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Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

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Friday, 29 August 2014, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Sir Mark Lyall Grant/ Mr. Wilson	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. De Antueno
	Australia	Mr. Bliss
	Chad	Mr. Gombo
	Chile	Mr. Olguín Cigarroa
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Jordan	Mr. Omaish
	Lithuania	Mrs. Jakubonė
	Luxembourg	Mr. Maes
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Oh Joon
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Rwanda	Mr. Nduhungirehe
	United States of America	Mr. Klein

Agenda

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (S/2014/558)

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (S/2014/558)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Serbia to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Farid Zarif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Mr. Zarif, who is joining today's meeting via video teleconference from Pristina.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Enver Hoxhaj to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2014/558, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo.

I now give the floor to Mr. Zarif.

Mr. Zarif: It is with great regret that I feel obliged to begin my remarks today by addressing briefly the incidents that took place in and around Kosovo during the past 36 hours, near the villages of Orlovac and Kushtovë, resulting in at least three fatalities, including a Serbian police officer, and gunfire injuries to three others. While law enforcement agencies and international presences are still determining the details, preliminary information suggests that armed persons involved in illegal wood-cutting were likely responsible for the incidents.

Such tragic outcomes unfortunately occur when serious criminal activities are being pursued. However, in sensitive areas such as the location of those incidents, great care should be taken not to give reign to speculation of political motives, so that professional agencies may do their work and those who commit such crimes and violence are brought to face justice. I wish, in this same light, to express my deepest sympathies to the family of the Serbian police officer who fell in the line of duty.

Turning to the latest report (S/2014/558) before the Council today, I wish first of all to congratulate the Kosovo voters, institutions and political leaders on the successful conduct of the general elections on 8 June, which were held for the first time throughout Kosovo under a unified legal framework and in a peaceful and well-organized manner. I also wish to acknowledge the constructive role played by the leadership in Belgrade in encouraging Kosovo Serb voters to fully participate in the elections. I commend the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the European Union (EU) for the important role they played in facilitating the organization of the elections and in enhancing their overall transparency and accountability. In order to capitalize fully on the success of that process, I have joined many others in urging political leaders in Kosovo to treat the formation of Kosovo's next Government as the most pressing imperative.

The Constitutional Court, in its decision published on Tuesday, has ruled as unconstitutional the election of the Assembly President on 17 July, and asked the Assembly to complete its constitutive session and to elect, as soon as possible, an Assembly President and Deputy Presidents in compliance with the Constitution and the Assembly's rules of procedure. Moving forward expeditiously in the wake of that decision will best serve the interests of the people of Kosovo and will be a further manifestation of their maturing political processes.

As the Council is aware, Belgrade and Pristina have made great strides since last year towards normalization of relations, including through their constructive participation in the EU-facilitated dialogue. In May, the adoption of municipal statutes by the Serb-majority municipalities in northern Kosovo marked a significant step forward. Both sides are aware that commitment to full implementation on the ground of the First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations of 19 April 2013 can be validated only

through their concrete and visible actions. In that context, making progress on the formation of the association/community of Serb-majority municipalities will serve as an essential factor for sustaining the positive momentum and promoting the prospects for further normalization. I hope that members of the Council will unanimously encourage both parties to resume their high-level meetings as soon as the next government is in place in Pristina.

Unfortunate acts of violence and lawlessness, committed during the demonstrations on 22 June in South Mitrovica, highlighted the volatility which still characterizes the north-south divide in the Mitrovica region. Misguided behaviour in this case did not inflame wider tension, thanks in great measure to the professional and effective intervention by the Kosovo police, as well as the Kosovo Force, with the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) on stand-by as a reserve capacity. Yet close vigilance remains necessary to safeguard the achievements and continuing progress of the dialogue.

I take this opportunity once again to urge all parties to address issues related to the main bridge of Mitrovica — and any other disputed construction work — through respectful dialogue. The 8 July and 11 August meetings on the subject between Kosovo's Minister for Environment and Special Planning and the mayor of North Mitrovica, as well as the 22 July meeting of the EU-facilitated working group on the matter, marked such constructive steps. Alongside these, all local channels of communication and contacts should be fully utilized in order to address the issues on the ground that directly affect the everyday lives and perceptions of local communities.

In northern Kosovo, arrest warrants recently requested by a EULEX prosecutor and issued by a EULEX pre-trial judge in the Basic Court of Mitrovica against the current and former mayors of Zubin Potok have significantly added to the unease in local sentiments against EULEX. Although critical of those recent developments in their joint statement of today, the mayors and members of the four northern municipal assemblies have expressed their readiness to continue cooperating with EULEX.

As I continuously stress the crucial importance of respecting judicial independence, I cannot but note that public confidence in the system will be enhanced greatly when justice is perceived to be conducted professionally and expeditiously. In that respect, I am pleased to see that the trial of five Kosovo Serbs charged with war crimes and murder began its proceedings on Tuesday at the Basic Court in Mitrovica after an extended period marred by unhelpful speculations.

Of greater and long-term importance for the process of justice and reconciliation in Kosovo was the 29 July statement of findings (S/2014/558, annex II) made by the Chief Prosecutor of the Special Investigative Task Force. Although the filing of further indictments will await the establishment of a specialist court, the statement itself represents another milestone in strengthening the rule of law and an historic opportunity for further healing of the scars of war. Immediate responses from all quarters to the Chief Prosecutor's statement have been encouraging. The Kosovo authorities have recently reiterated their commitment to continuing full cooperation with the Special Investigative Task Force. Once fully functional, the Assembly of Kosovo is expected to move expeditiously to pass the necessary legislation to ensure the court becomes fully operational early next year.

With regard to further progress in determining the fate of missing persons, exhumation works at the Rudnica stone quarry in Serbia's Raska municipality were concluded on 22 August in the presence of Kosovo Government forensic observers, supported by EULEX, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Commission on Missing Persons and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). I wish to acknowledge with great appreciation the efforts of both Belgrade and Pristina to ensure a non-politicized professional operation. As we prepare to commemorate the International Day of the Missing Persons tomorrow, I reiterate my call on all parties to continue the work in this same manner and to respect the suffering endured by the families of the victims.

The reporting period showed that the interconnectedness of ongoing crises throughout the world is also affecting Kosovo. I wish to applaud the initiative by President Jahjaga and the effective action taken by the Kosovo police and security bodies to tackle trends of violent extremism and prevent participation of some Kosovars in the conflicts in Syria and Iraq. During this summer, large-scale police operations resulted in a significant number of arrests of persons suspected of supporting extremist organizations or participating in these foreign wars. I also wish to commend the close

engagement of the Islamic community of Kosovo and its leaders, as well as the public stand taken by other religious and secular leaders, to distance themselves entirely from such extremism.

During the reporting period, UNMIK has continued to focus its resources on strengthening reconciliation efforts among the communities throughout Kosovo. The Mission successfully completed its 2013-2014 confidence-building measures programme and is now taking further initiatives on the foundations of the implemented projects. We are engaging our international partners to facilitate and support similar initiatives throughout Kosovo, in particular in the north.

However, I must sound a note of concern regarding the protection of cultural and religious heritage in Kosovo. Despite numerous announcements made by the municipal authorities, the council for the protection of the historic village of Hoca i Madhe/Velika Hoča has not been established yet. In addition, the illegal construction in the special protective zones — including that surrounding the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization World Heritage site of the Visoki Dečani monastery — continues to undermine our reconciliation efforts on the ground. Resolute and effective enforcement measures against such activities have yet to be taken by the concerned Kosovo authorities.

Since the last report, little progress has been observed with regard to the returns and reintegration process of internally displaced persons (IDPs), with 35 percent fewer IDPs returning to Kosovo between January and July 2014 compared to the corresponding period last year. The hostile local protest of yesterday against an approved visit of IDP pilgrims to Mushtisht in order to mark the 28 August Orthodox feast was deeply disappointing. I was grateful, however, to note the strong and prompt public response was issued by the Minister for Communities and Returns in the immediate aftermath of this incident. I also welcome the recent decision to postpone the eviction of around 50 Kosovo Serb IDPs from a collective centre in Shtërpce municipality, and I continue to encourage the authorities in Pristina and in the municipality to find durable solutions for this problem. Overall, greater and proactive efforts are needed to address the rights of IDPs before and after their return.

UNMIK fully supports the commendable work of the EU and High Representative Ashton in facilitating the high- level political dialogue and the implementation of its historic agreements, which has significantly enhanced the EU strategic perspective of both Belgrade and Pristina. In this light, I wish to note the initialling of the Stabilization and Association Agreement between the EU and Kosovo in Brussels on 25 July. The commitment to the EU path being shown throughout the region continues to be a driving force for positive political, institutional and socioeconomic changes. This is essential as well to fulfil the Council's objective of finding a peaceful settlement of the Kosovo issue. UNMIK remains wholly committed to performing its mandate in the furtherance of this objective.

I conclude my remarks by expressing my gratitude to you, Mr. President, and to all members of the Council for your continuous support of UNMIK's work. The period ahead will bring further challenges that will require your continuing active engagement with both parties to encourage full implementation of the 19 April 2013 Agreement and to support the work of the Special Investigative Task Force and the establishment of the specialist court. UNMIK will continue working closely with local and international partners to support all vital processes in accordance with its mandate, exerting its efforts in support of the political progress being achieved and helping to reduce and redress the short-term challenges as and when they appear.

