enterprises.

142. Each of these sources was able to recount unique and specific details regarding the precise location and appearance of the house, the background of its proprietor, the KLA personnel posted there, and the character and commandership of the illegal activities that took place in the house in the period from 1999 to 2000.

143. Based upon these source testimonies, it can be concluded that the K. house was occupied by, and under the control of the KLA, which was part of a network that operated throughout most of the northern half of Albania.

144. A small group of KLA commanders reportedly ordered and oversaw multiple deliveries of civilian captives to the K. house over a period of up to a year, from July 1999 until mid-2000. Most of these captives had been abducted from the provincial areas of southern Kosovo and brought into Albania using the methods of transportation described in this report. Unlike those held in Kukes, the captives brought to Rripe were predominantly ethnic Serbs.

145. In addition, sources close to the KLA spoke of a large number of trafficked women and girls being brought to the K. house, where they were exploited for sex not only by the KLA personnel, but also by some of the menfolk in the Rripe community.

146. During the period in which the KLA maintained a presence at the K. house, the silence of the inhabitants of Rripe as to the presence of KLA units and their activities was obtained by threats, but also by "pay-offs", including significant sums of money, as well as free access to alcohol, drugs and prostitutes.

147. There are substantial elements of proof that a small number of KLA captives, including some of the abducted ethnic Serbs, met their death in Rripe, at or in the vicinity of the K. house. We have learned about these deaths not only through the testimonies of former KLA soldiers who said they had participated in detaining and transporting the captives while they were alive, but also through the testimonies of persons who independently witnessed the burial, disinterment, movement and reburial of the captives' corpses, both

while the KLA was occupying the K. house, and in the period after the KLA had vacated the K. house and the family inhabitants had returned.

148. Our findings in relation to the K. house appear to corroborate, to a large extent, the findings made by a team of investigative journalists working for the United States-based documentary producers "American Radio Works". These findings were summed up in a confidential internal memo submitted to UNMIK in 2003, which in turn gave rise to the investigative mission to the K. house referred to above.

149. Yet, the testimonies we gathered also revealed a dimension to the KLA's operations at the K. house that had not previously been reported, either by the American Radio Works team, or in the memoirs of former ICTY Chief Prosecutor Carla Del Ponte, or in the successive "revelations" in the media.

150. KLA operatives in fact not only dropped off captives at Rripe, but apparently also picked up captives from Rripe, for transportation onwards to different detention facilities. According to the testimonies of drivers involved in transporting the captives, some of the persons they picked up at Rripe were the same persons they had brought from Kosovo, while others had arrived at Rripe from a different and unknown provenance, which the drivers never found out.

151. The K. house was therefore not the endpoint, or ultimate destination, in this joined-up network of detention facilities and captive transports. Its precise role, its importance to the whole operation, was perhaps previously misconstrued.

152. The K. house appears in fact to have had the character of more of a "way station", at which captives were held in transit to their ultimate fate, and according to certain sources, subjected to apparently strange forms of "processing"/"filtering", including the testing of their blood and physical condition.

3.3.2.1.2. Observations on the conditions of detention and transport

153. Captives were reportedly held incommunicado under constant armed guard at these detention facilities, either in rooms that were part of the main buildings, or in barns, garages, warehouses or other adjoining structures designed for storage.

154. During the transport between these buildings, captives were routinely bundled into vans and trucks, restrained by binding their hands behind their backs, and tied to internal fixtures of the vehicle.

155. The drivers of these vans and trucks — several of whom would become crucial witnesses to the patterns of abuse described

— saw and heard captives suffering greatly during the transports, notably due to the lack of a proper air supply in their compartment of the vehicle, or due to the psychological torment of the fate that they supposed awaited them.

3.3.2.2. Third subset of captives: the "victims of organised crime"

156. The last and most conspicuous subset of captives in the post-conflict period, not least because its fate has been greatly sensationalised and widely misunderstood, comprises the captives we regard as having been the "victims of organised crime". Among this subset are a handful of persons whom we found were taken into central Albania to be murdered immediately before having their kidneys removed in a makeshift operating clinic.

