



Security Council

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Letter dated 28 April 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council

I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of the briefing provided by Mr. Zahir Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, as well as the statements delivered by the representatives of Belgium, China, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, the Niger, the Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Viet Nam, in connection with the video-teleconference convened on Friday, 24 April 2020. Statements were also delivered by His Excellency Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, and by Mr. Glauk Konjufca.

In accordance with the procedure set out in the letter dated 2 April 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council (S/2020/273), which was agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the briefing and statements will be issued as an official document of the Security Council.

(Signed) José **Singer Weisinger**
President of the Security Council



Annex I**Statement by Mr. Zahir Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo**

Allow me to start by expressing condolences to everyone in our Mission area whose lives have been so affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The pandemic has been an unprecedented challenge for Kosovo and for the region and a reminder that such challenges can be resolved only through regional cooperation.

The human toll has continued to rise in Kosovo and throughout the region. In Kosovo, the public health authorities, in consultation with the World Health Organization and other international bodies, reacted swiftly to put in place measures to curtail the spread of the disease. Those included closing borders and boundaries, broad restrictions on movement, the closure of schools and many private businesses and the isolation of severely affected municipalities. With its smaller population and more limited resources, Kosovo remains particularly vulnerable to the threat of a wider outbreak or a significant increase in critical cases. Even as heroic efforts are being made by medical personnel, the health-care resources of Kosovo are stretched thin.

In addition, the immense economic and social burden of the health crisis on Kosovo's fragile economy is just beginning to be felt. This month, the International Monetary Fund approved a \$56.5-million emergency loan to Kosovo, targeting the health-care sector as well as other sectors affected by the crisis, while the European Union (EU) has just pledged some €100 million in favourable loans to help stabilize the economy and overcome balance of payments difficulties. Some Member States have also begun to increase their direct support. More will surely be needed, along with strong monitoring, transparency and accountability measures to ensure that assistance reaches the people most in need.

International cooperation has been galvanized on the ground. The United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the United Nations Kosovo team are cooperating closely with the local public health authorities and with all our international partners. As the Council will expect, UNMIK is adapting its work, and we stand together with the people of Kosovo in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. The Mission has revised its programmatic work for 2020. Among other adjustments, it has been providing direct support to the municipalities and communities that are most vulnerable. Our online platforms and communications team have been cooperating with local media and partners to produce and disseminate health information, in partnership with the United Nations Kosovo team. I have personally been in contact with leaders in the region, including the Prime Minister of Albania, Mr. Rama, and the President of Serbia, Mr. Vučić, to solicit their help in promoting an inclusive and unified response. UNMIK and UN-Women are ramping up ongoing support to shelters and other responses to domestic violence, with reported cases having risen by 36 per cent during March. We are closely monitoring the human rights implications arising from this pandemic, including the right to privacy. We have also taken all requisite measures to address the health and safety of Mission personnel, with, to date, no cases of the COVID-19 illness among Mission or any other United Nations staff in Kosovo.

As experience shows everywhere, success in defeating the COVID-19 virus requires, at a minimum, first, a focused Government; secondly, the mobilization of people and resources; and, thirdly, strong leadership. It is an unfortunate feature of the present circumstances in Kosovo that political divisions have distracted the attention of many leaders away from the health crisis. These divisions have served to reduce

public trust in the political leadership during a time of heightened public anxiety and uncertainty. Since the close of the reporting period, the political landscape in Pristina has been characterized by polarization among parties and competing claims to power between factions. This has been manifested in sharp disagreements both within the governing coalition and between the Government and the President on a range of issues, from the response to the pandemic to the lifting of the tariff on Serbian goods and the dialogue with Belgrade.

The conflicting agendas culminated in a vote of no confidence against the coalition Government on 25 March, just as the COVID-19 crisis was striking. A caretaker Government is in place, but, as I speak to the Council today, the President has called for a new Government to be formed by an alternative majority, while the Prime Minister has called this action unlawful, vowing to challenge it in the Constitutional Court. Whatever next steps may ensue, it is clear at this stage that popular discontent has been palpable for weeks. It is essential that the political uncertainties not interfere with non-partisan action to fight the pandemic.

This internal political instability may lead Kosovo to face additional challenges in joining with broader efforts to confront the crisis. However, I wish equally to highlight numerous examples of positive cross-community and cross-boundary coordination when it has been most needed. Health officials in Pristina, in northern Kosovo and in Belgrade have recently established improved communication and coordination, which was missing at the onset of this crisis. Essential items have moved more freely across the boundary, while the Serbian Government recently donated a consignment of testing kits to Pristina's health authorities, regardless of a few public figures in Pristina choosing to react negatively along nationalist lines. The solidarity shown between leading medical professionals and officials across ethnic and political divides gives hope that cooperation can still increase as the rate of infections also continues to rise.

The removal of the 100 per cent tariff on imports from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina for an initial period, coupled with the introduction of reciprocity measures vis-à-vis Belgrade, has been welcomed by some, although viewed as insufficient by others. Irrespectively, this decision marked a step towards resuming more regular commercial relations and a return towards the principles of the Central European Free Trade Agreement. It is also an important signpost towards a restart of the political dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina. I note that the European Network of Transmission System Operators has voted to endorse an agreement with the Kosovo operator KOSTT, which is an important achievement for advancing energy efficiency in the region and for implementing the EU-facilitated energy agreement.

Although there is as yet no clear road map for continuing the dialogue, there are at least signals that attention continues to be focused upon the issue even as the COVID-19 emergency takes precedence. I welcome the appointment by the European Union of a dedicated Special Representative charged with advancing the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue. Recent joint infrastructure and transportation initiatives, launched under the auspices of the United States Government's Special Presidential Envoy, marked another example of the practical engagement that is possible when there is mutual political will and international support. Looking farther ahead, a coordinated international approach in support of the EU-facilitated dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade will be essential, and this remains our best hope for reaching a comprehensive agreement and for sustaining peace.

This crisis has tested the strengths and weaknesses of Member States and territories the world over. In closing, I wish to pay tribute to those leaders and professionals on both sides of the boundary who are supporting one another in fighting the pandemic. I urge political leaders to follow their example and to focus on

unifying their energy while putting personal and political agendas aside. UNMIK, the United Nations Kosovo team and our partners will continue devoting our own collective resources and knowledge to help. I take this opportunity to call for further direct support to Kosovo to address its very urgent health and social welfare needs. As the Secretary-General has stressed, only through solidarity and unity of effort can we succeed in meeting and overcoming this enormous challenge.

I thank all members of the Council for their continuing support for UNMIK.

Annex II

Statement by Mr. Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve, Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations

I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), Mr. Zahir Tanin, for his briefing and welcome the presence of both Ministers for Foreign Affairs.

Let me first turn to the recent political developments in Kosovo. In the interests of its people, we call on political leaders to show unity and cooperation. Political stability is key to keeping the country on the reform track and for Kosovo to pursue its European aspirations. We particularly underline the progress required with regard to the rule of law.

The urgency imposed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) should inspire the political leadership to put its political differences aside and to provide Kosovo's citizens the protection and assistance needed under the current circumstances. At the end of March, the European Union (EU) reallocated €37 million for emergency support to its partners in the Western Balkans, and €5 million in COVID-19 emergency support has been awarded to Kosovo. A further €61 million for economic recovery measures and loans are awaiting approval.

The efficient allocation of these and other resources is a considerable undertaking. It necessitates a stable political environment that fosters bold and inclusive policymaking, with special attention paid to vulnerable groups. We call on the relevant actors to prioritize services for the prevention of and response to gender-based violence, given the worldwide reported increase in domestic violence, affecting in particular women and girls. We reiterate the call of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on all Kosovo institutions and stakeholders to uphold human rights and to leave no one behind in the fight against COVID-19.