The President: I thank Mr. Zarif for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Serbia.

Mr. Dačić (Serbia) (*spoke in Serbian; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): Allow me to greet you, Mr. President, and the members of the Security Council, as well as to thank you for your ongoing attention to the question of Kosovo and Metohija. I am very pleased to be presented another opportunity to address this body in connection with the efforts that have been made under United Nations auspices to find a lasting and sustainable solution to the question of Kosovo and Metohija for 15 years now.

I am convinced that we all agree with the assessment that the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) has a key role to play in the creation of conditions for peaceful coexistence for the residents of Kosovo and Metohija, a safe and secure life for all its communities and respect for their human rights. Serbia cooperates in good faith with the United Nations in Kosovo and Metohija and wishes to further strengthen, enrich and promote that cooperation. We appreciate the

efforts invested by Mr. Farid Zarif in the implementation of the UNMIK mandate and the coordination of international civil and security presences. We also appreciate the contributions of UNMIK and other international organizations — the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX), the Kosovo Force (KFOR) and specialized agencies like the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees — which, through their missions and under the United Nations auspices and resolution 1244 (1999), are constituent parts of those presences in Serbia's southern province.

The dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, within which the First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations was reached in Brussels on 19 April last year, was initiated with the aim of finding practical solutions to questions that hamper the normal life of the residents of Kosovo and Metohija. Serbia expects the European Union to continue to facilitate that dialogue.

We believe that the results achieved by Serbia so far in the adoption of European values and standards and its further progress along its European path are the right context for the creation of a proper living environment for the people in Kosovo and Metohija. In that regard, we concur with the assessment presented in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2014/558) that the commitment of Belgrade, as well Pristina, to European integration, coupled with continued active engagement by the European Union, are critical driving forces for the normalization of relations between Belgrade and Pristina.

Serbia is firmly committed to the continuation of constructive dialogue with Pristina at all levels, as well as to the implementation of all agreements reached so far. It has fulfilled in good faith the obligations derived from the agreements reached in the dialogue.

Regrettably, no such assessment could be made in connection with the Pristina side. It has not yet taken the necessary steps to fully implement the agreements reached in Brussels, including the adoption of an amnesty law, the budget and local self-government. Confidence-building is not improved by the problems encountered by Serbian officials on their trips to Kosovo and Metohija either. In this reporting period, for instance, Serbian liaison officer Dejan Pavićević was banned from entering the province on 25 June.

In addition to the consideration of the quarterly reports at Security Council meetings, true insight into the situation in Kosovo and Metohija can be gained only by taking into account the broader picture of the level of integration of Serbian and other non-Albanian populations in the economic and social flows of the province. That picture reveals the existence of a substantial gap between international standards and the legal framework and the situation in the field, which is characterized by inter-ethnic incidents, unresolved property issues and limited access to the services of public institutions by members of non-Albanian communities, as well as their mistrust in the work of those institutions.

The situation in Kosovo and Metohija continues to be difficult. Serbs live in constant fear, while unemployment in Serbian communities is at levels higher than ever in the past. Those are all obstacles to the normalization of relations and to inter-ethnic confidence-building and are a potential threat to stability and security in a broader regional context.

Four houses of Serbian returnees were broken into and looted in the village of Ljevosa, in the municipality of Peć, during the night of 18 to 19 June. About 20 Serbs returned to the village in 2005 and 2006. That was not the first time that returning Serbs were intimidated with the aim of discouraging them from returning to their homes. Nor is the amelioration of the atmosphere of mistrust helped by arbitrary arrests of local Serbs, such as Jovica Dejanović from Prilužje and Dorde Bojkovic from Babin Most, near Obiliq.

I would like to make special mention of the case of Oliver Ivanović, the leader of the civic initiative Serbia, Democracy, Justice, who was remanded into custody in January on suspicion of participating in alleged crimes committed during 1999 and 2000. Oliver Ivanović continues to be detained, while he was indicted only in mid-August. The Government of Serbia has given guarantees that he will attend the trial, so the refusal to release him from detention is disrespectful of the Government of Serbia, which has contributed so much to the normalization of relations. We demand that Oliver lvanović be released from detention.

The data on the number of ethnically motivated crimes against members of non-Albanian communities remains incomplete, without explanation, as no investigation of the attacks on Serbs and their property has been successfully brought to an end. The percentage of perpetrators of attacks on members of Serbian and

other non-Albanian communities discovered and tried in the past 15 years is well nigh zero. The persons who took part in the ethnically motivated violence in March 2004 — the only pogrom committed on European soil in the twenty-first century — were tried for offences against public peace and order under the civil procedure.

At the same time, no public records are available on ethnically motivated attacks on members of Serbian and other non-Albanian communities. The scope and type of those attacks are concealed by being catalogued as general crimes. The message thus sent to Serbs and other non-Albanians, in particular the returning ones, is that they are not welcome. The ethnically motivated crime is thus de-personalized, while offences against members of non-Albanian communities are tolerated.

The perpetrators of killings, abductions and attacks on Serbs committed since June of 1999 have not yet been discovered and tried. Serbia has therefore followed attentively the investigation of the EULEX Special Investigative Task Force and its Chief Prosecutor Clint Williamson of the allegations of the 2010 report of Swiss Senator Dick Marty, adopted in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, entitled "Inhuman treatment of people and illicit trafficking in human organs in Kosovo".

First of all, let me recognize the efforts of Chief Prosecutor Williamson and all other members of the Special Investigative Task Force invested in the detailed investigation of the allegations from the report of Senator Marty regarding the crimes committed against the Serbs, Roma and Albanians of Kosovo and Metohija by the members of the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). We are not surprised by the fact that they faced numerous obstacles during their work, mostly the intimidation of witnesses and the destruction of evidence.

It is with appreciation that we accept the conclusion of Chief Prosecutor Williamson that enough evidence has been gathered to indict the KLA leaders responsible for the persecution of Serbs, Roma and members of other non-Albanian communities, as well as the Albanians of Kosovo and Metohija. As we understand from the statement of the Chief Prosecutor (S/2014/558, annex II), the campaign of persecution included killings, abductions, enforced disappearances, illegal detentions in camps both in Kosovo and Metohija and in Albania, sexual violence and other forms of inhuman treatment such as forced displacement, and the destruction of churches and other religious sites. That resulted in a large-scale ethnic cleansing of the Serbian and Roma populations from parts of Kosovo and Metohija south of the Ibar River. We concur with the assessment that the widespread and systematic nature of those crimes constitutes a basis for the prosecution of crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Surely, the statement of the Chief Prosecutor (S/2014/558, annex II) on the results of the investigation so far is an immense contribution to the establishment of the responsibility of the KLA leaders for the crimes committed against the population, particularly the non-Albanian population of Kosovo and Metohija. However, justice will be served only if those who committed and ordered the heineous crimes — the KLA commanders who still walk free today — are tried in courts. Serbia therefore expects that a special court be established soon — not later than the beginning of 2015 — in which it will be possible to indict the leaders of the KLA suspected of, among other things, crimes against humanity and war crimes. We are convinced that all countries that respect international law will insist on it.

The widespread nature and magnitude of the crimes mentioned in the statement (S/2014/558, annex II) of the Chief Prosecutor call for a judicial epilogue, for only that can bring justice and peace to a great number of victims and their families. In that connection, we address a strong appeal to key actors in the international community to do, for their part, all that is necessary so that a special court is established by the beginning of the next year. It must not be allowed, as has been the case in court proceedings so far, that because of the intimidation of witnesses, responsible individuals are acquitted due to the lack of evidence. All those involved in the intimidation must also be tried.

At the same time, we must join forces to establish the fate of the missing persons. As stated in the statement (S/2014/558, annex II) of Chief Prosecutor Williamson, not enough has been done in that regard, and additional efforts must be made.

As it has done in the past, Serbia will do its utmost so that additional evidence can be provided with regard to organ trafficking. It is necessary that other countries too make efforts in order to make it possible for evidence of organ trafficking to find its way to the special court.

Since beginning the work of the special court depends in part on the decisions that ought to be taken

in Pristina, we call on all political actors in Kosovo and Metohija to bear in mind that their conscientious work will be a linchpin to the service of justice for the crimes that have been committed.

It is with concern that we have followed the trial of the so-called "Drenica Group" initiated last May before the Basic Court in Kosovska, Mitrovica, for reasons stated in the report before us. Three out of seven indicted members of the former KLA managed to run away from the institution in which they were being given medical treatment. EULEX assessed the results of the internal investigation in this case as bad and without information of key importance.

I would like to point to another question raised in the report relating to the adoption of the law amending the laws on the mandate of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo. The new law changes the composition of the chambers of courts that hear the criminal and civil cases that fall within EULEX competency, to the effect that the number of judges of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government is always greater than that of EULEX judges. I especially mention that situation because the cases tried in the Special Chamber of the Supreme Court of Kosovo in connection with the Kosovo Privatization Agency and the cases before appellate panels relating to decisions of the Kosovo Property Claims Commission have continued to be cases in which mostly Serbs and non-Albanians are the aggrieved parties.