157. The captives in this subset undoubtedly endured a most horrifying ordeal in the custody of their KLA captors. According to source testimonies, the captives "filtered" into this final subset were initially kept alive, fed well and allowed to sleep, and treated with relative restraint by KLA guards and henchmen who would otherwise have beaten them up indiscriminately.

158. The captives were, as we were told, each moved through at least two transitory detention facilities, or "way stations", before being delivered to the operating clinic. These "way stations", apparently controlled by KLA operatives and affiliates aligned to the "Drenica Group", were situated *inter alia* in the following detention locations:

— Bicaj (vicinity): an apparently privately-owned house in a small village south of Bicaj, in a rural setting not far removed from the main road towards Peshkopi;

— Burrel: on the outskirts of the town of Burrel, a compound containing at least two individual structures in which captives were locked up, as well as a house in which operatives congregated and rested;

— Rripe: the two-storey, self-standing farmhouse referred to as the K. house, or the "Yellow House", which was subject to a combined UNMIK/ICTY forensic site visit in 2004 after being identified by investigative journalists;

— Fushë-Krujë: another detached, two-storey farmhouse removed from the main roads and enclosed within a large compound, which reportedly served as a "safe house" not only for KLA affiliates, but for other groups of organised criminals involved in smuggling drugs and trafficking in human beings.

3.3.2.2.1. Case study on the nature of the facilities: Fushë-Krujë

159. It was in the last of the locations discovered in our investigations, Fushë-Krujë, that the process of "filtering" purportedly reached its end point, and the small, select group of KLA captives who were brought this far met their death.

160. There are strong indications, from source testimonies we have obtained, that in the process of being moved through the transitory sites, at least some of these captives became aware of the ultimate fate that awaited them. In detention facilities where they were held in earshot of other trafficked persons, and in the course of being transported, some of these captives are said to have pleaded with their captors to be spared the fate of being "chopped into pieces".[45]

161. At the latest, when their blood was drawn by syringe for testing (a step that appears to have been akin to "tissue typing", or determining levels of organ transplantation compatibility), or when they were physically examined by men referred to as "doctors", the captives must have been put on notice that they were being treated as some form of medical commodity. Sources described such tests and examinations having been undertaken in both Rripe and Fushë-Krujë.

162. The testimonies on which we based our findings spoke credibly and consistently of a methodology by which all of the captives were killed, usually by a gunshot to the head, before being operated on to remove one or more of their organs. We learned that this was principally a trade in "cadaver kidneys", that is to say the kidneys were extracted posthumously; it was not a set of advanced surgical procedures requiring controlled clinical conditions and, for example, the extensive use of anaesthetic.

163. We learned from distinct and independent KLA insider sources about diverse elements and perspectives of the organ-trafficking ring in action: on the one hand, from the perspective of drivers, bodyguards and other "fixers" who performed logistical and practical tasks aimed at delivering the human bodies to the operating clinic; and on the other hand, from the perspective of the "organisers", the criminal ringleaders who, as alleged, entered business deals to provide human organs for transplantation purposes in return for handsome financial rewards.

164. The practical dimension of the trafficking enterprise was relatively simple. Captives brought as far as the Fushë-Krujë area (which entailed an arduous drive of several hours onwards from Rripe or Burrel) were first held in the "safe house" facility. The proprietor of this property was an ethnic Albanian who allegedly shared both clan ties and organised criminal connections with members of the "Drenica Group".[46]

165. As and when the transplant surgeons were confirmed to be in position and ready to operate, the captives were brought out of the "safe house" individually, summarily executed by a KLA gunman, and their corpses transported swiftly to the operating clinic.