The struggle against the virus and its impact benefits from tangible regional cooperation without ulterior motives. We welcome the pragmatic approach taken by the Serbian and Kosovo authorities on health issues during the current crisis, facilitated by prior agreements under the EU dialogue. We encourage the parties to continue and further expand these efforts for the benefit of their populations.

Also, the recent decision of the Kosovo Government to lift the customs tariffs on goods imported from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina has produced tangible results on the ground as the flow of goods has resumed. We hope that this first positive gesture is the prelude to further confidence-building initiatives and the resumption of the EU-facilitated dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina. We call for the implementation of the existing agreements concluded in the framework of the EU-facilitated dialogue and welcome the recent appointment of Miroslav Lajčák as EU Special Representative for the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue and other Western Balkans regional issues. The EU remains resolved to end the current status quo between Pristina and Belgrade. We invite both parties to engage with the EU Special Representative with a view to reaching a comprehensive normalization of relations in the form of a legally binding agreement.

To conclude, I would like to reiterate our engagement in favour of transitional justice. Contradictory narratives about Kosovo's past continue to create division. Only by truthfully facing its past will Kosovo be able to consolidate lasting peace and reconciliation. In their efforts to achieve truth, justice and reparations for past human rights violations, it is important that the authorities consult and engage with civil society and grass-roots organizations. Victims' needs must be placed at the centre of the process, with special attention to the plight of missing persons and their families.

Annex III**Statement by Mr. Yao Shaojun, Minister Counsellor of China to the United Nations**

I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Zahir Tanin for his briefing. I also thank Mr. Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, for his attendance and for his statement. I also listened carefully to the statement made by Mr. Konjufca.

Resolution 1244 (1999) is an important legal basis for the settlement of the Kosovo issue. China has always maintained that the best way to resolve the Kosovo issue is for the parties concerned to reach a mutually acceptable solution through dialogue and consultation, in accordance with the relevant Council resolutions. We welcome the recent positive developments in this regard.

China respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Serbia. We understand its legitimate concerns with regard to the Kosovo issue and commend its efforts to find a political solution thereto. We hope that Kosovo will demonstrate the necessary political will, effectively lift its unilateral tariff measures and work towards the resumption of dialogue between the two parties.

Reconciliation and harmonious coexistence among all ethnicities in Kosovo are in the fundamental interests of peoples from all communities. At this critical time, when the world is facing the extraordinary challenge of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, cooperation and solidarity are more imperative than ever. China hopes that all parties concerned will put the interests of the people first, refrain from any rhetoric or actions that could complicate or escalate the situation, and create conditions for the proper settlement of the Kosovo issue.

Against that backdrop, it is important for the Security Council to remain seized of the Kosovo issue. China commends Special Representative of the Secretary-General Tanin and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) for their active efforts in bringing about a political solution to the Kosovo issue. We also appreciate the efforts of UNMIK to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. China firmly supports the Mission in the diligent implementation of its mandate and the playing of its important role. We call on the relevant parties to fully ensure the safety and security of United Nations personnel and to create conditions conducive to the implementation of their mandate within agreed parameters.

Annex IV

Statement by Mr. José Singer Weisinger, Special Envoy to the Security Council of the Dominican Republic

We thank Special Representative Zahir Tanin for his briefing and the commendable work that his team continues to do to fully implement their mandate on the ground even in the current circumstances. We also thank His Excellency Mr. Ivica Dačić and Mr. Glauk Konjufca for their statements today.

At the outset, we would like to echo the call of the Secretary-General for a global ceasefire and his invitation to the world to focus on the fight against the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). In this regard, we take note of Belgrade's recent declaration of its willingness to cooperate with Pristina to combat the pandemic.

We would like to congratulate the citizens of Kosovo on the success of their recent legislative elections, with the highest participation ever recorded for a general election in the country, giving rise to a democratic and peaceful transition. At the same time, we regret the subsequent impasse that caused the fall of the current coalition Government. We acknowledge the efforts undertaken by the elected authorities aimed at forming a new Government and trying to develop an agenda that reflects the need of the people of Kosovo to move forward, including the need to normalize relations with Belgrade. However, we urge the political authorities in the country to take current conditions into account and implement the measures necessary to fight COVID-19 before setting the date for the next elections.

We take note of the decision taken in Pristina on 1 April with regard to tariffs. We also note that this measure included removing 100 per cent of tariffs on goods from Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is vitally important that the parties move forward with measures that could help accelerate the resumption of negotiations between Pristina and Belgrade, taking into account the current circumstances.

We believe that cooperation and the promotion of measures to build trust continue to represent an important pillar in accomplishing the normalization of relations. In this regard, we wish to acknowledge the cooperation shown by the Government, civil society and the international community in support of these confidence-building measures.

We support the initiatives undertaken by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in collaboration with the United Nations team in Kosovo, particularly those designed to empower youth, women and civil society and those aimed at promoting multilingualism, intercommunity dialogue and respect for human rights. We take this opportunity to congratulate Ms. Vjosa Osmani-Sadriu on being elected Chair of the Assembly of Kosovo. She is the first woman elected to this post. We also extend congratulations to all the women recently elected to various positions.

It is appropriate to mention the important role a reliable justice system plays in strengthening the rule of law. We would therefore like to highlight the efforts made by the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) Case Monitoring Unit in strengthening access to justice and improving the independence of the judiciary.

Finally, we encourage the parties to uphold their commitments pursuant to the Brussels Agreement and act in accordance with resolution 1244 (1999). At the same time, we reiterate our support and appreciation for the work carried out in Kosovo by UNMIK, the Kosovo Force, the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and EULEX in pursuit of building peace.

Annex V**Statement of Mr. Gert Auväärt, Deputy Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations**

We would like to thank Mr. Zahir Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his briefing. We would also like to thank Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, and Mr. Glauk Konjufca, Foreign Minister of Kosovo, for their statements.

Estonia commends Mr. Tanin in particular for the latest report of the Secretary-General the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) (S/2020/255) and for leading the work of UNMIK, which has helped advance the democratization of Kosovo and promoted human rights. We also appreciate UNMIK's support for women's participation in decision-making processes and for initiatives targeting youth and the fight against gender-based violence. During the critical time of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) crisis, we commend the positive actions taken by UNMIK, including the donation of medical equipment to the country's Ministry of Health.

We would like stress that the parliamentary no-confidence vote has further complicated the political situation in Kosovo during the global COVID-19 pandemic. Political stability should be restored as soon as possible, and all political actors must work together to ensure that citizens receive the medical assistance and economic support they need. We therefore call on political and institutional leaders in Kosovo to unite their efforts to mitigate the social and economic impact of COVID-19.

We hereby highlight the contribution made by the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) to help Kosovo, especially during these difficult times. Recently, for example, EULEX helped to build the capacity of security bodies within the institutions of the Kosovo Correctional Service by donating information technology equipment to assist its staff in holding virtual meetings.

The normalization of relations between Serbia and Kosovo is the key to regional stability, and the dialogue between them should resume after the pandemic is over. We welcome the appointment of Mr. Miroslav Lajčák as European Union Special Representative for the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue and other Western Balkan regional issues at the beginning of this month and wish him much success in his endeavours.

We commend the decision taken by the Kosovo Government to lift the customs tariffs on imports from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. This is an important first step towards the resumption of the dialogue. We are also glad that the President of Serbia, Mr. Aleksandar Vučić, has affirmed his readiness to fully cooperate with the Pristina authorities in responding to the outbreak and helping the people of Kosovo. As time passes and as both countries continue to demonstrate actions of good faith, the challenges faced by Kosovo and Serbia will hopefully be increasingly addressed in the context of the dialogue facilitated by the European Union (EU), which remains an essential requirement in order for each to advance on its respective European paths.