Bearing in mind the importance of the implementation of the EULEX mandate, in particular the part related to the proper investigation, trial and enforcement of sentences for war crimes, terrorism, organized crime, corruption, inter-ethnic crime, financial-economic fraud and other grievous offences, the question of the readiness of the judicial organs to carry out impartially, conscientiously and professionally the tasks entrusted to them is very pertinent indeed. I emphasize this because the Kosovo 2013 Progress Report of the European Commission highlights the need for improved enforcement of decisions regarding human rights violations and the many unresolved property cases related precisely to damage compensation and inter-ethnic disputes, which have been unjustifiably delayed.

In that connection we stress the importance of the continued oversight over and assessment of the work of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government, and the judicial and other organs, and adequate appraisal of their readiness to assume the executive competencies that EULEX currently holds, as provided for by the EULEX reconfiguration decision of this past June. I would like to remind the members of the Security Council, the body that adopted resolution 1244 (1999), which established UNMIK with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General at its head, that the competencies held by the Special Representative may be transferred to the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government only with his authorization. The fact that those competencies were entrusted to EULEX does not diminish the powers and responsibility of the Special Representative.

The incidents around the bridge in Kosovska Mitrovica during this past June have served as a reminder of the distance that the communities in Kosovo and Metohija still need to traverse to achieve reconciliation. The removal of the barricades on the northern side of the bridge over the Ibar River was an act of goodwill on the part of the local Serbian population. Unlike that act, the reaction of their Albanian fellow residents did not show good faith and only added to the deepening of intolerance.

One of the reasons that Serbia insists on the unreduced presence and engagement of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo and Metohija is precisely because of the volatility of the situation in the province. The trust that Serbian and other non-Albanian communities have in the Mission as guarantor of their survival is of paramount importance. In that context, we must not allow the role entrusted to the United Nations Mission, which is the guarantor and the basis for the activities of all other international missions in Kosovo and Metohija, to be weakened.

It is with concern that we look at attempts to marginalize UNMIK — that is, reduce its size, both in the number of substantive international personnel and its activities in the field. We hope that, even though the budget has been reduced compared to that of the past year, the UNMIK budget adopted this past June will not negatively affect the realization of the Mission's concrete tasks, including verification of the number of returnees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the protection of minority communities.

The Government of the Republic of Serbia is fully committed to the normalization of relations with Priština, which was confirmed by its call addressed to the Serbs with residences registered in Kosovo and Metohija to participate in the early general elections on 8 June. Regrettably, in their attempt to exercise

their voting rights, persons of Serbian nationality, in particular the IDPs, encountered numerous obstacles all over again, from a questionable legal interpretation of electoral provisions to challenges to the recognition of their right to be entered into voters' lists.

Overall, 30,000 IDPs, 26,000 of them from the central parts of Serbia, sent their voting applications to the Central Election Commission. Out of 26,000 applications, less than half were accepted, while the rejected ones were directed to an appellate procedure. The Central Election Commission adopted 200 out of 9,000 appeals. The number of Serbs with the right to vote has diminished in comparison with their number at the local elections in November 2013. The fact that as many as 20,000 deceased persons were inscribed on the voters' lists and that, even after the removal of their names, the number of registered voters has continued to be greater than the population of Kosovo and Metohija is indicative all by itself.

The new general elections law was being discussed in Parliament at the time that the early elections were called; the law was not adopted. Absent a new elections law, the Central Election Commission decided to invoke the provisions of the constitutional amendments of 2012, with negative consequences for a number of the mandates of the Serbian community. Specifically, the Civic Initiative Serbia list was thus left short of six additional Parliament seats.

Some provisions of the draft general elections law downgrade outright the voting rights of members of the minority communities in Kosovo and Metohija. I believe that we all can agree that setting conditions for dialogue and the participation of Serbian community members in the work of provincial institutions in which the scope of their rights has been reduced cannot be politically justified.

In the municipalities in the northern part of the province with a Serbian majority, conditions have been fulfilled for the establishment of the association/community of Serbian municipalities, as provided for in the Brussels Agreement. We expect Pristina to complete the post-electoral processes in the foreseeable future in order to make it possible to establish the community, that is to say, to adopt the legal framework necessary for the implementation of its competencies. That would be a true indicator of the commitment of the Pristina side to the implementation of the agreements that have been reached, contribute to the strengthening of confidence in provincial institutions, and represent an important step in the direction of achieving progress in mutual dialogue.

Let me particularly draw the Council's attention to the situation of the IDPs and the fact that the solution to their situation largely depends on the actions of political actors in Priština. In June 2014, Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons Chaloka Beyani presented a report to the Human Rights Council on his visit to Serbia in October 2013. The Special Rapporteur called on the authorities in Priština to invest efforts in ensuring effective implementation of legal solutions and to increase the political will to find a lasting solution for the IDPs. He also pointed to an urgent need to solve property issues.

The creation of real conditions for IDPs to return to their homes is one of the key factors in the process of reconciliation. The return of the IDPs to Kosovo and Metohija has been obstructed by administrative impediments, to the point that the Administration in Pristina cannot honestly claim to continue to espouse democracy and multi-ethnicity. In practice, instead of facilitating the IDPs' return, the required documents and procedures constitute insurmountable obstacles for any returns, let alone sustainable ones. In that way, implicit pressure is being brought to bear on the IDPs to integrate into local communities outside Kosovo and Metohija, the end result of which is a forced change in the demographic picture of the province.

The Republic of Serbia is the country with the largest number of IDPs in Europe — 230,000, with 18,000 of them in Kosovo and Metohija. In our estimation, between 2,000 and 4,000 IDPs have realized a sustainable return to Kosovo and Metohija. The low level of returns is caused preponderantly by the failure to ensure the basic conditions for return and normal life, which has also been confirmed by the Secretary-General's reports to the Security Council. According to the report before us, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees registered as few as 49 voluntary individual returns by members of non-Albanian communities in the period from April to June.

This has been taking place despite the presence of the international civil administration, one of the main responsibilities of which under resolution 1244 (1999) is to assure the safe and unimpeded return of all refugees and internally displaced persons. The creation of conditions for Serbian and other non-Albanian populations to enjoy fundamental human rights and the

rights that belong to them as non-majority populations would surely contribute to the improvement of the general atmosphere for the return of IDPs.

The programmes aimed at strengthening confidence that have been devised by UNMIK and other missions active in Kosovo and Metohija are, no doubt, useful in the process of reconciliation among communities, yet they do not suffice. In order to create a sustainable atmosphere of tolerance, political will and a comprehensive approach on the part of the provisional institutions in Pristina are needed. Our assumption is that, with the support of competent international organizations, the authorities in Pristina will seriously take into consideration the recommendations contained in the assessment of the implementation, at the municipal level, of the law on the use of languages, published by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) this past June. The conclusion of the OSCE is that the law has been implemented only partially because of a lack of political will and the absence of full understanding of the obligation.

In the Kosovo 2013 Progress Report of the European Commission, special mention is made, inter alia, of the problem of continued attacks on religious heritage, particularly that of the Serbian Orthodox Church and its graveyards. The report also points to the unsatisfactory implementation of the anti-discrimination law, the numerous unresolved property cases before the courts related to damage compensation, and inter-ethnic disputes. It also highlights the problem of sustainable return and reintegration, which has continued to worsen, owing to persistent incidents targeting returnees, their property, their religious and cultural heritage and the lack of suitable economic opportunities.

It is not only the property rights of returnees that are impossible to exercise and protect in Kosovo and Metohija. Nothing is being done about cases of forged purchase and sale agreements of real estate legally owned by Serbs. Only one report has been published on this issue, the 2009 OSCE Mission in Kosovo report on fraudulent transactions in the Peć region, the only systematic and detailed review of violations of Serbs' property rights, and that in only one region. The statistical reviews of court decisions and cases conceal the real picture of a large number of decisions that strike down property-damage claims filed by Serbs. That is an enormous problem and appears to be ethnically motivated in view of the fact that the damaged property belongs exclusively to Serbs.

I would be remiss if I failed to note that the report mentions only the number of cases closed. It discusses only the decisions adjudicated by the Kosovo Property Agency and not the number of decisions that have been enforced, which would, practically speaking, reflect the number of owners who have gained possession of their properties. That is only one of the issues that have affected and continue to affect the process of IDP returns to Kosovo and Metohija in more ways than one.

An ongoing big problem is the privatization being carried out by the Kosovo Privatization Agency, formerly known as the Kosovo Trust Agency, which contravenes international and European human-rights conventions by continuing to privatize public and socially owned companies in Serbian communities. The sale of such companies to persons of Albanian nationality leads to a loss of economic resources in Serbian communities and also influences the exodus of the Serbian population. The latest in a series of such events took place on 9 June, when officials of the Kosovo Privatization Agency entered the FDK Lola plant in Štrpce, seized its documentation, keys and seals, put in their own security and banned Serbian workers and management from entering the premises. Similarly, the Kosovo Privatization Agency has decided to liquidate the Hotel Junior in Štrpce, which houses a group accommodation centre for 85 lDPs, who would be further displaced if the hotel were privatized.

I would like to point out once again that one of the Republic of Serbia's top priorities is to find a lasting solution for the question of Kosovo and Metohija through negotiations and dialogue with the provisional institutions of self-government in Priština, with the recognition of the legitimate interests of the Albanian, Serbian and other populations of Kosovo and Metohija and full respect for the mandate of the United Nations set out in resolution 1244 (1999).

