



REPUBLIKA E KOSOVËS
REPUBLIKA KOSOVA – REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO

Security Council Meeting

STATEMENT

By

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Washington, DC

19 November 2015
New York

Honorable President of the Security Council of the United Nations,
Honorable Members of the Security Council,
Honorable Special Representative of the Secretary General in Kosovo,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my distinguished honor to stand in front of you today and to discuss the periodical report of the Secretary General.

Sixteen years ago Kosovo had no voice in this honorable chamber. We were witnessing the darkest moments of our lives. We were being deported from our homes, we were being killed, and we were being raped. Our lives and our dignity were being targeted in the most brutal way from the Serbian military and paramilitary forces. Families were being separated. Some, forever.

Scenes of helpless people being driven away in trains captured the world. Atrocities of that magnitude expose not only the worst of humanity, it is in moments like these that we see the very best that humanity has to offer.

We, Kosovars, are a living proof, that when there is solidarity amongst the free nations of the world, when the world decides to act together against atrocities, injustice, and terror, life beats death, good prevails over evil. And, although we did not have our own voice in this chamber, you all spoke on our behalf. For that, we are grateful.

In the immediate aftermath of the war and devastation, the United Nations deployed UNMIK in Kosovo. A mission that came and found a country in ashes and helped rebuild our country as well as our lives. We had to start everything from scratch. Serbian forces took with them our civil registry, our cadastral records and all documentation. It was not an easy start. Once you are free, you realize that survival is not the only worry. That freedom is not self-sufficient. There are many pressing priorities. You have homes to rebuild, roads to pave, schools to construct, opportunities to create, laws to adopt, institutions to build. None of it is easy, but we have managed to accomplish it together, with your help.

Today, sixteen years later, Kosovo is an independent state, recognized by a majority of the free nations of the world. We are being a constructive partner in the region and beyond. We have gone to great lengths to accommodate the minority communities in our young state. We have provided with unprecedented affirmative actions, unlike any of other minorities throughout the region, and we are proud of it. Kosovo has set an example to be followed.

While political debate back home sometimes might be fierce, let no one have any doubts about our collective aspirations and commitment to Euro Atlantic values and ideals. I am

honored to inform you that Kosovo's dedication and hard work was rewarded with the signing of the Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union last month. Although this marks just the first step in our accession process, it is a clear act, which demonstrates that our European future is irreversible and unstoppable. This is a clear and mutual commitment, in one hand Kosovo institutions commit that they will continue with the reforms, in all levels, and on the other hand the European Union commits to provide a concrete roadmap to accession. It will open our markets and it will increase and ease the exchange of goods and ideas, it will stimulate growth and competition. Ultimately, it will make Kosovo a better place to live. We understand that this will be a long process, and it will involve lots of difficult and painful reforms, but we remain committed to it. We also expect a positive recommendation from the European Commission on the visa liberalization process. We have delivered on the criteria, now the EC should deliver on its promises.

While the role of the European Union and the level of the interaction between Kosovar institutions and EU is increasing, we believe that the time is long overdue to change the nature and the format of the relationship between Kosovo and United Nations in general, and the format of the debate here at the Security Council in particular. From now on onwards, Kosovo will be represented in this respectable chamber at the level of the ambassador. We also believe that there is no need to meet every three months to repeat the same old positions and speak completely opposite discourse of what we are trying to achieve through the Brussels dialogue.

We in Kosovo believe that this honorable chamber is being misused, and your valuable time is being consumed, with desperate attempts from our northern neighbor to project a picture that does not match reality, to artificially inject the idea that somehow Kosovo's status is not settled; that our independence is temporary and unfinished business.

Now, let me be very clear, Kosovo is free and independent, and we will never negotiate our right to exist as an equal member of the family of the free world. Which brings me to another point, our aspiration to join and contribute within international mechanisms. Kosovo so far has joined several important international organizations. And we will continue to do so in the future. The path towards this aspiration will have twists and turns, but rest assured in the end, we will succeed. And this brings me to our unsuccessful attempt to join UNESCO few weeks ago.

