



Statement by First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ivica Dačić at the UN Security Council session on UNMIK's work:

Mr. President,  
Distinguished Members of the Security Council,

I thank Secretary-General Guterres and Special Representative Tanin for the efforts they invest in implementing the mandate of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) under United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1244 (1999).

For almost two years we argued in the Security Council meetings whether to meet two, three or four times a year; all along, however, the situation in Kosovo and Metohija went from bad to worse. Unfortunately, the current situation tells us that the decision to reduce the number of meetings was taken too soon. I do believe, though, that we have left the procedural issues behind and that we shall now be able to address the core issues and make our meetings bear fruit.

Notwithstanding some contentions that our deliberations are often antagonistic and less than constructive, the consideration of the situation in Kosovo and Metohija in this esteemed body is an occasion not to be missed to advise the Security Council and the international community, on a regular basis and in a transparent way, of the situation on the ground and the key political and security challenges that we face in the Province, no matter how difficult they may be and despite the fact that it is evident that our positions are different.

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At the outset, let me reiterate my call for a dialogue and the solution of the decades-long problem in Kosovo and Metohija by peaceful means and through compromise. I hope that you all will subscribe to it and, in doing so, state, loud and clear, what we need for a successful dialogue. And what we need are sides which behave rationally and sensibly, which are ready to talk and then implement what they agree upon. In the negotiations conducted in Brussels with

the facilitation of the European Union, one side in the dialogue has behaved so since the very beginning. The other one, regrettably, has not. Last week we heard from Priština that it was not planning to implement anything agreed upon six years before, including the establishment of the Community of Serb Municipalities. This statement by Hashim Thaçi makes us wonder what we have been doing all along. For, if an agreement is reached, then signed and guaranteed also by the European Union, but goes unimplemented by Priština for six years and is plainly rejected eventually, the question posed is: Was it a dialogue at all? This was not the wool over the eyes of Serbia alone that was encouraged by the entire international community to continue the dialogue and called upon to be patient against Priština's constant prevarications to implement any agreement. This is also a serious dent to the credibility of the European Union which put its signature to the Brussels Agreement, guaranteeing thus its implementation.

Let me recall once again: In August 2013, as Prime Minister of Serbia at that time, I signed the First agreement of principles governing the normalization of relations between Belgrade and Priština, which we have come to know as the Brussels Agreement, alongside Hashim Thaçi and Baroness Ashton. The negotiations which preceded its signing were not easy for Serbia at all; however, a responsible partner, my country has implemented all the obligations it assumed. Serbia signed this Agreement only because it guaranteed the establishment of the Community of Serb Municipalities.

On the other hand, the representatives of Priština said, without mincing words, that they were not going to implement what had been agreed and, dissatisfied with their treatment, went on to threaten the European Union that they would consider unification with Albania and annex three other municipalities in southern Serbia to boot. Can they be considered a serious and responsible party with which we should continue to negotiate? And who can convince us now that Priština will not behave towards this process in the same way also in the future? In chorus comes also the threatening messages from Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama on the unification of Albania and Kosovo; they are let go un-responded and glossed over as not serious.

Mr. President,

Two weeks ago the so-called anti-corruption and anti-organized crime operation was carried out in northern Kosovo and Metohija. ROSU, the special Kosovo police unit, arrested over 30 people. Serbia supports the fight against organized crime on its entire territory, but long barrels, use of excessive force and a television spectacle that followed the operation were indicative of a different goal altogether. And the goal was to intimidate the remaining Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija. To that end, more than 70 combat vehicles were deployed; Serbs were brutally beaten, while Albanians were apprehended without enforcement measures at all. If this unacceptable act is not widely condemned, including by this esteemed body, its purpose will be served: the Serbian population in Kosovo and Metohija will continue to be intimidated and terrorized.

