



# 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 me to report at regular intervals on the implementation of its mandate. The report covers the activities of UNMIK, and developments related thereto, from 16 September 2019 to 15 March 2020.

2. The priorities of the Mission remain to promote security, stability and respect for human rights in Kosovo and in the region. In furtherance 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 Security Council resolution [1244 \(1999\)](#). The European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) continues its presence in Kosovo, in line with the statement by the President of the Security Council of 26 November 2008 ([S/PRST/2008/44](#)) and my report of 24 November 2008 ([S/2008/692](#)). The United Nations agencies, funds and programmes work closely with the Mission.

#### II. Key political and security developments

3. Following early legislative elections, held on 6 October, in which opposition parties made strong inroads, a prolonged period of vote counting, electoral appeals and coalition negotiations culminated in the formation of a new Assembly of Kosovo on 26 December and a new government on 3 February. The resulting political landscape attests to the rise of a new generation of political leaders and the success of prominent women candidates, as embodied by the highest percentage of women deputies and the election of the first woman President of the Assembly. The new government has laid out priorities with a focus on reforming the judiciary, combating organized crime and corruption and fostering economic development.

4. The early legislative elections were conducted in all 38 municipalities of Kosovo with a turnout of 44.56 per cent. Voter turnout in the 10 Kosovo Serb-majority municipalities was the highest to date, as a total of 48.6 per cent of eligible voters cast ballots. Despite the orderly conduct of the ballot, the certification of election results was delayed owing to numerous electoral appeals filed by political entities.



Detected irregularities regarding the results and reconciliation forms prompted the Election Complaints and Appeals Panel to order a recount of ballots cast at 88 per cent of polling stations. Furthermore, on 13 October, the Kosovo police evacuated the premises used for the verification of postal ballots after 26 Central Election Commission staff reported allergic symptoms upon contact with ballots from Serbia. The incident was investigated by the Special Prosecution Office and Kosovo police, which had not disclosed their findings by the end of the reporting period. The Central Election Commission processed and counted 3,782 parcels of ballots from Serbia on 23 October, but on 7 November the votes were annulled in an appeal process, on the grounds that the postal ballots from Serbia were delivered by “unauthorized individuals” rather than by regular mail. The invalidation of those postal ballots reduced the overall number of valid votes and, as a consequence, the number of votes needed to reach the 5 per cent electoral threshold. In that context, the pre-election coalition of the Socialist Democratic Initiative of Kosovo, the New Kosovo Alliance and the Justice Party secured six seats in the Assembly.

5. The certified results announced by the Central Election Commission on 27 November showed that no political entity had won a majority of seats in the 120-seat Assembly. Among the Kosovo Albanian parties, the Movement for Self-Determination (Vetëvendosje) obtained 26.27 per cent of the votes and 29 seats in the Assembly, followed by the Democratic League of Kosovo with 24.54 per cent of the votes and 28 seats. Among the remaining Kosovo Albanian political entities, the Democratic Party of Kosovo obtained 21.23 per cent of the votes, securing 24 seats. The pre-election coalition between the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo and the Social Democratic Party of Kosovo came fourth with 11.51 per cent and 13 seats. The Serbian List secured all 10 seats guaranteed for the representatives of the Kosovo Serb community, while the representatives of other non-majority communities collectively filled the 10 seats guaranteed for them. The share of women deputies in the legislature surpassed the 30 per cent gender quota by two percentage points, spearheaded by women candidates from the Movement for Self-Determination, the Democratic League of Kosovo and the Serbian List, who won Assembly seats irrespective of the legally mandated ratio. Local and international election observers assessed the elections as well-administered and transparent. However, the European Union Election Observation Mission to Kosovo pointed out that the campaign environment in Kosovo Serb-majority areas was “marred by intimidation”.

6. The elections were followed by four months of negotiations between the Movement for Self-Determination and the Democratic League of Kosovo over the formation of a coalition government. A key point of contention in the process was the nomination of the candidate for President of Kosovo in 2021. On 26 December, the Assembly of Kosovo was constituted with the election of the Movement for Self-Determination candidate, Glauk Konjufca, as President of the Assembly. Although the deputies of the Democratic League of Kosovo supported the constitution of the legislature, the final status of the President of the Assembly was resolved in a subsequent agreement between the Movement for Self-Determination and the Democratic League of Kosovo on 2 February. In accordance with the agreement, Mr. Konjufca resigned his position on 3 February, permitting the election of Albin Kurti, of the Movement for Self-Determination, as Prime Minister of Kosovo and Vjosa Osmani, of the Democratic League of Kosovo, as the first woman President of the Assembly, with a majority of votes. Although the Serbian List abstained from voting for the government, it voted for Ms. Osmani as President of the Assembly. The new coalition government consists of two Deputy Prime Ministers, 15 ministers and 35 deputy ministers, with the Movement for Self-Determination and the Democratic League of Kosovo each holding six ministries, the Serbian List two ministries and other non-majority communities one ministry. The new Cabinet was reorganized and

reduced from the previous 21 ministries and contains the highest percentage of women since 2008, with 5 ministries headed by women.

7. The new government has taken initial steps to address alleged misconduct in public office under the previous government. In February, it dismissed the Board of Directors of the publicly owned Kosovo Telecom and annulled a public competition for the appointment of new notaries, which had been criticized by Kosovo civil society organizations and some international actors as non-transparent and not based on merit.