Serbia is open to dialogue for the purpose of finding a comprehensive solution to the question of Kosovo and Metohija, first and foremost in the interests of its own citizens. Let us not forget that behind all our speeches, reports and statements are people whose only desire is to have normal living conditions for their families, who want to work, educate their children, provide them a happy childhood and a safe and secure future and enjoy all the rights belonging to them according to the European standards to which our entire region aspires.

This is nothing less or more than what we all want for ourselves. Our reports on the situation in Kosovo and Metohija must therefore not be turned into mere numbers. As we consider each and every situation report on the province, we should ask ourselves how much we have helped the local population live better lives. I am not sure that the conditions are there for lessening the Security Council's interest in this topic. Regrettably, this has also been confirmed by an incident that took place yesterday in the Ground Safety Zone, in which Stevan Sinđelić, a member of the Serbian Gendarmerie, was killed.

Great progress has been made, but we are far from being close to our goal. The Republic of Serbia is ready to do everything in its power to contribute, as a responsible United Nations Member State and not just as an interested party, to improving the situation in the province. Serbia is also ready to put its maximum effort into further stabilizing and normalizing the situation, for peace is its primary goal.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Enver Hoxhaj.

Mr. Hoxhaj: It is a great honour for me to address the Security Council today and to present the latest developments and progress in the Republic of Kosovo. During the past three months there have been many important developments contributing to peace and stability as well as to strengthening a multi-ethnic and democratic Kosovo.

I am pleased to be able to report to you today on the subjects of Kosovo's strengthening of statehood internally, its further integration into the international community, its successful negotiation of a draft Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union and the continuation of our inter-State dialogue with Serbia. I will also take this opportunity to raise a number of concerns on behalf of the Government of Kosovo.

Before addressing those issues, I would first like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon and the current States members of the Security Council for their support for peace and progress in Kosovo. For the citizens of Kosovo, the United Nations remains a symbol of hope, peace and international justice.

Two decades ago, the Council had repeated discussions and acted on those discussions, as the main United Nations body addressing the human-rights violations and crimes against humanity committed by the Milošević regime. It witnessed the apartheid period in Kosovo and drew attention to the State-sponsored crimes and ethnic cleansing perpetrated by the Milošević regime. Today, 15 years since the end of the war and despite many challenges, Kosovo represents a successful story of State- and peacebuilding, which would not have been possible without the international community's active support.

Over the past three months, Kosovo has continued to maintain political and economic stability and to further strengthen its democratic governance. One of the main developments of recent months has been the successful holding of parliamentary elections. The international democratic community, including a European election observation mission, applauded the elections of 8 June for their credibility, organization and transparency, and for being in line with the highest European standards. Those elections also marked an important milestone, because for the first time Kosovo Serbs living in the four northern municipalities participated in electing representatives to the Kosovo Assembly.

We are currently at the stage of consolidating the new Assembly. The Constitutional Court has been crucial to that process by ensuring the establishment of a democratic and constitutional basis for Kosovo's new legislative and executive institutions. Kosovo's new Government will therefore soon be in place — a Government whose composition will be inclusive, multi-ethnic, and committed to continuing comprehensive reforms. In that regard, it is important to emphasize that, while our institutions are in the process of being formed, Kosovo has continued to maintain high levels of security and stability.

On 25 July, Kosovo initialled a Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union (EU). It is the first contractual Agreement between Kosovo and the European Union, and it will provide a clear framework for reforms and political engagement with the EU in the integration process. The next step will be the Agreement's adoption by the Council of the European Union and its formal signing. This crucial step on our path to European integration signals Kosovo's comprehensive progress in democratic governance, the protection of human rights, economic reform, ethnic relations, and strengthened statehood. The deal seals our country's strategic orientation and launches us on the path to our desire, which is to become a full-fledged and equal member of the European Union.

Beyond the political benefits, the Agreement will open the EU market to our small and medium enterprises, which will generate new jobs and economic growth in Kosovo. On its path to joining the EU, Kosovo will continue to exhibit high levels of political and institutional responsibility. We will undertake all necessary reforms in the areas of the rule of law and the alignment of our legislation with that of the EU. On the EU integration path, Kosovo has shown progress in fulfilling the remaining criteria for visa-free travel in the EU Schengen zone. The visible progress on the EU integration path shows that Kosovo's European future is secure.

Parallel to the consolidation of domestic institutions, Kosovo has shown progress in strengthening its international position. In the past two months, the Togolese Republic and Solomon Islands have recognized the independence and sovereignty of Kosovo. We are committed to strengthening our bilateral relations with all 108 countries that have recognized Kosovo's independence and statehood. The unprecedented and overwhelming international support for Kosovo's statehood shows that the declaration of independence was a legitimate and legal act, with wide international acceptance, which has contributed to regional peace and stability. Kosovo is therefore gradually claiming its rightful place in the family of free, democratic and peace-loving nations.

Moreover, Kosovo has shown progress in increasing its membership in international and regional organizations. Kosovo has become a full member of the Venice Commission, which is part of the Council of Europe, and has joined two important regional organizations, the South-East European Cooperation Process and the Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative. Kosovo's membership in those regional bodies has strengthened Kosovo's regional role in the service of constructive regional cooperation.

In the near future, we intend to apply for full membership in the Council of Europe, an important regional body for strengthening human rights and democracy. Kosovo deserves a place in the Council of Europe because of our geographic position, democratic performance and commitment to human rights protection and the rule of law. Kosovo will continue to press forward on achieving its goal of gaining full membership in the international community. That would be in the best interest of our citizens and would provide an opportunity to contribute to regional and international peace and stability and to take on international responsibility.

Kosovo has been and remains highly committed to the EU-facilitated dialogue with Serbia. We are dedicated to improving the relations between our two independent and sovereign States. Thus far, substantial success has been achieved in the implementation of the First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations, reached between Kosovo and Serbia in April 2013. However, more needs to be done. In recent months, there have been some incidents in the Serb-populated northern part of Kosovo that have impeded the implementation of technical and political agreements and have not contributed to the normalization and improvement of the everyday lives of people. Here I am referring to the placement of barricades on the bridge over the river in Mitrovica and the recent aggressive rhetoric of local Serb leaders in the north against the work of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, which seeks to strengthen the rule of law in Kosovo.

I take this opportunity to call upon on the authorities in Belgrade to respect the agreements that we have reached together and not to promote the destabilization of the situation in those municipalities. The Government of Kosovo highly condemns all possible pressure on EULEX personnel when it comes to arresting alleged criminals operating in the northern municipalities. Beyond that, we share our serious concern that the Serbian authorities have not upheld the implementation of other agreements reached as part of the dialogue. This year, the Constitutional Court of Serbia nullified the agreements on cadastral surveys and records and the mutual recognition of university diplomas. While Kosovo has undertaken all necessary legal changes to accommodate the technical and political agreements, the same is not the case with Serbia. We urge our Serbian counterparts to respect the agreements reached and undertake the necessary constitutional and legal changes in order to ensure their normal implementation.

Despite those developments, we have expressed our will to make progress on discussing new topics as part of the dialogue with Serbia until we achieve full normalization of inter-State and inter-society relations. However, the dialogue cannot continue endlessly and must come to a successful conclusion with the signing of a peace treaty, which should represent an agreement for mutual recognition and the establishment of permanent friendship and neighbourly relations between Kosovo

and Serbia. That would be in the interest of advancing a common peace, regional stability and our joint European future.

In speaking about relations with Serbia, I would like to point out that, two days ago, an isolated incident took place on the north-eastern border with Serbia, where a private citizen of Kosovo had a confrontation with Serb security forces across the border. We wish to reassure Serbian authorities that it was an isolated incident, and we regret that it happened. Nether side should exaggerate it, and we should continue working together to build confidence and resolve all outstanding issues through dialogue.

The Special Investigative Task Force for alleged war crimes in Kosovo, initiated by former Special Rapporteur of the Council of Europe Dick Marty, issued a statement (S/2014/558, annex II) at the end of July. The Government of Kosovo has closely cooperated with the Task Force throughout the entire process, and we will continue to cooperate until the entire investigation is over. Our commitment is also demonstrated by the actions taken in the Kosovo Assembly to create a special chamber as part of Kosovo's legal system to address those allegations. That is the best proof that Kosovo is a State governed by the law, and it demonstrates our willingness to undertake all necessary steps to fully cooperate with our international partners in that process. The Government of Kosovo appreciates the work of Ambassador Williamson, which is an important step for resolving all the allegations and other accusations.

As I address the Council here, a mass grave has been discovered in the town of Raška in Serbia that holds the bodies of approximately 350 Kosovo Albanian civilians killed during the war in Kosovo. Those innocent civilians were killed in Kosovo, transported by the Serbian security apparatus to Serbia to hide the traces and buried in a mass grave, above which buildings have been constructed. It is not the only mass grave of civilians killed during the Kosovo war that has been discovered in Serbia. While we acknowledge Serbia's efforts towards cooperation on this matter, we appeal to Serbia to undertake more proactive measures to move ahead with the excavation and identification of the bodies in the mass grave in Raška.

