

Minority Rights: An Opportunity for Adjustment of Ethnic Relations in Kosovo?

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There is a prevailing perception in Kosovo that minority rights are nothing but ‘ad hoc compromises’ that were paid in return for Kosovo statehood. This paper presents a two-fold argument. First, although Kosovo has ensured the legal entrenchment of ‘group-differentiated rights’ for minority communities in Kosovo, implementation of those rights remains weak. Second, ethnic relations between majority and minority communities living in Kosovo is understood through an essentialist perspective of ethnicity, which encouraged both Albanian and Serbian leaders in Kosovo to take an ethnic approach to politics in order to preserve their power, presenting themselves as the ‘true’ defenders of their ethnic group. This paper concludes that the main impediment to minority communities enjoying the highest democratic standards is not Kosovo’s legislation but its implementation, which illustrates the unwillingness of the political leadership and institutions to meaningfully embrace minority rights as an existential necessity for Kosovo society.

Keywords: minority rights; group-differentiated rights; Ahtisaari plan; technical and political dialogue.

If ethnic hatred triumphs, then everything that people of goodwill [in Kosovo] and their friends in the international community struggled for during the last 10 years would have been in vain.

Bernard Kouchner, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, 1999 (cited in MRG, 2007: 27)

On 26 March 2007, after 15 months of unsuccessful United Nation-sponsored negotiations between Serbia and Kosovo¹ to reach a political settlement on the status of Kosovo, the United Nations (UN) Secretary General Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari prepared a Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement

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(hereafter ‘Ahtisaari plan’) recommending ‘supervised independence’ for Kosovo (Ker-Lindsay, 2009; Weller, 2009). A key component of this settlement was the strong guarantee provided to minority communities that their rights and interests would be protected under the new regime. However while the Kosovo constitution embeds almost all key international legal standards on minority rights, many of these remain unimplemented in practice, and this constitutes the main hindrance to minority rights protection in Kosovo.

In April 2011, for the first time since 1981, Kosovo undertook a post-independence population and housing census. The 2011 census counted 1,739,825 residents in Kosovo, disaggregated by ethnicity as follows: 92.2% Albanians, 1.5% Serbs, 1.6%, Bosniaks, 0.6% Gorani, 0.5 % Roma, 0.6% Egyptians, 0.9 % Ashkali 1.1% Turks, and 0.6% ‘others’ or not specified (Kosovo Agency of Statistics, 2012). However, the results of the 2011 census were seen as controversial as they excluded the four Serb-majority northern municipalities of Leposavić/Leposaviq, Zubin Potok, Zvečan/Zveçan and North Mitrovica/Mitrovicë. Serbia was not interested in calling on Serbs from the north of Kosovo to participate, pledging to conduct its own census in the north to determine the number of Serbs in Kosovo (Karadaku, 2012). The Kosovo Academy of Arts and Science also criticized the results and called for a new census, on the grounds that the initial estimates of Albanians in Kosovo had been higher (Karadaku, 2011). In other words, the census did not meet the expectations of ethno-national elites / institutions in both Serbia and Kosovo, as both saw it as a means of legitimizing the nationalist discourse of the other.

Five months after Kosovo declared itself an independent state, the Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development (KIPRED) issued a report entitled *Kosovo Serbs after the Declaration of Independence*, which underlined that:

Kosovo’s government has pledged to respect and implement the highest standards for minority communities’ protection enshrined in the new Constitution. The nature of the state, as pledged in the Constitution, is inclusive for all communities and has a symbolic neutrality to any community living in Kosovo, which is contrary to the prevailing regional nation-state philosophy. (KIPRED, 2008: 5)

The report emphasizes the neutrality of the newly independent and sovereign state institutions with regard to communities in Kosovo, and highlights that the symbolic neutrality is embraced by both the Albanian majority and the Serb minority.

However, Kosovo’s independence derives explicitly from the desire of the

Albanian majority to be independent from Serbia. From the 1990s, Kosovo Albanians organized a ‘virtual state’ in response to discrimination, intimidation and segregation perpetrated by the Serbian state, which culminated in 1999 in the expulsion of more than half of the population from Kosovo by Serb authorities and subsequent intervention by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Consequently, neutrality does not exist in practice, as Serbs, especially those in the north, continue to oppose Kosovo statehood.

At the same time, the Kosovo constitution, which draws in large part on the provisions of the Ahtisaari plan, is a document which recognizes the ‘group-differentiated rights’ of Kosovo Serbs as the biggest minority in Kosovo. Article 57.1 of Chapter III of the Kosovo constitution, on Rights of Communities and their Members, states that: ‘Inhabitants belonging to the same national or ethnic, linguistic, or religious group traditionally present on the territory of the Republic of Kosovo (Communities) shall have *specific rights* as set forth in this Constitution *in addition* to the human rights and fundamental freedoms provided in chapter II of this Constitution’ (emphasis added).

As noted above, the Kosovo constitution is heavily rooted in the Ahtisaari plan. While Kosovo is neither a member of the UN nor of the Council of Europe, and consequently is not obliged to ratify or report on relevant international human rights instruments, the general principles of the Ahtisaari plan foresaw that Kosovo would be ‘governed by highest democratic standards’ (Ahtisaari plan, 2007). Kosovo institutions are thus obliged to preserve, protect and develop identities of all communities in Kosovo. The Kosovo constitution was to be consistent with all provisions of the Ahtisaari plan, and it was agreed that in the event of conflict ‘the latter shall prevail’. Thus, the Kosovo constitution and its extensive minority protection provision are subordinated both to the Ahtisaari plan and to international law.

A close look at the Ahtisaari plan reveals that it foresees extensive rights for minority communities, notably Serbs. The catalogue of rights listed in the Ahtisaari plan even go beyond those included by the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (hereafter ‘FCNM’). For instance, it contains additional rights on citizenship, which are regulated by the Ahtisaari plan and the Law on Citizenship; the latter guarantees the right to multiple citizenship at Article 3: ‘A citizen of the Republic of Kosovo may also be a citizen of one or more other states’,

while Article 32 of the same law foresees that ‘all persons who on 1 January 1998 were citizens of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and on that day were habitually residing in the Republic of Kosovo shall be citizens of the Republic of Kosovo and shall be registered as such in the register of citizens irrespective of their current residence or citizenship’ (Law No 04/L-215). In addition, Serbian is an official language throughout Kosovo, including in areas where the Serb community is not in the majority. In terms of representation, the Ahtisaari plan guarantees more rights for minority communities than the FCNM: in every municipality where a minority community constitutes 10% or more of the overall population, the post of Deputy Mayor of that municipality will be reserved for a member of that minority.

