



Armed Conflicts Report

Serbia and Montenegro (ex-Yugoslavia) - Kosovo (1998 - first combat deaths)

Update: January 2007

Summary

Type of Conflict

Parties to the Conflict

Status of the Fighting

Number of Deaths

Political Developments

Background

Arms Sources

Summary:

2006 Decentralization talks began in January and continued throughout the year, though a final decision on Kosovo's status was delayed until 2007. Kosovo president Ibrahim Rugova died in January and was replaced by Fatmir Sejdiu. Serbian PM Kostunica continued to reject requests for independence, and Serbs living in Kosovo continued to boycott the Kosovar government and its institutions, despite efforts by Kosovo's newly appointed PM Agim Ceku to reach out to the Serb minority. A number of small scale attacks were reported. However, as the death toll remained very minimal for the second year in a row, this conflict has been removed from current *Armed Conflicts Report*.

2005 Sporadic violence continued but declined from the previous years. The UN Security Council decided that talks on the final status of Kosovo would begin in 2006.

2004 Violent riots in March killed over 30 people and were quelled only when additional NATO peacekeepers were deployed to the effected areas. While tensions declined after March, groups observing the region warned the UN Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK) of the danger of violence flaring again.

2003 Violence between the ethnic-Albanian and Serbian populations continued in 2003, although at a lower intensity than in previous years. Despite tensions between the two groups, there were several confidence-building measures undertaken to further reconciliation. For the fourth consecutive year Kosovo remained under the administration of the United Nations.

2002 The level of violence between ethnic groups declined this year. Sporadic fighting and violent protests claimed the lives of at least 25 people.

2001 Despite a March cease-fire between the government and ethnic Albanian rebels, violence continued in the form of bombings, assassinations, and attacks across the Yugoslav-Kosovo border and at least 50 people were killed. Former Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic was extradited to The Hague to face charges of crimes of war, crimes against humanity, and genocide.

2000 Despite the presence of a NATO-led peacekeeping force, Kosovo was gripped by violence between Kosovar Albanians and Serb minorities. At least 100 people died in ethnic or political violence.

1999 While NATO forces conducted a 78-day aerial bombing campaign in the spring against Serbian targets, Yugoslav forces carried out Aethnic cleansing@ of Kosovar Albanian civilians. Following a June ceasefire, returning Kosovars conducted revenge attacks on Serbs and Romas. At least 3,000 and as many as 10,000 people died, the majority Kosovar civilians.

1998 Conflict erupted in the Kosovo region of southern Yugoslavia as tense relations between the Serbian-

dominated Yugoslav government under President Slobodan Milosevic and the separatist Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) turned into war. Most violence was committed against civilians, and most (though not all) was attributed to the Yugoslav government

Type of Conflict:

State formation

Parties to the Conflict:

1. The Government of Serbia & Montenegro:

In February 2003, the Serbian and Montenegrin components of the now-defunct Federal Republic of Yugoslavia came together to form a loose federation, led by the appointed Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica. Kostunica had previously been the president of Yugoslavia, when he defeated Slobodan Milosevic in elections held in October 2000. Boris Tadic is Serbia's current president. The Serbian government continues to refuse to entertain proposals of self-determination for the region, willing to consider only a limited self rule. Government security forces include the police and armed forces.

2. Government of Kosovo:

While Kosovo remains under UN administration, in 1999 the UNMIK established Kosovo's Provisional Institutions of Self Government (PSIG), and continue to transfer increased governing capabilities to the PSIG. The government is currently comprised of a coalition of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) and the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK). Fatmir Sejdiu (of the LDK party) took over the presidency in February 2006, after his predecessor, Ibrahim Rugova died of lung cancer in January 2006. Agim Ceku (a former KLA commander) was elected Prime Minister in March, after his predecessor Bajram Kosumi resigned. The LDK is the largest political party in Kosovo, and has its roots in the nonviolent resistance movement to Milosovic's rule. The AAK is the second largest party, and has roots in the KLA.

3. Other political and armed groups:

a) Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), which arose in 1996 as a militant response to Serbian repression in the Kosovo region of Yugoslavia. It sought independence for Kosovo as an ethnic Albanian nation, but was outlawed and disbanded following the 1999 conflict.

b) Albanian National Army (AKSh), which is an ethnic-Albanian extremist group that operates in the region and has claimed responsibility for several attacks against Serb targets within Kosovo. The AKSh is believed to be a union of fighters from dissolved ethnic-Albanian militant groups including: the National Liberation Army of Macedonia; the Kosovo Liberation Army; and the Liberation Army of Presevo, Mevedje and Bujanovac, which is active in southern Serbia.

c) Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK), led by Hashim Thaci, a former political leader of the Kosovo Liberation Army during the 1998-1999 conflict.

d) Kosovo Independence Army, newly formed in 2005.