Honorable members of the Security Council,

While Kosovo waged a very positive and moderate campaign, focused on our youth and rich cultural, religious, and historical heritage, we were faced with a very brutal, dishonest, factually incorrect and ultimately a racist campaign against Kosovo from Serbia. Waging that kind of campaign against Kosovo's membership in UNESCO is a direct violation of the spirit of dialogue and normalization that we in the region so desperately need. Spending all the time to

disseminate fabricated facts and untrue stories, with the ultimate goal to prevent our youth and our culture from feeling as a part of the global family is unworthy of a country that is an EU candidate. Furthermore, abusing the Serbian Orthodox Church, and instrumentalizing it for political campaigns is unacceptable. We have witnessed a Serbia that acts in total discordance with European values, issuing threats and warnings against our immediate neighbors that supported Kosovo's membership in UNESCO. Against our positive campaign, top leadership from Serbia used hate speech of unprecedented and unacceptable levels.

They claimed that the overwhelming majority of the citizens of Kosovo are of a lower class, that Kosovo is equal with the worst extremist organizations, while rows of senior officials became promoters of xenophobic attitudes towards Kosovo. 16 years ago we witnessed what such hate can produce.

But we will not allow our neighbors rhetoric and actions to deter us from our strong commitment to cultivate peace, dialogue and interfaith tolerance in Kosovo.

Serbian Orthodox Church in Kosovo and its protection and preservation is a constitutional category, as foreseen within the Ahtisaari provisions, and this subject will no longer be opened and will not be a topic for discussion in Brussels dialogue. As we will not negotiate with Serbia and we will not ask for Serbia's permission or consent to join international organizations. Quite the opposite, we would and should expect from Serbia to act accordingly and in the spirit of the normalization process. We will be working even harder to join international mechanisms, not because of vanity, but because only by being a member of the global family, only by having a seat at the table we can provide more opportunities for all the citizens of Kosovo, regardless of their ethnic or religious background.

On behalf of the government of the Republic of Kosovo I would like to express my deepest gratitude and appreciation to the 92 representatives of countries that supported and voted in favor of Kosovo's membership in this extremely important organization. To the representatives of the countries that abstained, that had any doubts or suspicions, I want to assure you that we are working hard, we will continue with an affirmative approach, convinced that we deserve a seat in this prestigious organization, and we will do our best to prove our commitment and intentions until the next opportunity. We also understand, that for some of you, abstention for our membership in UNESCO is not related to Kosovo as such, as some of you have told us clearly.

Finally, we appeal to the representatives of the countries that voted against to give us a chance and openly discuss your concerns before our application will be on the agenda again in 2017.

Honorable members of the council, ladies and gentlemen,

Kosovo institutions reassure you that we will continue to be proactive and committed to the inter-state dialogue in Brussels. Only through dialogue can we achieve sustainable peace. But we also need to be honest, and speak in earnest on what the normalization of relations with Serbia means.

For us in Kosovo, there is no room for ambiguity. While we commit to implement the agreements with Serbia, which are in line with our constitution, we also need to see the same level of commitment from Serbia.

Just yesterday, our Minister of Finance was not able to go and visit our customs offices in the northern part of Kosovo, despite the agreement that Serbia will dismantle its parallel structures in Kosovo. There is a bridge in Kosovo, in the 21st century that does not serve to connect people, but to divide, despite the agreement for freedom of movement. This dualism must end.

We in Kosovo are facing lots of questions from our people and from political parties on the value of the dialogue, while Serbia continues to change its face and approaches depending on the venue. There is a strong public pressure to justify our commitment. We believe that the best and the only way to prove the skeptics wrong is to implement what we have agreed upon in Brussels, in earnest and unambiguously. That's why we believe that the decision of our President, to address the issue of the association of the Serbian municipalities at the Constitutional Court, will give clarity. We should allow the Court to do its job and evaluate the constitutionality of the agreement, as foreseen from the agreement itself.

We must pass this test and prove wrong the fears that we will allow dysfunctionality and veto powering entities to block the progress.

We are also committed to our international obligations. Our parliament adopted constitutional amendments and respective legislation for the establishment of the special court with a vote of a 2/3 majority. Now we are at the final stage of the negotiation with Netherlands for opening of the special chamber of Kosovo in the Hague. We in Kosovo, more than anyone else need to close this chapter. We have always cooperated with international justice, and we will continue to do so. Our war happened in the 21st century, before the eyes of the world. No court and no process can re-write history. Kosovo has nothing to hide.

Kosovo has proven to be an active member of the Global Coalition against terrorism. Just few days ago, terror in the streets of Paris reminded us that we are fighting a borderless war. We

must all stand together and united. Please allow me to voice the solidarity of people of Kosovo with France, and to reassure you that we will continue to give our utmost to fight this global threat.

Honorable President, members of the council,
I thank you for your attention.