Since Kosovo declared independence and adopted a new constitution, about 40 laws have been promulgated in the Kosovo Assembly (Kosovo’s legislative body), guaranteeing very high standards of minority protection in Kosovo.² Using the Ahtisaari plan as a blueprint for Kosovo state-building, the International Civilian Office (ICO) of the Special Representative of the European Union and European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) were established in order to ensure that all minority rights provisions were fully implemented (Feith, 2012: v). Although the Ahtisaari plan was implemented to a large extent in the south of Kosovo, the four northern Serb-majority municipalities remained in limbo, for the most part refusing any formal cooperation with Kosovo institutions.

This paper will apply Kymlicka’s (1995) theoretical approach on ‘group-differentiated rights’ to the examination of minority rights in Kosovo. The article is divided into five sections. Section one explains Kymlicka’s theory of minority rights. Section two reviews minority rights from a legal perspective. Section three assesses the challenges to minority protection in Kosovo on the ground. Section four analyses the mainstream minority policies deployed by UNMIK. Section five examines the 15-point agreement between Kosovo and Serbia on the normalization of the relations between them. We conclude that without genuine proactive engagement and commitment by the Kosovo authorities towards minority communities, neither sustainable democracy nor effective institution building can occur.

1. Will Kymlicka’s theory of minority rights

Embedded in the liberalist tradition, Kymlicka’s theory of minority rights posits a premise of personal autonomy which implies that individuals belonging to different

social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds should be recognized and supported (Kymlicka, 1989; McDonald, 2007; May *et al.*, 2004). However, from Kymlicka's perspective, personal autonomy can only be developed and nourished within a social and cultural context or 'context of choice', because personal autonomy does not exist in a cultural void and there is always a link between personal autonomy and culture. This is at the root of the minority rights debate between liberals and communitarians, who see minority rights, respectively, from an individual and a group perspective. In the *Politics in the Vernacular* (2001), Kymlicka summarizes this debate comprehensively into three stages, which I review in the following sub-section.

Kymlicka highlights three stages in the development of minority rights. The first stage was the pre-1989 debate between 'liberals'/individualists and 'communitarians'/collectivists. While the former argue that 'the individual is morally prior to the community', the latter 'rather than viewing group practices as the product of individuals choices, view individuals as the product of social practices' (Kymlicka, 2001: 18-19). During this stage, there was overwhelming optimism among political philosophers that communism would collapse and a process of democratization would emerge smoothly in Eastern Europe. However, with the collapse of communism issues of ethnicity, nationalism and minority rights derailed that optimism, as new conflicts spread across Eastern Europe, particularly Yugoslavia. Consequently, in the second stage, the debate over minority rights was not between liberals and communitarians, but between liberals themselves. The issue at stake was the compatibility of minority rights with liberal democracy, and the question posed was: 'If groups are indeed liberal, why do their members want minority rights?' (Kymlicka, 2001: 21). However, this debate did not solve the problem. In the third stage, Kymlicka proposed that minority rights were 'not as a deviation from ethnocultural neutrality, but as a response to majority nation-building' (*ibid*: 41).

Institutionalization and regulation of ethno-cultural diversity in public life is essential for a stable and fair democracy. The determination and ability of countries in the Western Balkans, including Kosovo, to solve ethnic conflict profoundly affects the process of democratization. According to Kymlicka and Opalski:

The ability or inability of countries in Eastern Europe to resolve their ethnic conflicts has profoundly affected the process of democratization. While most countries without significant ethnic tensions have democratized successfully—for example Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Slovenia—those countries with major ethnic and linguistic cleavages are having a more difficult time

consolidating democracy and civil society—for example Slovakia, Ukraine, Romania, Macedonia. (Kymlicka and Opalski, 2001: 3)

In other words, minority rights should be seen from the perspective of a just and stable democracy, and the justification of minority rights should not be regarded as a prescription for this or that minority or as an *ad hoc* compromise. Instead, minority rights should be seen as ‘the appropriate application of defensible moral principles’ (Kymlicka and Opalski, 2001: 1). The protection of minority rights became an internal imperative for stabilizing ethnic relations and establishing a fair democracy in newly post-communist countries, and a precondition for allowing those states to join NATO, the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and the European Union (EU). The EU membership ‘Copenhagen Criteria’ require that ‘the candidate country has achieved stability of institutions guaranteeing [...] respect for and protection of minorities’ (Rechel, 2008: 4). Minority rights are not considered a matter of domestic politics but of international politics and international law. Indeed, the movement of internationalizing minority rights has gained widespread international legitimacy and there are even tendencies ‘to develop a “universal declaration of minority rights”, to supplement the 1948 universal declaration of human rights’ (Kymlicka and Opalski, 2001: 5).

Liberal critics of international minority rights movements argue that state institutions are ‘colour-blind’, that the state is neutral with regard to different ethno-cultural groups, and that minority rights constitute an unfair privilege for certain groups. However their defenders, among them Kymlicka, argue that while minority rights do not contradict liberal theory in principle (Kymlicka and Norman, 2003: 5), the latter has nonetheless ignored certain minority rights, including cultural membership, language, and identity of ethno-cultural groups, and the fact that they compensate for unfair disadvantages experienced by those groups (Taylor, 1992; Tamir, 1993; Miller, 1995; Eisinber and Spinner, 2005). Kymlicka argues that there are three cases where individual human rights are insufficient to protect minority groups from injustice, and these are settlement policies, boundary policies and language policies (Kymlicka, 1998: 213).