With regard to Kosovo's EU integration path, we look forward to Kosovo's continued implementation of the Stabilization and Association Agreement, which is also important to the completion of further reforms in support of socioeconomic development, the rule of law, and the fight against corruption and organized crime. Accordingly, as strong cooperation with EULEX becomes increasingly prevalent in due course, we would welcome the strategic review of UNMIK.

Finally, we wish to express the hope that the plan proposed by President Macron and Chancellor Merkel to host a summit meeting between Serbia and Kosovo in Paris, with the participation of both parties' leaders and EU High Representative Borrell, will come to fruition.

As we face the global health crisis presented by COVID-19, let us stand together in solidarity, unity and compassion, in line with the Secretary-General's appeal.

Annex VI**Statement by Mr. Wadid Benaabou, Deputy Political Coordinator
at the Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations**

[Original: English and French]

I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Zahir Tanin, for his briefing. I also welcome the participation in this video-teleconference of the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia and of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kosovo.

Concerning Kosovo, one of France's utmost priorities is the normalization of relations between Pristina and Belgrade, within the framework of the dialogue conducted under the leadership of the European Union (EU). That objective is our compass, and I would like to make two remarks in that respect.

First, France welcomes the appointment on 3 April of Miroslav Lajčák as the European Union Special Representative for the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue. We fully support mediation by the European Union, given that the dispute is a European security issue. We call on the leaders of Kosovo and Serbia to engage with Mr. Lajčák.

Secondly, we welcome the announcement on 1 April by the caretaker Government of Kosovo of the full suspension of the 100 per cent tariffs on goods from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is an important step in the right direction. The flow of goods between Serbia and Kosovo has restarted, which is an important development. We encourage both sides to take further steps to enable the resumption of the EU-led dialogue.

We are aware that the pursuit of that objective is taking place in a difficult context owing to the mobilization of all resources for the fight against the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The COVID-19 crisis nevertheless shows that cooperation is the best way to fight against common challenges and, in that respect, I welcome the cooperation on the ground between Belgrade and Pristina to fight the pandemic and hope that it will help rebuild trust between the parties. In addition, bearing in mind the political situation in Kosovo, we call on all stakeholders to set aside their political differences and prioritize the fight against COVID-19.

In addition, I reiterate France's support for the work of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, which works tirelessly to promote security, stability and respect for human rights in Kosovo and the region. Its work in bringing communities closer together and promoting the women, peace and security agenda is essential and must be commended. Those efforts must continue, in conjunction with the initiatives of other regional and international actors, in particular the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo.

France is convinced that Serbia and Kosovo have a shared European future. In order to build that future, we will continue to support the reforms needed to consolidate the rule of law and socioeconomic development. In support of the EU-led mediation, we will ramp up our efforts to facilitate the conclusion of a comprehensive, final and legally binding agreement between the two parties, which will contribute to the lasting stabilization of the Western Balkans.

Annex VII

Statement by Mr. Jürgen Schulz, Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations

The last few weeks have changed the world. We are all struggling with the current coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. That also applies to the countries of the Western Balkans. We are encouraged by the way Kosovo's caretaker Government is managing the current pandemic. They have taken swift and successful action to limit the spread of the coronavirus and mitigate the effects of the crisis on the country. We call on all actors and decision-makers in the country to work together in that regard. What Kosovo requires now is stability and for all actors to act responsibly and in the interest of Kosovo's citizens. We commend the cross-border cooperation between the caretaker Government of Kosovo and the Government of Serbia to fight the health crisis together. It is encouraging proof that progress is possible when all work towards the same goal. That spirit of collaboration should be a positive example of resolving differences.

The unresolved relationship between Kosovo and Serbia remains a source of bilateral tensions, an obstacle in the everyday lives of the citizens of both countries and a stumbling block on both Kosovo's and Serbia's paths to the European Union (EU). It is clear that progress in Kosovo-Serbia relations is urgently needed. The goal must be a comprehensive, legally binding agreement that is sustainable, enables both countries to become members of the EU and contributes to regional stability. That, in turn, will require well-structured negotiations with significant input from the European Union as the facilitator of the dialogue. In that context, we very much welcome the recent appointment of the new EU Special Representative for the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue, Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, and look forward to closely working with him.

We also welcome the Kosovo Government's lifting of tariffs on goods from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina as of 1 April. In the first three weeks since the lifting, trade has been flowing freely across the border. It was the necessary step by the Kosovar side to resume the EU-facilitated dialogue. Existing grievances concerning, for example, non-tariff trade barriers should be settled in the framework of the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia. The EU has offered its support.

We call on both sides to further build confidence, which includes halting Serbia's de-recognition campaign. It also includes adopting conciliatory rhetoric towards one another, as well as transparent communication towards constituencies on why finding a comprehensive agreement is in their mutual interest.

We continue to support the efforts in Kosovo to adopt and implement a survivor-centred approach to addressing conflict-related sexual violence, in line with resolution 2467 (2019). In that regard, we welcome the ongoing work of the Kosovar Government commission responsible for the verification and recognition of the status of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, which has so far granted survivor status to 785 applicants, including 758 women and 27 men. We call on the Kosovo institutions to further intensify their work on empowering women survivors of conflict-related sexual violence from different communities to overcome isolation, contribute to the well-being of their families and elevate their status and role within their community.

At the same time, it is essential that women participate meaningfully and equally in the political process. We call upon the EU Special Representative to include women and civil society in the Dialogue and on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo to mainstream gender issues across all their work and policies.

Let me conclude with a practical example for the need and benefit of closer regional cooperation. Together with our French partners, we have initiated a regional road map for the Western Balkans to strengthen the control of small arms that are all too readily available in the region. We are encouraged by the progress achieved both at the national level in building new capacities and at the regional level in strengthening cross-border cooperation and coordination. The ministerial conference chaired by the German and French Ministers for Foreign Affairs on 31 January reaffirmed the strong commitment of the entire region to making that advance a success and to solving the problem of illicitly circulating weapons in the Western Balkans in a lasting way.

Annex VIII

Statement by Mr. Muhsin Syihab, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Indonesia to the United Nations

On behalf of my delegation, I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Mr. Zahir Tanin for his briefing. I would also like to welcome the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, Mr. Ivica Dačić.

I would further like to join others in expressing our concern over the recent developments in the field. Today, I would like to bring the following three points to the attention of the Council.

First is the need to resume dialogue immediately. It is regrettable that the European Union-facilitated dialogue is at a standstill. Any peaceful avenue to resume talks should be explored by all stakeholders. The highest political figures should demonstrate commitment to dialogue so as to convince their constituents that they are serious about peace. There will be no progress in combatting organized crime and corruption or in advancing economic development without first resuming dialogue.

We condemn the incidents of desecration and vandalization of religious sites of cemeteries, which are among the negative impacts of lack of dialogue. This should be taken very seriously.

Secondly, I turn to the important role of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in maintaining stability in the region. Indonesia commends UNMIK's multiple approaches to engaging grassroots communities through capacity-building, roundtables and workshops. Its support in the Working Group on Persons Unaccounted for in Relation to the Events in Kosovo provides a bridge to mend the wounds of conflict.

UNMIK also deserves the recognition of the Council for becoming the first peacekeeping operation to obtain the ISO 9001:2015 quality management standard for end-to-end mission support field operations. This is a clear confirmation that UNMIK's operations are client-oriented, transparent and accountable, and serves as a testament to a desirable performance culture.