4. North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO):

NATO conducted aerial bombing of Kosovo and Serbia between March and June 1999 and has since provided troops for the UN-sanctioned Kosovo Force (KFOR) peacekeeping mission.

5. The United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)

UNMIK continues to administer Kosovo until a decision on its future is taken. Joachim Rucker was appointed as the new head of UNMIK after Soren Jessen-Petersen stepped down as the leader of the mission in June.

6. The United Nations Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the future status process for Kosovo (UNOSEK), led by Martti Ahtisaari, is currently working on a proposal that will decide Kosovo's final status and plans for decentralization. UNOSEK is supported by a six-nation Contact Group, comprised of members from the US, UK, France, Germany, Italy, and Russia. Martti Ahtisaari, sponsored by the Contact Group, is to present a proposal to the UN Security Council sometime in early 2007

Status of the Fighting:

2006 A few small attacks against Serbs (including grenades and shootings) and UN forces (including stoning and paint bombs) were reported this year, but there were no major incidents of violence.

[Source: International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch Database]

2005 A small number of sporadic street clashes, shootings and bomb attacks occurred but there were no major incidents of violence reported this year.

"A Kosovo Serb policeman was wounded when his vehicle was ambushed and fired on later Friday, U.N. police said, in a region where two Serb men were shot dead two weeks ago." [Reuters, September 10, 2005]

"United Nations police officers intervened to separate groups of Serbs and ethnic Albanians hurling stones at one another Sunday in this divided town in northern Kosovo." [Reuters, June 20, 2005]

"An explosion has hit the car of Kosovo President Ibrahim Rugova while he was traveling in a convoy in the province's capital, Pristina. Mr. Rugova appeared unhurt by the blast at about 0820 (0720 GMT) as he headed to talks with top EU officials." [BBC News, March 15, 2005]

2004 An outbreak of violent rioting in March, set off by the alleged drowning of three Albanian children by Serbs, accounted for 19 of the year's deaths. The violence was halted after intense international diplomatic pressure and an increased peacekeeping presence. Several groups observing Kosovo argued that the situation remained highly unstable and could turn violent again.

"Kosovo Serbs are likely to become targets of ethnic cleansing if a strong international military presence is not maintained in the war-torn province for at least another decade, Swedish Brigadier General Anders Braennstroem said on Monday." [Agence France-Presse, May 3, 2004]

"A total of 61 NATO troops have been wounded, including three seriously, in bloody clashes between ethnic Albanians and Serbs in the Serbian province of Kosovo, according to a new NATO official toll released Friday." [Agence France-Presse, March 19, 2004]

"Violence exploded throughout Kosovo today, March 18, after at least seven people were killed in Mitrovica in riots following the discovery of the bodies of two Albanian children in the river Ibar dividing the northern town. As UN police and NATO peacekeepers lost control over simmering ethnic hatred, Serb villages came under sustained attack from angry crowds, forcing women and children to flee to larger, better-protected enclaves for safety." [Institute for War and Peace Reporting, March 17, 2004]

"NATO-led peacekeepers and UN police in Kosovo were searching Tuesday for three ethnic Albanian children reported missing after being chased by ethnic Serbs into a fast-moving river, a UN official told AFP...The incident follows a blast suspected to have been caused by a hand grenade thrown near a compound inhabited by ethnic Albanians in the Serb-dominated northern part of the ethnically divided town. No injuries or damage were reported. Tensions between the Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo have been running high since Monday's shooting of a Serb teenager in the village of Caglavica, just outside the provincial capital Pristina." [Agence France-Presse, March 16, 2004]

"The European Union's foreign policy chief, Javier Solana, is expected to visit Kosovo Tuesday amid renewed tensions over ethnic violence...The visit comes days after two Serbs were found shot dead in a car in what some fear to be another ethnically motivated crime in the troubled Serbian province. [Agence France-Presse, February 24, 2004]

2003 Low-level, politically or ethnically-motivated violence continued sporadically throughout 2003, largely between Kosovar Albanian and Serbian groups, but also between rival ethnic-Albanian groups. Although the intensity of the violence was low, the UN-authorized, NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) was criticized for failing

to provide the level of security required to ensure the safe return of 200,000 Kosovar Serbs who fled the province in 1999. In addition, attacks on the personnel and property of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) intensified, culminating in the death of a UNMIK police officer in August.