8. The European Union-facilitated dialogue remained at a standstill, although international efforts to encourage its resumption continued. During his visit to Pristina and Belgrade in January, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, Josep Borrell, affirmed the commitment of the European Union to advance the dialogue process. On 23 January, efforts undertaken by the United States of America, led by the Special Presidential Envoy for Serbia and Kosovo Peace Negotiations, Richard Grenell, culminated in the signing of separate letters of intent by the two sides with a German air carrier to reopen a direct commercial air route between Belgrade and Pristina. On 14 February, representatives of Belgrade and Pristina signed additional letters on the re-establishment of a railway connection and the construction of a highway between the two cities.

9. In Pristina, on 7 February, the Kosovo Force and the Government of Iceland signed a framework agreement regarding the opening of additional commercial routes in the lower airspace over Kosovo. Under the agreement, Iceland would provide air navigation services in the lower airspace under the overall authority of the Kosovo Force. UNMIK welcomed the initiatives as being in line with Security Council resolution [1244 \(1999\)](#) and the Military Technical Agreement of 1999 and acceptable to both Pristina and Belgrade, as well as other key stakeholders.

10. Following the formation of the Kosovo government, international actors stressed the need for a swift resumption of the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina. On 13 and 14 February, the President of France, Emmanuel Macron, and the United States Secretary of State, Michael Pompeo, addressed separate letters to Mr. Kurti, calling upon the government to remove all obstacles to further negotiations, in particular by abolishing the 100 per cent tariff on goods from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the same time, United States and European actors called upon Belgrade to halt the “de-recognition campaign against Kosovo”. Although political leaders in Belgrade and Pristina reaffirmed their willingness to resume the dialogue, they also linked such resumption to diverging conditions. Mr. Kurti insisted upon enacting a policy of “full commercial reciprocity” and that Belgrade should cease its campaign for the revocation of recognition of Kosovo, while Belgrade stressed the need for a full and unconditional lifting of the tariff and the ceasing of efforts by Pristina to gain international recognition. On 27 February, Mr. Kurti proposed introducing a partial removal of the tariff on 15 March, followed by its full lifting from 1 April, contingent upon the commitment of Belgrade to abolish all non-tariff trade barriers and stop the “unfriendly campaign”. He said that if Belgrade did not meet those conditions Pristina would gradually implement the “principle of reciprocity” in trade, economic and political areas and reinstate the original tariff from 15 June. However, the governing partner in the coalition, the Democratic League of Kosovo, called for the full removal of the tariff rather than gradual measures as proposed by Mr. Kurti. Owing to conflicting views within the ruling coalition, Mr. Kurti announced on 15 March that the 100 per cent tariff would remain in place until the Cabinet reached consensus on the way forward.

11. The President of Kosovo, Hashim Thaçi, after meeting the President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, at the White House in Washington, D.C., on 2 March, emphasized “the necessity of a peaceful resolution of Kosovo-Serbia issues” and “the possibility of reaching a final agreement”. On 15 March, the Assembly of Kosovo approved a resolution in which it confirmed the commitment of Pristina to engage in political negotiations with Belgrade that would result in mutual recognition. It reaffirmed the mandate of the Kosovo government to lead the dialogue with Belgrade in compliance with the Constitution and the Constitutional Court ruling of June 2019 (see [S/2019/797](#), para. 7) and stated that the “territorial integrity and unitary character” of Kosovo was non-negotiable.

12. With regard to the security situation in Kosovo, there were a number of incidents in which religious sites and cemeteries were targeted. In October, thefts occurred at two Orthodox churches in Vushtrri/Vučitrn and one in Shtërpce/Štrpce, while two monuments were stolen from a Catholic church in Pejë/Peć in December. Vandalism was also reported at religious sites of the Protestant community in Gjilan/Gnjilane in September and the Islamic community in Prizren in November. Several gravestones in Kosovo Serb cemeteries in Lipjan/Lipljan and Istog/Istok were also desecrated. My Special Representative expressed serious concern about the desecration of gravestones at the Orthodox cemetery in Lipjan/Lipljan, where a similar incident had occurred in July 2019 (see [S/2019/797](#), para. 11).

13. There was an increase in the prosecution of terrorism-related offences during the reporting period. From 16 September to 25 February, 35 individuals (24 women and 11 men) were indicted and 23 of them (17 women and 6 men) were sentenced on terrorism-related charges. Of those sentenced, 16 women and 3 men were part of the group of 110 persons (74 children, 32 women and 4 men) who had been repatriated from the Syrian Arab Republic to Kosovo in April 2019 (see [S/2019/461](#), para. 16). All women pleaded guilty to “organizing and participating in a terrorist group”, receiving suspended sentences of two to three years of imprisonment and mandatory psychological counselling. The three men received prison sentences ranging from six months to 5.5 years. The 74 children continued to live with relatives. The Mission continued to monitor these cases, as well as broader reintegration processes, in coordination with the United Nations Kosovo team and international actors. During the reporting period, the International Organization for Migration supported the Division of Prevention and Reintegration within the Ministry of Internal Affairs by drafting guidelines for reintegration and joint assessments of specific cases and reintegration needs and also provided capacity-building for local and central authorities to facilitate the process.

### III. Northern Kosovo

14. Political developments in northern Kosovo were centred on the early legislative elections held on 6 October. The Serbian List won in all four northern Kosovo municipalities, which registered the highest voter turnout to date by significant margins, receiving between 81 and 92 per cent of the votes.