My third and last point concerns coronavirus disease (COVID-19) prevention measures. The Secretary-General's report (S/2020/255) highlights the fact that authorities in Pristina declared a public health emergency in the region as the number of confirmed cases rose. As we know, this global pandemic draws attention to the need for cooperation and to protect the vulnerable. Working with neighbours plays a vital role in managing, containing and eliminating the pandemic. It is therefore critical that the authorities in Pristina start to work together with neighbouring communities to address this issue promptly. We call for unity of action in addressing COVID-19 and its potential security-related impact so to ensure that the situation does not deteriorate.

If there is a lesson to be drawn from the current global pandemic, it is that we must work seriously on achieving unity and peace worldwide. It is time to put aside all the past resentments and seek to live as a single human heart — one heart that beats for the single cause of peace for each nation and all people.

Annex IX**Statement by Mr. Abdou Abarry, Permanent Representative of the Niger to the United Nations**

I begin by extending my warm welcome to Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, and Mr. Glauk Konjufca, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kosovo, who joined us this morning.

Let me also thank Mr. Zahir Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), for his precise and detailed briefing on the activities of the Mission.

My delegation welcomes the holding of early parliamentary elections in Kosovo on 6 October 2019, which, according to local and international observers, were held in good conditions despite incidents in some localities.

However, we deplore the stalemate in the dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade, despite the tireless efforts of regional and international actors. The resumption of dialogue, with mutual concessions aimed at removing all obstacles to negotiations, would contribute to the normalization of relations between the two parties.

The security situation in Kosovo, marked by incidents targeting religious sites and cemeteries and by terrorist activities, some of the perpetrators of which had been repatriated from Syria, deserves special attention.

We welcome the efforts of the International Organization for Migration, in cooperation with UNMIK and the Division of Prevention and Reintegration of the Kosovo Ministry of Internal Affairs, to establish guidelines for assessing reintegration needs and building the capacity of local and central authorities.

The return of the communities of Kosovo, reconciliation and community relations are dynamics that require the support of the international community — first and foremost the United Nations. In this regard, UNMIK, in partnership with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Kosovo Ministry for Communities and Return, has initiated a series of coordination meetings with a view to addressing the challenges related to internally displaced persons and the voluntary return process through enhanced cooperation and institutional coordination. This process, which includes local and central authorities as well as civil society organizations, should be encouraged. That is why I call for international solidarity in support of the trust fund, established at the recommendation of the UNMIK Commission on Human Rights, to assist communities suffering from lead poisoning.

Efforts to promote security and stability in Kosovo and the region will be in vain if they are not accompanied by measures to consolidate the rule of law and promote human rights.

First, with regard to the consolidation of the rule of law, the indictment of persons allegedly guilty of war crimes against the civilian population in some municipalities is commendable in many respects. The same is true of the public consultations involving UNMIK, civil society, academics and local communities to discuss the modalities for the establishment of a truth and reconciliation commission.

Secondly, with regard to the promotion of human rights, capacity-building of the Ombudsperson Institution of Kosovo and the Kosovo Agency of Statistics have made it possible to apply a human rights policy in the collection, analysis and use of data. This approach has contributed to improved monitoring and evaluation of human rights progress and implementation of commitments under the 2030 Agenda

for Sustainable Development in a manner consistent with international human rights law.

Furthermore, UNMIK's efforts to increase the capacity of civil society organizations to monitor and report on human rights violations and to support their engagement with United Nations human rights mechanisms should be encouraged.

UNMIK's actions in the context of institution-building and the consolidation of the rule of law in Kosovo are worth mentioning.

The Niger welcomes the leadership training provided to women by UNMIK, in partnership with UN-Women and the European Union, with a view to strengthening the capacity of women to influence political and peace processes, as part of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security.

In 2018, the United Nations Kosovo Trust-Building Forum was held in Ljubljana. In accordance with the Forum's recommendations and with the support of UNMIK, the Kosovo Law Institute provided free legal assistance on women's property rights, minority rights, the rights of internally displaced persons, refugees, asylum-seekers and detainees.

Also, as part of the implementation of the United Nations framework strategy on youth, peace and security, UNMIK, in partnership with the United Youth Task Force, launched a construction project aimed at promoting the participation of young people from all communities in decision-making processes by strengthening municipal youth councils and introducing youth-sensitive budgeting.

In conclusion, my delegation would appreciate if Mr. Tanin could tell us more about the actions taken by UNMIK to support the Government of Kosovo in dealing with the coronavirus disease pandemic.

Annex X**Statement by Mr. Vassily Nebenzia, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations**

We thank Mr. Zahir Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, for his briefing. We welcome the participation of Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia. We listened carefully to what Mr. Konjufca had to tell us today.

By the way, I am looking at the flag in the background of the picture of Mr. Konjufca and I fail to recognize what flag it is. Judging by the colours, it may be Swedish or Ukrainian, or it may be the flag of Barbados. Or, since we are discussing the Balkans, is it perhaps the flag of Bosnia and Herzegovina? I note that Mr. Konjufca spoke under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure. We would therefore like to request that all who speak under this rule be informed of what background and symbols are appropriate when they brief the Council.

The situation in Kosovo continues to deteriorate. The rosy pictures of Kosovo's democratic achievements that we were presented with and heard at this meeting did not convince us otherwise. We have been consistently saying that this project is not viable.

We hear today about a new looming political crisis in Kosovo. What is more, Kosovo-Albanian leadership demonstrates no interest in dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, despite Serbia's readiness to resume negotiations upon Pristina lifting discriminatory tariffs. Many in the West hurried to welcome, as they did in today's meeting, the announcement by Mr. Albin Kurti that the tariffs were abolished as of 1 April. The fact is, they were only temporarily suspended, accompanied by Pristina making even more unacceptable demands of Belgrade.

We see and notice attempts by the United States and the European Union (EU) to create conditions for dialogue to resume. We believe that such attempts will fail if they ignore the provisions of resolution 1244 (1999) and if unilateral measures introduced by Pristina are not lifted.

EU-facilitated dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina remains stalled, first and foremost because the EU did not ensure that Kosovo Albanians fulfil the obligations taken on seven years ago — to establish a community of Serb municipalities in Kosovo. We trust that Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, the new EU Special Representative for the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue and other Western Balkan regional issues, will be able to find a solution to this issue.

We continue to deplore plans backed by some Member States to create a so-called Kosovo army, which run counter to the provisions of resolution 1244 (1999) and will lead only to the destabilization of the situation in Kosovo and in the Balkans as a whole. We bring to the attention of our American colleagues that the NATO Bondsteel facility was established within the framework of peacekeeping operations in order to implement resolution 1244 (1999), but it later became a de-facto American military base in Kosovo. It is now being used to train Kosovo Albanian units with the aim of creating Kosovo armed forces — contrary to the provisions of resolution 1244 (1999).

We still await concrete information on the perpetrators of an incident in the Zubin Potok municipality on 28 May 2019, where officials of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) were detained and beaten by Kosovo police. That crime remains uninvestigated and its perpetrators unpunished.

We demand and insist on a thorough investigation and that its perpetrators be brought to justice.

Incidents targeting Serbian religious sites and cemeteries also continue. The decision on the plot of land owned by the Visoki Dečani Monastery has not been implemented for several years.

Pristina continues to shy away from cooperating with Belgrade in the investigation of the murder of the Kosovo Serb politician Oliver Ivanović in January 2018. In December 2019, six Kosovo Serbs were indicted, but there are serious doubts regarding the impartiality of investigative procedures.

We must once again point out that the Kosovo Specialist Chambers and the Specialist Prosecutor's Office in The Hague are doing nothing to investigate crimes committed by the Kosovo Liberation Army. After many years of endless red tape by yet another expensive army of judges, prosecutors and experts, not a single indictment has yet been issued. All this legal folderol has been going on since 2011 when the EU took it upon itself to investigate facts stated in the report issued by Mr. Dick Marty, former member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. We have a question: When will criminals who committed numerous atrocities against the Serbs, including trade in human organs, be brought to justice?