166. The surgical procedures thereupon performed — cadaver kidney extractions, rather than surgeries on live donors — are the most common means through which donor organs and tissues are acquired for transplant purposes, except for the criminal method of obtaining the cadavers. Eminent organ transplantation experts whom we have consulted during our inquiry described these procedures to us as efficient and low risk.[47]

167. Sources stated that the Fushë-Krujë axis was chosen to host these facilities because of its proximity to the main airport servicing Tirana. The facilities at the hub of this organ-trafficking ring — the "safe house" and the operating clinic — therefore offered accessibility for incoming international visitors and outgoing shipments alike.

4. Medicus clinic

168. In the course of our inquiry we have uncovered certain items of information that go some way beyond our findings as presently reported. This information appears to depict a broader, more complex organised criminal conspiracy to source human organs for illicit transplant, involving co-conspirators in at least three different foreign countries besides Kosovo, enduring over more than a decade. In particular, we found a number of credible, convergent indications that the organ-trafficking component of the post-conflict detentions described in our report is closely related to the contemporary case of the Medicus Clinic, not least through prominent Kosovar Albanian and international personalities who feature as co-conspirators in both. However, out of respect for the ongoing investigations and judicial proceedings being led by EULEX/the Office of the Special Prosecutor of Kosovo, we feel obliged at this moment to refrain from publishing our findings in this regard. Suffice to say, we encourage all the countries whose nationals appear in the indictment regarding Medicus to do their utmost to halt this shameful activity and assist in bringing its orchestrators and coconspirators to justice.

5. Reflections on the "glass ceiling of accountability" in Kosovo

Investigations currently being undertaken, and the indictments thus far issued, under the auspices ofthe Special Prosecutor's Office in Kosovo.

170. There seem to be two principal impediments to the quest for justice on behalf of the Kosovo people, as it is being led by the Special Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Kosovo. The first problem is that the de facto reach of the investigations is carefully managed and restricted by the Kosovo authorities; their collaboration with EULEX therefore suffers from a profound lack of confidence.[48]

171. Second, these men would apparently rather accept justice in the courts for their alleged roles in the running of illicit detention camps and the trafficking of human organs, respectively, than implicate their former senior KLA commanders, upon whose authority they acted and who are now senior political figures.

172. The central impediment to achieving true justice for many Kosovars, therefore, seems to be the ancestral custom, which still prevails in some parts of society, of entrenched clan loyalty, or its equivalent in the sphere of organised crime. Even where the conspirators in question are not themselves members of the same clans or extended families, the allegiances they feel towards their criminal "bosses" are as unbreakable as any family bonds.

173. Therefore, Sabit Geqi will resolutely avoid implicating those truly responsible for the torture of civilian prisoners at Kukes, who have now become respectable public figures. Equally, Ilir Rrecaj will continue to accept the consequences of being a scapegoat for the irregular licensing and funding practices in respect of the Medicus clinic in Pristina, rather than point the finger at those who are truly responsible for this organised criminal activity in Kosovo's health sector.

174. The result is that political leaders can plausibly dismiss the allegations relating to KLA involvement in detention, torture and murder in Albania — serious allegations that deserve to be investigated, as we have seen, much more seriously than has been the case so far — as little more than a "spectacle" created by Serbian political propagandists.

6. Some concluding remarks

175. In concluding, we should once again recall that that this report has been drawn up in the wake of the revelations that appeared in the memoirs of the former Chief Prosecutor of the ICTY.

Shocked by those disclosures, the Parliamentary Assembly entrusted us with the task of looking more closely into the allegations and the human rights violations said to have been committed in Kosovo in the material period. The elements reported in the former Prosecutor's book primarily concerned the alleged trafficking of human organs. Our difficult, sensitive investigations enabled us not only to substantiate those elements, but also to shed light on further,

related allegations and to draw a very sombre, worrying picture of what took place, and is to some extent continuing to take place, in Kosovo. Our task was not to conduct an criminal investigation — we are not empowered to do so, and above all we lack the necessary resources — let alone to pronounce judgments of guilt or innocence.

