



First Deputy Prime Minister of Serbia and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ivica Dacic is in New York, where, apart from attending the UN Security Council on UNMIK, had a meeting with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

“I had a very good meeting with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. We talked about various issues for an hour, and definitely the most important one for us was Kosovo and Metohija. The Secretary-General Ki-moon once again confirmed that the UNMIK Mission in Kosovo and Metohija, which will now be led by the new GS’s Special Representative Tanin, would strictly apply Resolution 1244 which would continue to be the main basis for the UN policy towards the problem of Kosovo and Metohija. It is very important for us because we believe that the UN should adhere to the only legal and valid document in Kosovo and Metohija that is status-neutral. Consequently, any unilateral action by Pristina must be prevented.

We also talked about Kosovo’s application for membership of UNESCO. He reiterated that the UN refused to submit the request of Kosovo for UNESCO membership and that the UN remained consistent to its resolution 1244. I presented to him, as well as to the SC members, three arguments which we consider crucial regarding the issue.

The first is that Kosovo and Metohija, under resolution 1244, cannot be a member of the specialized agencies and organizations within the UN system. The second argument is the relationship of the Pristina authorities towards a large cultural and religious heritage that we have in Kosovo and Metohija - the way in which they treat the assets of the Serbian Orthodox Church, not just in the last 10 - 15 years, but throughout the entire history. This is indicated by the fact that more than 260 churches and monasteries have been destroyed in the last 16 years. I also pointed out the fact that 4 buildings were under the protection of UNESCO and belonged to the world’s cultural heritage. UNESCO itself included them in the world cultural heritage because of the threat posed to them by representatives of the Pristina authorities who now want to become members of UNESCO.

The third argument is that Pristina plans, by its bills, to declare the entire property owned by the Serbian Orthodox Church the property of the so-called Kosovo state. That is why we made it

clear that it was absolutely unacceptable for us and that we would fight such a policy by all means, as it constitutes a violation of UNSC resolution 1244.

We also talked about the very successful cooperation that we have in the framework of peacekeeping operations. Serbia is the seventh in Europe and the first in the region in terms of the number of our military and police personnel involved in the UN peacekeeping missions. We also discussed the preparations for the opening of a UN house in Serbia where all the UN specialized agencies in Belgrade will be located in one place and it will be an opportunity for Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, as we agreed, to visit Belgrade, by the end of this year or early next year, in February or March”, said Serbian Foreign Minister Ivica Dacic.