



Security Council

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United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction and Mission priorities

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution [1244 \(1999\)](#), by which the Council established the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and requested the Secretary-General to report at regular intervals on the implementation of its mandate. The report covers the activities of UNMIK, and developments related thereto, from 16 March to 15 September 2024.

2. The priorities of the Mission remain to promote security, stability and respect for human rights in Kosovo and in the region. In pursuit of its goals, UNMIK continues its constructive engagement with Pristina and Belgrade, all communities in Kosovo, and regional and international actors. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Kosovo Force continue to perform their roles within the framework of resolution [1244 \(1999\)](#). The European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo maintains its presence, in line with the statement by the President of the Security Council of 26 November 2008 ([S/PRST/2008/44](#)) and the report of the Secretary-General of 24 November 2008 ([S/2008/692](#)). The United Nations agencies, funds and programmes work closely with the Mission.

II. Key political developments, including in the European Union-facilitated dialogue

3. During the reporting period, little progress was achieved in the implementation of European Union-facilitated agreements between Belgrade and Pristina. The Kosovo authorities undertook a series of actions that have affected the day-to-day lives of Kosovo Serbs and other non-majority communities. Pristina reiterated that those actions were intended to enforce the rule of law and did not specifically target Kosovo Serbs. Nevertheless, each time the Kosovo authorities implemented a measure that was not consulted and agreed upon with Kosovo Serb representatives and in the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue, many Kosovo Serbs perceived it as antagonistic. Kosovo authorities also closed several institutions financed by Serbia and stated their intention to reopen the main bridge in Mitrovica to vehicle traffic, which has become a contested and symbolic issue.

4. The regulation of the Central Bank of Kosovo that determined the euro as the only legal currency for cash transactions continued to affect the economic and social



rights of Kosovo Serbs and other non-majority communities, especially Kosovo Roma. Moreover, on 20 May, Kosovo police closed offices of the Serbian Postal Savings Bank in the four northern municipalities and separately searched offices of the treasury administration of the Government of Serbia in North Mitrovica. The Director of the Office for Kosovo and Metohija of the Government of Serbia, Petar Petković, asserted that this was an escalatory move and “a violent attack on dialogue”. In Pristina, the Minister for Internal Affairs, Xhelal Sveçla, said that the action had been taken “in order to establish legality”. Affected residents must now cross the administrative boundary line to withdraw their salaries, pensions and social assistance from the Government of Serbia.

5. The European Union facilitated six meetings in Brussels to try to resolve the dinar issue, but no agreement was reached. The last such meeting between the chief negotiators and the European Union Special Representative for the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue and other Western Balkan regional issues, Miroslav Lajčák, was held on 15 May.

6. On 5 August, Kosovo police closed all nine offices of the Post of Serbia in northern Kosovo for operating without a licence. The closures cut key financial and postal services to residents. These include money transfers; processing payments for Serbian institutions, including education and healthcare; the distribution of utility bills; and the disbursement of social benefit payments. Serbian-run post offices in the rest of Kosovo remain operational, albeit with heavily reduced services.

7. On 30 August, Kosovo police closed the four remaining municipal offices and a regional district office run by the Government of Serbia in northern Kosovo and searched a building at the Serbian-run hospital in North Mitrovica. The Kosovo government confirmed the closure, calling the offices “parallel, illegal institutions of local self-government” and stating that they had been operating in violation of the laws and constitution of Kosovo.

8. The European Union and the Quint (France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America) expressed concern and disappointment over the closures of the municipal and post offices and called on Pristina to refrain from unilateral actions. The United States and the European Union emphasized that matters relating to Serbian-run structures in Kosovo should be resolved within the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General stated that such actions were undermining efforts to maintain security, stability and peace.

9. In reaction to the closure of the institutions in northern Kosovo, on 6 September, activists from Serbia blocked all traffic at three crossing points between Serbia and Kosovo, except for medical vehicles and travellers carrying Serbian travel documents. The protesters demanded the withdrawal of Kosovo police from northern Kosovo, the release of arrested Kosovo Serbs, the arrest of “Kosovo Albanians who have committed crimes” and the sanctioning of the Kosovo government by the international community. They also called for UNMIK and the Kosovo Force to assert their role in the context of Security Council resolution [1244 \(1999\)](#). On 6 September, Kosovo authorities shut down the affected crossing points and advised all residents of Kosovo to avoid transit through Serbia. The Serbian activists lifted their blockades on 7 September. The Kosovo authorities subsequently reopened the respective crossing points.

10. Following the successful petition to initiate the process to recall the mayors in the four northern Serb-majority municipalities, polls on the recall opened on 21 April. However, the votes failed to exceed the required threshold of 50 per cent of registered voters. The Serbian List party had announced a boycott, noting that the threshold for the recall votes to succeed was unrealistic due to concerns about the accuracy of the voters lists and the planned presence of cameras in polling centres. The European Union and the Quint expressed regret over the low turnout.

11. In the following weeks, the mayors of Zubin Potok and Zvečan/Zveçan in northern Kosovo, who had been working in alternative premises since the violent protests in May 2023, moved into the municipal buildings.
12. On 11 July, Kosovo Serb employees of the Serbian-financed institutions in Štrpce/Shtërpçë municipality in southern Kosovo received summonses to report to the police for questioning and were charged with “assault on the constitutional order”.
13. On 3 August, under orders of the Kosovo Specialist Prosecutor’s Office, Kosovo police arrested five Kosovo Serbs for alleged war crimes. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia condemned the arrests, calling them part of a broader campaign with the aim of “intimidating and expelling the Serbian people”. The accused were held in pretrial detention for 30 days. A peaceful demonstration took place on 5 August in the village of Pasjane/Pasjan, where hundreds of Kosovo Serbs gathered to protest the arrests, criticized the international community for its inaction and asked for protection by the Kosovo Force.
14. The Kosovo government raised the issue of the opening of the main bridge in Mitrovica. On 30 May, the Kosovo police regional deputy commander said that the main bridge in Mitrovica would be open “very soon” for vehicle traffic, prompting members of the international community to reiterate that the issue should be discussed in the European Union-facilitated dialogue. The bridge over the river Ibar/Ibër has been closed for vehicles since 2014. In response, the Kosovo Force stated that it would continue to guarantee security and patrol on and around the main bridge and echoed calls for the issue to be agreed within the dialogue. On 17 July and 2 August, the Prime Minister of Kosovo, Albin Kurti, met with the Ambassadors of the Quint and the Head of the European Union Office in Kosovo and presented the government’s plan to reopen the bridge.
15. On 7 August, many Kosovo Serbs gathered peacefully in North Mitrovica to protest the plan to reopen the bridge. A public discussion organized by the North Mitrovica municipality on “interethnic cooperation, municipal counselling for community safety, cooperation between institutions and civil society” took place the following day but did not attract many Kosovo Serb participants. On the same day, an altercation between Kosovo police and the leaders of Serbian Democracy occurred, after contractors began painting over the colours of the Serbian flag in a public square in North Mitrovica. The leader of Serbian Democracy and his deputy were detained and released shortly thereafter.
16. On 11 August, the President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, warned that Pristina was planning to open the bridge by force and urged the Kosovo Force not to permit its “unilateral” opening. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General emphasized that “unilateral actions that could increase tensions, jeopardize stability and undermine trust among communities should be avoided”. On 13 August, when asked about the European Union’s proposal to include this issue on the agenda of the next dialogue meeting in Brussels, Mr. Kurti responded that the issue of the bridge had been resolved in 2016-2017 and that it “must be opened”. On the same day, over 400 women from the four northern municipalities submitted a letter to the Kosovo Force, urging it to not allow the bridge to be opened due to security concerns.
17. Against this backdrop, the European Union-facilitated dialogue continued to stagnate. On 17 March, the European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, marked the anniversary of the Agreement on the path to normalization of relations and its Implementation Annex, noting that there had been “very limited” progress by both parties in implementing their obligations.
18. On 26 June, Mr. Borrell chaired high-level bilateral meetings with Mr. Kurti and Mr. Vučić in Brussels aimed at paving the way for a trilateral meeting later. However,

that meeting did not take place. Mr. Borrell afterwards said that Mr. Kurti was not ready for the trilateral meeting and had outlined three conditions for Pristina's "further engagement in the broader normalization process", namely: (a) formalize the Agreement through signatures; (b) withdraw the letter submitted on 13 December 2023 by the former Prime Minister of Serbia, Ana Brnabić, to the European External Action Service; and (c) hand over the perpetrators involved in the Banjska/Banjskë incident to Kosovo's judicial authorities. According to Mr. Borrell, Mr. Vučić was willing to hold the trilateral meeting but was not ready to fully meet Mr. Kurti's conditions, citing constitutional constraints, while indicating readiness to explore options.