As a solution, he proposes ‘group-differentiated rights, such as territorial autonomy, veto-powers, guaranteed representation in central institutions, land claims, and language rights’, which indeed can help to ‘rectify this disadvantage, by alleviating the vulnerability of minority cultures to majority decisions. These external

protections ensure that members of the minority have the same opportunity to live and work in their own culture as members of the majority' (Kymlicka, 1995: 109). From Kymlicka's perspective, minority rights as a heterogeneous category share two key features: first, they go beyond the familiar set of common civil and political rights of individual citizenship which are protected in all liberal democracies; and second, they are adopted with the intention of recognizing and accommodating the distinctive identities and needs of ethnocultural groups (Kymlicka and Norman, 2003).

2. Minority community rights as a precondition to Kosovo statehood

After the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) was deployed to Kosovo in June 1999, the 'group-differentiated rights' of minority communities were recognized in UNMIK Regulation 2001/9, under the so-called 'Constitutional Framework for Provisional Self-Government'. Chapter VI of the Constitutional Framework recognized the specific rights of minority communities, going beyond rights contained in the FCNM and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (Benedek, 2005: 221). In 2003, the UNMIK administration in Kosovo set forth the policy of 'standards for Kosovo' (which later became known as the 'standards before status' policy), consisting of eight standards which Kosovo provisional institutions had to reach before they could begin negotiations on Kosovo's final status. As argued by Devic (2007), Serbs in the north showed no interest in meeting those standards, as they remained under Serbian patronage (2007: 264). However, while Kosovo's final status is not explicitly mentioned anywhere in the text, it does state that: 'These standards reinforce Kosovo's parallel progress towards European standards in the framework of the EU's Stabilization and Association Process, based *inter alia* on the Copenhagen criteria' (Standards for Kosovo, 2003).

A 2004 European Stability Initiative (ESI) study highlights the crux of UNMIK's approach towards Kosovo's institutions of self-government:

The essence of the 'Standards before Status' approach is that it requires Kosovo's institutions of self-government to demonstrate that they are willing and able to protect the rights of all of Kosovo's ethnic communities. This fundamental condition has been somewhat obscured by the tendency to incorporate every possible reform goal into the eight standards and 484 individual actions in the Standards Implementation Plan. However, the basic principle is clear: unless Kosovo is multiethnic, it cannot aspire to independence (ESI, 2004: 17).

One of the most explicit standards required of Kosovo provisional institutions was

‘Sustainable Returns and the Rights of Communities and their Members’. Kosovo was required to implement laws that would protect human and minority rights, establish effective institutional mechanisms to respond to human and minority rights violations, empower the Municipal Community Offices through adequate staff and resources, fully implement the FCNM, distribute municipal and ministerial resources fairly among all communities, and develop education curricula that encouraged tolerance and respect for all minority communities in Kosovo (Standards for Kosovo, 2003). These standards were due to be implemented considered by 2005, before the international community would address the question of Kosovo’s final status with the Ahtisaari plan.

The Ahtisaari plan foresaw comprehensive and specific rights for minority communities, which were later incorporated into the Kosovo constitution which entered into force in June 2008. To use Kymlicka’s terminology, the constitution depicts Kosovo neither as a ‘multi-ethnic state’ nor as a ‘multi-national/multi-cultural state’, but as a ‘multi-ethnic society’ consisting of Albanians and other communities. This paper argues that since Kosovo statehood was declared in 2008, there has been no genuine effort to implement minority community rights fully and unconditionally in Kosovo. Rather, minority rights were seen as a compromise. Faced with the multi-level governance of international administration, Kosovo’s political leaders embraced minority rights in return for statehood; however, they did not believe it to be necessary for Kosovo’s democratic infrastructure, nor see it as an opportunity to improve ethnic relations.

In the sections below, I will review equality and cultural rights, representation and self-government rights of minority communities living in Kosovo from a legal perspective. I will then examine shortcomings with regard to implementation of those rights. Finally, I will develop a critique of the UN administration in Kosovo, arguing that its minority rights policies contributed to an effective segregation of Kosovo Serbs.

2.1 Equality and cultural rights

Kymlicka points out that there is a close relationship between equality and minority rights. Kymlicka’s starting point is that the state is not unbiased in its relations with various national groups. It is not an a neutral defender of the individual human rights

of its citizens regardless of their ethnicity, language, religion and so on. Indeed, Kymlicka convincingly argues that states are not ‘culturally-blind’, ‘ethnically blind’ or ‘religiously-blind’, for they systematically

[...] privilege the majority nation in certain fundamental ways—for example, the drawing of internal boundaries; the language of schools, courts, and government services; the choice of public holidays; and the division of legislative power between central and local governments. All of these decisions can dramatically reduce the political power and cultural viability of a national minority, while enhancing that of the majority culture (Kymlicka, 1995: 51-52).

Therefore, Kymlicka proposes group-specific rights in the spheres of education, local autonomy and language, in order to ensure ‘that national minorities are not disadvantaged in these decisions’, thereby enabling the minority, like the majority, to sustain ‘a life of its own’ (*ibid*: 52).

Article 58 of the Kosovo constitution enables minority communities to preserve their cultural distinctiveness and obliges institutions to ‘adopt adequate measures as may be necessary to promote, in all areas of economic, social, political and cultural life, full and effective equality among members of communities’. The constitution provides for positive rights and active measures, which will sustain the distinctiveness of minorities *per se*. The chapter on Fundamental Rights and Freedoms guarantees physical and psychological integrity (Article 26), and prohibits torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment of every person in Kosovo. However, parallel to this, the constitution also includes a specific chapter on the Rights of Communities and their Members, which guarantees to persons belonging to minority communities the right to develop, foster and maintain the attributes of their community, and also—individually or as a group—to receive public education; to use their alphabet freely in relation to local and central authorities; to have their personal names registered in their original form; to have and manage their own media; and to enjoy unhindered contact with persons in any state, particularly with persons with whom they share a common cultural heritage (Article 59).

Kosovo authorities then expanded on these rights through specific laws, such as the Law on Anti-discrimination, the Law on the Civil Service of the Republic of Kosovo, the Law on the Use of Languages, the Law on Access to Official Documents, the Law on Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Communities and Their Members in Kosovo, the Law on Official Holidays in the Republic of Kosovo, the Law on Local Self-Government, and the Cultural Heritage Law, among others.³

The cultural rights of minority communities are also regulated by Kosovo's legislation. When Kymlicka addresses culture, he refers to a 'culture which provides its members with meaningful ways of life across the full range of human activities, including social, educational, religious, recreational, and economic life, encompassing both public and private spheres' (Kymlicka, 1995: 76). Similarly, Schneckener argues that cultural rights are those which 'allow group members to express freely, preserve, and develop their cultural and linguistic heritage'. This set of rights includes: (i) the right to maintain and develop one's own cultural identity, (ii) the right to information, (iii) the right to public and private use of a minority language, and (iv) the right to education in one's mother language (Schneckener, 2004: 24).