"On 24 July, two hand grenades were thrown at the UNMIK police station in south Mitrovica. ... Three male Kosovo Albanians (2 adults and one youth) were seriously injured ... one adult later died from his injuries." [*ReliefWeb*, September 3, 2003]

"Gunmen opened fire on a UN police vehicle in Kosovo, killing one officer in the first deadly attack on international police since the 1999 war, UN officials said on Monday." [*Reuters*, August 4, 2003]

"On 17 May, the former deputy mayor of Klokot, a Kosovar Serb, was found dead in Zabje. He had been shot in the head. Reportedly, a note marked 'AKSh' [Albanian National Army] was found beside the body." [*ReliefWeb*, July 1, 2003]

"Friction is especially intense between the municipality's two main [Kosovo Albanian] parties, the Democratic League of Kosovo, LDK, and the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo, AAK. ... The political divisions that emerged from the rivalry between the two forces climaxed on January 4 this year, when Tahir Zemaj - an ex-guerrilla commander loyal to the LDK - was murdered along with his son and nephew in a drive-by shooting 20 km north of the town." [*ReliefWeb*, January 24, 2003]

2002 Frequent clashes between ethnic groups and violent anti-NATO and anti-UN protests by both ethnic Albanians and ethnic Serbs were reported this year. The Albanian leadership was accused of tacitly supporting human rights violations of ethnic minorities. In response, the UN police force stepped up its security operations.

"NATO-led peacekeepers and UN police in Kosovo have come under fire from gunmen, in what is seen as the most serious attack since the UN mission arrived in the Yugoslav province in 1999... No one was hurt, but the situation was brought under control only after reinforcements were called in and following a gunbattle which lasted more than two hours." [*BBC News*, August 29, 2002]

"Ever since NATO soldiers entered Kosovo, a self-styled security force known as the bridgewatchers has been allowed to patrol in Mitrovica. The group sees itself as the defender of the Serb dominated north of the town, which is divided from the Albanian dominated south by the River Ibar. Frequent battles have broken out close to the city's two main bridges." [*The Guardian*, June 3, 2002]

"The new head of the United Nations mission in Kosovo, Michael Steiner, has signed a decree giving wide-ranging new powers to the UN police force to combat organised crime. The decree allows the police to use phone-tapping, covert photography and other forms of surveillance, forbidden until now by local laws." [*BBC News*, March 18, 2002]

2001 A number of clashes were reported between Yugoslav government troops and Kosovo guerrillas along the Kosovo-Yugoslav border. There were also numerous assassinations and bombings against ethnic minorities in Kosovo.

"The year 2001 saw some of the worst cases since the end of the NATO campaign of organized violence targeting minorities. In late January and early February, Serb homes, churches, and cultural sites were damaged by mortar fire and other similar attacks. On February 13, a convoy of Kosovo Serbs en route to Strpce, escorted by peacekeepers of the multinational Kosovo Force, was the target of a shooting that left one person dead. Only three days later a weekly convoy of civilian buses carrying about 250 Serbs to Gračanica, with a KFOR escort of seven armored vehicles, fell victim to a brutal bomb attack killing eleven people and injuring dozens. On April 18, the head of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia office in Pristina, Alexandar Petrovic, was killed in yet another deadly bombing." [*Human Rights Watch World Report 2001*, February, 2002]

"Ethnic Albanian guerillas have clashed with Yugoslav forces in the Kosovo border region, the government says." [CMN, May 13, 2001]

2000 Ethnic violence between Kosovar Albanians and Serbs emerged as a major challenge for NATO forces in Kosovo. The ethnic clashes led to the expulsion of Albanian families from northern Mitrovica and the flight of thousands of Serb civilians to Serbia. During the year, militant Albanian groups staged cross-border attacks on Serbian security forces.

"High-level talks have taken place between the international peacekeeping force in Kosovo and the government of Serbia. The Nato-led force, K-For, says progress has been made in efforts to end attacks along the Serbian border by ethnic Albanians. The talks came after the Yugoslav president, Vojislav Kostunica, demanded tough action to stop cross-border attacks." [BBC News, December 21, 2000]

"A senior United States official [Mr James Rubin] has told leaders of the Kosovo Albanian community that Washington's determination to support them is being weakened by continuing attacks on ethnic Serbs ... More than two hundred thousand Serbs have fled Kosovo since the arrival of NATO-led peacekeeping forces at the end of the war." [BBC News, March 12, 2000]

"Dozens of ethnic Albanian families are fleeing their homes in the Serb-dominated city of Mitrovica in Kosovo following renewed ethnic violence. Nato-led peacekeepers fired tear gas and imposed a curfew following the attacks which left four ethnic Albanians and ethnic Turks dead. Several more people, including Serbs, are reported to have been wounded. International peacekeepers say it is the worst outbreak of violence since the end of the Nato bombing in June last year." [BBC News, February 5, 2000]

1999 Following the failure of the Serbian-Kosovar Albanian peace talks in Rambouillet, France, NATO forces began a 78-day aerial bombing campaign in March against Serbian targets in Kosovo and Serbia. On the ground, Yugoslav forces conducted an "ethnic cleansing" campaign that forced over 800,000 civilians from Kosovo and killed thousands of military-aged men, as well as women and children. After a June ceasefire, returning Kosovars conducted revenge attacks on Serbs and Romas, resulting in the murder of several Serbs.