19. A follow-up meeting of the chief negotiators with Mr. Lajčák was held on 2 July in Brussels, primarily to discuss finalizing the sequencing plan for the Implementation Annex of the Agreement. The discussions ended without progress.

20. On 13 September, Mr. Vučić announced a series of measures that Serbia would take in response to Pristina's actions "against Serbian institutions". He also cited several conditions required to advance the dialogue process with Pristina. In that regard, he called for the reintegration of Kosovo Serbs into the Kosovo police and judicial structures and requested the conduct of local elections in northern Kosovo. Furthermore, he called for the establishment of the Association/Community of Serb-majority Municipalities, the reopening of the closed Serbia-run financial and postal services and the withdrawal of Kosovo police special operations units from northern Kosovo. On 16 April, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe recommended that Kosovo be invited to become a member of the Council of Europe, and that the organization would monitor Kosovo's implementation of several commitments and obligations after its accession. The Parliamentary Assembly noted that establishing the Association/Community of Serb-majority Municipalities would be "an important step" to ensuring the protection of the rights of Kosovo Serbs and should be regarded "as a post-accession commitment".

21. President Vučić had noted earlier that Serbia would consider leaving the Council of Europe if Kosovo were admitted to the organization and vowed to "fight" Kosovo's membership bid. Subsequently, the spokesperson of the European Union External Action Service said that Serbia's lobbying against Kosovo's bid to join international organizations clearly violated the 2023 Agreement.

22. In anticipation of the meeting of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 16 and 17 May, France and Germany stressed the importance for Pristina to make tangible progress towards the establishment of the Association/Community of Serb-majority Municipalities in the context of its application to join the organization. In a joint letter to Mr. Kurti, the Chancellor of Germany, President of France, and Prime Minister of Italy requested Kosovo to send the draft statute of the Association/Community of Serb-majority Municipalities that had been proposed by the European Union to the Constitutional Court of Kosovo for review. It further specified that Mr. Kurti's proposal to prepare a new draft statute to be sent to the Council of Europe for review "risked further undermining the European Union-facilitated dialogue". Kosovo's application to the Council of Europe remained pending.

23. Several restrictions on the freedom of movement were imposed both by Belgrade and by Pristina. On 17 April, hundreds of individuals from Kosovo, including Kosovo police officers, were halted for several hours at various Serbian border crossing points. The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Serbia announced that four people, including the Deputy Director of Kosovo Police, had been detained. All four individuals were released the following day. The President of the National Assembly of Serbia stated that the action had been intended to defend the constitutional order of Serbia. Mr. Kurti qualified the actions as "retaliation against Kosovo civilians" a day after the Parliamentary Assembly voted in favour of Kosovo's membership in the

Council of Europe. The spokesperson of the European Union External Action Service said that Belgrade's "unilateral and uncoordinated actions" violated the 2011 Agreement on Freedom of Movement.

24. On 13 May, the Kosovo authorities prevented Patriarch Porfirije and seven other hierarchs of the Serbian Orthodox Church from entering Kosovo to attend the Holy Assembly of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church at the Peć Patriarchate in the Pejë/Peć municipality. Kosovo authorities said that they had denied entry because "Serbia continues to violate the Brussels Agreement". The Quint and the European Union qualified the decision contrary to the Ahtisaari Plan. On 26 June, Mr. Petković was denied permission to travel to Kosovo for the Serbian national holiday of Vidovdan.

25. On 9 May, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Kosovo launched the process of replacing Serbia-issued driver's licences for individuals residing in Kosovo with Kosovo-issued ones. The Ministry reported that 6,509 applications for new licences had been received, including 5,732 from northern Kosovo.

26. On 16 August, the President of Kosovo, Vjosa Osmani, announced that the next regular general elections in Kosovo would take place on 9 February 2025. This would be the first completion of a full electoral term since Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence in 2008.

III. Northern Kosovo

27. The security situation in northern Kosovo remained tense and was marked by numerous incidents that continued to generate tension between Kosovo Serbs and the Kosovo authorities.

28. The continued restrictions on the import of Serbian goods and enforcement of the regulation of the Central Bank of Kosovo on cash payments have affected the socioeconomic rights of residents and adversely affected local businesses. Kosovo authorities inspected Kosovo Serb businesses to ensure compliance with the Kosovo regulatory system, leading to some closures. Non-compliant businesses were invited to register with the Kosovo Business Registration Agency, which subsequently opened offices in all four northern municipalities to facilitate registrations.

29. On 16 April and 1 August, Kosovo police searched numerous pharmacies in Leposavić/Leposaviq and Zubin Potok before seizing Serbian-made medications and inviting owners to register their businesses with the Kosovo Business Registration Agency. On 16 and 22 July, the Privatization Agency of Kosovo, accompanied by Kosovo police, inspected and closed five petrol stations in northern Kosovo for not being licensed in the Kosovo system. A public tender was initiated on 26 July for leasing the stations, which was concluded on 5 September. Kosovo authorities continued to inspect more petrol stations in northern Kosovo but took no further action.

30. On 9 April, the Privatization Agency of Kosovo, which administers socially owned enterprises, informed several Kosovo Serb business owners that the socially owned premises that they had been using premises would be listed for auction by the Agency.

31. On 23 May, employees of the only Serbian-language newspaper *Jedinstvo* in North Mitrovica protested against their eviction from their premises, which the Privatization Agency of Kosovo had said were subject to privatization. Mr. Petković condemned the eviction. The library of the University of Pristina in North Mitrovica, located in the same building, received a similar eviction notice, and employees subsequently vacated the premises.

32. The Kosovo government adopted a decision on 2 April to allocate €4 million to subsidize the construction of social housing for non-majority communities in northern Kosovo. On 12 August, the Kosovo Minister of Local Government Administration announced a project to build 200 houses in the four northern municipalities, pending clarification by the authorities whether the beneficiaries would be returnees or new settlers.

33. Investigations by both Belgrade and Pristina into the Banjska/Banjskë incident of September 2023 continued. Kosovo police conducted several searches across northern Kosovo, during which it seized a cache of weapons. On 15 June, Kosovo police searched two Serbian-run schools in Leposavić/Leposaviq, prompting condemnation from the Serbian authorities.

34. Belgrade requested evidentiary material from Pristina via the European Union Office in Kosovo in July, but the Kosovo authorities had not yet responded to the request, according to the European Union. In August, the Ministry of Justice of Kosovo claimed exclusive jurisdiction to investigate and adjudicate the case. It also stated that Serbia had not responded to the Special Prosecutor's formal request, made through the European Union Office in Kosovo, from October 2023. On 11 September, the Special Prosecutor's Office of Kosovo issued an indictment against 45 individuals. The accused were charged with various criminal offenses, including "serious offenses against the constitutional order and security of the Republic of Kosovo", "financing of terrorism" and "money laundering".

35. There were a series of security incidents, including numerous cases of arson of vehicles belonging to Kosovo Serbs. In North Mitrovica, an unknown individual threw a Molotov cocktail inside a café on 14 July, two days after the Minister of Internal Affairs of Kosovo and other senior Kosovo officials were photographed there. Another device detonated at Gazivoda/Gazivodë lake on 21 July targeting Kosovo Albanians. Mr. Kurti subsequently stated that the lake had been "bequeathed to them by their ancestors", prompting Kosovo Albanians to visit the lake and sparking reactions by Kosovo Serb residents. No injuries were sustained in these cases.

36. Several Kosovo Serbs were arrested, including those suspected by Kosovo authorities of injuring Kosovo Force personnel during the May 2023 protests in Zvečan/Zveçan. Kosovo Serb organizations raised human rights concerns, highlighting that the measures used against the individuals, which included lengthy pretrial detention periods in high security prisons, had been disproportional. UNMIK received reports, including allegations of the Kosovo police using excessive force following these arrests, and duly followed up the allegations with the Police Inspectorate of Kosovo.

37. Kosovo police arrested a Kosovo Serb at Gate 31 on 13 April, noting that the arrest was in relation to the violent clashes between police and protestors in October 2021. The arrest was condemned by the Serbian List and the Office for Kosovo and Metohija of the Government of Serbia. On 14 April, officers from Kosovo police special operations units stopped and reportedly assaulted a Kosovo Serb in Zubin Potok. The Police Inspectorate of Kosovo subsequently opened an investigation into the incident.