176. The information we have gathered nonetheless concerns extremely grave events that took place in the very heart of Europe. The Council of Europe and its member states cannot remain indifferent to such a situation. We have shown that organised crime is a significant phenomenon in Kosovo. This is nothing new, and it is admittedly not exclusive to Kosovo. Organised crime is a dreadful problem in the region and also affects Serbia, Montenegro and Albania, to name but a few examples. There are also worrying, surprising links and affinities between the different groups involved. Moreover, such criminal groups seem to co-operate with each other far more effectively than the responsible national and international judicial authorities. We have highlighted and documented the shady, and in some cases open, connections between organised crime and politics, including representatives of the authorities; that too is nothing new, at least for those who have not sought to close their eyes and ears at all costs. The silence and the failure to react in the face of such a scandal is just as serious and unacceptable. We have not engaged in mere rumour-mongering, but have rather described events on the basis of multiple testimonies, documents and objective evidence. What we have uncovered is, of course, not completely unheard-of. The same or similar findings have long been detailed and condemned in reports by key intelligence and police agencies, albeit without having been properly followed up, because the authors' respective political masters have preferred to keep a low profile and say nothing, purportedly for reasons of "political expediency". But we must ask what interests could possibly justify such an attitude of disdain for all the values that are invariably invoked in public? Everyone in Kosovo is aware of what happened and of the current situation, but people do not talk about it, except in private; they have been waiting for years for the truth — the whole truth, rather than the official version — to be laid bare. Our sole aim today is to serve as spokespersons for those men and women from Kosovo, as well as those from Serbia and Albania, who, regardless of their ethnic or religious backgrounds, simply aspire to the truth and to an end to scandalous impunity, with no greater wish than to be able to live in peace. Truth and accountability are absolute necessities if there is to be genuine reconciliation and lasting stability in the region. In the course of our mission we met with persons of great valour — both local and international actors — who are fighting to overcome

indifference and build a fairer society. They deserve not only our expressions of solidarity, but also our full and active support.

Notes:

1 All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

2 Reference to Committee: Doc. 11574, Reference 3446 of 29 May 2008.

3 Draft resolution adopted unanimously by the committee on 16 December 2010.

4 The United States of America has an Embassy endowed with impressive resources and a military base, Camp Bondsteel, of a scale and significance that clearly transcends regional considerations.

5 The "UNMIK legacy" was described to us in the form of a vivid image that scarcely requires further comment, as "300 000 pages in disarray".

6 We learned that certain KFOR contributors (for example the United Kingdom) took all their records away with them; and that these records were subsequently made accessible to EULEX investigators only on the basis of reasoned case-by-case applications, a complex procedure which considerably slows down the work of justice.

7 At the time of our visit in January 2010, EULEX investigators were not always able to access the ICTY's files, but the ICTY Prosecutor is more recently reported to have assured EULEX that access would be granted imminently.

8 The figures quoted here were provided by the Office of Missing Persons and Forensics (OMPF), with regard to cases still unresolved at the beginning of 2010.

9 The OMPF is currently co-headed by a EULEX official and a Kosovar official; it was created, we were told, "to clean up the mess left behind by UNMIK and the ICTY".

10 This difficulty was said to be most acute with regard to cases that arose during the period of "chaos" from June to late October 1999. KFOR soldiers were evidently unqualified to carry out police work and their crime scene reports were said to be mostly unusable.

11 An example with which we were confronted during our fact-finding visit to Pristina concerned excavations in a mineshaft where some thirty bodies of deceased Serbs were said to be buried. The local construction companies employed to do the work were threatened by members of the local community, which caused considerable delay in carrying out the explorations. According to what we have been told, the prevailing attitude among the Kosovar population is to regard as a "traitor" anyone who provides information regarding mass graves containing Serb victims.