Serbia should also show more willingness to cooperate with Kosovar and international authorities in identifying the bodies of over 1,700 other missing persons. Any delay in resolving the fate of missing persons prolongs the pain of their families. It is an inhumane practice and does not contribute to inter-ethnic reconciliation between Kosovo and Serbia. I would to bring to the Council's attention that approximately 15,000 Albanian civilians were killed for ethnic reasons alone, and that all of those crimes against humanity have been proved and documented in the proceedings of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

Recently, we joined the international campaign led by the United Kingdom on ending sexual violence in conflict. During the Kosovo war, there was a significant number of women who experienced sexual violence at the hands of the Serbian State and security apparatus, and those acts have to date remained unaddressed by international or domestic transitional justice mechanisms. Besides taking certain legal measures, very soon a petition will be addressed to the Secretary-General to urge the United Nations to undertake all necessary measures to bring justice to those women who have silently endured pain and suffering since the time of the war. Addressing past sexual violence done to women during the Kosovo war is a matter of justice and reconciliation, and we are committed to dealing with it.

Let me conclude by expressing the gratitude of the people and Government of Kosovo to the United Nations for supporting Kosovo over the years in consolidating peace and building State institutions. Since the declaration of independence in 2008, the role of the United Nations in Kosovo has gradually been reduced and its presence downsized. This has been in accordance with the evolving circumstances and local needs. Today, Kosovo has democratic, functioning, multi-ethnic institutions and has successfully implemented the Ahtisaari plan under international supervision.

As the European Union has taken a greater role in the region, it is of critical importance that the Council should consider ending the presence in Kosovo of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), as this would be timely, cost-effective and in line with the United Nations commitment to empowering local ownership and drafting successful exit strategies. We recommend that the Council reconfigure the UNMIK presence from its current mission to a United Nations political office in Kosovo, which could take on a new role in supporting Kosovo institutions in strengthening

domestic capacities for more responsible engagement in the international community.

In the meantime, the United Nations should reduce the budget and number of staff of UNMIK, since the Mission has no role in the implementation of the agreements reached as part of the EU-facilitated dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia. The guarantor of the implementation of those agreements remains the European Union. The financial costs of UNMIK could be distributed to other agencies in Kosovo and around the world and used for different projects that would improve the lives of the citizens in Kosovo and in other parts of the world.

The President: I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Maes (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, Mr. Farid Zarif, for his briefing. I welcome to the Council His Excellency Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia and His Excellency Mr. Enver Hoxhaj, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kosovo, and thank them for their statements.

Luxembourg congratulates the Kosovo authorities on the successful conduct of parliamentary elections in Kosovo on 8 June. The elections were conducted peacefully throughout Kosovo, including in the four northern municipalities with a Serb majority, in a unified legal framework. The election turnout was generally satisfactory and many Kosovo Serbs chose to go to the polls. We welcome Serbia's constructive role in encouraging that democratic choice.

This month, the Constitutional Court of Kosovo was able to clarify a number of issues raised following the elections. We now encourage the political leaders of Kosovo to show a spirit of compromise in order to swiftly form a new Government supported by a stable majority in Parliament.

It is encouraging to see that the situation in Kosovo remained calm and stable during the period covered by the recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2014/558). That said, we strongly condemn the fatal shooting that claimed the life of a Serbian police officer yesterday morning near the Serbian town of Merdare, near the Kosovo border. The circumstances of the attack must be investigated and those responsible must be brought to justice. During the months of June and July, tensions arose around a so-called peace park that was set up on the bridge of Mitrovica, blocking movement between the two parts of the city. We encourage the initiatives under way to address the issue by consensus.

We welcome the efforts made by Kosovo to strengthen the rule of law, with the support of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX). We welcome the progress made by the EULEX Special Investigative Task Force concerning allegations contained in the report on inhumane treatment of people and illicit trafficking in human organs in Kosovo, published in January 2011 by the Council of Europe. We thank the Chief Prosecutor, Mr. Clint Williamson, and his team for their hard work, which was summarized in a presentation on 29 July. We encourage Kosovo institutions to cooperate with the European Union in the establishment next year of a special tribunal to prosecute the perpetrators of the crimes committed, while allowing those who have been falsely accused to prove their innocence. Justice system can thereby become an integral part of the reconciliation process between Serbs and Kosovars.

In recent months, Serbia and Kosovo have taken further steps on the path to European integration. Negotiations with Serbia on joining the European Union are ongoing and, as has been noted, Kosovo has just initialled a Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union. As Serbia and Kosovo advance in that direction, there will be less need for United Nations involvement. We therefore call on the United Nations to adjust its presence to foster lasting stability in Kosovo, in line with the recent efforts of the European Union in restructuring EULEX. We welcome the Serbian Government's statement of unwavering commitment to the normalization of relations with Pristina under the auspices of the EU-facilitated dialogue. We are confident that the new Government of Kosovo, once established, will do the same to foster a new political impetus in the normalization of relations.

In conclusion, Luxembourg takes this opportunity to encourage the authorities of Serbia and Kosovo to continue to exercise the wisdom, commitment and courage needed to achieve successful reconciliation between their countries and fulfil their common European aspirations.

Mr. Omaish (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): First of all, I wish to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for his highly informative briefing. I also welcome the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister

for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo, and thank them for their statements.

Kosovo continues to make significant progress in re-establishing a unified, democratic, multi-ethnic State participating actively in the international community. We therefore urge all States to support Kosovo in taking advantage of the progress achieved. We duly note that the elections convened in Kosovo and in Serbia have slowed the dialogue facilitated by the European Union in the framework of the First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations of 19 April 2013.

Despite our support for ongoing technical discussions, we consider it extremely important to resume the high-level dialogue as quickly as possible. Furthermore, we believe that it is the duty of both parties to pursue the dialogue and the thorough implementation of the First Agreement. The European Union will have an essential role to play in accelerating dialogue.

We hope that the aspirations of both sides to integrate with the European Union and that their relationships with regional organizations will contribute to strengthening security and stability in the region, and to promoting relations among the countries of the region in various spheres with a view to fulfilling the aspirations of their peoples and achieving prosperity. On this point, we reiterate the importance of the activities of EULEX aimed at helping Kosovo in strengthening the institutions of justice and the rule of law.

We condemn the incident in which a EULEX convoy was shot at, and we encourage an investigation. Furthermore, Jordan welcomes the transparent and successful elections that were organized on 8 June with a high participation of voters. Furthermore, we commend the decision to establish new municipal councils. These successes clearly show that the Kosovar authorities are committed to establishing fully inclusive institutions and that they have a long-term political vision and are capable of managing a democratic process.

We urge the parties to continue engaging politically in a constitutional framework in order to establish a new Government that can address the challenges facing the region. We have already reaffirmed the importance of post-conflict transitional justice that seeks to strengthen reconciliation among communities. Jordan therefore commends Kosovo's determination to establish the rule of law and a new special tribunal to follow-up the decisions of the EULEX Special Investigative Task Force.

It is essential to continue monitoring the problems caused by this conflict, which have had a major impact on the collective spirit of the various communities in Kosovo and the region. One such problem is that of displaced, repatriated and missing persons. We hope that UNMIK and international organizations will continue to find solutions to all these problems in order to strengthen trust. Furthermore, religious tolerance has a key role to play in achieving political reconciliation. Coexistence among the different religions is the only path to building a real democracy in Kosovo. We therefore call on everyone to take advantage of the outcome of the annual conference on inter-faith dialogue that took place during the week of tolerance and reconciliation in Kosovo.

To conclude, we would like to express our gratitude to the head of UNMIK and his team for their efforts to ensure that the Mission fulfils its responsibilities in all areas.

Mr. De Antueno (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): First, I wish to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Farid Zarif, for his introduction of the Secretary-General's report on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (S/2014/558). We also welcome the participation of the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, Mr. Ivica Dačić, and Mr. Enver Hoxhaj.

Argentina, as is its tradition, would like to emphasize the important role that the United Nations plays in Kosovo through the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) by promoting security, stability and respect for human rights, as well as its cooperation with the Kosovo Force and with the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX). It maintains its neutral position regarding the territory's status and under the auspices of the United Nations.

Argentina continues to believe that resolution 1244 (1999), for which it had voted in favour when it was a member of the Council, is the international legal basis applicable in Kosovo in order to achieve a comprehensive settlement through a political process and through negotiations. We reiterate once again the importance of the firm leadership of UNMIK in support of Belgrade and Pristina.

As for the security situation, we welcome the fact that the elections held during the period under review did not result in any significant incident. Nevertheless, we join Pristina, Belgrade and the rest of the international community in condemning the attack on two EULEX vehicles on 25 April. We call on the relevant authorities to take measures to ensure that such acts do not recure in the future.

Given the commitment shown by the parties to the high-level dialogue under the auspices of the European Union, we would urge them to resume high-level negotiations so that progress can continue to be made towards the implementation of the historic First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations of 19 April 2013, and to consolidate the progress made towards reaching an agreement on the establishment of an association/community of Serb-majority municipalities. We encourage international actors with a presence on the ground to continue working together, in accordance with their respective mandates, to consolidate their achievements and to ensure the effective implementation of any outstanding issues.

While we are encouraged that the overall security situation in Kosovo has remained mostly calm, we must call attention to the security situation in South Mitrovica. We are concerned by the incidents that occurred in the area of the main bridge in South Mitrovica between 18 and 22 June. As the Secretary-General has stated, we consider that unilateral measures and incendiary statements must be avoided so as to ensure a climate conducive to dialogue. It should be reiterated that UNMIK's important work remains essential in providing maximal support to the political processes. Special attention should be paid to the implementation of the provisions of the 19 April Agreement. It is also vital to continue prioritizing the task of overcoming the impacts and legacy of the conflict, including the pending cases of missing persons. In that regard, we note the resumption of exhumations of a mass gave site in Rudnica, Raska municipality, and urge the speedy issuance of a judicial warrant to investigate and exhume two other sites in Rudnica.