1998 In February, Serbian police began a major offensive against the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) in an attempt to crush the rebel movement which had been growing steadily throughout the region. A slow expansion left the KLA in control of 40 per cent of the region but in late June the Serb army gained key strategic zones including Junik, the logistic and weapons distribution centre of the KLA. After NATO warnings of imminent air strikes, which stemmed from reports of mass ethnic Albanian civilian graves, Slobodan Milosevic agreed to a ceasefire in October. However, the Serb government and a regrouped and reorganized KLA began fighting again in late December.

"Serbian forces are resorting to the abduction and execution of civilians in their fight against ethnic Albanian separatists in Kosovo, according to human rights officials and witnesses. And as the war progresses, there is growing fear that the fighting could spiral into the kind of war against civilians that swept across Bosnia." [Globe and Mail, July 18th, 1998]

"The first government atrocities took place in late February and early March when special police forces attacked three villages in the Drenica region, known for its KLA presence, with artillery, helicopters, and armoured vehicles. At least eighty-eight people were killed, twenty-four of them women and children. Although it is unclear to what extent the KLA was offering resistance, the evidence strongly suggests that at least seventeen people were executed after they had been detained or surrendered. ... Some of the worst atrocities to date occurred in late September, as the Government's offensive was coming to an end. On September 26, eighteen members of an extended family, mostly women, children, and elderly, were killed near the village of Donje Obrinje by men believed to be with the Serbian special police. Many of the victims had been shot in the head and showed signs of bodily mutilation. On the same day, thirteen ethnic Albanian men were executed in the nearby village of Golubovac by government forces. an apparent attempt to crush civilian support for the rebels." [Human Rights Watch World Report 1999]

Number of Deaths:

Total: Estimates of conflict deaths range from 4,000 to over 12,000.

2006 Three Serbs were reported killed in ethnic or politically-motivated shootings.
[Source: International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch Database]

2005 Three people were reported killed in ethnic or politically-motivated shootings.

"Two Serbs were killed and two were wounded when their car was shot at in Kosovo, police said on Sunday, shattering a year-long lull in attacks there on Serbs." [Reuters, August 28, 2005]

"About 20,000 ethnic Albanians gathered on 9 January in Presevo for the funeral of 16-year-old Dashnim Hajrullahu, who was killed by a Serbian border guard two days earlier as he tried to cross illegally into Macedonia...." [Patrick Moore, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, January 14, 2005]

2004 More than 30 people were killed in 2004.

"United Nations police in Kosovo on Wednesday revised downward to 19 the toll from this month's ethnic violence in the Serb province." [Agence France-Presse, March 31, 2004]

2003 Independent media reports indicate that approximately 20 people, including several civilians, were killed in the first ten months of 2003. Although there were many reported attacks, the majority of them proved to be non-lethal.

"On 13 August, an unknown individual or individuals opened fire with an automatic weapon on a group of six Kosovo Serb teenagers ... one 19-year old died immediately, and a 12-year-old boy died on the way to the hospital." [ReliefWeb, October 3, 2003]

"On Saturday, gunmen unleashed a hail of bullets in the western mainly ethnic Albanian town of Pec, killing three people, including two young girls who were passing by." [Reuters, August 4, 2003]

2002 Media reports suggest that at least 25 people were killed this year.

"A day of mourning is being observed in Kosovo after an ethnic Albanian local mayor and two companions were shot dead on Sunday. The killings took place in the town of Suva Reka, during a dispute between supporters of two rival political parties - a day after municipal elections were held in the United Nations-administered province." [BBC News, October 28, 2002]

"U.N. peacekeepers stepped up security a day after a booby-trapped grenade killed a Serb in the ethnically mixed town of Kosovska Kamenica, about 55 kilometres east of Pristina." [CNN, January 7, 2002]

2001 At least 50 people were killed in 2001.

"An explosion has rocked the center of Kosovo's capital, Pristina, killing one person and injuring at least four others." [CNN, April 18, 2001]

"Three Serb policemen have been killed by two landmine explosions in the buffer zone separating Kosovo from Serbia." [CMN, February 18, 2001]

2000 At least 100 people were killed due to ethnic or political violence.

"In the first quarter of 2000 i.e. from beginning of January to end of March, according to the data of the Council for the Defence of Human Rights and Freedoms in [Pristina](CDHRF) there have been 108 killings in Kosovo, the overwhelming part of them unclarified to this day and believed to be ethnically or politically motivated." [Kosovo Annual Report 2000, International Helsinki Federation of Human Rights, January 19, 2001]

1999 Estimates of civilian deaths during Serb operations against ethnic Albanians range from 2,500 to over 10,000. Another 500 Serbian civilians died in NATO's air bombing campaign.

