

Mr. President,

Let me, first of all, thank you for convening this meeting of the Security Council under Council resolution 1244 (1999).

I also take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the Special Representative, Mr. Farid Zarif, for his engagement and positions expressed in his statement.

I have carefully read the Secretary General's Report on the work of UNMIK for the period 16 July-15 October 2012 which is, for the most part, factographic. We have expected it to contain some substantial assessments concerning the development of the situation in the region, primarily having in mind the Secretary General's visit to the region in July of this year.

Mr. President,

The Republic of Serbia is committed to contributing to building peace, security and stability in the region, as well as developing a platform for a common European future. We have once again confirmed in the reporting period our readiness to contribute to overcoming outstanding issues and problems. Our continuing efforts are aimed at a peaceful resolution of the problems in the region, including the issue of Kosovo and Metohija, as mandated by this Council's resolution 1244.

We continue to oppose unilateral actions by any party and, in this respect, I wish also to underline, this time again, the unacceptability of the unilaterally declared independence of Kosovo and Metohija. Let me state, once again: we shall not recognize the so called Republic of Kosovo thus proclaimed.

I would like to express my country's sincere gratitude to the majority of UN Member States that continue to respect Serbia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We urge them to maintain their principled stance as it is the most important contribution they can make to the ultimate success of the dialogue.

Adhering to the principles of international law, as well as the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, we support a continuous building and promotion of mutual confidence, while respecting the legitimate interests of both Albanians and Serbs living in Kosovo and Metohija.

The Serbian side continues to promote and pursue the policy of finding peaceful solutions in a constructive dialogue with Pristina. The Republic of Serbia sees the dialogue as the only way of overcoming the current crisis and arriving at sustainable solutions for the problems facing the population in Kosovo and Metohija on a daily basis. The new government of the Republic of Serbia recently entered into the follow-up to the dialogue wishing to make a concrete progress between Belgrade and Pristina. During the last meeting between the Prime Minister of Serbia Mr. Dacic and Mr. Taci, held in Brussels on 7 November 2012, a wide range of issues was discussed. We insisted that the executive control powers at the crossing points in northern Kosovo be vested in EULEX, recalling that an agreement was reached to start implementing integrated control by 10 December, within the framework of pilot projects at the administrative crossing points. Also, agreement was reached that the Kosovo Police Service should set up a special unit for the protection of Serbian cultural heritage which will predominantly be made up of Kosovo Serbs.

We are determined to fully implement the arrangements reached thus far and are open to discussions on all issues, except the dismantling of Serbia's institutions in Kosovo and Metohija. Serbia wishes to move forward towards its European future and is fully committed to the process which should result in lasting peace between Serbs and Albanians.

We believe that UNMIK should have an important role complementing the dialogue, so that an effective exchange of information and reporting to the Security Council could be assured. The Security Council remains indispensable in securing the legitimacy of a comprehensive settlement.

Mr. President,

The role of the United Nations in the stabilization of the situation in the region is irreplaceable. Therefore, the mandate of UNMIK must remain unchanged and it should continue to enjoy our full support. We would like to see a more efficient cooperation between UNMIK, KFOR and EULEX. Both UNMIK and EULEX should be active on the ground and act in accordance with their mandates, in a status neutral way, under the auspices of the United Nations.

I would like to stress that the role of EULEX, especially at this moment, must not be changed. Its executive role remains crucial, especially as far as the implementation of agreements reached in the dialogue is concerned. The Republic of Serbia will insist on the implementation of agreed solutions over the integrated border management through the presence and executive role of EULEX at the administrative boundary line.

It is important that UNMIK continues to perform its mandate related to the external representation of Kosovo, unless it has been otherwise agreed within the framework of some regional gatherings. In addition, the United Nations should ensure that the missions in Kosovo and Metohija operate solely in a status neutral framework, as envisaged in SC resolution 1244. The United Nations should further continue its key role of coordinator of all international organizations that act under its auspices.

Of special significance for the Republic of Serbia is a continued financing of UAM (UN Administration in Mitrovica). It is unacceptable to us to additionally limit the responsibilities of UAM as a result of the lack of finances and the takeover of UNMIK's responsibilities by the creation and functioning of a parallel body based in Pristina. We point out that UNMIK is the only legitimate international presence in which people in North Kosovo still have full confidence.