UNMIK should continue to support and encourage efforts to determine the fate and whereabouts of missing persons, and redouble its efforts and cooperation to ensure that these grave human rights violations, including in relation to cases mentioned in the 2010 report of the Special Rapporteur of the Council of Europe, do not enjoy iompunity. We also deem it important to take into account the findings of the Chief Prosecutor of the Special Investigative Task Force at the European Union.

We highlight UNMIK's work in support for the rule of law, in particular its collaboration with all relevant interested parties with regard to resolving the main problems on the ground. We also stress the need for those international actors with a presence on the ground in Kosovo to continue strengthening mutual cooperation in order to establish conditions conducive to an improved implementation of the 19 April 2013 Agreement. Finally, we highlight the work carried out by the Special Representative to promote security, stability and respect for human rights in Kosovo, in accordance with resolution 1244 (1999).

Mr. Klein (United States of America): I thank Special Representative Zarif for his briefing. I would also like to thank Foreign Minister Dačić and Foreign Minister Hoxhaj for their remarks today.

The United States welcomes Kosovo's continuing steps towards full integration within the international community. We commend the Governments of the Solomon Islands and Togo for their recognition of Kosovo as a sovereign, independent state. We are also very pleased about Kosovo's acceptance into the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe as its sixtieth member State. Those steps further cement Kosovo's place within the international community, strengthening Kosovo, the region and international cooperation.

The United States praises both Serbia and Kosovo for their continued dedication to the European Union-facilitated Kosovo-Serbia dialogue and the implementation of the First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations of 19 April 2013. While the next high-level meetings await Government formation in Kosovo, we are encouraged that working-level discussions continue, including a planned meeting on 4 September to carry forward the work on integrated border management. Both Governments have made difficult but necessary decisions to advance the dialogue, which remains integral to a stable, peaceful and prosperous region. We are further heartened by the recent public statements by Serbian officials reaffirming that stability is Belgrade's key interest in Kosovo.

The process of Government formation in Kosovo is under way following successful parliamentary elections in June. We are encouraged by the positive reports from local and international observers on the smooth and orderly conduct of the election and broad participation throughout Kosovo. As Kosovo's political and party leaders work to form the next government, it is important that the process proceed in line with Kosovo's laws and Constitution; the 1 July and 26 August rulings by Kosovo's Constitutional Court should serve as guidelines in that regard. We urge the leaders, parties and Kosovo Assembly members to move lawfully and quickly towards formation of the new government, so that the important work of strengthening Kosovo's multiethnic democracy can continue. We also welcome the formation of municipal assemblies and the Kosovo Ministry of Local Government Administration's certification in May of municipal statutes for the four municipalities in the Serb-majority north.

The United States supports freedom of expression and universal human rights, and we denounce those who would turn to violence to sow discord and unrest within their communities. We condemn the violence that occurred during the South Mitrovica demonstration on 22 June regarding barriers on the Austerlitz Bridge. The security services, including the Kosovo police, the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) and the Kosovo Force (KFOR), merit praise for their swift and appropriate response, which prevented further escalation. The violence and tensions over the Mitrovica bridge underscore the enduring sensitivity of these issues and the need for continued, constructive dialogue to resolve differences.

In a broader context, stability and security — both regionally and globally — benefit from rule of law and strong democratic institutions in Kosovo. Mr. Zarif mentioned interconnectedness. We commend Kosovo authorities for their efforts to address the problems of violent extremism and the initiative of the Kosovo police and judiciary in apprehending suspected foreign fighters and their supporters in June and August. President Jahjaga has publicly reinforced that Kosovo will not become a terrorist haven and that Kosovo institutions will not permit terrorists to endanger peace, stability and constitutional order. We welcome the initiative of several countries in the region, including Kosovo and Serbia, to put in place legislation penalizing the recruitment and participation of its citizens in foreign armed conflicts. We call on all States in the region to cooperate more closely on countering the common threat of violent extremism.

Finally, we are pleased with the agreement between the European Union and Kosovo to extend the mandate of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo until June 2016. EULEX and KFOR continue to make essential contributions to the international community's work in Kosovo.

Mr. Iliichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome the participation in this meeting of the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, Mr. Ivica Dačić. We agree with the comments he made and we took note of the statement by Mr. Enver Hoxhaj. We thank Mr. Zarif for his presentation of the report (S/2014/558) of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and his assessment of the situation in the region.

The United Nations Mission remains the main international presence in Kosovo. European Union mediation in the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina and the transfer of the functions from UNMIK to the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo does not diminish the role of the United Nations in Kosovo. We share the concerns expressed in the report of the Secretary-General about the lack of progress in the area of national reconciliation, the failure of the Kosovar authorities to implement a language policy and the continued desecration of religious shrines.

Unfortunately, the report does not mention the illegal and corrupt practice of usurping Serb property in the region, carried out by Kosovar authorities under the guise of privatization. Against the backdrop of problems related to the return of Serbian refugees and internally displaced persons and the restoration of their property rights, Pristina's actions deprive the remaining Serbs of their sources of livelihood. In essence, we are talking about a continuation of ethnic cleansing by economic means. In such circumstances, there can be no meaningful talk of progress in the process of the return of refugees or internally displaced persons.

All such systemic problems related to the violation of minorities' rights have significant potential for conflict and could lead to the escalation of violence at any moment. Unfortunately, that proved to be true in June in the ethnically mixed neighbourhoods of the Kosovar town of Mitrovica, where a wave of incidents

unfolded culminating in the clashes on the bridge across the Ibar river.

Given the wide range of problems, we call on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo to fully and proactively fulfil its mandate. To do so, it must have all the necessary resources. We should consider significantly enhancing the Mission by providing it with experts in the fields of human rights, the rule of law and reconciliation between communities. We condemn attempts to undermine UNMIK's role and call on the Kosovo Albanian side to encourage meaningful cooperation with the United Nations presence.

We are not inclined to share the optimism expressed about the elections held in the region. Only 41 per cent of registered voters took part in the elections and the participation of Kosovar Serbs was even lower, demonstrating their continued deep distrust of the region's institutions. In fact, these institutions are not really being established. We are seeing the ongoing protraction of the political crisis. The delayed formation of a Government also hinders the resumption of negotiations between Belgrade and Pristina. We believe that the interest of the Serbs and other non-Albanian communities of the region should be fully taken into consideration in the formation of new Government institutions. To protect the interests of the Kosovo Serbs, it is essential to create a community of Kosovo Serbian municipalities, in accordance with the Brussels Agreement, as quickly as possible.

We draw attention to the published interim results of the investigations related to the report of Dick Marty, which clearly state that there is sufficient evidence to bring charges against certain senior officials of the former Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). The report speaks of many cases of murder, abduction, rape, illegal detention, inhumane treatment and the desecration of churches, which resulted in ethnic cleansing and the expulsion of Serbs from southern and central Kosovo. Those activities were organized, widespread and systematic. The interim report also confirms cases of organ trafficking in the region.

The public results of the investigation clearly dispel the myth of the just struggle for liberation of the KLA, which was used in particular to justify the unilateral declaration of independence of the Serbian region of Kosovo by the former leaders of that organization. Those guilty of crimes must be punished, independent of the position they occupy now. We were worried by Mr. Clint Williamson's mention of the active resistance to the investigation of the crimes of the KLA, which clearly illustrates Pristina's attitude and readiness to cooperate with the inquiry.

The report does not say a great deal about the topic of the participation of Kosovars in conflicts in the Middle East. Nevertheless, since early August several dozen individuals have been arrested and accused of fighting in the ranks of terrorist and extremist groups in the conflicts in Syria and Iraq. Such activity needs to be stopped. We are happy to hear Mr. Zarif raise these issues in his briefing today.

In conclusion, we confirm that Russia's position on the problems of Kosovo remains unchanged. We believe that resolution 1244 (1999) remains fully in force and binding on all parties as the international legal basis for the resolution of the conflict in Kosovo.

Mr. Gombo (Chad) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I should like to thank Mr. Farid Zarif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) for his briefing on the situation in Kosovo.

I should also like to welcome His Excellency Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, and Mr. Enver Hoxhaj, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo. Chad fully supports their efforts to build peace in the region.

Chad welcomes the progressive improvement in the political, institutional, security and human rights situation in Kosovo. With regard to the political situation, Chad commends the holding on 16 March of transparent legislative elections in Kosovo, which demonstrated the political maturity of that country and signaled the growing engagement of Kosovo's political class and population in a genuine process of national reconciliation. Those significant achievements should be built upon and strengthened through the establishment of a legitimate and credible constitutional order.

Concerning Belgrade and Pristina's commitment to the normalization of their relations, we note with satisfaction the efforts deployed by Kosovo and the European Commission to finalize a Stabilization and Association Agreement. In addition, the onset of post-electoral talks has allowed Pristina to take a new direction, the main challenge which will be reform of

the electoral system. We welcome the progress of the dialogue with Pristina, facilitated by the European Union, and the full implementation of the First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations of 19 April 2013, in accordance with the implementation plan of 22 May 2013.