The President of Serbia offered cooperation between Belgrade and Pristina in fighting the coronavirus disease. We welcome it, but we note with concern the publication in Kosovo media of personal data of Kosovo Serbs infected with the disease. That is irresponsible and unacceptable.

In conclusion, we support Belgrade and Pristina in their efforts to achieve a sustainable and mutually acceptable solution based primarily on resolution 1244 (1999) — one in line with international law and endorsed by the Security Council. No fast-tracking of the so-called final normalization between Belgrade and Pristina or imposition of artificial deadlines can produce that goal. The Council should continue to lend its support to UNMIK, which is a key international presence in Kosovo that plays a leading role in monitoring the situation, maintaining stability and creating conditions conducive to a negotiated solution.

Annex XI

Statement by Ms. Halimah DeShong, Second Deputy Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations

We thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Tanin for his valuable updates, for the continued cooperation with the Security Council and for presenting the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/255) on the activities of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). We welcome all representatives to this virtual meeting.

We begin by acknowledging all efforts aimed at responding to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which continues to have far-reaching consequences for international peace and security. This response must be collaborative, and in that regard we encourage all States and multilateral bodies and agencies to engage constructively with each other.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines emphasizes the need for the good-faith commitment of both parties to a peaceful political solution. In that regard, we urge the parties to utilize the tools of diplomacy, including dialogue, mediation, political negotiations and other peaceful means.

We take this opportunity to condemn the incidents targeting religious sites and cemeteries, as mentioned in the Secretary-General's report. Such actions prevent the creation and maintenance of an environment conducive to stability and progress.

We underscore the significance of women's participation in the peace process and commend UNMIK's work in helping advance women's political participation.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines commends UNMIK's efforts in promoting security and stability in Kosovo and welcomes all initiatives to that end, which include engagement with young people and the implementation of the recommendations of the 2018 United Nations Kosovo Trust-Building Forum. We also acknowledge UNMIK's close cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and domestic bodies as it discharges its mandate.

As we conclude, we note with concern the challenging political situation in Kosovo and hope for a peaceful and workable solution.

Annex XII**Statement by Mr. Jerry Matjila, Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations**

Allow me to begin by welcoming the work of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), with support from the United Nations Kosovo team. I would also like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Zahir Tanin, for his briefing and note the significant role of the Secretary-General in creating an environment conducive to compromise, reconciliation and stability in Kosovo, as outlined in his latest report (S/2020/255) of 31 March 2020.

We wish to reiterate that the presence of the United Nations in Kosovo is critical to reaching a peaceful and sustainable solution and in encouraging cooperation among all parties and stakeholders. We would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate UNMIK on becoming the first United Nations peacekeeping operation to receive an International Organization for Standardization quality management standard for end-to-end mission support field operations. That is a commendable achievement for the UNMIK team.

South Africa continues to support the work of UNMIK and its constructive engagement with all stakeholders to create an environment conducive to compromise, reconciliation, unity and stability in Kosovo. In that regard, we support its continued cooperation with UN-Women and the empowerment of women and young people in peacebuilding and training.

We also wish to reiterate our support for the continued engagement with the authorities and civil society, as well as bilateral and international partners, in building peace and inter-community trust in Kosovo.

We note with concern the ongoing stalemate, which has brought the political dialogue to a halt, and call on both sides to recommit to the dialogue and to take the necessary steps to bring the process back on track.

We call on the parties during this time to redouble their efforts towards reducing tension, as it undermines any future prospects for successful dialogue and reconciliation. The differences between the parties regarding conditions for the resumption of negotiations have negative implications for progress. It is only through dialogue that existing disagreements can be resolved and the foundations laid for an inclusive and fair political settlement acceptable to both sides. We believe that, through confidence and trust-building measures, a sustained dialogue between the sides will prevail.

We laud the efforts by all sides to respond to the challenges posed by the onset of the coronavirus pandemic. We hope that the spirit of compromise will be the foundation for negotiations towards an inclusive, fair political settlement that is acceptable to both sides.

Annex XIII**Statement by Mr. Kais Kabtani, Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations**

At the outset, I thank Mr. Zahir Tanin for his briefing on the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) (S/2020/255). I would like to extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, and Mr. Glauk Konjufca.

As we reiterate our appreciation for the role of the United Nations and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Kosovo in protecting human rights, building institutions and creating a platform for a stable political system, we underscore the importance of continuing efforts to find a political settlement between Belgrade and Pristina.

In that regard, Tunisia expresses its support for the dialogue, under the auspices of the European Union (EU), between the two parties. That dialogue serves as the most suitable path to resolve the outstanding issues between the two parties and to reach solutions that will lead to a comprehensive settlement.

We welcome the designation of a new EU Special Representative in Kosovo to facilitate dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, and we hope that it will give new momentum to the dialogue. We also welcome the initiative of France and Germany to organize a summit on Kosovo when conditions are established.

Likewise, we call for the international community to continue its efforts to encourage Pristina and Belgrade to set aside their differences and focus on reaching consensus-based solutions within the framework of Security Council resolutions.

In that context, Tunisia welcomes the tangible steps taken by Belgrade and Pristina, with support from the United States, to promote connectivity and regional cooperation by committing themselves to working towards direct air, rail and road connections.

As we express the importance of the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, we urge the two parties to pursue formal talks and to reconsider all unilateral measures that are holding back meaningful dialogue.

In conclusion, we commend the positive cross-border communication and collaboration in response to the coronavirus pandemic. We hope that it will lead to great solidarity that creates a conducive environment to dialogue.

We also reiterate our full support for all United Nations personnel and UNMIK during these difficult and uncertain times due to the pandemic. We commend UNMIK's efforts to provide direct support to the most vulnerable communities in Kosovo.

Annex XIV**Statement by Mr. David Clay, Political Coordinator of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations**

I would like to begin by thanking the Special Representative and his team for their continued commitment and dedication to Kosovo, as laid out in the comprehensive report on the activities of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) (S/2020/255). I would also like to extend my thanks to His Excellency the Foreign Minister of Serbia and His Excellency the Foreign Minister of Kosovo for their briefings this morning.

The situation in Kosovo in 2020 is very different to that of 1999, when UNMIK started its work. UNMIK has played a key role in that transformation. Together with the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and NATO, it has promoted security, stability and respect for human rights not only in Kosovo but in the region more widely. However, significant challenges remain, and it is important that UNMIK's efforts be carefully tailored to address them. We continue to support a review of UNMIK to ensure that it is able to meet current needs as effectively as possible.

Dealing with the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has to be the primary task of the incumbent Government in Kosovo, as indeed it is for Serbia and other Governments throughout the world. The United Kingdom stands with the people of Kosovo during this global crisis. This is a time not for political manoeuvring but for cooperation, domestically and regionally. Following the vote of no-confidence in the Prime Minister by the Assembly of Kosovo, we call upon all actors to continue to respect the Constitution and for decisions to be taken quickly to enable the incumbent or new Government to make the protection of citizens' lives the paramount consideration. We welcome the support that the United Nations is providing the Government of Kosovo to help deal with the crisis through the establishment of an inter-agency task force to support the procurement and coordination of supplies of medical equipment. We urge that action be taken forward quickly.

There have been many positive examples of various communities working together to deal with COVID-19. The Council should welcome the cooperation that we have recently seen between the Minister of Health and the Minister of Communities and Returns, and the mayors of North and South Mitrovica on issues relating to the Kosovo Serb community. We should also welcome and encourage cooperation between health ministries in Kosovo and Serbia, such as the recent virtual meeting held between Ministers of both countries to discuss their response to the crisis. I would like to thank the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for making such a constructive exchange possible. We hope that these actions will solidify the foundations for closer cooperation both within Kosovo and between Kosovo and Serbia, during the pandemic and thereafter. Access to information on COVID-19 is essential. To that end, we welcome the Kosovo Government's development of a multi-language website and ask that it ensure that all information related to COVID-19 is available in all the official languages of Kosovo.