Mr. President,

Despite the long-standing international presence, there is no significant improvement on the ground. The lives and property of Serbs and other non-Albanians continue to be threatened; there are no basic security conditions or freedom of movement and employment; a safe return has not been assured to Serbian refugees and displaced persons to their homes in Kosovo and Metohija; no major infrastructure facilities have been rebuilt; violence against the Serbian population and their cultural and religious sites by Albanian separatists continues. The human rights situation in Kosovo and Metohija, especially of Serbs and other non-Albanians, continues to be deplorable.

Concern for security and safety, as well as limited free movement are definitely the most important factors having an adverse effect upon the quality of life of Kosovo and Metohija Serbs. Relative diminishing of inter-ethnic violence is not a result of improved inter-ethnic relations, but the consequence of growing isolation of the Serbian population, resulting from their retreat into enclaves or isolated villages.

According to the information available to us, in the period from July - October 2012, more than 70 attacks that could be described as ethnically motivated were carried out. The result is that there are less and less Serbs living in the territory of Kosovo and Metohija.

In the period under review, additional concern, lack of security and disquiet were also caused by

more arrests of members of the Serbian community without any explanation as to the legal grounds for issuing controversial warrants against them. In this way, added pressure is being put on the Serbian community living in Kosovo and Metohija, causing additional mistrust among the Serbian population.

I take this opportunity to emphasize once again that the systematic destruction and demolition of houses deserted by the Serbs and other non-Albanians has been continued, with the aim of purposely forcing the remaining Serbian population to leave and preventing returns. I would also like to point out the institutionalized activities of local authorities aimed at expropriation or forced dispossession and demolition of houses in the historical parts of towns like Pec and Djakovica.

Mr. President,

At a time when the international community is making efforts to provide durable housing solutions for refugees and displaced persons in the territory of the former Yugoslavia, the return of internally displaced persons to Kosovo and Metohija is a slow process characterized by a low level of sustainability. According to the latest figures for 2012, a mere 285 Serbs returned to Kosovo and Metohija, testifying to the trend of continued decrease of the number of returns. The way in which the Kosovo Privatization Agency (KPA) is privatizing enterprises in Kosovo and Metohija is alarming, especially after January 2012.

Of particular concern is the privatization of public and social enterprises in the Serbian communities. The consequences of selling these enterprises to Albanian nationals represent an additional factor forcing the exit of the Serbian population.

I take this opportunity to draw your attention to ever more frequent problems of limiting the freedom of movement for private persons due to technical changes in the established procedure of organized police escorts, usually in cooperation with EULEX police.

A particular problem is a constant prevention of visits and free movement of the officials of the Republic of Serbia, despite the fact that they duly, and in accordance with the established procedure, inform EULEX of their visit to Kosovo and Metohija. Even humanitarian aid was denied entry to Kosovo and Metohija.

In Kosovo and Metohija, Serbia is constantly faced with attacks on its cultural and historical heritage. Attempts to replace and rename the Serbian cultural identity in Kosovo and Metohija to Albanian, Byzantine, Illyrian etc. are continuously taking place, in spite of the relevant recommendations and decisions of UNESCO.

I would like to emphasize, this time again, the importance of full and effective investigation of allegations of killing people for the purpose of organ trafficking contained in the report of Mr. Dick Marty, Rapporteur of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly. The Republic of Serbia is ready to continue its cooperation with the EULEX investigation team, in order to help establish the truth, trace the missing and achieve justice for the victims. Truth must be established in a professional and serious manner, particularly bearing in mind the information on the ICTY's destruction of evidence gathered by UNMIK. Serbia will continue to call for the UN role in the investigation.

Mr. President,

After many years of conflicts and tensions in the Balkans, the region has entered a new era of cooperation, confidence building and dialogue. In this process, the Republic of Serbia has played a significant role and is committed to resolving all problems peacefully. I wish to reaffirm our strong commitment to continuing the process of reconciliation, a key element for the

consolidation of peace and stability in the region.

In this regard, I take this opportunity to point out the negative consequences of the latest judgement by the ICTY Appeals Chamber concerning the two generals of Croatia to the reconciliation process. Such a judgement has stunned not only the entire Serbia, but many legal experts around the world as well. We maintain that similar injustice must never happen again.

Mr. President,

Achieving the lasting peace in the region assumes finding a comprehensive solution for Kosovo and Metohija. Reconciliation between Serbs and Albanians necessitates tough decisions on both sides. The following words of the former UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld may serve as inspiration to us: "The pursuit of peace and progress can not end in a few years in either victory or defeat. The pursuit of peace and progress, with its trials and its errors, its successes and its setbacks, can never be relaxed and never abandoned. "

Thank you.