At the local level, we commend the adoption of new municipal statutes in the north and in Pristina with a view to normalizing the administrative and budgetary situation. In the judicial sector, Chad notes that the Special Investigative Task Force, with the support European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX), has collected sufficient proof of ethnic cleansing of the Serb and Roma populations during the armed conflict. Similar results have also been achieved with regard to cases involving violence and intimidation against the Kosovar Albanian oppposition. Nevertheless, the prosecution of these allegations can be addressed only once the special criminal tribunal has been established to that end. Chad urges the Kosovar authorities to establish the special tribunal by early 2015 so as to ensure that justice is served and to close this painful chapter in the history of the country.

We commend and encourage the efforts of the Kosovar judicial authorities in their fight against impunity. With regard to security, Chad strongly condemns the violent acts in the Mitrovica area, where violence has claimed victims among law enforcement officers and civilians, and damaged property belonging to the Kosovo police, EULEX and UNMIK. Chad commends the effective intervention and actions of the Kosovo police, EULEX and the Kosovo Force (KFOR) in resolving problems involving public disorder, such as the demonstration of 8 July in Pristina at the Embassy of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

With regard to human rights, Chad notes with satisfaction the significant progress of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, notably the resumption of the exhumation and identification of bodies. Chad also commends efforts to promote the voluntary return of 48 displaced persons to Kosovo. We urge the Kosovar authorities to ensure the implementation of the law so as to find a lasting solution to the problem of displaced persons and refugees and the restitution of their property. We take this opportunity to encourage the work of UNMIK to create a reconciliation programme in 18 municipalities, notably in northern Kosovo, and to commend the adoption of amendments to the law on the status and the rights of martyrs, invalids, veterans and members of the Kosovo Liberation Army, civilian victims of war and their families, and survivors of sexual violence in order to guarantee their access to compensation.

In conclusion, Chad notes with satisfaction the two-year extension of the EULEX mandate. Chad commends the sound management and dedication of the entire UNMIK team for its work on the ground and its fruitful collaboration with EULEX, KFOR, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, all United Nations agencies on the ground, and the institutions of Kosovo. Chad urges the international community, particularly the Security Council, to redouble their efforts to support Kosovo at this very delicate time in its transition towards stability, security, peace and development.

Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea): I would like to thank Special Representative Farid Zarif for his briefing. We also warmly welcome First Deputy Prime Minister Ivica Dačić and Foreign Minister Enver Hoxhaj to the Council and thank them for their statements today.

First, the Republic of Korea congratulates Kosovo on holding successful elections for the Assembly of Kosovo. In particular, the large participation of various ethnic groups and minorities, including the Kosovo Serbs, is a welcome development. We believe that these elections represent a big step forward for Kosovo's genuine democracy. Looking ahead, we hope that a new Government can be formed in a timely manner so that a new leadership can proceed to address the key challenges facing the country.

Secondly, we are pleased to note that Belgrade and Pristina are steadily moving forward in their implementation of the First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations of 19 April 2013. Although high-level dialogue between both sides has not taken place due to the electoral processes, progress on the ground has been sustained in many important areas, notably the adoption of new municipal statutes by the Serb majority municipalities in the north. Building upon such achievements, we encourage Serbia and Kosovo to resume the high-level dialogue facilitated by the European Union (EU) and to continue to scale up their efforts towards the normalization of their relations.

Despite these positive developments, we remain concerned over violent incidents in northern Kosovo, in particular the actual violence committed during

the demonstration in South Mitrovica. We commend the timely and appropriate responses of the Kosovo police, the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) and the Kosovo Force, and support the establishment of a special working group under EU auspices to prevent a further escalation of the tensions.

Such incidents are a clear reminder of the importance of a genuine reconciliation process between the communities. Unless the root causes of ethnic tensions are duly addressed, the ongoing political process may face more difficulties. At the same time, it is also vital to strengthen the rule of law and ensure accountability. In that regard, we welcome the statement of the Chief Prosecutor of the European Union Special Investigative Task Force in connection with the allegations of war crimes (S/2014/558, annex II). It is also encouraging that the Kosovo Assembly has authorized the extension of EULEX's mandate, including the establishment of a specialist court. We note with appreciation that Kosovo has taken concrete action to investigate crimes and promote reconciliation.

Finally, we once again commend the entire staff of UNMIK and EULEX, as well as other international partners, for their tireless efforts to ensure the peace and stability of Kosovo and the region.

Mr. Bliss (Australia): I would like to thank Special Representative Zarif for his briefing to the Security Council today. I also welcome First Deputy Prime Minister Dačić of Serbia and Foreign Minister Hoxhaj of Kosovo and thank them for their statements and their presence.

I also acknowledge the report on the activities of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX), and welcome the extension of EULEX's mandate through June 2016. The extension, supported by Kosovo, will ensure that EULEX can continue to investigate and prosecute serious organized crime, corruption and war crimes, while helping to build the capacity of Kosovo's multi-ethnic justice and police institutions, and working to progressively transfer tasks to local institutions.

Australia welcomes the successful holding of Kosovo Assembly elections on 8 June, which the European Union (EU) election observation mission assessed as being transparent and well organized. In a major achievement, the elections were held peacefully across the country, including in Kosovo's four northern Serb-majority municipalities, under a unified legal framework. We recognize the role of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in facilitating the electoral process in northern Kosovo. We acknowledge the series of political developments in both Serbia and Kosovo that have slowed high-level dialogue on the implementation of the 19 April 2013 First Agreement of Principles on the Normalization of Relations between the two countries. The delays are understandable but should not stand in the way of practical steps at the working level to implement existing agreements. We recognize that both sides remain committed to the process, and we call for renewed political dialogue as soon as a new Government is formed in Kosovo. Australia commends the European Union's efforts to facilitate technical discussions in order to maintain momentum for dialogue.

We were concerned by the violent clashes that took place in Mitrovica on 22 June. We commend the response of the Kosovo police, EULEX and the Kosovo Force. We strongly encourage all sides, at all levels, to renounce violence, eschew inflammatory rhetoric and commit fully to reconciliation and dialogue.

Australia commends the efforts of the European Union Special Investigative Task Force to investigate allegations of widespread and systematic crimes committed after the end of the war in 1999. The work is challenging and complex, not least because of utterly unacceptable witness intimidation. It is critical that the perpetrators of serious international crimes found to have been committed in Kosovo be held to account and that no one impedes that process. It is essential that the specialist court to be established to adjudicate allegations arising from the work of the Task Force be set up as soon as possible.

We note the report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, presented in Geneva on 12 June (A/HRC/26/33/Add.2). While progress has been made in assisting the 230,000 people who were displaced during the Kosovo conflict in returning to their homes, much remains to be done. Their return is an essential component of long-term reconciliation in Kosovo.

The shooting of a Serbian police officer on 27 August near the Serbian town of Merdare and close to the border with Kosovo is a worrying development that must be investigated. But, as Special Representative Zarif has said, it will be important not to speculate on possible political motives. Australia is encouraged that the overall security situation in Kosovo generally

remains peaceful. It is essential that the new leadership in Kosovo, once in place, recommits to dialogue. It was on the basis of a mutual commitment to such dialogue that negotiations on a Stabilization and Association Agreement for Kosovo were concluded and accession talks with the EU by Serbia opened.

In conclusion, Australia encourages the newly elected leadership in Pristina and in Belgrade to work together to consolidate the peaceful future for their peoples that is within close reach.

Mr. Olguín Cigarroa (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank Mr. Farid Zarif for presenting the report on the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) (S/2014/558), and we welcome Foreign Ministers Ivica Dačić and Enver Hoxhaj.

I would like to begin by highlighting the formation of the new Serbian Government, led by Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić, and by commending the Government's prompt confirmation of its willingness to continue its high-level dialogue with Pristina, facilitated by the European Union, and the full implementation of the 19 April 2013 First Agreement of Principles on the Normalization of Relations.

We commend the peaceful and orderly conduct of the parliamentary elections held in Kosovo on 8 June. We also appreciate the negotiation and adoption of new statutes for the Serbian majority municipalities and the establishment of an association of those municipalities, as outlined in the Agreement. We urge that the high-level meetings between Belgrade and Pristina that were suspended during the elections be re-started as soon as possible. It is essential that the parties participate actively in the dialogue facilitated by the European Union in order to reach their shared goal of better cooperation in building peace and the rule of law. In that context, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) deserve special mention for their contribution to the process of establishing the rule of law and maintaining security in Kosovo. We also welcome the decision to extend EULEX's activities in Kosovo for another year.

We are concerned about the acts of violence committed during the demonstration in South Mitrovica on 22 June, when the Kosovo police, EULEX and the Kosovo Force helped to reduce tensions. Such acts pose a threat to the Agreement between the parties and are a reminder that the road to reconciliation between the communities is long and hard.

We emphasize the important work of the Serbian-Kosovo Working Group on Missing Persons, advised by UNMIK, on the Rudnica exhumation site and consider it vital that the tasks of exhumation, identification and return will continue for missing-persons cases. Chile's own experience has shown how important such tasks are to achieving national reconciliation, since they encourage the search for truth. Equally important to the reconciliation process is the safe return of refugees and internally displaced persons, in accordance with resolution 1244 (1999), including their reintegration into social and economic activities. We also call for the continued implementation at all levels of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, in order to enable women to participate fully and effectively in decision-making and to ensure that due account is taken of their needs.