38. On 10 September, Kosovo police arrested four young Kosovo Serbs in North Mitrovica, after an altercation with officers in civilian clothes. The arrest was made amid allegations of excessive use of force, ill-treatment in police custody and denial of medical care. The four individuals were placed in police custody in South Mitrovica for 48 hours. Peaceful protests calling for their release took place outside the police station and court. On 11 September, they were sentenced to 30 days of house arrest. The deputy Ombudsperson issued a statement following his visit to the detainees, noting "serious elements indicating human rights violations, including

inhumane treatment by the police” and that detainees exhibited visible injuries, which were absent from their medical records.

39. In April, several Kosovo Albanians were arrested for allegedly assaulting Kosovo Serbs in North Mitrovica. A Kosovo Serb was arrested in Leposavić/Leposaviq on 19 May for allegedly attacking a Kosovo Albanian.

40. On 26 June, a Kosovo Serb was arrested at Gate 1 (Jarinje/Jarinjë) on suspicion of espionage. On 27 June and 12 September, two Kosovo Serbs were separately arrested on suspicion of having committed war crimes. The arrests prompted responses from Serbian authorities who qualified the arrests as politically motivated and “an oppression of Kosovo Serbs”.

41. Despite earlier progress on the implementation of the energy road map, many residents of northern Kosovo voiced dissatisfaction in recent months with the services of the energy provider Elektrosever. As reported in the previous report of the Secretary-General (S/2024/282), Elektrosever had begun distributing electricity bills in northern Kosovo, marking the first time since 1999 that local residents had been billed for electricity. In March, Elektrosever began distributing flat-rate electricity bills of €21.60, while later delivering additional invoices for the same billing month. Responding to concerns of inaccurate or retrospective billing, Elektrosever began installing new electric meters. It also opened a new office in North Mitrovica to facilitate the regular distribution of bills.

42. The request of the Kosovo Central Election Commission to obtain access to Serbian-run schools to use as polling centres for the mayoral recall votes was denied by the schools. On 4 July, the prosecutor’s office in Mitrovica launched proceedings against 14 Kosovo Serb school directors for allegedly obstructing the electoral process. The directors were questioned but no criminal charges were filed.

43. On 2 May, the Kosovo police installed surveillance cameras in the centre of North Mitrovica and confirmed their intention to install around 200 cameras in northern Kosovo, prompting multiple civil society organizations to express concerns about the right to privacy. On 22 July, technicians, accompanied by Kosovo police, installed several cameras around the main Ibar/Ibër bridge.

44. On 3 June, the Kosovo Property Comparison and Verification Agency announced the preparation of 100 eviction notices in northern Kosovo. In June, around 40 notices were served to residents in North Mitrovica with additional eviction notices expected. These eviction decisions, which had been pending implementation since 2006 and 2007, were aimed at facilitating the right to return of some Kosovo Albanians. Conversely, the decisions potentially affect the right to adequate housing of some Kosovo Serb evictees in vulnerable situations, for whom alternatives had not been actively explored. Twelve Kosovo Serb families voluntarily vacated properties, including one that was handed over to a Kosovo Albanian owner on 18 July.

45. As part of ongoing efforts to combat smuggling, on 5 June, Kosovo police excavated roads in Banje/Banë village, Zubin Potok. Kosovo Serb villagers complained that they had consequently lost access to their properties.

46. Government decisions and pending court proceedings regarding the expropriation of land parcels for government “infrastructure projects” that had already been constructed in Leposavić/Leposaviq and Zubin Potok continued to pose challenges to the property rights of Kosovo Serbs. On 30 May, the Kosovo government issued a final decision on the expropriation of over 100 parcels of land in Zubin Potok and Leposavić/Leposaviq. The government’s action followed prior decisions by the Basic Court in Pristina determining the legality of previously conducted expropriations. The Serbian List reiterated the inviolability of property rights and criticized the Kosovo government for violating its own legislation. On

6 June, the Quint, the European Union and OSCE issued statements regretting the government's decision. In July, the Kosovo government approved a request to transfer land parcels in Zubin Potok to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and sought proof of ownership from the property holders.

47. On 26 June, the Post of Kosovo opened an office inside the former Banjska/Banjskë spa complex, which had remained closed since September 2023 when the Privatization Agency of Kosovo took control of the premises. On 30 June, it was reported that the Post of Kosovo would open three additional branches in northern Kosovo by the end of 2024. On 29 August, a branch was opened in the centre of North Mitrovica amid peaceful protests by Kosovo Serbs and under the protection of armed police. On 26 August, a Kosovo Albanian-owned company opened a supermarket in North Mitrovica on the premises of a former shop owned by a Kosovo Serb. An anonymous call for residents to boycott the supermarket circulated on social media, stating that any resident who approaches the shop "will be photographed and severely sanctioned".

48. On 30 June, posters with photographs of the President of Serbia appeared across northern Kosovo with the inscription "Supreme Commander, we are waiting for you". The Kosovo police opened a case of "incitement of hatred and discord". Separately, on 7 July, Kosovo police arrested a Kosovo Serb minor and interviewed three others in connection with the distribution of pamphlets in North Mitrovica, for inciting hatred and discord. On 9 July, Kosovo police arrested a Kosovo Albanian minor for incitement of hatred after allegedly setting alight a Serbian flag in North Mitrovica.

49. On 10 September, Kosovo Serbs peacefully protested while Prime Minister Kurti attended the opening of a restaurant owned by a Kosovo Albanian in North Mitrovica. The leader and deputy leader of Serbian Democracy were arrested for blowing a whistle in protest of the visit. They were released the same day. The arrests were condemned as "illegal" in a joint statement by several civil society and human rights organizations.

50. UNMIK regained access to its offices within the municipal buildings in Leposavić/Leposaviq, Zvečan/Zveçan and Zubin Potok and is conducting assessments to ensure the safety and security of its staff members before returning.

IV. Rule of law and human rights

Rule of law

51. Following the Kosovo government's decision on 13 March to recognize the property rights of the Visoki Dečani monastery, on 20 March, the Serbian Orthodox Church Diocese of Raška and Prizren announced that the ownership rights of the Visoki Dečani monastery over 24 hectares of land had been officially registered in Kosovo's central cadastre, as foreseen by a 2016 decision of the Constitutional Court of Kosovo.

52. Arrests, indictments and trials for war crimes committed during the 1998–1999 Kosovo conflict continued. On 18 April, Serbian police arrested and detained a Kosovo Albanian suspected of war crimes. The suspect is a former member of the Kosovo Liberation Army. On 24 April, the High Court in Belgrade sentenced a former Yugoslav army commander to 20 years in prison for war crimes committed near Pejë/Peć in 1999.

53. On 14 May, the Special Prosecutor's Office of Kosovo issued an indictment in absentia against three Kosovo Serbs for alleged war crimes in relation to abuses of Albanian detainees in prisons in Pristina and Lipjan/Lipljan. On 10 June, the Basic

Court of Pristina sentenced a Kosovo Serb to eight years in prison for war crimes. On 27 June, a Kosovo Serb from Leposavić/Leposaviq was arrested on suspicion of committing war crimes in the Malishevë/Mališevo area and around Klinë/Klina. The Basic Court of Pristina subsequently ordered the suspect to be detained on remand due to the risk of flight. On 12 July, the Basic Court of Pristina sentenced a Kosovo Albanian holding Serbian citizenship to 15 years in prison for his involvement in the Izbicë/Izbica massacre in March 1999, where 130 Kosovo Albanians were killed. On 19 July, the Basic Court of Pristina sentenced a Kosovo Bosniak, to 12 years in prison for war crimes committed in May 1999.

54. Lawyers for Kosovo Serbs who are being prosecuted for alleged war crimes, including in absentia, voiced concerns regarding the rights of the accused to a fair trial within a reasonable time, the lack of legal reasoning and potential links between the prosecution and property disputes.

55. On 28 June, the Basic Court of Pristina convicted four and acquitted two Kosovo Serbs indicted for the 2018 murder of the prominent Kosovo Serb politician Oliver Ivanović.

56. Kosovo police arrested several individuals for their alleged involvement in the attacks on members of the Kosovo Force and Kosovo police during the protests in Zvečan/Zvečan in May 2023. On 10 May, one suspect was arrested at the Jarinjë/Jarinjë administrative boundary line. On 19 June, another suspect was apprehended in Mitrovica. A third suspect was sentenced to 15 months imprisonment and a fine of €12,000 on 24 June for his involvement in the attacks. On 24 July, another individual was apprehended and charged.