Cultural rights, as modelled by Kymlicka and Schneckener, are explicitly guaranteed in the Law on Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Communities and Their Members in Kosovo. This is an all-inclusive law which guarantees a wide scope of rights, including the right to culture (Article 5), the right to language (Article 4), the right to identity (Article 2), the right to full and effective equality (Article 3), the right to access to the media (Article 6), and the right to education (Article 8). Cultural rights in Kosovo are also guaranteed by the Law on Official Holidays in the Republic of Kosovo, which recognizes minority community holidays as official. The Law on the Use of Languages provides for cultural and linguistic rights which go beyond those that are enshrined in the 1992 European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages or the 1998 OSCE Oslo Recommendations for Linguistic Rights of National Minorities,⁴ by declaring Albanian and Serbian as official languages and allowing smaller communities to establish their own official languages at the municipal level. Article 2.3 of the law states that:

In municipalities inhabited by a community whose mother tongue is not an official language, and which constitutes at least five (5) percent of the total population of the municipality, the language of the community shall have the status of an official language in the municipality and shall be in equal use with the official languages. Notwithstanding the foregoing, exceptionally, in Prizren Municipality the Turkish language shall have the status of an official language. (Law No.03/L-64)

By recalling the values of tolerance, common life and the multi-religious character of Kosovo society, the Law on Freedom of Religion guarantees 'equal rights and obligations to religious communities, without any discrimination' (Law No.03/L-64), while stating that 'there shall be no official religion'. Regarding financial matters, the

law highlights that religious communities in Kosovo are exempt from the obligation to pay taxes.

Furthermore, protection of religious and cultural heritage is guaranteed in the Ahtisaari plan. Annex V unequivocally states that the Serbian Orthodox Church in Kosovo shall be afforded the protection and enjoyment of its rights, and that those Serbian cultural sites which are considered to have special significance for Kosovo Serbs will be provided with security by the Kosovo police force. Parallel to this, the Ahtisaari plan allows for certain Serbian Orthodox monasteries to be labelled ‘Special Protective Zones’, of which there are currently 44 (Ahtisaari plan, 2007).

2.2 Representation and self-government rights

The OSCE 1999 Lund Recommendations on the Effective Participation of National Minorities point out that: ‘Effective participation of national minorities in public life is an essential component of a peaceful and democratic society. Experience in Europe and elsewhere has shown that, in order to promote such participation, governments often need to establish specific arrangements for national minorities’ (OSCE/HCMN, ‘The Lund Recommendations’, 2009: Point 1). Similarly, political science scholars argue that representation in a democratic process is decisive to maintaining its functionality (Held, 2006). Western democratic countries have guaranteed seats for minority communities in order to safeguard their political representation. Schneckener has analysed this very dimension of minority rights by highlighting two pivotal elements: self-rule and representation of minorities. The scope of rights included in this dimension of minority rights varies across countries, but may include (i) political representation at the local and national levels, (ii) symmetrical representation in the civil service, (iii) self-government bodies, and so forth.

By contrast, Kymlicka argues that ‘while the traditional concern of national minorities and ethnic groups has been with either self-government or poly-ethnic rights, there has been increasing interest by these groups, as well as other non-ethnic social groups, in the idea of special representation rights’ (Kymlicka, 1995: 31-45). These ‘special representation rights’ are guaranteed by Kosovo’s legal system. The Kosovo constitution and the Law on Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Communities are the two most important legal documents concerning community representation. The constitution states that 20 of the 120 seats in the Kosovo Assembly shall be guaranteed to members of ‘non-majority’ communities (Article

64). It also establishes a permanent Committee on the Rights and Interests of Communities within the Kosovo Assembly to guarantee the ‘vital interests’ of communities within the law-making process (Article 81). There are eight laws through which the vital interests of minority communities in Kosovo are guaranteed and none of these can be challenged in a referendum.

Representation of communities is also guaranteed at the ministerial level. Article 96 of the constitution states that the Serb community must be represented by one minister, and that one minister must be appointed from another minority community; a third minister from a minority community can also be appointed if the Kosovo government has more than 12 ministries. The constitution also mandates the creation of Consultative Council for Communities (CCC) under the auspices of the President of Kosovo (Article 60). The mandate of this CCC is as follows:

- i) Articulation of minority community views with regard to the public policies of Kosovo institutions;
- ii) Reviewing legislation at an early stage and providing input in relation to specific laws;
- iii) Serving as a channel of inter-ethnic co-ordination and consultation;
- iv) Enabling representatives of minority communities to assess the needs of their communities (Law No. 03/L-047).

At the judicial level, 15% of Supreme Court judges must be members of minority communities. The Constitutional Court of Kosovo, the final arbiter on all constitutional issues, is composed of nine judges and two out of nine judges ‘shall require the majority vote of the deputies of the Assembly present and voting, but only upon consent of the majority of the deputies of the Assembly holding seats reserved or guaranteed for representatives of the Communities not in the majority in Kosovo’ (Constitution of Kosovo, Article 114). The Kosovo Judicial Council, the institution which guarantees impartiality of the judicial system, counts four community experts out of a total of 13 members. In addition, the constitution guarantees a minimum number of positions for minority communities in public institutions, particularly in publicly-owned enterprises and police services in areas where minority communities reside. The 2010 Law on Civil Service of the Republic of Kosovo states that ‘within the civil service in institutions of the central level at least 10% of the positions are reserved for persons belonging to communities that are not majority in Kosovo and who fulfil the specific employment criteria’ (Law No 03/L-149).