15. On 28 February, the government of Kosovo dismissed the oversight board of the Trepça/Trepča mining company on account of alleged violations of fiduciary duties and mismanagement of assets and recruitment processes. The government’s decision was preceded by more than two weeks of protests in South Mitrovica by prospective employees of the mining company, who alleged that the company’s recruitment practices were not merit-based and were subject to undue political influence.

16. In December 2019, the Special Prosecution Office of Kosovo filed an indictment against six individuals (five men and one woman) for the murder of the Kosovo Serb

politician Oliver Ivanović in January 2018. The defendants were accused of participating in an organized criminal group operating in northern Kosovo. Among the accused are two police officers charged with failure to secure the crime scene and concealing or destroying evidence. During the initial hearing, held at the Basic Court of Pristina on 11 February, all defendants pleaded not guilty to the charges. On 2 December, the Director of the Office for Kosovo and Metohija of the Government of Serbia, Marko Đurić, as well as the Serbian List, questioned the credibility and impartiality of the judicial process and accused Pristina of not cooperating with Serbian authorities on the investigation.

#### **IV. Returns, reconciliation and cultural heritage and community relations**

17. During the reporting period, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) recorded 152 voluntary returns by members of non-majority communities who were displaced within and outside Kosovo. The returnees included 75 women and 77 men (87 Kosovo Serbs, 33 Kosovo Roma, 28 Kosovo Egyptian and 4 Kosovo Ashkali). This brings the total number of displaced members of non-majority communities who have found durable solutions in Kosovo since 2000 to 28,358, including 13,919 women and 14,439 men (12,091 Kosovo Serbs, 7,634 Kosovo Egyptians and Ashkali, 3,968 Kosovo Roma, 1,875 Kosovo Bosniaks, 1,464 Kosovo Gorani, 1,282 Kosovo Albanians, 21 Kosovo Montenegrins, 19 Kosovo Turks and 4 Kosovo Croats). There remain 16,121 displaced persons within Kosovo (7,442 women and 8,679 men), as well as 69,627 persons with displacement-related needs across the Western Balkans, out of the approximately 200,000 displaced persons from Kosovo residing in the region, most of them in Serbia.

18. On 12 February, UNMIK, in partnership with UNHCR and the Ministry for Communities and Return of Kosovo, commenced a series of coordination meetings with municipal officials responsible for the protection and promotion of communities' rights and returns. The meeting was attended by representatives of 11 municipalities in the Gjilan/Gnjilane region, as well as central authorities, civil society representatives and the international community. The participants discussed the main challenges affecting displaced persons and the voluntary return process, agreeing to enhance institutional coordination and cooperation aimed at facilitating durable solutions. The second meeting, held on 26 February, was co-organized by the Ministry for Communities and Return and the Ministry for Local Government and Administration and was attended by representatives of 10 municipalities in the Pristina region, central authorities, civil society and the international community.

19. On 25 and 26 November, a technical working group composed of senior representatives from Belgrade, Podgorica, Pristina and Skopje met in North Macedonia under the auspices of a regional initiative supported by UNHCR and OSCE, known as the "Skopje Process", to support durable solutions for displaced persons from Kosovo. The participants discussed the implementation of earlier agreed action points and endorsed a concept note on durable solutions for displaced persons from and within Kosovo, which provides a framework for sustainable solutions and calls for a commitment to and the timely resolution of displacement in the region.

20. On 18 November, the Eparchy of Raška-Prizren expressed concern over a series of cultural events and religious services held on the remains of St. Nicholas Church in the municipality of Novo Brdo/Novobërdë that were not compliant with the Law on Special Protective Zones. During the reporting period, representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church also voiced concerns over the non-implementation of a

Constitutional Court decision dated 19 May 2016 in which the Court ruled in favour of the Visoki Dečani monastery's ownership of 24 ha of land. The Implementation and Monitoring Council, which oversees the special protective zones surrounding religious sites, did not meet during the reporting period owing to the prolonged electoral and government formation process.

21. Women representatives of the Ashkali, Egyptian and Roma communities, civil society groups and local authorities attended a focus group discussion held on 30 September and 15 October on the empowerment of women. The event, organized by the United Nations Development Coordinator, UNHCR and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), was focused on ways to address the lack of education and employment opportunities and limited access to public services, which were identified as the main obstacles to the empowerment of women among non-majority communities. UNHCR also continued to support members of the Ashkali, Egyptian and Roma communities in obtaining civil documentation and resolving civil status issues in order to enable them to have access to various public services. It provided legal aid to 159 individuals (90 women and 69 men) for civil registration procedures. In addition, 85 individuals (49 women and 36 men) were given support to have access to and benefit from education, social assistance, property and pension rights.

22. UNHCR also provided psychosocial support to 42 identified survivors of sexual and gender-based violence from the Ashkali, Egyptian and Roma communities.

23. Efforts to attract voluntary contributions for the trust fund in support of the Ashkali, Egyptian and Roma communities affected by lead poisoning in Kosovo continued. The trust fund was established in 2017 pursuant to the recommendations of the Human Rights Advisory Panel. No additional contributions were received during the reporting period.

## **V. Rule of law and human rights**

24. During the reporting period, the Kosovo judicial system filed indictments against several high-profile individuals. In December, the Special Prosecution Office of Kosovo indicted the former Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development, Nenad Rikalo, of the Serbian List, and the former Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport, Kujtim Gashi, a newly elected deputy of the Democratic Party of Kosovo, for abusing their official positions or authority. In February, the Court of Appeals issued a final judgment in which it found the former Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Health, along with other ministerial staff, guilty of abusing their official positions and, in another case, confirmed an unprecedented conviction in a money-laundering case and ordered the confiscation of almost 1 million euros worth of assets. At the same time, all accused individuals in the so-called "Pronto case", which involved high-ranking officials of the Democratic Party of Kosovo, were acquitted by a first instance judgment of the Basic Court of Pristina in January. The prosecutor of the case received death threats on social media in which she was accused of failing to build a strong enough case against the indicted individuals. The suspect who made the threats was subsequently arrested and a restraining order was issued.