I echo the Secretary-General's report in welcoming developments in this period to increase connectivity between Kosovo and Serbia. The normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia remains crucial for regional stability and prosperity and is in the interests of both countries. I reiterate the United Kingdom's long-standing support for the European Union (EU)-facilitated dialogue as the route to achieving a legally binding, comprehensive and sustainable agreement between Kosovo and Serbia. We welcome the decision of the incumbent Government of Kosovo on 1 April

to lift the tariffs on goods from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. We call on Serbia to respond positively and to halt its de-recognition campaign. We believe that grievances, including non-tariff barriers, can be settled in the framework of the EU-facilitated dialogue, if there is the political will and courage to do so. We look to both parties to take the necessary steps to return to the dialogue at the earliest possible opportunity.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the appointment of Miroslav Lajčák as the EU Special Representative for the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue and other Western Balkans issues. We look forward to working with him, with our Quint partners and with Serbia and Kosovo to achieve a comprehensive, conclusive, legally binding normalization agreement that respects territorial integrity, is acceptable to the citizens of both countries and will deliver long-term benefits to them and to the whole region.

We welcome the progress made by the Kosovo Specialist Chambers and the Specialist Prosecutor's Office. The United Kingdom strongly supports those institutions and the important work that they do. We urge the Governments of Kosovo and Serbia and the members of the Council to cooperate fully with them. Justice must be delivered for victims and their families. We cannot allow a culture of impunity to exist for the most serious crimes; to do so would be unconscionable and enormously damaging to the rule of law and prospects of reconciliation across the region. We regret the slow progress in domestic prosecutions for war crimes and urge the authorities in Kosovo and Serbia to push ahead in dealing with these historic crimes.

We welcome the progress made by the Government of Kosovo in dealing with the legacy of conflict-related sexual violence, with the first indictment filed by a local prosecution for conflict-related sexual violence as a war crime. We commend the work that UNMIK has done in supporting survivors to share their stories and encouraging the Government of Kosovo to prioritize addressing sexual violence. The United Kingdom is committed to supporting victims and preventing sexual violence in all its forms. Through funding the "Be My Voice" campaign in Kosovo, we are raising public awareness and tackling head-on the stigma experienced by victims.

Last October, the people of Kosovo voted for change. They voted for a Government that promised to tackle corruption and promote economic development. There is still considerable work to be done to strengthen the rule of law and deal with weaknesses in the justice system in Kosovo. We call upon the incumbent or new Government to prioritize work to deliver the people's long-term priorities.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate my thanks to the Special Representative and his team. We look forward to continuing to support them in their important work.

Annex XV**Statement by Ms. Cherith Norman-Chalet, Acting Deputy
Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the
United Nations**

I wish to thank Special Representative Tanin for his briefing this morning. We also welcome the participation of Kosovo and Serbia's Foreign Ministers today.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has demonstrated that international cooperation is more important than ever. This is especially true in the Western Balkans. The United States recognizes the notable efforts of the Governments of Kosovo and Serbia to respond to the pandemic, and we are encouraged by the increased cooperation between Pristina and Belgrade to facilitate the flow of essential goods and personnel required to combat COVID-19. In addition, I want to express our gratitude to the Serbian Government for its support with repatriation flights for American citizens and the generous offer by the Kosovo Government for support in the United States fight against COVID-19.

The United States supports a stable, secure and prosperous Western Balkans, and we are committed to helping countries in the region advance their integration into Western institutions. Furthermore, we find it encouraging to hear continued statements from both Kosovo and Serbian leaders that they remain committed to the normalization of relations.

The current situation emphasizes the priority the United States has placed on the development of economic and commercial ties between Kosovo and Serbia. Although tariffs have been suspended, Kosovo must remove all reciprocal measures immediately and unconditionally. We encourage both sides to implement agreements to help businesses flourish, open up economic opportunities for their citizens and resume the dialogue process in earnest.

Today we reiterate the importance of the meaningful participation of women in decision-making, and we welcome recent progress in gender representation in the new Kosovo Government. Furthermore, we expect the political establishment in Kosovo to focus on shared priorities and adhere to Kosovo's Constitution and law in its efforts. We also welcome the appointment of Mr. Miroslav Lajčák as the new European Union Special Representative for the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue and other Western Balkan regional issues. We look forward to continued United States-European Union coordination in the region.

While the unprecedented circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic reveal the importance of cooperation, they also illustrate the fact that the Council's time and resources must be utilized wisely — and where the need is the greatest. The United States reiterates its firm conviction that the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) has long since fulfilled its original purpose and should close. The United States looks forward to working with other Security Council members to draw down UNMIK and determine a more relevant role for the United Nations in helping Kosovo and the Western Balkans realize their full potential.

Annex XVI**Statement by Mr. Dang Dinh Quy, Permanent Representative of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to the United Nations**

I thank Mr. Zahir Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), for his detailed briefing. I welcome the participation at today's meeting of the Security Council of His Excellency Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, and of Mr. Glauk Konjufca.

I would like to recall that this month seven years ago, Serbia and Kosovo concluded a historic agreement, the Brussels Agreement, also known as the First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations between Serbia and Kosovo. Since then, step by step, various accords in key areas have been signed. My delegation is also encouraged to learn that two months ago, transportation links were created, with the resumption of direct flights between Belgrade and Pristina. We also welcome the recent high-level meeting.

However, despite these positive developments, there remain reasons to worry about a number of issues. Various agreements were signed, but we have seen almost no implementation thereof. We have also witnessed less constructive behaviours and attitudes of one side towards the other side, among other things. These obstacles are not helpful to they are to overcome their remaining differences.

We urge Serbia and Kosovo to remove all remaining obstacles. We call on the parties to engage in good-faith dialogue and peaceful negotiation to resolve their differences. We support the parties concerned in achieving a durable and comprehensive solution that is in line with the fundamental principles of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the provisions of resolution 1244 (1999). In this process, we applaud the support of the international community, the United Nations and regional and individual actors for peace and stability, not only in Kosovo but also in the rest of the Balkans, in Europe and throughout the world.

We are pleased to note that, in November 2019, UNMIK became the first peacekeeping operation to attain the International Organization for Standardization quality-management standard for end-to-end mission-support field operations. We commend UNMIK's efforts in engaging with all communities in Kosovo and conducting various activities during the reporting period to facilitate cooperation between Belgrade and Pristina. We continue to support the critical role of UNMIK in Kosovo.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has also spread to Kosovo, with hundreds of confirmed cases. We express our serious concern about the pandemic's devastating impact on socioeconomic developments and the well-being of the people in Kosovo. In this regard, we support UNMIK in implementing four key objectives for peacekeeping operations in the fight against COVID-19, which were addressed to the Security Council by the Secretary-General on 9 April. At the same time, we urge all Mission personnel to stay safe.

Annex XVII**Statement by Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia**

Unfortunately, I address the Security Council today at a time when the whole world is facing the huge challenge posed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. I would like to voice my hope that our joint efforts, mutual solidarity and cooperation will see us overcome this difficult situation in the very near future. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my deepest condolences to the families of the victims of the coronavirus disease throughout the world and to show the strong solidarity of Serbia with all countries affected by the pandemic.

I wish to point out the importance of this meeting being held, as it conveys a strong message to the people in Kosovo and Metohija that they have not been forgotten, at this difficult hour, and that we care for them more than ever before, well aware of the fact that their living conditions were difficult even before the pandemic outbreak.