Furthermore, the right of representation for communities in Kosovo is ensured at the local level. The Law on Local Self-Government, which was adopted three days after Kosovo declared independence, states that in cases where a minority community constitutes at least 10% of the overall municipal population, a Deputy Mayor for Communities can be appointed (Law Nr. 03/L-040). The Law on Local Self-Government also established Communities Committees at the municipal level, with a mandate to review compliance of municipal with applicable law in Kosovo. It also provided some municipalities with enhanced competences in four areas: (i) secondary health care, (ii) higher education, (iii) culture, and (iv) selection of higher police station commanders. These enhanced competences were given mainly to the newly established Serb-majority municipalities, notably Graçanicë/Gracanica, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica North, Shtërpçë/Štrpce.

Kymlicka claims that a right to self-government implies some form of political autonomy ‘to ensure the full and free development of their culture and the best interests of their people’ (Kymlicka, 1995: 27). Ahtisaari proposed a sustainable system of local self-government in Kosovo, which attempted to address the concerns of Kosovo Serbs. This plan was incorporated into the Law on Local Self-Government. Under the Ahtisaari plan, the 5+1 newly established Serb-majority municipalities (Graçanicë/Gracanica, Klokot/Vrbovac, Mitrovica/Mitrovicë North, Partesh/Partes, and Ranillug/Ranilug, along with an expanded Novëbërd/Novo Brdo) were to have enhanced asymmetrical competences in the areas of secondary health care; cultural affairs, including Serbian religious heritage within their municipalities; and competence to appoint the Police Station Commanders. Mitrovica/Mitrovicë North, in addition, would have had additional competences in the area of higher education.

The establishment of new Serb-majority municipalities through the decentralization process is considered one of the most successful stories in Kosovo. The only Serb municipality that has not been established to date, as foreseen by the Ahtisaari plan, is Mitrovica/Mitrovicë North which remains the most fragile territory in Kosovo. Mitrovica/Mitrovicë remained in a state of limbo after 1999. Serbia established parallel illegal structures, and repeatedly prevented both UNMIK and Kosovo institutions from exercising their authority in the region. Moreover, northern Serbs boycotted local elections organized in Kosovo and refused to recognize the authority of Kosovo’s provisional institutions. To address this, the Ahtisaari plan proposed the establishment of northern and southern Mitrovica/Mitrovicë

municipalities, governed by a joint board, and gave northern Serbs extensive local self-governing powers. However, northern Serbs refused to implement this offer, and in March 2011 the EU began to facilitate a technical dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia in order to normalize relations between them. The dialogue was meant to serve as a milestone towards normalization of the overall situation of northern Kosovo, including Mitrovica/Mitrovicë north. I will come back to this in detail in the last section of this paper.

With regard to the aforementioned Kosovo legal framework, two aspects should be emphasized. The first is related to the overall lack of implementation of minority rights protection laws. Reports by international and local non-governmental organizations (such as the European Commission, the OSCE, the Kosovo Ombudsperson, Minority Rights Group International and the Humanitarian Law Center) have all concluded that while these laws are ‘good on paper’ most have yet to be implemented.⁵ For instance, the Law on Anti-Discrimination and the Law on the Use of Languages are two of the most advanced language laws in the Southeast European region, but the ineffectiveness of implementation mechanisms makes them inaccessible to Kosovo’s minority communities. The second aspect of the legal framework is a political one. UNMIK’s minority rights policy has been equated with a policy for Serbs, and has failed to take adequate account of the needs and interests of other minority communities present in Kosovo. This paper argues that this approach to minority communities in Kosovo has been flawed.

3. Shortcomings in minority rights enforcement in Kosovo

The 2010 EU Commission Progress Report, which measures progress in Kosovo across a range of areas, does not speak in terms of minority rights but human rights. Limited progress with regard to enforcement of human rights is noted in the report, although it underlines that Kosovo has adopted a strategy and action plan for human rights for the period 2009 to 2011. The main critique of the report is that human rights mechanisms in Kosovo are ineffective at both the central and local levels, and that there is a lack of funding for human rights units as well as poor co-ordination between local and national authorities to enhance awareness of human rights. It concludes that ‘both the institutional framework and the financial commitment of Kosovo are inappropriate for the implementation of the human rights legislation’, and notes that ‘[e]nsuring full respect for human rights is a key European Partnership priority’

(Kosovo Progress Report, 2010: 13).

The annual reports of the Ombudsperson, which measure the state of human rights protection in Kosovo, indicate that the state of human rights has progressed in recent years. However, the reports from 2009 until 2011 did not devote a particular section to minority rights. It was only in 2011 that the annual report included for the first time a section on the right of communities and their members as guaranteed by Article 59 of the constitution. That report highlighted progress in the area of returns of refugees and displaced persons, reconstruction of houses for Kosovo Serbs, Serbian-language education programmes provided by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia, etc. Addressing other minorities, such as the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, it underlined that, despite the adoption by the government of Kosovo of a Strategy and Action Plan for Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, these groups continued to face a high level of discrimination and poverty. Forced repatriation from Western countries was also a serious problem. The same report drew attention to a loss of confidence and lack of awareness on the part of the Kosovo's institutions implementing the law. During the reporting period of 2011, the Ombudsperson registered 1,453 potential cases of human rights violations. However, most of the recommendations provided have not been considered to date.

Given that the implementation of the law is the main premise of functioning of the legal State, in the Republic of Kosovo, despite the positive efforts, the non-implementation of the law is a main indicator of loss of confidence of the citizens in the State authorities whose legal and constitutional obligation is to implement the law. (Ombudsperson Kosovo, 2012: 8)

Knut Vollebaek, former OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, when addressing the problems of minority rights in Kosovo in 2008, noted the 'urgency and importance of ensuring that minority rights are protected and implemented in Kosovo's evolving democratic society'. Combining a legal and economic perspective, Vollebaek recognized the fact that without addressing inter-ethnic tensions, Kosovo cannot 'secure long term economic development through investments [until] it has shown that inter-ethnic conflict is well and truly a thing of the past' (OSCE, 2008: 3).

The 2011 European Commission Progress Report for Kosovo found some progress in the area of minority protection, particularly with regard to decentralization. However, it identified limited progress in the area of minority education, noting a lack of mother-tongue textbooks and curricula for the Turkish, Bosniak and Roma communities. It also highlighted the problem of a lack of civil

registration for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities and the continued presence of Roma camps in northern Kosovo (Kosovo Progress Report, 2011: 14-16). In general, the enforcement of minority rights remains one of the main challenges in Kosovo.