25. Courts in Kosovo also filed indictments and issued a number of decisions in war crimes cases. The Special Prosecution Office of Kosovo indicted four individuals in three cases for crimes allegedly committed against civilians in 1999 in the municipalities of Pristina, Ferizaj/Uroševac and Lipjan/Lipljan. Initial hearings were held in all three cases. During the reporting period, the Court of Appeals acquitted one defendant accused of committing war crimes against the civilian population in

the municipality of Klinë/Klina in 1999 and reduced the sentence of another defendant from 14 to 10 years in a case involving a crime committed in the municipality of Suharekë/Suva Reka. In two other cases involving crimes allegedly committed in the municipalities of Prizren and Pejë/Peć, the trials are ongoing.

26. On 24 February, upon receiving notification from the Specialist Prosecutor of his intent to initiate proceedings before the Kosovo Specialist Chambers, the President of the Chambers assigned a pretrial judge to review indictments filed by the Specialist Prosecutor. In accordance with the applicable rules of procedure, indictments are filed confidentially, and the pretrial judge has up to six months from the filing of the indictment to issue a decision to either confirm or dismiss the indictment.

27. In February, the preparatory team for the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission held another round of public consultations with members of civil society, academic institutions and local communities across Kosovo to discuss the functional modalities of such a commission. The preparatory team, which had been established at the initiative of Mr. Thaçi in February 2017, consists of representatives of central institutions and civil society groups from majority and non-majority communities. However, the results of a public survey conducted by a local non-governmental organization, Integra, and presented on 4 March indicated that, while there was overall public support for initiatives that would help to unveil the truth related to events that occurred in 1998 and 1999, a majority of interviewees were not familiar with the concept of the right to truth and did not necessarily distinguish between the process of intercommunal reconciliation in Kosovo and the political dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina.

28. UNMIK continued to provide support to the Working Group on persons who are unaccounted for in connection with events in Kosovo. In September, after weeks of disagreement on procedures, the Pristina delegation, in the presence of the Belgrade delegation, handed over human remains of five members of a Kosovo Serb family to the Montenegrin Commission on Missing Persons. The remains of two other persons, identified as members of another Kosovo Serb family, were handed over to authorities in Belgrade in early September. In a welcome development, the Working Group resumed its activities in Belgrade in February, with both delegations agreeing to strengthening its analytical capacities and jointly conducting a number of assessments of potential sites in the coming months. According to the International Committee of the Red Cross, 1,646 persons out of a total of 6,064 remain missing as of February.

29. In November, UNMIK facilitated a series of capacity-building and drafting sessions for the Ombudsperson Institution of Kosovo and the Kosovo Agency of Statistics. This resulted in the signing in January of a memorandum of understanding between the two institutions, reflecting their commitment to apply a human rights and gender-sensitive approach to the collection, analysis and use of data. Mainstreaming gender and human rights into data collection will improve the monitoring and assessment of progress on human rights and help to ensure that commitments made by Kosovo institutions under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are implemented in a manner consistent with international human rights law.

30. The work of the outgoing Ombudsperson has resulted in significant achievements that have contributed to promoting a culture of human rights in Kosovo. The Ombudsperson's well-documented reports have provided a solid foundation for furthering human rights accountability, as reflected in the increased number of his recommendations being implemented by Kosovo authorities. He has effectively contributed to the prevention of torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

## **VI. Women and peace and security**

31. During the reporting period, the Kosovo government commission responsible for the verification and recognition of the status of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence received 143 applications, bringing the total number of applications received since its establishment in 2018 to 1,226. To date, 785 applicants (758 women and 27 men) have been granted survivor status. Challenges persist in terms of assessing and evaluating applications owing to the sensitivity and complexity of cases. On 12 November, the Ombudsperson Institution of Kosovo launched an investigation into the assessment and evaluation process upon receiving complaints from two individuals whose applications for survivor status had been rejected by the commission. On 6 March, the Special Prosecution Office of Kosovo filed an indictment against a former member of the Serbian reserve police forces for crimes allegedly committed against the Kosovo Albanian civilian population in May 1999, including conflict-related crimes of sexual violence. This is the first indictment filed by a local prosecution office on conflict-related sexual violence as a war crime since the end of the EULEX executive mandate in 2018.

32. From 25 November to 10 December, the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence annual global campaign was marked in Kosovo with more than 100 activities on the theme “Orange the World: Generation Equality Stands against Rape!”. UNMIK produced a documentary film, entitled “Not Your Property”, featuring women survivors from different ethnic communities, which was screened in 11 of Kosovo’s 38 municipalities and provided a platform for women survivors to share their stories and inspire others to speak up. The multi-stakeholder Security and Gender Group chaired by UN-Women, in which UNMIK participates, called upon the new Kosovo government to prioritize addressing sexual violence and to protect and support survivors.

33. The United Nations in Kosovo continued to help to advance the political participation of women. On 21 September, in partnership with UN-Women and the Regional Women’s Lobby for Peace, Security and Justice in Southeast Europe, it organized a regional round table in Pristina on the empowerment of women in peacebuilding and decision-making processes. Between December and February, in partnership with UN-Women and the European Union, it provided leadership training to 15 women leaders from all Kosovo communities to help to enhance their ability to influence political and peace processes. This included engaging with a network of peers and senior mentors and interacting with members of the European Parliament and experts in Brussels.