[12] EULEX investigators informed us that the level of co-operation from the Albanian authorities was "nil". The reply, after several months, to a request for international legal assistance (concerning the camp at Kukës) was that the requested investigations were "delayed by a natural disaster". Other international officials also confirmed the "strong resistance" of the Kosovar authorities to co-operating in efforts to solve cases of missing Serbs or alleged Kosovar Albanian "traitors". Other international officials have confirmed that Albania never allowed exhumations in its territory: "There was no war here, so there are no graves to look for."

[13] There is said to exist some degree of reluctance even within the OMPF concerning the disappearances that occurred after 12 June 1999.

[14] Serge Brammertz, ICTY Chief Prosecutor, in a letter to me dated 17 December 2009. In an interview I had with Ms Carla Del Ponte in 2009, the former Chief Prosecutor assured me that the materials in question should be stored in the ICTY's archives and that their destruction was simply inconceivable.

[15] Such requests were made in March 2009 to the following countries: Belarus, Canada, Germany, Israel, Moldova, Poland, Russian Federation and Turkey. At the time of writing, only Canada was said to have provided a satisfactory response.

[16] See the EULEX press release of 15 October 2010: www.eulexkosovo.eu/en/pressreleases/0098.php; and the report by Nebi Qena (AP), 12 November 2010:
http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20101112/ap_on_re_eu/eu_kosovo_organ_trafficking/print.

[17] The ICRC provided only non-confidential information on missing persons.

[18] See Expert Report quoted in the Limaj judgement.

[19] Carla Del Ponte herself said of the Limaj trial that "the impunity that feeds upon fear was allowed to prevail": see Del Ponte and Sudetic, *The Hunt*, Chapter 11: Confronting Kosovo, p. 26.

[20] The KLA had grown domestically throughout most of the 1990s by rallying the support of volunteer fighters — men of all ages in their respective villages — to coalesce around leaders like Adem Jashari and form small armed units, or "brigades" across the territory of Kosovo. Many of the recruits to this "homeland KLA", effectively a peasant army, undertook guerrilla warfare training at camps in northern Albania, and smuggled arms into Kosovo with which to undertake acts of violent resistance. Our inquiry received more than a dozen testimonies of ethnic Albanian males who had taken part in this campaign of "resistance". With the killing of Jashari and scores of his family members and associates in a clampdown by Serb security forces in 1998, this initial incarnation of the KLA was effectively ended, and has gravitated into folklore as a romantic notion of Kosovar liberation, with Jashari as its martyr.

[21] The main rival political parties in recent election cycles have included the Democratic Party of Kosovo (*Partia Demokratike e Kosovës*, or

PDK) and the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (*Aleanca për Ardhmërinë e Kosovës*, or AAK), both of which are led by commanders of former KLA "splinter groups" and count large number of former KLA operatives among their members.

[22] We have noted the remarkable confessions of a man named Nazim Bllaca, who came forward last year and testified as to the use of these intelligence structures in targeted killings and different forms of racketeering; Bllaca's depiction of this secret underworld is one we recognise from our own research.

[23] In this regard, our findings correspond with those of international representatives of military and intelligence monitoring missions — from NATO's Kosovo Stabilisation Force (KFOR), to the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), to the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) — in reports published at various points over the last fifteen years.

[24] In Kosovo itself, the area of influence of the Drenica Group and its affiliates went on to extend far beyond that particular locale, however: they exercised firm control over criminal cartels active in municipalities including, but not limited to, Istok, Srbica, Skenderaj, Klina, Prizren and Pristina.

[25] See *Le Monde*, 11 December 2010. *"Hashim Thaçi, l'homme fort du Kosovo en quête de reconnaissance"*.

[26] Thaqi was, for example, named as head delegate of the Kosovar Albanians to the Rambouillet Summit.

[27] For example, the United States Drug Enforcement Administration said in a report in spring 1999 that drug smuggling organisations composed of Kosovo's ethnic Albanians were considered "second only to Turkish gangs as the predominant heroin smugglers along the Balkan route".

[28] These are the German (BND), Italian (Sismi), British (MI6) and Greek (EYP) intelligence services.