We have undertaken decisive measures to help Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija fight the epidemic — by supplying medical and protective equipment and sending medical doctors and staff. But we have also expressed readiness from the very beginning to fully cooperate with Albanians and work together with representatives of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG) in Pristina to combat the epidemic. Persons who had been infected in Kosovo and Metohija and who have been receiving medical treatment in central Serbia include both Serbs and Albanians, and last week we donated 1,000 coronavirus test kits to the Institute of Public Health in Pristina.

I would like to reiterate that Serbia will continue to extend all the necessary assistance and show solidarity to all in these difficult times, as well as that the fight against coronavirus and the protection of human lives are the top priority today. In this context, I will briefly reflect only on the previous period, covered in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/255).

Serbia has time and time again, and most notably in the past year, demonstrated its strong commitment to finding a compromise solution for the issue of Kosovo and Metohija that would secure lasting peace and stability, while also showing its readiness to reach a solution by which neither side would be an absolute winner, but would gain enough for the solution to be a long-term and sustainable one. Serbia has responded with restraint to all the unilateral and discriminatory actions of Pristina PISGs, while refraining from countermeasures and acting as a responsible partner, one contributing to stabilization of the situation and aiming to secure conditions for an unimpeded course of dialogue.

We had hoped that the October election in Kosovo and Metohija and the appointment of new authorities in February this year would have been a good opportunity for Pristina PISGs to turn over a new leaf in their approach to the dialogue, to finally show readiness for talks and revoke the controversial decision on the imposition of tariffs, which resulted in the dialogue being stalemated for a long time now. However, we ended up being faced with positions even more extreme and an absolute lack of goodwill for the dialogue, which was all made blatantly obvious in the programme presented and decisions made by the Albin Kurti Government. Their position as to the tariffs imposed by Pristina on goods originating from central Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina — thus inflicting immeasurable political and economic damage on Serbia and the region as a whole — has best illustrated their approach to the dialogue as well.

Despite all of that, Serbia has continued to show its commitment to the resolution of all issues relevant to the lives of our citizens, while striving to promote connectivity and freedom of movement as well as the flow of goods, capital, services and people. In view of that, and as a token of goodwill, we recently signed letters of intent to establish air and railway traffic between Belgrade and Pristina, as well as a statement of intent to finalize the construction of a motorway connecting the two cities. I take this opportunity to express gratitude to Ambassador Richard Grenell, Special Envoy of the President of the United States, for his initiative and all the efforts he made towards reaching the agreement.

Support and assistance in the context of dialogue is always welcome. We hope that the engagement on the part of the European Union (EU) will also gain new momentum with the appointment of Mr. Miroslav Lajčák as the EU Special Representative for the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue and that conditions for the continuation of the dialogue will be in place immediately upon the end of the pandemic. All it takes for that to happen is for one step to be made by Pristina.

We have heard countless calls made by all the stakeholders involved for the revocation of the senseless tariffs, including at Security Council meetings, but Pristina has persistently refused to do so. We were recently informed that Kurti made a decision to lift the tariffs, but to also impose “reciprocity measures” at the same time. Such a disingenuous move by Pristina was meant to “pull the wool over the eyes” of everyone who called for the revocation of the tariffs, while practically making no difference as compared to the previous measures.

For that reason, I would like to remind once again that resolution 1244 (1999) remains the only valid United Nations document, which must be respected, and that the formation of the community of Serbian municipalities is Pristina’s obligation in accordance with the Brussels Agreement.

I take this opportunity to once again call for a return to dialogue and refraining from unilateral moves. The ongoing situation has taught us better than any before that we need to rely on each other and be aware of the importance of cooperation and connectivity. Regrettably, the current political atmosphere in Kosovo and Metohija has resulted in even the assistance and solidarity of Serbia in the fight against COVID-19 being a subject of politicization and misinterpretation by way of brutal attacks and unseemly accusations, to which the entire international community responded with condemnation. It is therefore incumbent upon us to set aside our differences once we overcome the coronavirus pandemic, and arrive at decisions and solutions that will ensure normal and peaceful life to all communities in Kosovo and Metohija.

I need to reiterate once again that we see it as unacceptable to draw any correlation between the imposition of anti-civilizational tariffs and the decisions to revoke recognitions of the unilateral declaration of independence by so-called Kosovo, particularly bearing in mind that Pristina, by its own admission, has continued lobbying across the globe in favour of the recognition of so-called “Kosovo”, in which, as they have claimed, they enjoyed selfless support by some members of the Council. If members are requesting that we stop campaigning for the revocation of recognitions, would it not make perfect sense for them to stop lobbying in favour of Kosovo unilateral declaration of independence first, while asking the so-called Kosovo authorities to do the same?

In February of this year, when the fake news appeared that Jamaica purportedly recognized Kosovo unilateral declaration of independence, Pristina representatives, including Hashim Thaçi and Behgjet Pacolli, expressed their gratitude to United States Congressman Eliot Engel for his assistance. In a letter to Secretary of State

Michael Pompeo, Congressman Engel and Senator Robert Menendez requested to be informed “why the [United States] Administration has neither imposed those sanctions nor actively pressed Serbia to end its global de-recognition efforts”. Please, let me know how such steps could be considered as conducive to a good climate for the continuation of the dialogue. Only if everyone stops lobbying, the same can be asked of Serbia.

In the previous period, we were particularly alarmed by two highly important issues concerning the vows to make military service compulsory in Kosovo and Metohija and to pass the so-called law on war crimes, genocide and alleged Serbian aggression. I remind the Council that a special Security Council meeting was held in December 2018 (see S/PV.8427) to address the announced establishment of the so-called Kosovo armed forces and that on that occasion, and several times after that, we warned about the serious consequences of such steps that would immediately threaten the safety of Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija and drastically deteriorate the security situation in the region. The statement about military service indicates another forthcoming unilateral and absolutely unacceptable act by Pristina, in violation of resolution 1244 (1999) and the Kosovo Force mandate it established, as the only legal and legitimate military structure in the province.

With regard to the announcement to bring a case against Serbia before the International Court of Justice on the count of alleged genocide, that has been clearly motivated by Pristina’s attempts to somehow obscure the issue of trials for crimes committed by the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), particularly now that it has become apparent that it is highly likely that, despite years of delays, formal indictments will soon be raised before the Specialist Chambers.

If it is indeed our wish to build a future together, we are also obliged to act in a responsible way and say that those who suffered the most in the conflicts in Kosovo and Metohija were innocent civilians, regardless of their ethnicity. We cannot allow one side to assume the role of sole victim while denying the crimes committed against the Serb population. The farming families killed in Staro Gracko and the child victims in Goraždevac, victims of the massacre at Lake Radonjić and the Klečka killings, as well as each and every one of the 200,000 Serbs persecuted by the so-called KLA from Kosovo and Metohija, of whom only 1.9 per cent have achieved sustainable return, and who are not able to get back to their homes in Kosovo and Metohija for safety reasons even after more than 20 years, all deserve answers. Therefore, it is our hope that the activity of the Specialist Chambers for crimes committed in Kosovo and Metohija will contribute to justice being served for all.

At a time when the whole world is facing one of the greatest challenges of the century and when we are required to show maturity and seriousness, the Pristina authorities have demonstrated that they do not consider the safety and the lives of citizens to be a top priority and that nothing matters to them more than who will assume political power. They have shown an utmost lack of understanding of what a responsible approach means, while failing to address the difficult challenges we are all facing at the moment.