Another matter of concern for minority communities remains the enforcement of legislation on proportional representation and employment of members of communities in public enterprises and institutions, at both the central and local levels. The 2013 OSCE report on representation of communities in the civil service in Kosovo found that minority communities continued to be under-represented in central-level public institutions, failing to meet the minimum 10% threshold. Data for this report were gathered between March 2012 and July 2013, covering 29 municipalities and 15 central-level institutions, and showed that communities at the central level occupied approximately 8% of civil services positions, while Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities continued to be the most under-represented at the central level. The latter communities, along with the Gorani and Turkish continued to be under-represented at the municipal level. By contrast, Albanians, Serbs and Bosniaks were proportionally ‘over-represented in those municipalities where they constituted a numerical minority’ (OSCE, 2013a: 4).

Data provided by the Ministry of Public Administration on the overall representation of minority communities at the central level institutions in Kosovo indicated that only 0.12% were Kosovo Ashkali, 1.6% were Kosovo Bosniak, 0.11% were Kosovo Egyptian, 0.17% were Kosovo Gorani, 0.22% were Kosovo Roma, 4.34% were Kosovo Serb and 1.29% were Kosovo Turk—figures which do not match those of the 2011 census (*ibid*: 7). These statistics indicate that the Law on the Civil Service of the Republic of Kosovo has not been fully implemented and minority communities continue to be under-represented in the civil service in Kosovo.

4. Segregation as a form of minority “protection” in Kosovo

The largest minority group in Kosovo, the Serb community, has a kin-state which most Kosovo Albanians consider a threat, due to the recent conflict. A decade since 1999, the Serb community in Kosovo, particularly in the north, have continued to use a parallel system of administration, health and education, with the support of the government of Serbia, with the ultimate aim of impeding international efforts to build a multi-ethnic Kosovo society by separating Serbs from the rest of Kosovo society.

The policy of the Serbian government towards Kosovo Serbs can be divided into two distinct periods. The first was applied between 1999 and 2008, and focused on creating alternative authorities for administration, health care and education (so-called 'enclaves') and, by doing so, impeding the authority of Kosovo institutions and the UNMIK administration. This first policy had two main aims: to demonstrate the inability of Kosovo authorities to govern the territory of Kosovo, as well as the inability of UNMIK administration to integrate Serbs into Kosovo.⁶ The second post-independence policy, which extended from 2008 onwards, was mainly focused on undermining Kosovo independence by isolating Serbs from Kosovo institutions.

While Serbs in southern Kosovo have taken some steps towards integration (ICG, 2009: 2-7), the Serbian government's plan of isolating Serbs from Kosovo institutions in the four northern municipalities of Leposavić/Leposaviq, Zubin Potok, Zvečan/Zveçan and North Mitrovica/Mitrovicë has prevailed. Moreover, this isolationist policy overlapped with UNMIK's approach of maintaining a physical distance between Serbs and Albanians in order to prevent potential confrontation and conflict. The deployment of the EU Rule of Law Mission (EULEX) has also been unsuccessful to date in integrating and accommodating northern Serbs into Kosovo institutions.

In this vein, Clive Baldwin has emphasized:

Despite the fact that minority rights promote integrated societies, and despite the fact that conflict prevention requires integrated societies, the international community in Kosovo has, time and again, reinforced the segregation that it allowed to develop in 1999. In fact, dealing with minority issues seems to have meant simply addressing the demand of Serb leaders for effective segregation. All other minority groups have been effectively treated as second class. (MRG, 2006: 27)

Paradoxically, the application of minority rights appeared to be a compromise between the demands of Kosovo Albanians to establish their statehood and the demands of Kosovo Serbs to be fully protected within Kosovo society. The shortcoming of this approach is that minority rights were seen as a solution to ethnic conflict between Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo, and not as general moral and legal principles applicable to all minority communities. Kymlicka and Opalski (2001: 1) argue that 'proposals for resolving ethnic conflicts almost always appear as special pleading on behalf of this or that minority, rather than as the appropriate application of defensible moral principles'. Thus, general principles of minority rights were not applicable to smaller, more vulnerable minorities in Kosovo, such as Roma, Ashkali

and Egyptians, who could also not rely on the support of a kin-state.

These communities, who face widespread discrimination and poverty, have been treated as second-class citizens. Although the Government of Kosovo has adopted a ‘Strategy for Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in Kosovo, 2009-2015’,⁷ progress towards its implementation has been minimal and financial commitment from Kosovo institutions almost non-existent. Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs continue to shape the domestic politics of Kosovo.

The political leadership of both the Kosovo Albanian and the Kosovo Serb communities has encouraged an ‘ethnicization’ of politics, a rational self-interested approach by which they present themselves as the true defenders of their ‘ethnic identity’, thereby legitimizing preservation of their political power (Simonsen, 2005: 299). Moreover, UNMIK’s failure to address ongoing needs for sustainable economic development, employment and foreign investment, efficient healthcare system, and modernized education for the Kosovo citizens resulted from a lack of consensus and co-operation between ethnic minority communities in Kosovo. As argued by Simonsen (2004: 299) ethnicity remained the dominant social marker in Kosovo and, for Kosovo’s peace-building and nation-building processes to be successful in the longer term, politics should be ‘de-ethnicized’.

One of the biggest flaws of the UN administration in Kosovo was to understand Albanians and Serbs through an ‘essentialist’ perspective of ethnicity. Rather than seeing ethnicity as constructed, situational and fluid, which would allow for greater interaction between the groups, UNMIK employed a ‘primordialist’ or ‘essentialist’ perspective, by which Albanians and Serbs were regarded as two antagonistic groups with ‘some bundle of unchanging cultural traits’ (May *et al.*, 2004: 9), who could only be effectively managed through the strategy of physical separation. Similarly, Devic investigates the imposed Western model of multiculturalism as the diagnosis for improving inter-ethnic relations in Kosovo, which he argues fails to take account of the complex network of inter-ethnic relations on the ground. The Western model of multiculturalism neglected the fact ‘that before the outbreak of violence there existed some long-standing forms of multiculturalism, which could be defined as unstructured multiculturalism, rooted in everyday life and indicating the existence of alternatives to liberal multiculturalism’ (Devic: 2007: 270).