[29] See, for example, the report of the *Institut für Europäische Politik*, Berlin, of 9 January 2007 prepared for the German Federal Ministry of Defence ("*Operationalisierung von Security Sector Reform (SSR) auf dem Westlichen Balkan — intelligente/kreative Ansätze für eine langfristig positive Gestaltung dieser Region"*); document classified as secret and yet accessible on Internet; at page 57 the authors indicate that "Thaqi is considered, in security circles, as much more dangerous than Haradinaj, who as former head of KLA possesses a wider international network." (my own translation)

Another report of the German secret service (Bundesnachrichtendienst/BND), similarly available on Internet (BND Analyse vom 22 February 2005), names Messrs Haliti, Thaqi, Lluka and Haradinaj as key personalities of organised crime in Kosovo and explores in particular, in 27 pages of thorough analysis, the ramifications of the "Drenica Group". We did not limit ourselves to the study of these reports, and other sources, but we interviewed a number of persons who had been involved, at ground level, in the preparation of these reports.

[30] Fatmir Limaj, a former senior-ranking KLA commander, was indicted, tried and ultimately acquitted by the ICTY in a trial that encountered many problems with the integrity of evidence.

[31] In the course of the last ten years, intelligence services from several Western European countries, law enforcement agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in the United States, and analysts of several nationalities working within NATO structures have prepared authoritative, wellsourced, corroborated reports on the unlawful activities of this "Drenica Group".

[32] At a minimum, there is solid documentary evidence to demonstrate the involvement of this group, and its financial sponsors, in money laundering, smuggling of drugs and cigarettes, human trafficking, prostitution, and the violent monopolisation of Kosovo's largest economic sectors including vehicle fuel and construction.

[33] Primarily these funds had been generated through contributions from the Kosovo Diaspora and were held in foreign bank accounts, including in Germany and Switzerland. The finances available to Thaqi and his inner circle increased dramatically with the creation of a dedicated KLA fund known as *Atdheu Thërret* ("Homeland Calls").

[34] It is apt that I should acknowledge the excellent journalistic investigation of the Balkan Insight Reporters' Network (BIRN), which reported on elements of the KLA's network of detention camps in Albania in April 2009 (Altin Raxhimi, Vladimir Karaj and Michael Montgomery).

[35] While Thaqi attended the University of Pristina and became identified as a leader in the Kosovar Albanian student movement, Muja studied cardiology at the University of Tirana and associated himself with the more militant elements of the Albanian resistance to Serb oppression in Kosovo.

[36] Muja was the overall "Medical Co-ordinator" for the KLA General Staff, a post in which he oversaw the provision of medical treatment for wounded KLA soldiers, as well as other emergency cases in KLA operational zones. Muja notably made use of the Military Hospital in Tirana, Albania, and administered extensive supplies and equipment acquired by the KLA through foreign donations. During 1998 and 1999, as the official representative of the KLA, supported by elements in the Albanian Army and the Albanian secret services, Muja also administered a diverse array of other infrastructure: at least one helicopter, several well-funded construction projects and makeshift accommodation arrangements — including private houses and apartments — for KLA commanders, recruits and affiliates who travelled into Albania from overseas, including those *en route* to Kosovo.

[37] Muja acted both as the Health/Medical Co-ordinator for the Provisional Government of Kosovo, under provisional Prime Minister Thaqi, and as Commander of the 40th Medical Battalion of the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC).

[38] At the time of writing, in December 2010, Shaip Muja serves in the administration of Hashim Thaqi as a senior Political Advisor in the

Office of the Prime Minister, with responsibility, *inter alia*, for the health portfolio.

[39] Muja is widely credited with having played a role in the introduction of a "telemedicine" system in Kosovo whereby health and surgical services can be administered with the assistance of doctors in remote locations, using Internet technology to link the participants.