"The number of civilians killed during the war in Kosovo may be no more than 2,500, according to a British Sunday newspaper. The figure was estimated by a Spanish pathologist sent to the southern Serbian province immediately after the end of hostilities last summer to look for the bodies of ethnic Albanians killed by Serb forces. It contrasted sharply with a claim by U.S. Defence Secretary William Cohen at the height of the NATO bombing in May that up to 100,000 ethnic Albanian men were missing and might have been murdered." [*Reuters*, October 31, 1999]

"Despite precautions, including the use of a higher percentage of precision-guided munitions than in any other major conflict in history, civilian casualties occurred. Human Rights Watch has conducted a thorough investigation of civilian deaths as a result of NATO action. On the basis of this investigation, Human Rights Watch has found that there were ninety separate incidents involving civilian deaths during the seventy-eight day bombing campaign. Some 500 Yugoslav civilians are known to have died in these incidents." [*Civilian Deaths In The NATO Air Campaign*, Human Rights Watch, February, 2000]

1998 Reports from most major sources put the 1998 death toll at well over 1,000, with some reports as high as 2,000.

"Some 2,000 people were killed and 250,000 displaced in fighting in Kosovo in 1998." [*CBC NewsWorld*, January 8th, 1999]

"Over 1000 people have been killed since Miletovic launched a crackdown on separatists in February, and 300,000 people, mostly ethnic Albanians, have been forced from their homes." [*Washington Post*, December 16, 1998]

"Civilian deaths may already have occurred on a scale nobody wished to contemplate. Grave diggers in the town of Orahovac, where fighting broke out on July 17th and raged for several days, have told reporters that they buried hundreds of people, mainly civilians. Serbia has maintained that it had engaged in no ethnic massacre." [*The Economist*, August 8th, 1998]

Political Developments:

2006 Decentralization talks began in January and continued throughout the year. Kosovar president Ibrahim Rugova, a longstanding advocate of Kosovo independence, died of lung cancer in January. Rugova was replaced by Fatmir Sejdiu, who promised to continue pursuing independence through peaceful means. Agim Ceku was elected Prime Minister in March, and appointed a Serb as deputy minister of the interior, but Serbs continued to boycott Kosovo government jobs and institutions. Kosovo president Sejdiu issued a formal request for independence in July, but was rejected by Serbian Prime Minister Kostunica, who maintained Serbia's offer of substantial autonomy without independence. UNMIK leader Soren Jessen-Peterson stepped down in June, and was not replaced until September by German diplomat Joachim Rucker. A final decision on Kosovo's status was delayed until after the Serbian elections planned for January 2007, a decision that has made Kosovar leaders anxious about the potential of the proposal.

"There is growing concern that the short postponement UN Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari announced in November 2006 for presentation of his Kosovo final status proposals to take account of Serbia's 21 January elections may not be the last delay in a process that now could extend into the second half of 2007. Nervous Kosovo Albanian leaders worry they may not be able to contain public pressures beyond March. With Russia's positions hardening and Serbia as obstinate as ever, EU unity is vital—but far from assured—to keep the status process on track, first in the small Contact Group that has managed Kosovo affairs since 1999, then in the Security Council where ultimate decisions should be made." [International Crisis Group, *Europe Briefing No. 45*, December 20, 2006]

"Serbian Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica told Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice yesterday that Belgrade would not agree to Kosovos' independence, offering instead "the highest possible

autonomy" for the United Nations-run province...Talks on Kosovo's final status began in February but have not produced results." [Nicholas Kralev, *The Washington Times*, July 12, 2006]

"Kosovo on Friday elected moderate Fatmir Sejdiu as its new president, clearing the way for face-to-face talks between ethnic Albanians and Serbia on the future of the disputed province. The 54-year old replaces Albanian independence icon Ibrahim Rugova, who died of lung cancer on Jan 21. The 120-seat parliament voted 80 to 12 to elect Sejdiu, a longtime Rugova ally and senior member of his Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK)." [Reuters, February 10, 2006]

2005 An agreement on the final status of Kosovo remained elusive as most Kosovo Albanians and their political leaders demanded full independence while Serbia's Prime Minister called for the creation of an autonomous Kosovo within Serbia-Montenegro. Talks on the future status of Kosovo were set to begin in early 2006 after UN special envoy Kai Eide released a report on the progress made by the provisional government in a number of "good governance" areas, especially Kosovo Serb minority rights. Kosovo Serb politicians rejected Kosovo's provisional government's decentralization plan arguing that it did not ensure a sufficient level and long-term guarantee of local autonomy to Kosovo Serb communities.