57. In line with the requirement of the Kosovo constitution for representation of non-majority communities in Kosovo courts, the Kosovo Judicial Council recommended three Kosovo Serb candidates for five judgeships reserved for this community. Only one Kosovo Serb judge was appointed by Ms. Osmani. Similarly, in a recent recruitment to fill 100 notary positions across Kosovo, where 8 positions were reserved for Kosovo Serbs, the Ministry of Justice did not appoint a notary from the Kosovo Serb community, despite qualified applicants, leaving only 1 Kosovo Serb notary operating throughout Kosovo. This situation continued to affect the language rights and access to services for Kosovo Serbs. On 4 August, Kosovo police issued a vacancy announcement for the recruitment of new police officers, inviting Kosovo Serbs to apply.

58. The resignation of Kosovo Serb judges and prosecutors in November 2022 and the unresolved question of their return continued to raise concerns about the integration of the judiciary in Kosovo. Their absence hindered the administration of justice in northern Kosovo. The authorities sought to reassign judges and prosecutors temporarily from elsewhere in Kosovo, primarily Kosovo Albanians, to address staffing needs and manage caseloads.

59. On 16 April, following the murder of two women within four days, the Minister for Justice of Kosovo convened a high-level meeting with representatives of other ministries and the international community to address violence against women in Kosovo. Participants reiterated calls for judges and prosecutors to take cases of domestic and gender-based violence more seriously. According to a report from the Kosovo Women's Network, 58 femicide cases had been reported in Kosovo since 2010. On 6 August, a husband shot his wife two days after his release from detention, having been previously arrested for domestic violence. The Security and Gender Group, composed of over 50 local and international organizations working in Kosovo chaired by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), issued statements condemning the femicides and providing recommendations for the institutions of Kosovo to address the problem.

60. UNMIK continued to provide document certification services. The Mission processed a total of 1,884 documents, of which 699 related to pensions, 57 to diplomas and 1,128 to marriage, birth and death certificates. The Mission also facilitated the issuance of 44 Red Notices and 52 extradition requests from the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) to Kosovo. UNMIK also opened 1,498 new documentation cases based on requests for information. A total of 1,868 cases related to the territory or habitual residents of Kosovo remained open.

61. Lawyers from the UNMIK-supported Legal Aid Support Centre provided legal aid to 431 applicants, including 193 women and 238 men. They assisted 406 Kosovo Albanians, 10 Kosovo Serbs, 5 Kosovo Egyptians, 3 Kosovo Ashkali, 3 Kosovo Roma, 2 Kosovo Turks, 1 Kosovo Bosniak and 1 Kosovo Gorani. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) ensured the provision of free legal aid to two Kosovo Roma returnees seeking to uphold their property rights. The case could set an important precedent in providing effective access to justice and durable solutions for Kosovo Roma.

62. As part of its focus on improving judicial practices and access to justice, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) worked with judges, prosecutors and mediators to familiarize them with the new law on mediation and the juvenile justice code, as well as create a human rights database. By establishing mobile legal aid clinics, UNDP facilitated access to justice for over 200 individuals from different ethnic groups, conducted awareness-raising campaigns on legal aid and taught over 100 healthcare professionals how to deal with cases of gender-based violence. A new centralized translation system to enhance court translations was established within the Kosovo Judicial Council with the support of UNDP and UNMIK.

Human rights

63. There are still 1,612 missing persons (263 women and 1,349 men) connected to the 1998–1999 events in Kosovo. The Declaration on Missing Persons, facilitated by the European Union and endorsed by Belgrade and Pristina on 2 May 2023, which outlines the establishment of a joint commission to enhance cooperation between both parties, has not yet been implemented. In June, the Kosovo authorities handed over the remains of three Kosovo Serbs to Belgrade. For the second time in 2024, a meeting of the Working Group on Missing Persons was held on 2 July, following which Belgrade agreed to assess the existence of a potential gravesite in Serbia.

64. Since its establishment in February 2018, the Kosovo government commission responsible for the verification and recognition of the status of conflict-related sexual violence survivors has granted survivor status to 1,671 applicants (1,580 women and 91 men). The commission has rejected 325 applications (281 women and 44 men).

65. On 23 May, the Assembly of Kosovo adopted the agreement for the transfer of 300 prisoners from Denmark to Kosovo, raising concerns for the rights to family life, protection from discrimination, and legal assistance of one's own choosing.

66. On 13 June, the Kosovo government adopted its transitional justice strategy. Some members of civil society voiced criticisms, and some withdrew from consultations because of what they considered to be a non-inclusive process, marked by an "ethnocentric" approach to transitional justice instead of a victim-centred one. Representatives of the international community expressed similar concerns.

67. On 11 July, the Assembly of Kosovo adopted the draft law on the Independent Media Commission. The new law subjects online media to government licensing and control by the Commission, which the Council of Europe in a legal opinion qualified as not in line with standards and practices in other European countries. Online media outlets would also be required to register within the Commission. The Special

Representative of the Secretary-General regretted that the law “does not fully incorporate or address the concerns and recommendations raised by international partners, members of the media and civil society”.

68. The government launched a new platform to promote the socioeconomic rights of non-majority communities. The government’s existing online anti-discrimination platform for Kosovo Roma, Kosovo Ashkali and Kosovo Egyptian communities received over 60 complaints.

69. On 23 May, for the first time, the Assembly of Kosovo voted to formally reject the annual report of the Ombudsperson Institution of Kosovo for 2022, thereby challenging the independence of the Institution and the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles). This vote, coupled with the new law on the Independent Media Commission, raises concerns for the independence of the two entities, as foreseen by the legal framework of Kosovo. In a similar vein, the language commissioner of Kosovo continues to lack sufficient resources to effectively protect language rights.

70. Challenges to freedom of expression and the media persisted. The Association of Journalists of Kosovo received reports of 24 verbal and physical attacks against journalists from January to June. Moreover, fabricated photos targeting specific journalists appeared on social media in August. The allegedly forced resignations of the general director and the chair of the public broadcaster Radio-Television of Kosovo in July and August, respectively, raised concerns regarding the right to freedom of expression and the freedom of the media. Serbian print media remain unavailable in Kosovo, affecting the rights of Kosovo Serbs to freedom of expression and information.

71. UNMIK continued to monitor hate speech on social media, a significant share of which was gender-based, targeting women. Some instances of hate speech also targeted the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community. A noticeable selectivity in the criminal prosecution of hate crimes continued, mostly affecting Kosovo Serbs who faced charges of inciting ethnic hatred, typically for expressing or displaying pro-Serbian views or messages, including on social media.

V. Other key developments

72. The Kosovo authorities conducted a census in May, with technical support from UNDP, the United Nations Population Fund and the Economic Commission of Europe that aimed at raising awareness on the conduct of the census. A separate web-based count remains open for the Kosovo diaspora until the end of the year. The Kosovo Statistics Agency released preliminary results on 12 July. There was very low participation by Kosovo Serbs in northern Kosovo following calls from Kosovo Serb political parties for people to boycott the process, citing concerns about Pristina’s respect for the rights of Kosovo Serbs. Participation was higher in other Kosovo Serb-majority municipalities. The census included questions relating to the consequences of the 1998–1999 conflict in Kosovo, including damage to property and whether any family members were killed, wounded or disappeared. The questions were restricted to the period of 28 February 1998 to 12 June 1999. That timeframe was criticized by Kosovo Serb civil society representatives for excluding the period after the conflict, when many attacks against Kosovo Serbs and other non-majority communities reportedly took place.

VI. Returns, reconciliations, cultural heritage and community relations

73. UNHCR registered 13 voluntary returns from members of non-majority communities who had been displaced within and outside Kosovo, including 4 women and 9 men, 7 Kosovo Serbs, 5 Kosovo Roma and 1 Kosovo Ashkali. This brings the total number of displaced persons from non-majority communities who have found durable solutions in Kosovo since 2000 to 29,418, including 14,435 women and 14,983 men (12,831 Kosovo Serbs, 7,780 Kosovo Egyptians and Ashkali, 4,095 Kosovo Roma, 1,879 Kosovo Bosniaks, 1,464 Kosovo Gorani, 1,325 Kosovo Albanians, 21 Kosovo Montenegrins, 19 Kosovo Turks and 4 Kosovo Croats). There remain 15,586 displaced persons within Kosovo (7,176 women and 8,410 men), while across the Western Balkans there are 69,627 persons with displacement-related needs, out of the approximately 200,000 displaced persons from Kosovo residing in the region, most of them in Serbia.

74. The Kosovo authorities received 121 asylum claims (96 men and 25 women). UNHCR ensured that all asylum-seekers received free legal aid and psychosocial support, as well as interpretation services.

75. The independent commission of the government of Kosovo for the verification of degrees issued by the University in North Mitrovica has verified 267 of the 346 diplomas it has received since the commission resumed work in March 2023. From March to September 2024, the commission verified 192 diplomas. The verified certificates enable graduates of the University of North Mitrovica to seek employment in Kosovo institutions.