[40] The combined influence of Muja and Veseli in this regard endured through the transitional phase of the Kosovo Protection Corps; both men were central to the design of the intelligence structures and strategic decision-making mechanisms inside the PDK party. Among the external parties they are reported to have engaged are members of the Albanian secret services and American private military and security companies.

[41] The estimated 40 persons does not include persons who were held at Durres on a basis so fleeting that their detention lasted only as long as it took KLA intelligence officers to conduct an interrogation.

[42] The military grouping styled as *Forcat e Armatosura të Republikës së Kosovës*, or FARK ("Armed Forces of the Republic of Kosovo"), was nominally fighting for the same cause of liberation as the KLA, but was treated by KLA commanders as an adversary, with contempt and suspicion. FARK was politically aligned with the LDK, and envisaged as the defence arm of the Government-in-exile of Bujar Bukoshi. Unlike the KLA, FARK was built around a core of experienced military officers, ethnic Albanians who had served in the Army of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. KLA commanders were highly suspicious of FARK and sought to suppress its recruitment of new fighters and supplies of arms and ammunitions. The KLA detained numerous persons, especially civilians in northern Albania close to the Kosovo border, on the accusation that they supported FARK and were therefore disloyal to the KLA cause.

[43] Geqi and Alija were arrested in May and June 2010 respectively, and have been indicted for war crimes against the civilian population. While there is also substantial evidence against the third suspect in this regard, Krasniqi, he remains a fugitive at the time of writing and therefore cannot be subject to charges under Kosovo criminal procedure. Pending Krasniqi's apprehension and the efficient administration of justice, the trial of all three men should take place either in the District Court of Pristina or the District Court of Mitrovica in early 2011.

[44] Our KLA sources told us that Cahan was in fact an operational staging point for KLA advances over the mountainous border into Kosovo. KLA fighters stationed at Cahan are renowned for having launched "Operation Aero", a rare incursion into Serb-held territory in late May 1999.

[45] In the interests of balance, I should point out that some reporting of this fear on the part of the captives has tended to dramatise the facts unduly. For example, we have found no basis for the allegation that certain victims had one kidney removed before being "sewn up"

again, detained for another period, and then finally having the second kidney removed.

[46] The proprietor's collusion with networks who trafficked sex workers, illegal immigrants to Europe and contraband items, including drugs and weapons, eventually led him to be arrested by Albanian law enforcement officials; although there does not appear to have been any connection with crimes carried out in the KLA network.

[47] Contrary to the widespread scepticism as to whether the underlying operations involved in organ trafficking could have been performed in Albania in the period 1999–2000, our experts whom we consulted directly not only found it perfectly plausible that this methodology had been used, but were aware of analogous, similarly illicit enterprises in which cadaver extractions were found to have been performed.

[48] One example in the realm of information management is the limited access granted to EULEX police investigators to the criminal databases operated by their Kosovo counterparts. The local leadership grudgingly granted EULEX officers access to the Kosovo Police Information System (KPIS), but only via a handful of user names and passwords, each one of which had to be attached to the login of a known and named EULEX official. The searches conducted by each of these usernames could then be directly kept under surveillance by the Kosovo Police liaison officers, who would necessarily know how often, and when, EULEX searches had been performed and also precisely whom EULEX had been checking up on. Even against this background, there are just as many occasions on which simple technology foils a modern-day police investigator, because KPIS regularly breaks down. The equivalent system for motor vehicle registration, the KVIS, was also opened to EULEX investigators after a period of barely co-operative negotiation with the Kosovo Police. However, the version of the database made available (unlike the original prototype that had been jointly developed under UNMIK) was exclusively in the Albanian language. MMA (Monitoring, Mentoring and Advising), the abbreviation summing up the relationship between EULEX and the Kosovo police, does not count for much when the Kosovar partners do exactly what they want — the only remedial action the international liaisons can take is to write a report that goes up the chain of responsibility, and probably lands on a desk somewhere in Brussels and is treated with minimal urgency and a premium on political correctness.

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