"The U.N. Security Council on Monday embraced U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan's recommendation that international talks be launched to decide whether Kosovo gains independence or remains a Serb province... Diplomats say the West, though publicly refusing to back any particular solution is preparing to push for 'conditional independence' in talks that could last until spring 2006." [Reuters, October 24, 2005]

"The expected release of Kai Eide's report on whether Kosovo has met a series of standards necessary for final status talks is fuelling debate over the issue. Eide, appointed earlier this year by the UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, to report on the extent to which Kosovo has met democratic and human rights standards, made several fact-finding visits here this summer. His report - which is expected by the end of September will assess standards in the fields of institution-building, the rule of law, decentralisation, and, especially, the treatment of Kosovo Serbs and other minorities. A positive report is considered a precondition for the start of long-awaited negotiations on Kosovo's final status." "Many Kosovo Albanians think the standards were set too high in the first place, however." "Local Serbs - predictably - believe that Kosovo has achieved little on the human rights and democracy fronts. Few of this minority relish the thought of a positive report, which may mean Kosovo getting the green light to proceed towards independence." [Casey Cooper Johnson and Mevlyde Salihu, *Kosovo: Eide Report Triggers Standards Debate* Institute for War and Peace Reporting, September 23, 2005]

"Final status preparation among Kosovo politicians stalled, but Contact Group (U.S., U.K., Russia, Italy, Germany, France) and EU representatives held talks with Belgrade and Pristina...[and] publicly announced principles [stating] that Kosovo will not be partitioned, form a union with any other state or return to pre-1999 status. Serbian PM Vojislav Kostunica called for [a] solution of 'more than autonomy, less than independence.'" [International Crisis Group, *CrisisWatch*, June 1, 2005]

2004 Attempts at reconciliation between Serbs and Albanians continued under the administration of UNMIK and in the absence of a decision on the future of Kosovo. NATO's KFOR peacekeeping forces were increased following March riots that halted the refugee return process and added 3,200 to those displaced by the conflict. UNMIK and local police arrested over 270 people charged with crimes related to the rioting and the head of UNMIK, Harri Holkeri, stepped down to be replaced by Danish Diplomat, Soren Jessen-Petersen.

President Ibrahim Rugova was easily reelected in October in an election where only 0.3 percent of 80,000 ethnic Serbs cast votes. Under electoral rules the Serb minority should receive 10 seats in Kosovo's parliament but the low turnout left the legitimacy of the seats questionable. In December, Ramush Haradinaj, an ethnic Albanian who led Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) units, was elected Prime Minister by a vote of 72 to three.

"The new chief of the United Nations mission in Kosovo, Danish diplomat Soren Jessen-Petersen, is to take over his post next week..." [Agence France-Presse, August 10, 2004]

"Despite some progress in Kosovo since violent clashes in March, the province faces an uphill challenge in moving forward along the path of normalization, ethnic reconciliation, strengthening its still-fledgling democratic institutions, and creating a tolerant, inclusive society, a senior United Nations official told the Security Council today." [UN News Service, August 5, 2004]

"A U.N. envoy will this week recommend to Secretary-General Kofi Annan top-to-bottom reforms in the U.N. administration governing Kosovo following the province's deadly riots in March, U.N. officials said on Thursday." [Reuters, July 22, 2004]

"United Nations police in Kosovo have now arrested about 270 people in relation to the two days of deadly riots and ethnically-motivated violence that roiled the province in mid-March, a UN spokesman said today." [UN News Service, June 17, 2004]

"A total of 2,000 French, British, German, Italian and US soldiers were being rushed to Kosovo to reinforce the 17,000-strong NATO-led multinational peacekeeping force there (KFOR), various military officials said here Friday." [Agence France-Presse, March 19, 2004]

2003 The name of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was formally changed to Serbia and Montenegro - of which Kosovo is a part - in February. In March, Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic was assassinated, an action which threatened to further destabilise the region, but which seemed to have minimal impact upon the Kosovo situation. Kosovo continued to be administered by the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), with security provided by a NATO-led peace enforcement mission. A series of political initiatives suggested the beginning of a process of reconciliation. In July, several key Kosovar Albanian leaders, including Kosovo's President Ibrahim Rugova, called for Serbs who had fled the province during the conflict to return to assist in the creation of a multi-ethnic state. Furthermore, meetings held in October between the Serbian government and Kosovo's Albanian leaders, brought together the two sides for the first time since 1999 to discuss the future of the province.

In July, the conviction of four Kosovar Albanians belonging to the former Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) were convicted of war crimes, eliciting heavy criticism from the ethnic-Albanian population.