## **VII. Trust-building, partnership and cooperation**

34. During the reporting period, UNMIK, in close collaboration with the United Nations Kosovo team, continued the implementation of recommendations of the United Nations Kosovo Trust-Building Forum, held in Ljubljana in May 2018. To date, 150 institutions, organizations and individuals have undertaken approximately 200 initiatives in line with the recommendations of the Forum. The majority of the efforts were led by civil society, and about a quarter of the related activities were conducted by central and local institutions.

35. In the area of justice, UNMIK continued to support the integration of the judiciary and the administration of justice, as part of the implementation of the recommendations of the United Nations Kosovo Trust-Building Forum. During the reporting period, the UNMIK-supported Legal Aid Centre of the Kosovo Law Institute received and processed 233 requests for free legal aid, involving property



rights of women (44), labour and pensioner rights (69), the rights of minorities, internally displaced persons, refugees and asylum seekers (35), domestic violence and gender-based violence (27), detainees' rights (27) and strategic litigation cases (31).

36. UNMIK continued its efforts to help to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the judicial system to better serve the population, including reducing the backlog of pending court cases in Kosovo in collaboration with a local non-governmental organization. In November, UNMIK and the Advocacy Centre for Democratic Culture commenced a project aimed at supporting the Basic Court of Mitrovica in the translation of case files and the integration of young Kosovo Serb lawyers into Kosovo legal practice. Also in November, the United Nations Development Programme, with programmatic funds provided by UNMIK, began to implement a joint project to assist the Basic Courts of Pristina, Ferizaj/Uroševac and Gjilan/Gnjilane with the translation of case files and training for court interpreters. On 19 February, my Special Representative participated in a conference organized by the Advocacy Centre for Democratic Culture to assess the status of the judiciary and law practice in northern Kosovo, at which he pledged continuous support for Kosovo institutions in strengthening the judiciary. However, challenges remain owing to insufficient budgetary resources allocated to address the use of official languages in courts and the backlog of cases.

37. As part of a wider initiative to promote language rights and remove language barriers that prevent communities from fully exercising their fundamental freedoms, UNMIK, in partnership with the International Organization for Migration, launched on 26 November the first standard online Albanian-Serbian and Serbian-Albanian dictionary. At the inauguration, my Special Representative emphasized the essential role of linguistic diversity in ensuring a healthy social environment and the commitment of UNMIK to further advancing efforts to preserve linguistic diversity in Kosovo. To date, the online dictionary has over 6,000 active users.

38. UNMIK continued to advance the implementation of its framework strategy on young people and peace and security. In January, in partnership with a local multi-ethnic network of young peacebuilders, the "United Youth Task Force", it launched a capacity-building project aimed at fostering the participation of young people from all communities in local decision-making processes by strengthening the municipal youth councils and implementing youth-sensitive budgeting in 10 ethnically mixed municipalities. Furthermore, in implementing the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech, UNMIK, in collaboration with "United Youth Task Force," organized a training programme for a multi-ethnic team of 37 young bloggers and youth activists (20 women and 17 men) on digital media literacy and means to identify, deconstruct and challenge expressions of intolerance. During the training programme, which was held from 22 to 24 February, the participants also met with representatives of the resource centre for missing persons established by UNMIK and the Kosovo Documentation Centre to discuss the impact of media on transitional justice and the role of youth in building sustainable peace. From September to February, as a follow-up to the third United Nations Youth Assembly in Kosovo, held in 2019, UNMIK and the United Nations Children's Fund supported the first multi-ethnic youth-led project, on the theme "Under one sky". Over 630 young people (370 women and 260 men) completed a one-day course on observational astronomy and discussed astronomy education and development in Kosovo and the Western Balkans.

39. The implementation of a youth-focused project supported by the Peacebuilding Fund continued. Through the project, the United Nations in Kosovo, in cooperation with the Association of Journalists of Kosovo provided training to 61 journalists and journalism students (38 women and 23 men) aimed at enhancing capacities to apply a gender perspective in their reporting. Similarly, in collaboration with the University

of Pristina, the United Nations facilitated a series of lectures with international and local academics to raise the awareness of 416 students (231 women and 185 men) on the importance of the meaningful inclusion of women in peacebuilding. Under the same project, building upon the success of existing youth-led initiatives supported by the United Nations and its partners, the United Nations Children's Fund helped 2,000 young women and men from various communities, including 723 adolescents, to develop the skills necessary to identify community challenges and design solutions to meet social needs. These have resulted in over 30 youth-led initiatives.

40. UNMIK continued to strengthen its engagement with human rights-focused civil society organizations to contribute to cross-community dialogue and encourage grassroots monitoring of human rights violations and other human rights-related concerns. From 20 to 22 October, it organized a workshop on international human rights mechanisms and reporting for over 20 civil society representatives from across Kosovo, aimed at increasing capacity to monitor and report on human rights and support their engagement with United Nations human rights mechanisms.

41. The Mission continued to provide document certification services. During the reporting period, a total of 2,213 documents were processed, including 1,211 documents related to pensions and 1,002 to civil status, such as high school and university diplomas and birth, marriage and death certificates. UNMIK continued to facilitate police cooperation between Kosovo authorities and the Ministry of the Interior of Serbia, with a total of 45 requests received and processed. It facilitated the issuance of 24 Red Notices and 15 extradition requests to Kosovo from members of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL). It also opened 875 cases for investigation within the INTERPOL database, bringing the total number of open cases related to the territory or people of Kosovo to 957. UNMIK also processed 6,745 items of official correspondence as part of its INTERPOL liaison function during the reporting period.