76. The Kosovo government created a task force and a 10-year action plan to achieve proportional employment of non-majority communities in the public administration. The plan is expected to create around 3,000 jobs for non-majority communities. Each ministry is to allocate at least 10 posts for non-majority members by the end of 2024.

77. There were several incidents affecting Serbian Orthodox and Catholic sites in non-majority community areas. These include break-ins or attempted break-ins at Serbian Orthodox churches in Šilovo/Shillovë, in Krushevë e Madhe/Veliko Kruševë, in Talinoc i Muhaxherëve/Muhadžer Talinovac, and in Lipjan/Lipljan town. A theft was also reported from a Catholic church in Zllakuqan/Zlokuçane in May, which has become a repeated target for break-ins.

78. Additional cases involving religious sites of non-majority communities include the illegal dumping of waste at the Serbian Orthodox cemetery in Klinë/Klina town and at the special protective zone of the Binaç monastery in Buzovik in March; incendiary graffiti sprayed inside the Serbian Orthodox Holy Trinity Church in Nakëll/Naklo; and damages to a cross in a Serbian Orthodox cemetery in Rahovec/Orahovac in May. Further incidents occurred at several religious sites of various denominations throughout Kosovo in locations where the affected community is in the majority.

79. In May, unknown persons vandalized the entrance of a school attended by Kosovo Serbs in the village of Gojbulë/Gojbulja.

80. UNMIK registered multiple incidents affecting special protective zones, including illegal logging by three Kosovo Albanian suspects identified by Kosovo police in the forest owned by the Serbian Orthodox Draganac Monastery on 5 April. In the same month, the authorities stopped a Kosovo Albanian man from cultivating fields owned by the Peć Patriarchate without authorization in Budisalc/Budisavci village. On 5 June, a private company demolished three buildings within the Old Saraj

complex in the historical centre of Prizren. In August, UNMIK observed the construction of a road, funded by Kosovo authorities, inside the 50-metre perimeter of the Dolac Monastery. The construction had not been previously approved by the Serbian Orthodox Church, as required by the Law on Special Protective Zones. In its first meeting since November 2020, the Implementation and Monitoring Council held an extraordinary meeting on 4 September, where the Serbian Orthodox Church agreed to the continuation of the road works.

81. On 3 July, the Serbian Orthodox Visoki Dečani Monastery received a draft municipal development plan from the municipality that classified the monastery and substantial parts of the special protective zone as an “urban area” and envisaged several infrastructure projects in the zone. The Monastery urged the municipal authority to adhere to the legal framework and called for consultations to explore alternative development strategies, but so far, no consultations had taken place.

VII. Trust-building, partnership and cooperation

82. UNMIK continued to support trust-building initiatives across Kosovo with a focus on promoting inter-ethnic dialogue and combating divisive narratives to address the trust-deficit and strengthen the social fabric. This included support to the Barabar Centre in Pristina, a multi-ethnic space for trust-building and engagement among all communities.

83. In May, close to 50 people from Kosovo Albanian, Kosovo Ashkali, Kosovo Bosniak, Kosovo Egyptian, Kosovo Roma, Kosovo Serb and Kosovo Turk communities working on community-related issues across Kosovo participated in a meeting to coordinate and support trust-building between municipalities and central authorities. The meeting was organized as part of an UNMIK-funded project.

84. The Mission continued to engage all communities in Kosovo on environmental protection. In that regard, UNMIK supported Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb activists in holding two debates and publishing four reports and three opinion editorials on issues such as pollution and energy transition.

85. UNMIK supported a forum held in the Pejë/Peć region in June 2024 that enabled more than 40 business leaders, innovators, young entrepreneurs and development experts from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Kosovo to expand their collaboration across sectors and strengthen regional economic cooperation.

86. UNMIK continued to train Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb media organizations to strengthen fact-checking partnerships, debunk false news and mitigate the impact of misinformation and disinformation on inter-ethnic relations. In March, UNDP provided training to young women and men from different ethnic backgrounds on improving media literacy and combating gender-based disinformation to fight stereotypes and false information.

87. UNMIK supported the annual report on human rights drafted by 37 civil society organizations. It also supported the Ombudsperson Institution in finalizing the methodology to identify human rights indicators and helped prepare the ground with relevant actors for the inclusion of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the Kosovo legal framework.

88. The Mission continued to train municipal non-discrimination officers in cooperation with the Council of Europe. It also supported the realization of language rights in cooperation with the language commissioner of Kosovo and the International Organization for Migration.

89. UNMIK supported the families of missing persons in pursuit of their right to know by facilitating family reunions and information sessions and by reaching out to the authorities in Belgrade and Pristina to advocate for a human rights-based approach to the issue and encourage further meetings of the thematic working group. The Mission supported efforts to tackle the persistent stigmatization of conflict-related sexual violence survivors and provided training to members of the Kosovo government commission responsible for the verification and recognition of the status of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence on stress and trauma-sensitive approaches to providing survivors with services that adhere to the highest international standards.

VIII. Women and peace and security

90. On 15 and 16 April, the second edition of the international forum on women and peace and security, organized by President Osmani, brought together participants from over 40 countries. During the forum, Ms. Osmani signed an agreement with the United States to establish a regional centre of excellence on women and peace and security. UNMIK expressed its commitment to supporting the centre, which aims to foster learning and collaboration between networks of international experts.

91. On 19 June, the Mission organized a global open day on women and peace and security, during which over 150 attendees gathered in Pristina. Deputy Prime Minister Emilija Redžepi emphasized the importance of cooperation among all communities to advance gender equality.

92. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and UNMIK organized round-table discussions in Tirana, Albania and Gjakova/Đakovica where women parliamentarians and regional civil society leaders from diverse ethnic backgrounds discussed obstacles facing the European Union-facilitated dialogue.

93. The UNMIK police component, with the support of the United Nations Office for Project Services and other partners, provided training on trauma response and stress management to members from various ethnic communities of the Association of Women in the Kosovo Police.

94. The Ministry of Justice, as the government's coordinator for preventing violence against women and domestic violence, together with the Agency for Gender Equality of Kosovo, formed several sub-working groups to develop sublegal acts to improve government services provided to people who have experienced such violence.

IX. Youth and peace and security

95. Between March and September, 300 young people from diverse communities participated in the second phase of an UNMIK-supported project implemented by a multi-ethnic network of young Kosovo peacebuilders. Activities included the sixth annual United Nations Youth Assembly in Kosovo, an astronomy peace camp and a week-long cultural exchange programme, aimed at fostering cross-community exchanges and cooperation on matters of mutual concern.

96. With 130 local and regional youth delegates, the 2024 United Nations Youth Assembly in Kosovo created the first regional multistakeholder platform to discuss challenges and opportunities related to artificial intelligence for the youth and peace and security agenda. The Youth Assembly benefitted from the expertise of nearly 50 local and international experts in the field of artificial intelligence, public policy and peacebuilding. The event contributed towards equipping young people with the skills

and knowledge to enable them to better harness the power of artificial intelligence and benefit their communities. The Youth Assembly also hosted a Youth4Youth projects competition, through which UNMIK funded five informal youth-led teams to implement their initiatives. These focused on cybersecurity, countering hate speech and fake news with artificial intelligence tools, empowering young women in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics, as well as mental health.

X. Observations

97. The atmosphere in northern Kosovo remains tense, and the potential for escalation persists. I call upon the parties to reaffirm their commitment to the European Union-facilitated dialogue and to fully implement existing agreements. Unilateral actions, including the closure of institutions financed by Serbia and steps towards reopening the Mitrovica bridge, as well as restrictions on Serbian goods and the implementation of the new currency regulation, heighten tensions and erode trust among communities and between communities and institutions. Such actions not only disrupt the daily lives and socioeconomic rights of those affected, but also jeopardize the collective progress and stability that are crucial for a peaceful and prosperous future shared by all. I reiterate my call for greater and meaningful participation of women representatives in the dialogue.

98. Furthermore, I call for responsible leadership that prioritizes the well-being and human rights of all people in Kosovo. It is critical that the actions of political leaders reflect a commitment to address the needs and rights of all communities.

99. Concerns from non-majority communities over potential actions affecting Serbia-run education and healthcare institutions, following the closure of institutions providing essential services, must be fully addressed. Safeguarding the economic and social rights of non-majority communities, including for the most vulnerable, is vital. The need for renewed trust-building and inter-community engagement is thus an urgent priority for the Mission.

100. The serious security incident in Banjska/Banjskë on 24 September 2023 underscores the urgent need for all parties to cooperate in the pursuit of justice. Addressing such incidents transparently and effectively is crucial to restoring confidence and ensuring long-term stability.