Simonsen (2005), on the other hand, argues for an alternative approach to conflict transformation. Like Horowitz (1985: 600), he argues that ethnic differences

cannot be fully eradicated, but maintains that it is possible to make ethnicity less salient through the ‘de-ethnicization’ of politics, notably the creation of cross-cutting ethnic cleavages and the development of institutions that encourage political elites to transcend their ethnic boundaries. While seeing ethnicity as non-static in terms of character and intensity, he highlights that ‘institutionalized ethnic-affirmative systems do address the lack of trust in a post-conflict situation, but they cannot solve every problem that emerges from deep divisions’ and underlines that ‘institutions in post-conflict societies should not institutionalize ethnic division’ (2005: 312). While promoting an integrative and ‘centripetalist’ approach towards minority groups, Simonsen emphasizes:

That a de-ethnicization of politics can be seen as a useful strategy for peacebuilding even in societies with very deep divisions is demonstrated in a proposal by the International Crisis Group for a reorientation of UNMIK’s policies in Kosovo (ICG, 2003). Interestingly, the proposal specifically cited both the work of Kymlicka and a report inspired by centripetalism. The ICG argued against the applicability of consociationalism in Kosovo, referring to the minorities’ small share of the population as well as the fact that human rights culture has not been internalized by politicians, and political structures are not mature enough to accommodate the mobilization of minority groups [...] UNMIK should wager on a civic future for Kosovo, rather than seek compromises with collectivist (‘ethnicist’) political structures for tactical and short-term advantage [...] it is impossible to build a multiethnic Kosovo by directly implementing multiethnic policies. (Simonsen: 2005: 314)

In other words, UNMIK failed to see ethnic groups as process-based, dynamic and contextually fluctuating, in contrast to Brubaker (2004: 53-54), who stated that:

Ethnicity, race, and nation should be conceptualized not as substances or things or entities or organisms or collective individuals—as the imagery of discrete, concrete, tangible, bounded, and enduring “groups” encourages us to do—but rather in relational, processual, dynamic, eventful, and disaggregated terms. This means thinking of ethnicity, race, and nation not in terms of substantial groups or entities but in terms of practical categories, cultural idiom, cognitive schemas, discursive frames, organizational routines institutional forms, political projects, and contingent events.

Fourteen years since international deployment in Kosovo, relations between the ‘substantial groups’ of Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs remain antagonistic. Inter-ethnic relations in Kosovo continue to be seen through a security lens and Kosovo Serbs, especially those in the north, are still perceived as a threat to the security of the new state. Kymlicka has outlined circumstances where a particular group is regarded as disloyal and a threat to the security of the state:

In particular, states will not accommodate groups which are seen as likely to collaborate with foreign enemies [...] [M]inority groups are often seen as a kind of ‘fifth column’, likely to be working for the enemy. This is particularly a concern where the minority is related to a neighbouring state by ethnicity or religion, so the neighbouring state claims the right to intervene to protect ‘its’ minority. Minority groups are seen—rightly or wrongly—as allies or collaborators with external powers that have historically oppressed the majority group. (Kymlicka, 2002: 19)

Furthermore, Kymlicka argues that claims to minority rights should not be seen as evidence that minorities have become aggressive, but rather as a defensive response to majority nation building which minorities may regard as an injustice. In post-conflict societies such as Kosovo, the concept of justice is seen as compensation for past historical injustices, where the majority holds a minority responsible for its historical suffering. Justice is not understood as an equal distribution of power, rights and resources between majority and minority groups, but as compensation paid by the minority for its historical wrongdoing. However, Kymlicka argues that minority acceptance of the state-building process cannot be secured through suppression, but by ensuring that those communities enjoy fully-fledged minority rights; he adds that early and generous devolution of power would prevent ethnic separatism (Kymlicka, 2001: 64).

5. The way ahead

On 10 September 2012, formal supervision of Kosovo’s independence by the International Civilian Office—created to oversee implementation of Kosovo’s post-independence commitments enshrined in the Ahtisaari plan—was ended, on the justification that much of the Ahtisaari plan had been implemented (ICG, 2012: 1; Feith, 2012: 129). Despite significant progress in terms of accommodation of minority community rights in the southern and eastern parts of Kosovo, notably with the establishment of Serb-majority municipalities with enhanced competencies, execution of the Ahtisaari plan in the north of Kosovo, and the establishment of Mitrovica/Mitrovicë North as a new municipality, was widely seen to have failed. To date, northern Kosovo Serbs do not feel bound by the Ahtisaari plan.

Serbia does not recognize the independence of Kosovo. However, in March 2011, the UN Assembly adopted Resolution 64/298 under which the EU was obliged to facilitate a technical and political dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia, aimed at the normalization of relations between the two. These negotiations, which began in

2011, sought to address the needs of Serbs in the north by further devolving powers and ‘group-differentiated rights’ from Prishtinë/Priština. From 2011 to date, several technical agreements and conclusions were reached between the two parties, including arrangements on integrated border management, university diplomas, customs stamps, free trade, registry books, cadastral registry, and so on. These agreements will enable Kosovo to accommodate Kosovo Serbs living in the north without regarding them as a ‘fifth column’ or an enemy of the state, and to move towards normalization of relations between Prishtinë/Priština and Serbs in the north.

On 19 April 2013, Kosovo and Serbia reached a ground-breaking 15-point agreement, which granted special autonomy to an ‘Association of Serb Municipalities’ in exchange for the dismantling of Serb parallel structures in the north. On 27 June 2013, the Assembly of Kosovo passed a law ratifying this ‘First International Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations between the Republic of Kosovo and the Republic of Serbia’ (Law No. 04/L-222).⁸ Under the new agreement, the municipalities of Leposavić/Leposaviq, Zubin Potok, Zvečan/Zvečan and North Mitrovica/Mitrovicë will have a District Court and a regional police commander belonging to the Serb community. The agreement is meant to ‘unlock’ the process of EU integration for both Kosovo and Serbia (*The Economist*, 2013). However, the main critique of this agreement is that it could endanger the multi-ethnic character of Kosovo society, as some of the points in the agreement contradict the spirit of the constitution. The leader of the Self-Determination movement *Vetëvendosje!* articulated this position as follows: ‘[T]he agreement with Serbia had “totally suspended the state-building of Kosovo. Instead of state-building, we have an Association of Serbian municipalities”’⁹ (Peci, 2013).