## **VIII. Mission support**

42. In November, UNMIK became the first peacekeeping operation to obtain the International Organization for Standardization 9001:2015 quality management standard for end-to-end mission support field operations. The certification, which is valid for a period of three years, is a testimony to the Mission's efforts to ensure that its support operations are client-oriented, transparent and accountable, in line with my management reform initiative to strengthen performance culture, transparency and accountability. UNMIK has continued to implement its three-year quality assurance strategy, consolidating its position as a centre for excellence in business intelligence. It has progressed in training its staff in business intelligence and implemented management "dashboards" to monitor the impact of programmatic activities and other outreach initiatives in follow-up to the United Nations Kosovo Trust-Building Forum.

## **IX. Impact of COVID-19**

43. On 11 March 2020, after the declaration by the World Health Organization of the COVID-19 outbreak as a pandemic, the government of Kosovo announced certain containment measures, including the closure of schools and the suspension of travel from high- and medium-risk countries. On 12 March, the government established an inter-agency commission, chaired by the Prime Minister, tasked with preventing the spread of the virus by ensuring the distribution of supplies to medical centres and emergency services, as well as with preparing accommodation for affected persons.

On 13 March, upon confirmation of the first two cases of COVID-19 in Kosovo, the government took further measures, including restricting the movement of people into and out of two affected municipalities, closing all land crossing points and suspending all inter-city public transportation and regular commercial air routes. On 15 March, it declared a public health emergency as the number of confirmed cases rose to nine (five women and four men).

44. The United Nations in Kosovo remains fully operational, despite the implementation of risk reduction measures, such as telecommuting for non-critical staff and a move to virtual communications platforms, though with limited ability to implement programmatic activities and confidence-building projects. In the spirit of the One United Nations initiative, the Mission and the United Nations Kosovo team have been closely coordinating on issues related to medical prevention, preparedness and response, including through the implementation of business continuity plans. An inter-agency task force was established, chaired by UNMIK, to support and coordinate procurement of medical supplies and equipment. United Nations coordination with the Ministry of Health of Kosovo has been led by the World Health Organization and the United Nations Development Coordinator from the onset of the crisis. At the end of the reporting period, there were no confirmed cases of COVID-19 among the United Nations staff in Kosovo.

## **X. Observations**

45. The recent elections in Kosovo contributed to a peaceful transition of power, with a new government formed for the first time by the previous opposition. The election outcome thus represented a major change in the political landscape in Kosovo, reflecting a desire among a large part of the Kosovo population for political change. The new government has set an ambitious reform agenda, in particular in the areas of rule of law and economic development, which have been long-standing challenges in Kosovo, and which are priorities for the United Nations worldwide. The success of such efforts will require political will and commitment by the new government and external support. Greater representation of women in the leadership of the Assembly and the executive is encouraging and should inspire their increased participation in Kosovo in decision-making processes, as well as in the dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade. The government and the Assembly should engage all segments of society, in particular those who are left behind and those who are underrepresented, in the deliberations over the most sensitive issues facing Kosovo.

46. In addition to institutional reform, pursuing the normalization process with Belgrade is at the forefront of international expectations. It is essential that obstacles to the continuation of productive dialogue are removed swiftly. I am encouraged by the personal determination expressed by Mr. Borrell to spearhead efforts to resume the European Union-facilitated dialogue. I also welcome the tangible steps taken by Belgrade and Pristina, with support from the United States, to promote connectivity and regional cooperation by committing themselves to working towards direct air, rail and road connections.

47. Acknowledging the challenges, I am nonetheless very encouraged by activities of the joint Belgrade-Pristina working group on missing persons, which continues to operate with the participation and support of UNMIK, as well as other agencies. In order to bring long-awaited answers to families, it is strongly hoped that individuals with relevant information will continue to come forward and communicate with the joint working group.

48. I commend the Mission for advancing its trust-building agenda through a variety of initiatives in cooperation with the government, civil society, international

organizations and diplomatic partners. UNMIK, collaborating with the United Nations Kosovo team, has focused on areas that are critical to societal reconciliation in Kosovo and which are in turn indispensable to dialogue, compromise and sustainable peace. Collective United Nations efforts have centred on the empowerment of women, young people, civil society and professional media and support for other positive change-makers throughout Kosovo. Projects focused on institutional capacity-building and the promotion of multilingualism have reinforced the Mission's support for Kosovo institutions in promoting and protecting human rights. I hope that such work can be expanded to connect with similar initiatives across the region.

49. I wish to reiterate the importance of the United Nations trust fund in support of the Ashkali, Egyptian and Roma communities affected by lead poisoning in Kosovo. It is our shared responsibility to ensure support and assistance for the affected communities. The Fund has received only one pledge so far, and I once again appeal to Member States and other actors and organizations to contribute to the trust fund.

50. I thank my Special Representative, Zahir Tanin, and all UNMIK staff for the energy, creativity and dedication that they put into the Mission's work. I also reiterate my gratitude to the long-standing partners of the United Nations in Kosovo – the Kosovo Force, OSCE, the European Union and the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes – for their contribution and collaboration.