"Harri Holkeri, the head of the United Nations mission in Kosovo, on Friday hailed as symbolically important this week's negotiations between the Serbian government and Kosovo's ethnic Albanians ... While senior Serbian and ethnic Albanian delegates reportedly refused to shake hands in Vienna and clashed over core issues, it was agreed that talks would continue among experts from the two sides, focussing on how to restore the rule of law, improve economic conditions and ensure the multi-ethnic nature of the province." [Agence France-Presse, October 17, 2003]

"On 16 July, four Kosovo Albanians belonging to the former Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) were convicted of war crimes by a court in Pristina ... Members of the Kosovo Assembly criticized the sentences ... [and] approximately 1,000 people took part in a protest in Podujevo in support of the convicted war criminals." [ReliefWeb, September 3, 2003]

"Encouraged by Kosovo's ethnic-Albanian leaders, thousands of Serbs are ready to return to the province they left in 1999 ... The Albanian leadership's initiative was encouraging because it received broad support from all sides of local politics, including President Ibrahim Rugova and Hashim Thaci, former political leader of the now-disbanded guerrilla movement ... Thaci said in a recent interview with AFP that he was determined to create a multi-ethnic Kosovo in line with United Nations resolutions." [Agence France-Presse, July 27, 2003]

2002 In March, Kosovo's new assembly chose pacifist Albanian leader, Ibrahim Rugova, as the province's first president after a power-sharing agreement was reached with other main Albanian parties. Although the province remained under UN administration, the Kosovo Assembly resumed authority over the economy and some services, including health care. The trial of Slobodan Milosevic at the Hague began in February with the Kosovo phase ending in September. The former Serbian leader was charged with atrocities carried out in Kosovo in 1999.

"The Kosovo indictment against Mr Milosevic says that he was responsible for the murder of about 900 Kosovo Albanians, and the expulsion of an estimated 800,000 others. In all, Mr Milosevic faces more than 60 charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity for his role in the conflicts in Kosovo from 1998-99, Croatia from 1991-95 and Bosnia from 1992-95." [*BBC News*, September 10, 2002]

"The new government splits power between Mr Rugova's Democratic League of Kosovo, which has the largest number of seats in the assembly, and its rival Democratic Party of Kosovo, which came second in the elections. ... The government's task will be to rebuild the province's ruined social, education and health services, as well as economic infrastructure." [*BBC News*, March 4, 2002]

2001 A March cease-fire was agreed between the Yugoslav government and ethnic Albanian rebels responsible for attacks across the Yugoslav-Kosovo border. Slobodan Milosevic was arrested by the new Yugoslav government of Vojislav Kostunica in April on corruption charges. In June he was extradited to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in The Hague to stand trial on charges of crimes of war, crimes against humanity, and genocide. Following the province's first parliamentary election in November, Albanian leader Ibrahim Rugova called on the international community to recognize Kosovo as an independent state.

"On April 1, Serb authorities arrested Milosevic on corruption charges. To avoid emerging political and legal gridlock, the government of Serbia transferred Milosevic to The Hague on June 28, invoking the Statute of the Tribunal and the Constitution of Serbia as the legal basis." [*Human Rights Watch World Report 2001*, February, 2002]

"Moderate ethnic Albanian leader Ibrahim Rugova claimed victory in Kosovo's historic election and is calling for the province to now be recognized as an independent state." [*CNN*, November 19, 2001]

"Ethnic Albanian rebels say they have agreed to a cease fire in a tense area on the Kosovo border." [*CNN*, March 12, 2001]

2000 Opposition candidate Vojislav Kostunica defeated President Slobodan Milosevic in September presidential elections. Initially failing to admit defeat, Milosevic provoked a violent public protest that soon ended his hold on power. The Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), led by Ibrahim Rugova, won Kosovo's local elections in October. In Serbia, Zoran Djindic emerged as prime minister in December when his coalition won the republic's parliamentary elections.

"As hundreds of thousands of protesters flooded the streets of Yugoslavia's capital yesterday calling for Slobodan Milosevic to step down, scenes of chaos gave way to jubilation as many hailed what they saw as the end of a bloody era. The police and the army were nowhere to be seen, their barricades crushed under the weight of the uprising in which parliament and state media outlets were seized." [*The Globe and Mail*, October 6, 2000]

"The moderate Albanian leader in Kosovo, Ibrahim Rugova, says he now has a mandate to negotiate independence from Serbia, after Saturday's local elections. Mr Rugova was speaking after provisional results confirmed a big victory for his Democratic League of Kosovo LDK. It won almost sixty per-cent of the vote and will control almost every municipal council." [*BBC News*, October 30, 2000]

"With more than 90 per cent of the votes counted yesterday, Mr. [Djindic's] coalition had won 176 seats in the 250-member legislature. Mr. Milosevic's once dominant socialists took only 37 seats. The rest went to the ultranationalist Radicals, with 23 seats, and another hardline group, the Serbian Unity Party, with 14." [*The Globe and Mail*, December 26, 2000]

1999 Intensification of NATO bombing led to a June agreement, under which Yugoslav troops withdrew from Kosovo, replaced by NATO forces which later became the Kosovo Force (KFOR) with a UN mandate. The KLA agreed to embark on a demilitarization process and the Security Council authorized the creation of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) to administer the province. In May, President Slobodan Milosevic and other Yugoslav government leaders were indicted by the International Tribunal for Yugoslavia for crimes against humanity.