The political messages conveyed by representatives of the then new Government, which was dismissed in less than two months in a vote of no-confidence, can be taken seriously or not, or seen either as only serving local political purposes or as being addressed to the international public. However, it is a fact that every word uttered at any time and any decision we make can have unforeseen consequences for all citizens. The weight of responsibility is all the greater if one is dealing with a sensitive situation, as is the case in Kosovo and Metohija. The main victims of political conduct that shows no signs of readiness for a compromise solution that

would satisfy the interests of both the Serbian and Albanian sides are not the politicians, but Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija, who have been physically assaulted, threatened and exposed to hate speech on a daily basis, and also Albanians who are now rushing to Serbia to receive medical treatment. Therefore, the responsibility lies with political leaders not to generate contexts that prevent the development of a society towards a democratic and modern one.

Sadly, I cannot help but conclude that Pristina politicians have, through their behaviour in these difficult times, once again affirmed a fact that has been clear to all, but that some Council members would not admit to, namely, that the project to create an independent State of Kosovo was a big mistake made by a part of the international community, as well as that States cannot be created by unilateral decisions.

Let me reiterate once again that the Republic of Serbia firmly believes that problems should be resolved through dialogue and hopes that conditions for this will be in place as soon as possible. Serbia's endeavour is to ensure that we build a joint future by pursuing a policy of peace and cooperation.

Annex XVIII

Statement by Mr. Glauk Konjufca

It is a great honour and privilege for me to address the Security Council as Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kosova.

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Kosova, its citizens and myself, I take this opportunity to extend our sincere condolences to the families that have lost their loved ones to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic anywhere in the world, and especially in the respected countries comprising the membership of the Security Council.

Before the first cases of COVID-19 appeared in Kosovo, on 11 March, our Government took immediate preventive measures, including closing schools and banning flights. As a result of a rapid, professional and efficient operation, the number of people in Kosova infected with COVID-19 has been relatively small, and the number of deaths in the country from the virus is smaller than in other countries of the region.

On 6 October 2019, parliamentary elections were held in the Republic of Kosova. The elections demonstrated a high degree of democratic awareness among the citizens of Kosova and received positive evaluations from international monitors. The opposition won the elections, with the political movement I represent, Lëvizja Vetëvendosje! — which means “the Self-Determination Movement!” — obtaining the relative majority in the Parliament of the Republic of Kosova. Prime Minister Albin Kurti was granted the mandate of the citizens to govern the country.

Election turnout in municipalities with Serb ethnic majorities was higher than in the municipalities with Albanian ethnic majorities. Representatives of the Serb ethnic minority in Kosova won just six seats by vote, but, as guaranteed by our Constitution, also obtained four additional seats. The same has also occurred with respect to other ethnic minorities in the country. Although the counting and recounting process took some time, the transfer of power took place in a proper manner. Accordingly, the 6 October 2019 election represents a major step forward for democracy in Kosova.

Resolution 1244 (1999) was adopted in another context. Its purpose was to resolve the humanitarian catastrophe, end the fighting, return the refugees to their homes and stop the ethnic cleansing in Kosova after the implementation of a terrible hegemonic project by Serbia. Now the situation has changed radically. As reflected in the Secretary-General’s report (S/2020/255), in the last six months there have been no inter-ethnic conflicts in Kosova. Therefore, the time has come for the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) to complete its mission.

In my first month as Foreign Minister, I participated in a number of regional meetings with the countries of the Western Balkans; representatives of Serbia were also present at all the meetings. The impression that I garnered during the meetings is that Serbia is still unable to accept the simple fact that, on 22 July 2010, the International Court of Justice in The Hague sealed the legacy and legitimacy of the independence of the Republic of Kosova, which is irreversible. Let us all take a moment to remember the Court’s explicit statement that

“[t]he court is of the opinion that the declaration of independence of Kosovo adopted on 17 February 2008 did not violate international law.”

The sooner Serbia understands this, the more benefits there will be for Serbia, for us and for our region.

I know that some of the States represented today in Security Council have not recognized Kosova as an independent sovereign State. The absolute majority of United Nations Members, however, have recognized the Republic of Kosova. I invite the members to recognize the Republic of Kosova. Through that act, they would not only respect the legitimate will of the absolute majority of the citizens of Kosova but also respect the decision of the International Court of Justice and support peace and cooperation in our region.

The report of Secretary-General cites the International Committee of the Red Cross, stating that 1,646 individuals have been missing since the war in Kosova in 1999. The most well-known person is University of Pristina professor Ukshin Hoti. Professor Hoti was last seen on 16 May 1999, in Dubrava Prison. He was arrested by the Serbian regime for political reasons. He had to be released that day after spending five years as a political prisoner. The guards took him out the cell door, and he was never seen again. Where is Ukshin Hoti? He was in the hands of Serbian State institutions. There are 1,645 other people like Professor Hoti. The State and society of Kosovo has a right to know where Ukshin Hoti is. Where are the 1,646 people of Kosova?

Another tragedy that has pervaded the lives of many Albanian women and men since the 1999 war is rape. It is a very sensitive issue, and it comes as no surprise that many of those women and men do not want to be registered or identified owing to a fear of reliving the horror again. Despite that, there are brave women who have decided to face their fears and come forward. For instance, in 2013, Ms. Marte Tunaj was the first woman to openly testify about her rape; she died in May 2016 with a pension of €96. In addition, Ms. Vafije Krasniqi-Goodman has continued the sacred mission of Ms. Tunaj by constantly speaking out on this issue that pains an entire nation. Recently, Ms. Shyhrete Tahiri-Sylejmani also showed unparalleled strength when she decided to talk about her experience. Today I thank those women for their courage and for inspiring and encouraging other women and men to seek justice. Most of the perpetrators were Serbian soldiers or police. Rape is a war crime. We ask Serbia to identify its soldiers and police officers who raped Albanian women and men. Justice must be served.

One of the latest unjust actions by the Government in Belgrade is the arrest of our citizen Mr. Nezir Mehmetaj. He was arrested by the Serbian authorities on the border between Serbia and the Republic of Kosova on 3 January. Mr. Mehmetaj's family has stated that he and his close family have lived in Switzerland for about 30 years. As Mr. Mehmetaj suffers from diabetes, his health has deteriorated significantly during his detention. I appeal to the Permanent Representatives of United Nations States Members to use their authority to intervene and call for Mr. Mehmetaj's release from Serbian prison.

Our country's relations with Serbia have remained difficult. The Government of the Republic of Kosova is convinced that our relations with Serbia can be improved only through equal, sincere and constructive dialogue. To create such an environment, on 1 April, our Government decided to lift the 100 per cent tax on goods from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina imposed by the previous Government. At the same time, we have taken some gradual measures of reciprocity to offset many non-tariff barriers that Serbia has imposed on our goods. It is our utmost belief that, in order to have normal relations and to contribute to stability in the region, Serbia should lower its non-tariff trade barriers, end its de-recognition campaign against Kosova and stop funding its parallel structures in our country.

Prime Minister Kurti recently sent a letter to the President of the United States, Mr. Donald Trump, about the dialogue with Serbia. He had a telephone conversation with German Chancellor Angela Merkel on 23 March, and another with

French President Emmanuel Macron on 9 April. In all those communications, Prime Minister Kurti made the position of Kosova clear, namely, that it is aiming for an equal dialogue that does not undermine the territorial integrity and unitary character of our State, is designed to improve relations between Kosova and Serbia and ideally results in mutual recognition.

For reasons of culture, geography and history, Kosova's future lies within the European family of democracies. Therefore, we are committed to pursuing the goal of full membership in the European Union as soon as possible and implementing the reforms required to that end. Similarly, we are fully committed to joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and will take all the steps necessary to reach that goal. In the area of security, Kosova has declared its commitment to peace and stability in the region of South-East Europe. The independence of Kosova is a factor of peace and stability in the region, and we are a part of the international coalition against terrorism and fundamentalism.

The Republic of Kosova looks forward to working with all the Members of the United Nations to promote our shared goal of world peace and security.