However, beyond this debate, the agreement aims to accommodate and integrate northern Serbs into Kosovo’s institutions through free and fair elections, which were held in November 2013. The implementation of this agreement could contribute to the normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia on the one hand, and Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo on the other. The normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia would have a huge impact on the integration of the Serb community into Kosovo society. In addition to implementing the agreement, Serbia should also abandon its policy of patronizing local Serbs in Kosovo, which would contribute significantly to the establishment of a responsible and democratic political leadership among the Serbian community in Kosovo.

Conclusion

Although Kosovo political leadership has adopted an extensive framework of ‘group-differentiated rights’ for minority communities, largely as a result of the protracted international presence in Kosovo, there has been little willingness to fully and unconditionally implement those rights in Kosovo. Claims for minority rights were perceived as aggressive tendencies towards institutions and, later, towards the newly independent state of Kosovo. Antagonistic relations between Kosovo and Serbia shaped the treatment of minorities in Kosovo, especially Serbs. The need to adopt a ‘de-securitized’ and non-essentialist approach towards ethnic relations is of utmost importance to Kosovo’s long-term development and growth.

Across Kosovo as a whole, much remains to be done to implement the Ahtisaari provisions. Serb parallel structures in the north of Kosovo should be dismantled, and free and legitimate institutions should be established through free and fair elections. Minority rights legislation concerning use of language, civil service representation, returns, education and discrimination should be fully enforced in Kosovo, and this enforcement in turn would significantly increase the legitimacy of Kosovo’s still contested sovereignty.

Several obstacles to minority rights implementation remain in Kosovo. They are: (a) the perceived illegitimacy of Kosovo statehood by local Serbs, especially those living in northern Kosovo, who continue to receive patronage from Serbia; (b) the lack of political will of the part of Kosovo’s leadership to enforce minority rights and overcome the prevailing ethno-centric discourse; (c) unresolved judicial cases on war crimes and the absence of genuine reconciliation between Albanians and Serbs; (d) the lack of normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia; and (e) insufficient funding. Unless these challenges are addressed, full and effective implementation of minority rights in Kosovo will be impossible.

Notes

1. For an account of the negotiations, see Ker-Lindsay, 2009; Weller, 1999: 211-251, 2009. For an account of the conflict in Kosovo, see Judah, 2002; Malcolm, 1998.
2. In the text, I use the term ‘minority community’ to designate the ethnic minorities in Kosovo. However, it should be noted that the term ‘community’ has a twofold meaning in the Kosovo legal framework: the first is defined in Article 3 of Law Nr.03/L-040 On Local Self Government as ‘a group of communities belonging to the same ethnic, religious or linguistic group’; while the second is defined in defined in Article 1 of Law 03/L-047 On

- the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Communities and Their Members in Kosovo to mean minority populations in Kosovo, e.g. Serbs, Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Gorani and Turks.
3. Law No. 2004/ 3 On Anti-discrimination, approved by the Kosovo Assembly on 19 February 2004; Law No. 03/L-149 On the Civil Service of the Republic of Kosovo, approved by the Kosovo Assembly on 15 May 2010; Law No. 02/L-37 On the Use Languages, approved by the Kosovo Assembly on 27 July 2006; Law No. 2003/12 on Access to Official Documents, approved by the Kosovo Assembly on 16 October 2003; Law No. 03/L-047 On the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Communities and Their Members in Kosovo, approved by the Kosovo Assembly on 13 March 2008; Law No. 03/L-064 On Official Holidays in Republic of Kosovo, approved by the Kosovo Assembly on 21 May 2008; Law No. 03/L-040 On Local Self Government, approved by the Kosovo Assembly on 20 February 2008; Law No. 02/L-88 On Cultural Heritage, approved by the Kosovo Assembly on 9 October 2006.
 4. For instance, Point 3 of the 1998 OSCE Oslo Recommendations regarding the Linguistic Rights of National Minorities, states that: ‘In areas inhabited by significant numbers of persons belonging to a national minority and when there is sufficient demand, public authorities shall make provision for the display, also in the minority language, of local names, street names and other topographical indications intended for the public’. Point 14 states that: ‘In areas inhabited by significant numbers of persons belonging to a national minority and when there is sufficient demand, public authorities shall make provision for the display, also in the minority language, of local names, street names and other topographical indications intended for the public’. OSCE Oslo Recommendations regarding the Linguistic Rights of National Minorities & Explanatory Note, February 1998.
 5. See MRG, 2006; 2007. Ombudsperson Kosovo, ‘Eleventh Annual Report 2011’, addressing the Assembly of Kosovo, Prishtina, 13 July 2012. OSCE, ‘Representation of Communities in the Civil Service in Kosovo’, Prishtina, February 2013. OSCE, ‘The Implementation of Civil Service Legislation in Kosovo’, Prishtina, February 2013. Kosovo 2010 Progress Report, SEC (2010) 1329, Brussels, 9 November 2010; Kosovo 2011 Progress Report, SEC (2011) 1207, Brussels, 12 October 2011.
 6. UNMIK Reg. 1999/1, Chapter 12: ‘The exercise of the responsibilities of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government under this Constitutional Framework shall not affect or diminish the authority of the SRSG to ensure full implementation of UNSCR 1244 (1999), including overseeing the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government, its officials and its agencies, and taking appropriate measures whenever their actions are inconsistent with UNSCR 1244(1999) or this Constitutional Framework.’
<http://www.unmikonline.org/regulations/2001/reg09-01.htm>. Retrieved: Oct 13, 2013.
 7. ‘Strategy for the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in the Republic of Kosovo 2009-2015’, Office of the Prime Minister, December 2008.
 8. Law No. 04/L-199 On Ratification of the First International Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations between the Republic of Kosovo and the Republic of Serbia, approved by the Kosovo Assembly on 27 June 2013.
 9. Peci wrote in June 2013 that: ‘Kosovo’s opposition nationalist Vetevendosje movement has called for a mass protest in Pristina against the agreement with Serbia on Thursday, when the Kosovo parliament is due to ratify a law on normalising relations with Serbia and an action plan’.

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