"The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) signs an undertaking on demilitarization and agrees to modalities and schedules for this, to be monitored by KFOR."

[<http://www.un.org/peace/kosovo/news/kos30day.htm>, June 21, 1999]

1998 Based on alternative 1992 elections, the Kosovo Democratic League (LDK) continued to pronounce itself the legitimate head of the Kosovo region while the Serb government refused to acknowledge the LDK, calling the elections and the party illegal entities. After Serbian police attacked and killed many KLA insurgents and ethnic Albanian civilians in the Drenica region of Kosovo in late February, many in the Kosovar population abruptly shifted allegiance from the pacifist LDK to the militant KLA.

Background:

Ninety per cent of the population of the province of Kosovo is ethnic-Albanian, but Serbs consider the area to be the historical birthplace of the Serb state. The Yugoslav government removed Kosovo=s autonomous status in 1989. From 1989 until 1998, the Kosovo Democratic League (LDK), led by Ibrahim Rugova, sought independence for Kosovo=s Albanian people by non-violent resistance. In response to government social and political repression, a militant independence organization, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), emerged in 1996. In February 1998, Serbian security forces began to crack down on the KLA, which had become increasingly popular, and Kosovar Albanian civilians. After February 1999 peace talks between Serb authorities and Kosovar Albanians failed in Rambouillet, France, NATO forces launched a 78-day air campaign in June against Serbian targets in Kosovo and Yugoslavia.

Since 1999 Kosovo has been administered by the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), which is coupled with a NATO-led peace enforcement mission mandated to provide security throughout the province. By 2003 this Kosovo Force (KFOR) consisted of 30,000 troops. Although the major conflict ended in 1999, ethnic tensions between the ethnic-Albanian majority and the Serbian minority remain. Following the NATO bombing campaign in 1999, over 200,000 Serbs fled Kosovo in order to avoid reprisal killings undertaken by Albanian armed groups. The return and reintegration of these Serbs into Kosovar society alongside the ethnic-Albanian population is now the greatest challenge facing the province.

"Four years after the end of the Serbo-Albanian war in Kosovo, the southern Serbian province is still wracked by violence and ethnic hatred overseen by a United Nations mission which is losing the respect of all sides of the conflict. ... A crackdown on the ethnic-Albanian majority by forces of then-Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic was the initial justification for NATO's 1999 intervention. But now it is the Serbs who are living in fear of Albanian extremists. ... More than 200,000 Kosovo Serbs have left their homes as a result of extremist violence or fearing bloody reprisals from Albanians. The 80,000 to 120,000 Serbs who remain live in isolated enclaves, sometimes as small as a single apartment block, 'protected' by NATO troops." [*Agence France-Presse*, June 10, 2003]

Arms Sources:

During the 1998-1999 conflict, Yugoslav armed forces received most weapons from indigenous arms manufacturers, while the KLA reportedly received arms and financing from Albanian and Turkish drug gangs. In September 2003 the UN mission in Kosovo launched an initiative aimed at reducing the numbers of small arms held by Kosovars by granting amnesty to those who turned in illegally-held weapons. Since the end of the conflict in 1999, 7,000 surrendered weapons had been destroyed.

"The UN mission in Kosovo announced the start on Monday of a month-long weapons amnesty in a bid to curb the spread of illegal arms in the troubled Serbian province." [*Agence France-Presse*, September 1, 2003]

"More than 300,000 small arms, including large numbers of handguns and assault rifles, are unregistered or uncontrolled, and thus held illegally, according to the [Small Arms Survey] report." [*ReliefWeb*, August 27, 2003]

"Albanian rebels seeking to start a new round of conflict in the southern Balkans have been

buying millions of pounds worth of weapons with the proceeds of heroin smuggling from Afghanistan to the streets of a dozen European capitals... Albanian extremists from Macedonia and Kosovo are estimated to have used part of the profits to buy new weapons since last October. They have used arms dealers in Belgrade, Bulgaria, Macedonia and Bosnia, sometimes also Swiss and Serb middlemen." [*Electronic Telegraph*, February 16, 2002]

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