101. I encourage all parties to implement measures that safeguard and promote respect for human rights while upholding the rule of law. It is essential that law enforcement, in particular in relation to arrests, detentions and property rights, is conducted with full respect for Kosovo's legal framework and international human rights standards. The integrity and impartiality of rule of law institutions must be preserved.

102. The continued progress on resolving the fate of the missing through the Working Group on Missing Persons is commendable, and an acceleration of those efforts is encouraged. Both parties should take all steps necessary to implement the provisions of the Declaration on Missing Persons, endorsed by Belgrade and Pristina on 2 May as part of the European Union-facilitated dialogue.

103. I call on government institutions to advance efforts to enhance the legal and policy frameworks addressing gender-based violence and to ensure their effective implementation.

104. I welcome the official registration of the property of Visoki Dečani Monastery, in accordance with the ruling of the 2016 Constitutional Court of Kosovo. This represents an important step in respecting legal obligations and protecting cultural heritage.

105. I reiterate my appeal for voluntary contributions to the United Nations trust fund to enhance support to the Kosovo Roma, Kosovo Ashkali and Kosovo Egyptian communities, who remain among the most vulnerable in Kosovo.

106. Finally, I express my deep appreciation to my Special Representative, Caroline Ziadeh, and the entire UNMIK team for their unwavering efforts in fostering dialogue and building trust. I welcome the vital ongoing cooperation between the Mission and the United Nations Kosovo team. I am grateful for the continued collaboration with our partners in Kosovo, including the Kosovo Force, the European Union and OSCE, whose commitment to peace, security and the well-being of Kosovo's people remains steadfast.

Annex I

Report of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to the Secretary-General on the activities of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo from 15 March 2024 to 15 September 2024

1. Summary

The reporting period was marked by a continuing deterioration of relations between Belgrade and Pristina and the persistence of a tense and fragile security situation in northern Kosovo. No progress was made towards normalization of relations between the parties.

In April, Srpska Lista and all other Kosovo Serb political entities stated they would not participate in the vote for the recall of mayors of the four municipalities in northern Kosovo and called upon Kosovo Serbs to boycott the vote, as well as a subsequent population census. Pristina further enhanced its efforts to consolidate full control over the entire territory of Kosovo by conducting a series of operations aimed at dismantling a number of institutions and services of the Serbia-run “parallel structures”, as well as Serbian financial institutions. The European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX), along with the international community, expressed concerns over the impact of these developments.

On 20 May 2024, the Kosovo Police searched and closed six Serbian financial institutions in the four municipalities in northern Kosovo, after seizing large sums of cash. Also in May, the Kosovo authorities issued eviction warrants for 12 apartments in northern Kosovo that had been evacuated decades ago by their Kosovo Albanian inhabitants during or following the 1998-1999 conflict and inhabited by Kosovo Serbs since. Additional eviction warrants were issued later.

In August 2024, the Kosovo police closed nine Serbian post offices in the four municipalities in northern Kosovo. The Government of Kosovo’s declared its intention to reopen the Austerlitz bridge in Mitrovica for vehicle traffic, which is fiercely opposed by Serbia and Kosovo Serbs, and other ongoing tensions between the two parties further exacerbated the situation.

EULEX continued its regular robust monitoring of selected cases and trials, with a specific focus on high-profile cases involving, for example, inter-ethnic incidents, arrests of Kosovo Serbs and other sensitive issues. The Mission also continued to advise and support the Kosovo Correctional Service and the Kosovo Probation Service. In addition to cooperation and coordination with the Kosovo police, including through monitoring of selected police operations and engagement of EULEX Police Advisors North in all police stations in northern Kosovo, EULEX continued to support the Kosovo police by facilitating international police cooperation through the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol). During the reporting period, the Mission’s longstanding cooperation with the Institute of Forensic Medicine was reconfirmed through the signing of two technical arrangements, outlining the Mission’s continued support to the Institute.

EULEX continued to support the Kosovo Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecutor’s Office.

EULEX further improved its already good cooperation with the Kosovo Force and remained ready to take on its role as second security responder, as defined in the

Kosovo security framework, according to which the Kosovo police is the first, EULEX the second and the Kosovo Force the third security responder.

2. Monitoring

In the light of the tense situation in northern Kosovo and the increase in Kosovo police operations in the area, the Mission continued to monitor cases involving Kosovo Serbs apprehended or questioned during the reporting period, including, when applicable, the conditions of their detention on remand. The Kosovo police often notified prosecutors verbally of a planned operation in the last minute, disregarding the intent of the Criminal Procedure Code, which grants prosecutors a significantly bigger role in overseeing and authorizing such criminal investigations. In addition, on some occasions, Kosovo Serb defence counsels complained of a lack of timely access to case files relating to their clients.

EULEX followed up on Kosovo police operations aimed at dismantling the “parallel structures”. In May, the Kosovo police searched six Serbian financial institutions in northern Kosovo, sequestering large sums of cash and closing the institutions. The searches were carried out without court orders, and the on-call prosecutor was only informed when the operation had already begun. The European Union, supported by the United States of America and other members of the international community, assessed the police operation as being detrimental to the dialogue. Also in May, the Kosovo authorities rejected a request from the Patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church to visit the Peć Patriarchate in the Pejë/Peć municipality, likewise prompting negative reactions from Serbia and the international community. Following its decision to disallow the use of driver’s licences issued by the Serbia-run “parallel structures”, the Government of Kosovo introduced a procedure to facilitate their conversion to official Kosovo licences. The decision foresaw a three-month grace period, which would end on 9 August, after which the use of licences issued by the “parallel structures” would be banned. The deadline was later extended to 23 August, reportedly to accommodate the high number of requests.

The implementation of a Central Bank of Kosovo regulation on cash operations effectively banned the use of the Serbian Dinar and other currencies but the euro. This triggered frustration, as Kosovo Serbs were forced to travel to Serbia in order to receive their salaries, pensions and other social benefits. The Mission learned from various interlocutors that the Kosovo Serbs in northern Kosovo feared the further worsening of their living conditions due to the measures against the “parallel structures”. There also is a growing resentment against the Kosovo police in view of several recent arrests, which many Kosovo Serbs interpret as politically motivated. Generally, the Mission’s interlocutors perceived the situation as continuously deteriorating. Recent unilateral operations in August – like the closure of nine Serbian Post offices in northern Kosovo, the short apprehension of two Kosovo Serb politicians who protested against the Government of Kosovo’s measures and the Government’s declared resolve to reopen the Austerlitz bridge in Mitrovica for vehicle traffic – have further exacerbated resentments among Kosovo Serbs in northern Kosovo.

EULEX continued its regular monitoring of cases of interest. The Mission noted that, in high-profile cases previously adjudicated by EULEX judges, lenient verdicts or acquittals represented a trend. The prominent Oliver Ivanović murder case, monitored by the Mission from the beginning and characterized by numerous delays and unproductive or cancelled hearings, concluded in June. Guilty verdicts were issued for four of the six defendants, six years after the crime had been committed and three and a half years after the indictment was filed. The problematic practice persists of the Court of Appeals sending cases back to basic courts for retrial, very often resulting in the trial being unnecessarily prolonged. This problematic practice

also occurred during a trial concerning the rape of an 11-year-old girl, which the Mission had monitored from the outset.

The Mission also continued its robust monitoring of the overall treatment of detainees and prisoners in the Kosovo correctional facilities. The Mission's experts focused on Kosovo Serb detainees and prisoners, given numerous media and social media reports alleging violence and unfair treatment. The Mission found that those allegations were unsubstantiated.

Another focus of the Mission's monitoring activities is high-profile Kosovo Albanian detainees, prisoners and juveniles. While EULEX experts established that there had been no indications of physical mistreatment by the prison staff in the monitored cases, they registered multiple procedural violations. These violations included the placement of some detainees in segregation-like conditions without a written decision by the court or the correctional facility, which would enable the detainee to file an official complaint, or the issuance of institutional decisions against individuals, for example, revoking a permit for phone calls, without appropriate justifications. The Mission also noted the lack of Serbian-speaking staff in facilities with predominantly Serbian-speaking prisoners, resulting in continuous communication problems between the staff and the prisoners. However, the Mission found that allegations of inmates lacking access to prison healthcare services were unsubstantiated.