## 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 16 September 2019 to 15 March 2020**

#### **1. Summary**

Judicial officials addressed a number of issues identified by the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) Case Monitoring Unit (in the scope of its monitoring mandate), such as eliminating potential undue interference by implementing an automated blind-draw allocation of judges to trial panels and by avoiding the use of fixed panels at the Special Department of the Basic Court of Pristina, as well as by committing to taking steps to reduce the high rate of unproductive court hearings. These measures are aimed at strengthening access to justice and improve the independence and impartiality of the judiciary.

The Case Monitoring Unit continued its close monitoring of former EULEX and other high-profile cases. The Mission noted little progress in the investigation of such cases at the police and prosecutorial levels.

In support of the European Union-facilitated dialogue, the Mission continued to facilitate the technical implementation of the integrated border management technical protocol and the dialogue agreements related to freedom of movement. On the latter, the Minister of Internal Affairs extended two ministerial decisions on driving licences and civil status documents. The Mission also continued to support the Basic Court of Mitrovica and the Court of Appeals Division in Mitrovica in the implementation of the justice agreement.

EULEX continued to support the Kosovo police in the field of international police cooperation at different levels. Through the Institute of Forensic Medicine, support was provided to local counterparts in locating and identifying missing persons. Furthermore, the Mission maintained its rapid intervention capacities as second security responder and continued its support for the Specialist Chambers and the Specialist Prosecutor's Office.

#### **2. Activities of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo**

##### **2.1. Monitoring**

The Mission continued its close monitoring of selected cases and trials in the justice system, both former EULEX cases and ad hoc cases.

In January 2020, the Kosovo Judicial Council adopted criteria for the allocation of court cases through an electronic system in all Kosovo courts. It provides for a "blind draw" for the allocation of cases, which will help to limit external interferences. The first automatic case assignment was launched in all Basic Courts in Kosovo on 18 February. The Council further announced that it would look into the reasons for the high number of unproductive court hearings and take measures to reduce it. The Head of the recently established Special Department of the Basic Court of Pristina informed EULEX that the Special Department had decided not to use fixed trial panels in its proceedings any longer. These three important decisions, all taken in line with the Mission's recommendations, are expected to contribute to an increase in access to justice, as well as to an improved perception of the independence and impartiality of the judiciary in Kosovo. That said, the monitoring of some high-profile cases revealed signs of possible undue interference in court proceedings.

EULEX continued to support the Kosovo police War Crimes Investigation Unit in establishing a new war crimes database, including through the provision of tailor-made training measures on how to effectively search and manage the database. Part of the EULEX assistance consists of developing a system for clustering similar cases in order to reduce their number to a manageable size. Upon a request issued by the Kosovo police, the Mission will continue to assist the police over the coming months in order to ensure that the project is completed successfully. While some positive developments on war crimes cases were visible, no progress was seen in the investigation of high-profile cases.

EULEX observed significant improvements in certain aspects of the Kosovo police's handling of sexual violence cases. These included the correct referral of cases to other institutions to ensure the preservation of biological evidence, as well as an increasingly unbiased approach and readiness to investigate all possible aspects and leads. However, the implementation of a victim-based approach, notably with juveniles, remained an exception, and the Kosovo police still lacked sufficient technological resources to properly investigate such cases. The Mission observed that minimum sentences were often imposed in domestic violence cases, and aggravating circumstances were not taken into consideration, despite a clear obligation to account for them in the new Criminal Code.

The Mission's support to the senior management of the Kosovo Correctional Service did not progress substantially given that neither actions nor decisions on its new structure were taken by the outgoing government, and external recruitments were also not carried out. Likewise, there was no progress in amending the legal framework affecting the Service.

The monitoring of high-profile prisoner transports revealed some minor issues of concern, mainly at the technical level. With the aim of eliminating existing gaps, the Mission provided suggestions and recommendations on a regulation on the transport of prisoners, recently developed by the Kosovo Correctional Service.

Alongside other international actors, EULEX supported the development of a strategy and action plan for the training of Kosovo Correctional Service staff in the period 2020–2024. Furthermore, the Mission and a European Union twinning project jointly supported the Service in designing a regulation that enables prisoners to work outside correctional facilities, the implementation of which started in November as a pilot in one facility. Upon the request of the Service, the Mission conducted a review of the regulation and presented its findings and recommendations. In February, the Mission forwarded to the Director General of the Kosovo Correctional Service a thematic report on the establishment of a Prisoners' Assessment and Classification Unit in the Service, taking stock of steps made to date, outlining the Mission's intensive support in that area and providing recommendations on future steps in the process.

The Mission continued to facilitate the implementation of the integrated border management technical protocol stemming from the European Union-facilitated dialogue. There were no new developments regarding the planned construction of six permanent common crossing points between Kosovo and Serbia. The Serbian authorities remained in the temporary containers at the Merdarë/Merdare and Mutivodë/Mutivode common crossing points, although the construction of the permanent crossing points at those locations had been finished in mid-2019.

The Mission continued to support the technical implementation of the European Union-facilitated dialogue agreements related to freedom of movement. As advised by EULEX, the Minister of Internal Affairs extended two ministerial decisions necessary for the implementation of these agreements, namely a decision enabling the conversion of Serbian driving licences into Kosovo ones and a decision on the

acceptance of Serbian birth, marriage and death certificates for applying for any Kosovo identification documents.

The Mission continued to support the Basic Court of Mitrovica and the Court of Appeals Division in Mitrovica in the implementation of the European Union-facilitated justice agreement.

