

**STATEMENT BY PETER DUE, SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE  
OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AND HEAD OF UNMIK  
SECURITY COUNCIL BRIEFING ON UNMIK**

**9 APRIL 2026**

Mr. President,

It is an honour to brief the Security Council on Kosovo after having assumed my duties three months ago.

I previously served in Pristina in 1999 and 2000 and in Belgrade from 2013 to 2015. I have returned to a region that has made remarkable progress through reforms, dialogue and the efforts of a new generation determined to move beyond divisions. However, significant challenges remain.

Mr. President,

I arrived in early January at a moment of optimism that Kosovo could move forward after the political stalemate of 2025. The legislative elections held at the end of December were conducted in a peaceful and inclusive atmosphere. They reflected the broad participation of all communities. The swift constitution of the Assembly and the timely formation of a government pointed to a trajectory of stability and progress.

That momentum, however, was tested during the process of electing a new President of Kosovo, which has not yet been completed. On 25 March, the Constitutional Court decided that the Assembly still had 34 days to elect a President. Let us hope that differences can be bridged, a new President can be elected and that new legislative elections can be avoided. This would help ensure that the institutions remain focused on the broader public interest and people's needs.

Mr. President,

Democratic processes often touch people's lives most directly at the local level. I commend the active participation of all communities in the municipal elections held in October and November, as well as the timely establishment of local government administrations across Kosovo.

In northern Kosovo, the return of Kosovo Serb mayors marked an important step toward their re-engagement in local institutions. At the same time, this process has not been without challenges. In my recent meetings with some of these mayors, I heard concerns about incomplete handovers, administrative gaps and language barriers. These are not merely technical issues – they directly affect the ability of municipalities to respond effectively to the needs of their communities. I welcome recent efforts to strengthen cooperation between central institutions and municipal leaders in the north, and I encourage continued dialogue.

Questions have also arisen regarding the balance between municipal competencies and law enforcement responsibilities. Respect for the framework of local self-government remains essential to build trust and ensure effective governance. At the same time, positive steps are

being taken. I welcome efforts by the Kosovo Police to revitalize community policing in northern Kosovo, which can contribute to strengthen trust and enhance public safety. Ensuring that police institutions reflect the diversity of the communities they serve – also at senior levels – remains equally important.

Mr. President,

From the outset, I have sought to establish an open and constructive working relationship with as many people and communities as possible and – guided by resolution 1244 – to focus UNMIK's efforts on supporting dialogue and engagement, especially where the daily lives of people across communities are affected. I hope to have a regular and sustained dialogue with the authorities in both Belgrade and Pristina, despite their divergent views, including on the work of UNMIK.

Mr. President,

I welcome the recent progress in the EU-facilitated dialogue aimed at the normalization of relations between Belgrade and Pristina, and commend the European Union and its Special Representative, Mr. Peter Sørensen, for their engagement with the parties.

The convening in Brussels of the Joint Commission on Missing Persons for the first time in a trilateral format in January marked an important step forward. I encourage the parties to sustain their engagement, in close cooperation with the Working Group on Missing Persons.

I also commend the EU, and Belgrade and Pristina, for identifying a constructive way forward to implement the Law on Foreigners in March. This should help ensure uninterrupted access to education and healthcare, while contributing to an environment conducive to advancing dialogue, trust and stability.

These positive developments facilitated by the EU show that progress is possible through sustained engagement. It is important that Belgrade and Pristina build on this momentum, also by advancing the implementation of existing agreements, including the establishment of the Association/Community of Serb-majority municipalities. I hope that a high-level meeting between President Vučić and Prime Minister Kurti can take place in the near future.

Mr. President,

Dialogue, trust and accountability remain the cornerstones of lasting peace and security in the region. I reiterate the call of the Secretary-General for full cooperation by the authorities in Belgrade and Pristina to ensure that all those responsible for the attacks in Banjska/Banjskë in 2023 and on the Ibër-Lepenc/Ibar-Lepenac water canal in 2024, are held accountable. I urge both sides to work together through mutually agreed mechanisms in pursuit of justice.

Mr. President,

Kosovo has a dynamic civic space. This requires a media environment that safeguards the independence of journalists, free from political or other forms of pressure. We trust that attacks against journalists are promptly investigated and prosecuted. Strengthening accountability would also contribute to safeguarding media freedoms and preventing any erosion of the broader information space in Kosovo.

Members of non-majority communities continue to raise concerns related to equality and non-discrimination, access to justice and basic services and freedom of expression. Issues related to property rights remain particularly sensitive and require sustained attention.

Full implementation of Kosovo's language laws is also central to promoting inclusion and social cohesion. Recent steps to strengthen the use of official languages in judicial proceedings are encouraging. I also welcome the recent advertisement of the post of Language Commissioner, which has been vacant for over a year. A timely appointment will help ensure that all communities can fully exercise their rights and effectively engage with institutions.

Mr. President,

Trust among communities and between communities and institutions allows progress, dialogue and cooperation to take root. Even in the face of financial constraints, building trust remains a priority of the UNMIK. We pursue this hand in hand with the UN Kosovo Team as well as local and international partners through targeted initiatives that bring communities together. The Barabar Centre, a multi-ethnic space in the heart of Pristina, is one example, but I have also witnessed and been impressed by other projects such as a mobile laboratory that brings STEM education to girls from communities in rural areas or an initiative that brings together youth across Kosovo to explore cultural heritage and share experiences or an award-winning documentary titled "The Divided City of Mitrovica".

Throughout its engagements, the Mission aims to advance the meaningful participation of women and young people in political processes as part of a broader commitment to foster a culture of peace where participation is inclusive, where voices are heard, and where every community sees itself reflected in the path forward.

Mr. President,

UNMIK is not immune to the financial crisis facing the Organization. The Mission has recently implemented a contingency plan reducing encumbered positions by almost 30 per cent.

Furthermore, in line with the recommendations of the civilian staffing review conducted in late 2025 and reflected in UNMIK's proposed budget for 2026-2027, the Mission has adjusted its operations and will continue to pursue efficiencies with a view to maximizing available resources in support of mandate implementation.

Finally, I am grateful to the members of this Council for the welcome you have extended to me and for your continued commitment to peace, stability and cooperation in Kosovo.

Thank you, Mr. President.