EULEX regularly highlights these and other shortcomings in its justice monitoring reports. These reports address findings in a number of areas, such as the slow progress in adjudicating high-profile cases, the system of scheduling court sessions, anti-corruption measures, corruption in the healthcare system, gender-based violence, crimes against journalists, property rights, juvenile justice, and institutional procedural negligence and discriminatory practices in correctional facilities. All reports include recommendations to remedy the identified flaws. EULEX is currently preparing its seventh justice monitoring report, which will examine the level of implementation of the Mission's recommendation issued in previous reports. This year's justice monitoring report is expected to be launched in October. EULEX is also preparing a report on the treatment of prisoners, from the start of detention until the prisoner is released. The report will examine the procedural effectiveness of the treatment of detainees and prisoners by the Kosovo Correctional Service and its compliance with Kosovo laws.

The Mission's correctional experts also continued to support the Kosovo Correctional Service and the Kosovo Probation Service in their drive to advance their capabilities. This included the drafting of the Kosovo Correctional Service in-service training analysis and a development plan for optimizing and systemizing the Kosovo Correctional Service internal training structure, as well as supporting the Kosovo Probation Service in drafting its new standard operating procedures for probation work, with a special focus on the implementation of alternative measures for juveniles. Furthermore, due to the regular discovery of contraband in facilities, prisoner escapes and incidents in prisons, the Mission continued to provide support to the management of the Kosovo Correctional Service in security matters. This included an analysis on the state and capabilities of the Kosovo Correctional Service Intervention Unit and recommendations on ways to further develop the Unit's performance.

As in previous reporting periods, EULEX experts monitored recruitment procedures, such as the qualification tests for 28 new prosecutors for the Basic Prosecution Offices, the promotion of seven Basic Court judges to the Court of Appeals, and the selection of 4 new prison directors and 113 new correctional officers.

3. Operations

The Mission's formed police unit and the EULEX Police Advisors North conducted regular patrolling activities to assess the security situation in northern Kosovo, notably around municipal buildings, common crossing points with Serbia, Kosovo police checkpoints, mixed- community neighbourhoods, cultural heritage sites and incident-specific locations. Particular attention was paid to institutions and buildings that had been closed down in the course of police operations aimed at dismantling some of the "parallel structures". The formed police unit and the Police Advisors North also monitored selected police search and seizure operations. In addition, the formed police unit continued to monitor the security situation in Kosovo Serb majority settlements south of the Ibar/Ibër River.

On 28 June, Serbs celebrate *Vidovdan* (Saint Vitus Day) in remembrance of the Battle of Kosovo in 1389. While the celebrations usually attract large numbers of participants, partly brought in by bus from Serbia and often featuring nationalistic symbols and speeches, this year's commemorations were characterized by relatively low attendance and very small numbers of organized participants from Serbia. Based on previous experience, and in line with its mandate as second security responder, the Mission deployed its full capacity to monitor the situation at all relevant locations and coordinated closely with the Kosovo police and the Kosovo Force. The situation remained calm, and no incidents were recorded.

The announcements by different Kosovo officials and political figures about the intention to open the Austerlitz bridge for vehicle traffic were met with strong objections from the European Union, the United States and the Kosovo Force and triggered peaceful protests by Kosovo Serbs. Since the end of July, EULEX increased its monitoring activities through enhanced patrolling by its formed police unit around the bridge, in close coordination with the Kosovo Force.

EULEX continued to support the Kosovo police International Law Enforcement Coordination Unit on international police cooperation by facilitating the exchange of information with, respectively: (a) Europol, through its Swedish Europol Liaison Desk; (b) the national central bureaux of INTERPOL under the umbrella of UNMIK (INTERPOL channel); and (c) the Serbian Ministry of Internal Affairs, based on the Protocol on Police Cooperation between the Mission and the Serbian authorities.

To strengthen cooperation further, the Kosovo Force invited EULEX to enhance its involvement in the planning of the Kosovo Force annual "Golden Sabre" exercise. This exercise seeks to test the ability of the three security responders to effectively respond to threats to freedom of movement and safe and secure environment.

The Mission and the Kosovo police continued to produce joint security assessments for the municipalities in northern Kosovo, in line with the Bratislava Agreement. However, in many cases the police failed to provide relevant information about their operations in northern Kosovo in a timely manner, thus negatively affecting the Mission's ability to implement its mandate.

The EULEX Forensic Medicine Team continued to support the Institute of Forensic Medicine in searching for, exhuming and identifying remains of missing persons from the period 1998–2000. These activities included active participation in 14 field operations, resulting in two exhumations.

The Mission's experts provided key expert assistance with the examination and reporting of cases at the Institute of Forensic Medicine, including active participation in the review of several hundred remains at the Institute's morgue. Overall, these activities resulted in the identification of 10 individuals, 6 of whom had been reported as missing persons, as well as 19 reassociations to previously identified people. The

remains of nine individuals were handed over to families and authorities, three of whom had been reported as missing persons. In July, the Forensic Medicine Team participated in a meeting of the sub-working group, a technical mechanism related to the working group on persons who are unaccounted for in connection with events in Kosovo, which is chaired by the International Committee of the Red Cross. The main objective of the meeting was to reach an agreement between the Pristina and Belgrade delegations on a joint plan of activities, with fieldwork to be conducted in both territories. Although both delegations agreed in principle to tackle a number of specific locations in the upcoming months, a plan of action could not be agreed upon as the parties could not commit to a specific timeline.

During the reporting period, the Mission also signed two technical arrangements with the Institute of Forensic Medicine. The first one focused on the terms of the technical and expert support provided by the Forensic Medicine Team to the Institute. The second arrangement concerned the use of temporary containerized offices set up by EULEX at the Institute, following a fire which had damaged the Institute's building.

The Mission continued to provide logistical and operational support to the Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecutor's Office in line with the Mission's mandate.

Annex II

Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecutor's Office

The Specialist Chambers and the Specialist Prosecutor's Office continued the efficient implementation of their mandates throughout the reporting period, including through the pronouncement of the judgment in the case of the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Pjetër Shala*; the second war crimes judgment before the Specialist Chambers; the Appeals Panel's new determination of sentence in the case of the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Salih Mustafa*; and the transfer of the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Sabit Januzi et al.* case to a Trial Panel.

On 15 March 2024, the Specialist Chambers judges gathered for their ninth annual plenary on the Chambers premises. The same day, the call for nomination of judges to a reserve list for the roster of international judges closed. The reserve list for the roster is intended to ensure that, in the future, judges who resign can be replaced immediately, thereby preventing any delay in the proceedings.

On 3 May 2024, the Single Judge issued a decision ordering the release of Mr. Isni Kilaj to Kosovo under strict conditions, given that Mr. Kilaj remained a suspect in proceedings before the Specialist Chambers. The Specialist Prosecutor's Office appealed the Single Judge's decision, which the Court of Appeals Panel denied on 13 May 2024. Mr. Kilaj was subsequently released on 15 May 2024.

Mr. Kilaj had been arrested by the Specialist Prosecutor's Office on 2 November 2023 in Kosovo pursuant to an arrest order issued by the Specialist Prosecutor for offences against the administration of justice, including obstructing official persons in performing official duties. He had been transferred to the Specialist Chambers detention facilities on 3 November 2023 and had made his first appearance before the Single Judge on 4 November 2023. The Specialist Prosecutor's Office submitted an amended indictment against Mr. Kilaj on 18 July 2024.

On 31 May 2024, the Specialist Chamber of the Constitutional Court delivered its judgment on a referral made by Nasim Haradinaj, who had alleged violations of his individual rights and freedoms in relation to the criminal proceedings against him before the Specialist Chambers. In its judgment, the Specialist Chamber of the Constitutional Court declared part of his complaints inadmissible and rejected the remainder, finding that there had been no violation of the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo or the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

Following the resignation of Judge Nicolas Guillou on 6 June 2024 as a rostered judge, to assume his duties at the International Criminal Court, the Appointing Authority, Major General Giovanni Pietro Barbano, EULEX Head of Mission, appointed Judge Marjorie Masselot to the roster in accordance with article 28(4) of the Law on Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecutor's Office. President Ekaterina Trendafilova thereafter assigned Judge Masselot as Pretrial Judge in the case of the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Sabit Januzi et al.* and as Single Judge in the case of Mr. Kilaj.

On 16 July 2024, Trial Panel I pronounced its judgment in the case of the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Pjetër Shala*. The Panel found Mr. Shala guilty of the war crimes of arbitrary detention, torture and murder and sentenced him to a prison sentence of 18 years, with credit for time served. Mr. Shala was found not guilty of cruel treatment, as that charge was subsumed by the crime of torture. This was the second war crimes judgment rendered by the Specialist Chambers.