## **2.2. Operations**

EULEX continued to support the Kosovo police in the field of international police cooperation. It facilitated the exchange of information between the National Central Bureaus of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and the Kosovo police's International Law Enforcement Coordination Unit under the umbrella of the INTERPOL Liaison Office within the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). In its supporting role between the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation and the Kosovo police, EULEX provided criminal intelligence support to States members of the European Union and third-country investigations, and facilitated the exchange of information between the Kosovo police and the Ministry of the Interior of Serbia. In November 2019, the Mission conducted a workshop on international police cooperation principles in the field of environmental crimes, followed by a study visit to Italy in December.

The Institute of Forensic Medicine continued its work on locating and identifying missing persons and supporting local counterparts. In September 2019, the Institute of Forensic Medicine, in cooperation with EULEX and the Kosovo police, launched an awareness-raising campaign entitled "Speak up on Time" on the importance of preserving biological evidence in cases of sexual violence. Hundreds of students were provided with relevant information during workshops in schools across Kosovo.

The formed police unit of EULEX maintained its rapid intervention capacities as second security responder. In January, the unit conducted two exercises with the Kosovo Force on medical evacuation and crowd and riot control. No joint training measures were conducted with the Kosovo police.

EULEX continued to support the Specialist Chambers and the Specialist Prosecutor's Office within its means and capabilities.

## Annex II

### Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecutor's Office

In February, the Specialist Prosecutor notified the President of the Specialist Chambers of his intent to initiate proceedings in accordance with article 38 (4) of the Law on the Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecutor's Office, and the President assigned a pre-trial judge accordingly.

On 13 January, a panel of the Specialist Chamber of the Constitutional Court found admissible a referral by a summoned individual who challenged the legality of the Specialist Prosecutor's interview process. Furthermore, the Judge for Staff Appeals and the Higher Judge for Staff Appeals issued four decisions between September and December 2019 on appeals by staff members of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland regarding their contractual status at the Specialist Chambers and the Specialist Prosecutor's Office.

On 6 January, the Specialist Chambers took possession of its detention facility following the conclusion of the negotiations with the prison service of The Netherlands on detention costs in late 2019. The rules of detention comply with international standards, in particular the European Prison Rules and the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules).

During the reporting period, the Registry supported the working group on the Lists of Counsel in drafting a constitution for the Independent Representative Body of Specialist Counsel. The working group met in The Hague at the Specialist Chambers to finalize the constitution, which was adopted on 4 December by the Lists of Counsel. With the adoption of its constitution, the Independent Representative Body of Specialist Counsel was formally established and can be consulted by the Specialist Chambers on changes to its legal framework. The first consultation with it on proposed amendments to the rules of procedure and evidence was held in January.

In late 2019, the President activated the Rules Committee for the purposes of considering proposed amendments to the rules of procedure and evidence, in particular those rules that were tested during the course of the investigations and operations of the Specialist Prosecutor's Office.

The President of the Specialist Chambers and the Registrar cooperated closely with the host State and other States members of the European Union. On 10 December, the Principals – the President, the Registrar and the Specialist Prosecutor – hosted the States members and contributing third States at their premises for the annual briefing. At the briefing, they gave updates on the recent activities and addressed questions from the participants. It was the fourth briefing of its kind to be hosted by the Principals.

In December, a call for nominations of judges for appointment to the roster of international judges was advertised, with the closing date extended until 17 March.

The Specialist Chambers Court Information Network, a network consisting of 15 representatives of non-governmental organizations in Kosovo and Serbia, met on 6 February in Pristina for an outreach workshop. The consultative workshop was focused on providing feedback on specific outreach products of the Specialist Chambers. Furthermore, the network provided valuable insight into how best to communicate Specialist Chambers messages locally and gave feedback on the outreach activities of the Specialist Chambers so that they could be further developed.

During the reporting period, 16 meetings with civil society representatives were held in Kosovo within the Specialist Chambers outreach programme. Towards the end



of 2019, the programme moved to its second phase. The first phase was mainly dedicated to establishing a dialogue with civil society in Kosovo and to ensuring that correct basic information about the Court was disseminated. The second phase is aimed at increasing the dissemination of information about the Specialist Chambers to the general public through traditional and social media and to create an understanding of the pretrial and trial stages of proceedings at the Specialist Chambers.

As a result of the activity of the Specialist Prosecutor's Office, the Defence Office has processed three legal aid requests and assigned counsel in accordance, and appointed 12 counsels and three co-counsels. There are currently 174 persons on the List of Counsels eligible to appear before the Specialist Chambers, of which 88 are eligible to represent victims. The application process remains open.

During the reporting period, the Registry increased its administrative support to the Specialist Prosecutor's Office, including in the areas of information technology and language services, to ensure that the Specialist Prosecutor could focus all his available resources on investigations.

In the reporting period, the Specialist Prosecutor's Office took its investigation further and continued interviewing suspects, victims and witnesses, as well as collecting and reviewing other evidence. In order to fulfil its mandate, it requires the increased engagement and support of the international community, international organizations and individual States.

**Annex III****Composition and strength of the police component of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo**

(as of 15 March 2020)

<i>Country</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Total</i>
Austria	1	–	1
Germany	1	1	2
Hungary	–	2	2
Russian Federation	1	1	2
Turkey	–	1	1
Ukraine	–	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>

**Composition and strength of the military liaison component of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo**

(as of 15 March 2020)

<i>Country</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Total</i>
Czechia	–	2	2
Poland	–	1	1
Republic of Moldova	–	1	1
Romania	–	1	1
Turkey	–	1	1
Ukraine	–	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>