In the wake of the signing of the Brussels Agreement, I attended, alongside Aleksandar Vučić, Baroness Ashton and Hashim Thaçi, a meeting in NATO Brussels Headquarters; it was agreed at the meeting that no Kosovo security force will come to the North until two conditions have been complied with: one, notification to KFOR and, two, advice to the representatives of the

Serb Communities in northern Kosovo and Metohija. These conditions were not fulfilled on this occasion. Moreover, two UN staff members were not spared the brutality and arrest, either; they rendered no resistance nor were they armed. I spoke with Special Representative Tanin who officially informed me that the two members were on duty. Mikhail Krasnoshchokov was beaten and arrested unlawfully and was subsequently declared a persona non grata contrary to the relevant United Nations convention. Well, even the members of the United Nations mission are no longer safe in Kosovo. How do we expect the Mission to carry out its assignment if its members can be attacked and declared unwanted at will if they do not happen to be to Priština's liking? What is next – expulsion of the entire Mission? And, unashamed, Priština is now offering to the Secretary-General to negotiate UNMIK's future presence in northern Kosovo with him. I recall: the mandate of the Mission is determined by this esteemed body and UNMIK's mandate has been established by UNSCR 1244 (1999).

The developments in Kosovo and Metohija in the last several weeks, and in the last several months, are telling evidence that the international community should be much more alert and invest much more effort and that the international organizations in Kosovo and Metohija should be much more active. We've been witness of late that some members of the Security Council call for the so-called strategic review of the UNMIK mandate, its reduction, even its recall. At this moment in time, though, it is difficult even to think, let alone to act in the direction of any change whatsoever. Surely, we all understand now how far we are from a stable and secure situation in Kosovo and Metohija today, the situation that would no longer warrant the attention of this body. The risk of the worsening of the situation on the ground could prove costly and I am sure that, in the context of the recent developments, nobody wants to run that risk.

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Unfortunately, the authorities in Priština turn a deaf ear to arguments; they think that they can reduce the Mission by beating and expelling its members.

Mr. President,

This very day, twenty years ago, the illegal bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the aggression by NATO, carried out without a decision of this esteemed body, came to an end. We are all aware of the negative effects of this precedent on international relations and various events that took place in the world in the last twenty years.

This occasion, though, I must not let go by without mentioning numerous civilian victims, their sorry fate and a Serbia ravaged in the 78-day bombardment with depleted uranium. I must make mention of 666 victims in Kosovo and Metohija after 10 June 1999, 562 of them Serbs, as well as 8 134 attacks, 7 391 of them on Serbs.

Twenty years later, the only thing that we can say with certainty is that the greatest victims of the conflict in Kosovo and Metohija and the bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

were innocent civilians, either killed or expelled, irrespective of whether they were Serbs, Albanians or members of some other national belonging. Despite differences in positions, it cannot be denied that all sides committed crimes and that victims were on all sides. The victims, regrettably, we cannot bring back, but we can learn from our mistakes and make sure that they are not repeated. It is therefore important to condemn all crimes, empathize with all victims, exclude war as a means of resolving conflicts and embark upon a road of lasting reconciliation and economic and political stability by way of reaching a compromise and sustainable solution.

Twenty years ago to a day UNSCR 1244 (1999) was adopted. In my Statement, I shall strive to recapitulate the way in which its provisions dovetail with the facts on the ground. And the way in which they do speaks volumes of the Resolution's and UNMIK's validity and relevance, as well as of the task ahead of us.

In crafting the mandate of the international presence in Kosovo and Metohija, the Security Council reaffirmed 'the commitment of all Member States to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia [ ... ], as set out in the Helsinki Final Act.' [UNSCR 1244 (1999)]. However, the provision of the Resolution has been sledgehammered by many in order to conceal the fact that an ethnic minority, the Albanian minority which has its mother country of Albania, tried to secede from, and take away a part of the territory of, a sovereign country.

In Annex 2, point 5., of the Resolution, the Security Council calls, among others, for the '[e]stablishment of an interim administration [...] to ensure conditions for a peaceful and normal life for all inhabitants in Kosovo.' In other instances, UNSCR 1244 (1999) goes on to call for the establishment of 'a secure environment in which refugees and displaced persons can return home in safety'. Efforts have been made in this regard and, indeed, certain refugees and displaced persons did return. Yet, only 1.9 per cent of Serbs made a sustainable return; 200 000 of them have remained away from home for 20 long years and it is not likely that they will go home any time soon. And don't we all know why? Tell me what those people can expect if, year in, year out, they are met with organized attacks with sticks and stones even when they come visiting ... to pay respects to their dead on Christian holy days.