The trial proceedings in the *Pjetër Shala* case commenced on 21 February 2023. The Specialist Prosecutor's Office closed its case on 6 July 2023 and the defence concluded its case on 9 February 2024. The closing statements took place from 15 to 17 April 2024, following which the Trial Panel closed the evidentiary phase of the case. During the trial, the Panel heard 22 witnesses in court, and a total of 34 witnesses testified or gave evidence in the case. Eight persons were admitted as participating victims. During the pretrial and trial proceedings in the case, a total of 1,280 filings were submitted, including 538 orders and decisions by President of the Specialist Chambers, the Pretrial Judge, the Trial Panel and the Appeals Panel; as well as 373 filings by the Specialist Prosecutor's Office, 369 by the defence, 127 by the Registry and 50 by the Victims' Counsel.

The Appeals Panel authorized the parties to file their notices of appeal in the case, if any, by 2 September 2024. The defence did so on 2 September 2024, and the President assigned an appeals panel. On 4 September 2024, the Presiding Judge of the Court of Appeals Panel scheduled a pre-appeal conference for 20 September 2024.

On 29 July 2024, the Supreme Court Panel issued its decision on Salih Mustafa's request for protection of legality filed on 14 March 2024 following the issuance of the appeal judgment in his case. Mr. Mustafa raised five grounds in his request for protection of legality, related to the translation of the appeal judgment into Albanian, his conviction for murder as a war crime and in relation to his sentencing.

The Supreme Court Panel granted his request, in part, and annulled the appeal judgment insofar as it related to Mr. Mustafa's sentence of 22 years of imprisonment. The Supreme Court Panel returned the judgment to the Appeals Panel in accordance with Rule 194(1)(b) of the Rules for the Appeal Panel to consider reducing Mr. Mustafa's sentence in the light of the reasoning set out in its decision. On 31 July 2024, the President again assigned the Appeals Panel to consider Mr. Mustafa's sentence and any related matters, as necessary.

On 10 September 2024, the Appeals Panel issued its decision on a new determination of Mr. Mustafa's sentence imposing an overall sentence of 15 years with credit for time served.

According to the Reparation Order issued by the Trial Panel in the *Mustafa* case in December 2023, Mr. Mustafa was ordered to pay €207,000 as compensation for the harm inflicted on the eight victims of the crimes for which he had been convicted. The Registrar is instructed to implement the Order while a Single Judge oversees the implementation. During the reporting period, the Registrar made submissions in this regard and the Single Judge issued decisions, one of which was to instruct the Registrar to assess Mr. Mustafa's current and future ability to pay the ordered compensation. Such assessment would also be essential for a possible application on behalf of the victims to the Kosovo Crime Victims Compensation Programme.

The case of the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Hashim Thaçi et al.* continued to progress expeditiously since its commencement on 3 April 2023. The Prosecution had thus far introduced the evidence of 142 witnesses, of which 82 had testified in court. The four accused were charged with six counts of crimes against humanity each – persecution, imprisonment, other inhumane acts, torture, murder and enforced disappearance of persons – and four counts of war crimes – illegal or arbitrary arrest and detention, cruel treatment, torture and murder.

To ensure the expeditious pace of the case, a status conference was held on 27 May 2024 during which the parties discussed the latest notice by the Specialist Prosecutor's Office regarding its witness list. Following the status conference, the Panel issued a number of oral orders in court on 29 May 2024, including that the Specialist Prosecutor's Office file a further notice about its witness list no later than

16 September 2024. Another status conference will then be scheduled to allow the parties to present their views on the matter. Furthermore, the Panel ordered the Specialist Prosecutor's Office to submit a detailed plan by 21 June 2024 outlining how it intended to complete its case by 1 April 2025.

In the same vein, the defence was ordered to provide realistic estimates for cross-examinations. The Panel will review the estimates and, where necessary, impose time limits if there are inconsistencies between the Panel's estimates and those of the defence.

In the case of the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Sabit Januzi et al.*, the Pretrial Judge confirmed amendments to the joint indictment on 8 July 2024 and the Specialist Prosecutor's Office submitted the latest version thereof on 10 July 2024, which became the operative indictment in the case. As the amended indictment includes new factual allegations in relation to Sabit Januzi and Ismet Bahtijari, a further appearance was held on 12 July 2024 during which both pleaded not guilty to the new charge. The defence notified that they had filed their pretrial briefs on 2 September 2024 and the Pretrial Judge transmitted the case to a trial panel on 4 September 2024.

The Specialist Chamber of the Constitutional Court was seized on 3 April 2024 with a referral of the three accused regarding the constitutional validity of the Legal Aid Regulations of the Specialist Chambers. The Panel declared the referral inadmissible in accordance with article 113(7) of the Kosovo Constitution, article 49(3) of the Law on Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecutor's Office, and Rule 14(f) of the Rules of the Specialist Chamber of the Constitutional Court, as the Kosovo Constitution and the Law do not authorise individuals to raise general questions of constitutional compatibility of laws before the Specialist Chamber of the Constitutional Court.

A Supreme Court Panel was also assigned in the case on 16 July 2024, following Haxhi Shala's request for protection of legality in relation to his detention.

Mr. Januzi, Mr. Bahtijari and Haxhi Shala are charged with two counts of obstructing official persons in performing official duties and one count of intimidation during criminal proceedings.

In the case of the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Hysni Gucati and Nasim Haradinaj*, Hysni Gucati and Nasim Haradinaj continued to serve their sentences of four years and three months of imprisonment in a modified form, having been released to Kosovo with conditions on 16 October 2023 and on 12 December 2023, respectively.

On 13 June 2024, the President of the Specialist Chambers issued a final warning to Mr. Haradinaj to abide by all conditions set out in her decision on modification of sentence issued last December. The warning came after having received reports from the Registrar of the Specialist Chambers regarding Mr. Haradinaj's contacts or interviews with the media over the prior few months, without seeking the necessary approval, as mandated in the decision. The President highlighted that Mr. Haradinaj had already been reminded earlier in 2024 about the consequences of violating the President's decision. The President explained that, although the decision could be revoked or modified immediately due to the breaches, she had decided to give Mr. Haradinaj a final warning and made clear that any further breach would lead to his immediate return to the Specialist Chambers detention facilities to serve the remainder of the sentence.

During the reporting period, there were some developments in the case against Dritan Goxhaj, who was arrested in Albania on 31 July 2023 pursuant to a warrant of arrest of the Specialist Chambers for alleged offences against the administration of justice. The arrest was executed by the authorities of Albania following a Specialist Chambers request for cooperation and assistance. On 18 September 2023, a decision

approving Mr. Goxhaj's transfer to the Chambers was issued by a Tirana court. On 10 October 2023, the Court of Appeal in Tirana rejected the transfer and released Mr. Goxhaj without notice and without a written reasoned decision. The written decision was issued five months later, on 18 March 2024. On 9 July 2024, the Albanian Supreme Court dismissed the appeal of the Tirana Prosecutor's Office against the decision of the Appeals Court to deny the transfer of Mr. Goxhaj to the Chambers.

During the six-month reporting period, 1,180 filings and 355 orders and decisions were processed, 453 documents totalling 6,870 pages translated, and 2,057 items disclosed between the parties in all the cases before the Specialist Chambers. A total of 60 hearings took place and were streamed on the website of the Chambers in the three official languages of the court – Albanian, Serbian and English. The recordings thereof are available on the YouTube channel of the Chambers. In all, 34 witnesses provided their testimonies before the Chambers during the reporting period.

There were 169 participating victims in three of the four cases before the Specialist Chambers: 8 in the case against Mr. Mustafa; 8 in the case against Pjetër Shala; and 153 in the case against Mr. Thaçi et al.

There were 236 persons on the publicly available List of Counsel eligible to practise before the Specialist Chambers, of whom 113 were qualified to represent victims. The defence teams consisted of 141 persons, of whom 78 were practising in the *Thaçi et al.* case.

Throughout the reporting period, the Specialist Prosecutor's Office maintained its prosecution of former President Hashim Thaçi and his co-accused. The Specialist Prosecutor's Office also continued to investigate obstruction of justice throughout the reporting period in order to maintain the integrity of proceedings, with a view to prosecuting all who intimidate or interfere with witnesses or provide financial or other support to such criminal offences.

Annex III

Composition and strength of the police component of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (as at 14 September 2024)

<i>Country</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Total</i>
Austria	1	–	1
Canada	–	1	1
Finland	1	–	1
Germany	–	1	1
Hungary	–	1	1
Montenegro	1	1	2
Nepal	–	1	1
Slovenia	–	1	1
Total	3	6	9

Composition and strength of the military liaison component of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (as at 14 September 2024)

<i>Country</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Total</i>
Austria	–	1	1
Czechia	–	1	1
Hungary	–	1	1
Moldova	–	1	1
Poland	1	1	2
Romania	–	1	1
Slovenia	–	1	1
Türkiye	1	–	1
Total	2	7	9

Map