In conclusion, we reaffirm the importance of resolution 1244 (1999) as a fundamental tool to be used in the region of Kosovo in order to promote its communities' reconciliation, stability and prosperity. We also take this opportunity to express our gratitude for the work of the Chief Prosecutor of the European Union Special Investigative Task Force, Mr. Clint Williamson, who is leaving the post he has held for three years.

Mr. Lamek (France) (*spoke in French*): I too would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Zarif, for his briefing, and I welcome the two Ministers who have done us the honour of being here today, Mr. Dačić and Mr. Hoxhaj.

France is pleased that the elections on 8 June in Kosovo took place peacefully and transparently. The robust participation by the Serb community in the national elections is also a very positive sign. The election proves that the path of dialogue will enable balanced solutions to be found for all communities in Kosovo. We hope now that a compromise will finally be found on the speedy formation of a Government, in full respect for democratic institutions. Kosovo needs a stable Government. That is in the interests of all the people of Kosovo, given its pressing economic challenges, as well as in the interests of the region. It is also the Council's expectation.

More than a year after the historic First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of

Relations, of 19 April 2013, it is in everyone's interests that the dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade resume quickly. Both parties will have to demonstrate a constructive spirit and search for compromise to allow for the normalization of their relations and for the implementation of the agreement reached last year. That will also have an impact on their European rapprochement, a subject to which I will return. To accomplish that, the formation of a Government in Kosovo is a prerequisite. A return to the parties' courageous willingness to look to the future together that prevailed in spring 2013 is another.

Kosovo will not be able to turn confidently to the future without light being shed on its past. We thank Chief Prosecutor Clint Williamson, the Special Investigative Task Force and the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) as a whole for their tireless work over the past three years on the allegations of crimes contained in the Marty report. Now it is up to Kosovo to shoulder its responsibilities and facilitate the establishment of a tribunal charged with following up on the work of EULEX. Given the gravity of the alleged crimes, the European Union has also expressed its expectations vis-à-vis the Kosovo authorities as to the appropriate response.

We do not doubt the willingness of Kosovo to engage in a legal process that will respond in a fair and impartial manner to those allegations and to deal with all aspects of the difficult times that Kosovo experienced in the late 1990s. A satisfactory outcome to the case now depends in particular on the political parties in Pristina, which must demonstrate their maturity and determination, as they have done in the past.

I would like to condemn the violent incidents that rocked Kosovo on 22 July, while at the same time acknowledging the responsible stance adopted by the security forces in Kosovo in their measured response. Despite occasional incidents such as the death of a Serbian policeman and a Kosovo citizen yesterday in the border area, which we strongly condemn, the security situation in Kosovo, fortunately, remains stable overall.

I conclude by commending Kosovo and Serbia's joint progress towards European Union integration, following the normalization of their relations. Important steps have been taken recently by the European Commission and Pristina for the conclusion of the European Union-Kosovo Stabilization and Association Agreement, which is aimed at supporting Kosovo's development and reforms and thereby contributing to the stabilization of the region. We hope that the Agreement will be finalized very soon.

Serbia, meanwhile, has made significant efforts in terms of internal reforms and relations with its neighbours. The negotiations for its accession to the European Union, launched on 21 January, continue and will have to focus in particular on issues related to the rule of law. That aspect is advantageous for the entire region, and we welcome the efforts already made by Serbia.

It is now up to Serbia and Kosovo to meet their mutual commitments in order to together continue their process of European rapprochement.

Mrs. Jakubonė (Lithuania): I thank Mr. Farid Zarif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for the update. I also thank Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, and Mr. Enver Hoxhaj, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo, for their statements.

Over the past few years, we have witnessed many positive developments in the region. The historic Agreement between Belgrade and Pristina was one of the most salient examples of that progress. Its successful implementation will have a positive effect on the normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia and on overall stability in the region. We strongly encourage Belgrade and Pristina to continue to work hard in translating the agreements into results on the ground and building trust between communities.

Lithuania welcomes the smooth conduct of the parliamentary elections that were held throughout Kosovo in June, including in the north. The elections were transparent and well-organized and consolidated the progress made in the 2013 municipal elections. The voter turnout all over Kosovo, including among the Serbian community in the northern part, was high. We would like to express our hope that the Government will be formed as swiftly as possible and that it will respond to the expectations formulated by the population during the elections, in particular with respect to strengthening the rule of law and economic development.

We welcome the accession of Kosovo to the Venice Commission. Kosovo will benefit from that membership in terms of a further strengthening of democracy.

Kosovo has the right to ensure security within its own territory. The International Security Force in

Kosovo continues to contribute to the maintenance of peace and stability on the ground, while the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) plays a key role in the consolidation of the rule of law. We welcome the extension of the EULEX mandate for another two years.

The lack of security affects the functioning of institutions and international actors and people's day-to-day lives. We look forward to a thorough investigation of the incident of 19 September 2013, when a EULEX Lithuanian officer was killed. We call on the respective authorities to find the perpetrators and bring them to justice.

We welcome the decision to create the specialist court on war crimes to look into cases stemming from the work of the Special Investigative Task Force and the statement of findings (S/2014/558, annex II) presented by its Chief Prosecutor, Mr. Clint Williamson. We commend Mr. Williamson's efforts in carrying out difficult and important work and the cooperation by the partners, including the Government of Kosovo. The investigative work should continue. We expect that the specialist court will be fully functional in 2015 and will bring those responsible for crimes against humanity and war crimes to account and ensure belated justice for victims and survivors.

The support of the international community in guiding the transformation process in the Western Balkans proved to be vital. Kosovo seems to be a good example of how important results can be achieved when there is concerted action among different international donors and actors.

Finally, given the progress thus far, my delegation believes that there is a need to review the current United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) reporting cycle in the Council, with a view to reducing its frequency and considering the drawdown in UNMIK in view of the developments on the ground.

Mr. Laro (Nigeria): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important debate. I also thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Zarif for his briefing on the recent developments in Kosovo. I acknowledge the presence of His Excellency Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, and Mr. Enver Hoxhaj, and I thank them for their statements.

The successful conduct of elections for the Kosovo Assembly on 8 June is a significant development. We take positive note of the negotiations on electoral reform, political dialogue with Belgrade and participation by Kosovo Serbs in their internal politics. We see merit in the early conclusion of those negotiations in order to enable the authorities of Pristina to focus on procedural challenges, including political dialogue with Belgrade.

We note that, while no high-level meetings were held during the reporting period, talks facilitated by the European Union (EU) were held at the technical level, with a focus on the implementation of the First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations, of 19 April 2013. We welcome the commitment of the new Government in Serbia to the EU-facilitated dialogue with Kosovo and the full implementation of the Agreement of 19 April 2013. That will no doubt reassure the international community of Serbia's desire to continue its quest for peaceful coexistence with Kosovo. We look forward to the resumption of high-level talks between both sides, once a new Government is formed in Priština.

It is essential, in the interest of peace, that unilateral action and inflammatory rhetoric be avoided in order to ease the security challenges faced by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) and the Kosovo police. We condemn the violent incidents in Mitrovica that resulted in both police and civilian casualties and damage to vehicles belonging to the Kosovo police, UNMIK and EULEX. We applaud the intervention for peace by the EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on 11 July and welcome the establishment of a working group that will see to the peaceful resolution of the ethnic tensions in Mitrovica.

In our statement in the previous debate on UNMIK (see S/PV.7183), we encouraged the unimpeded resettlement of minority returnees and internally displaced persons in Kosovo. In that regard, we take positive note of the voluntary return of 49 IDPs during the reporting period. We welcome the completion of UNMIK's confidence-building measures programme aimed at promoting reconciliation among the various communities. We call for the institution of similar projects to promote reintegration, education and access to services and economic opportunities for all.

Finally, we commend Special Representative Zarif and his team for their unrelenting efforts to promote peace and stability in Kosovo.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Zarif, for his briefing. I welcome the presence and statement of His Excellency Mr. Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia in today's meeting. I have also listened attentively to the statement of Mr. Hoxhaj.

China respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Serbia and appreciates Serbia's reasonable concerns about the question of Kosovo. Council resolution 1244 (1999) is the important legal basis for settling the question of Kosovo. China's view is that, in addressing the issue of Kosovo, it is imperative to uphold the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, work within the framework of the relevant Council resolutions and find an appropriate solution that is acceptable to both parties through dialogue and negotiation.

The security situation in Kosovo has remained mostly peaceful of late. However, violent incidents continue to take place in the north. China believes that all relevant parties should undertake concrete measures to protect the legitimate rights of all communities in Kosovo and promote intercommunal reconciliation. At the same time, all parties should adopt a prudent attitude, stay the course in resolving disputes and differences through dialogue and avoid any actions that may lead to complication or escalation of the situation.

China appreciates Serbia's active efforts in seeking a political settlement regarding the question of Kosovo. China welcomes and supports the continued efforts of both Belgrade and Priština towards maintaining and furthering the high-level political dialogue and in implementing the bilateral agreements already achieved. China believes that the continued efforts of both sides to promote a pragmatic, positive and constructive dialogue process and seek a lasting solution to the question of Kosovo will contribute to the maintenance of peace and security in the Balkans and all of Europe. The search for an appropriate settlement of the question of Kosovo through efforts to strengthen the harmonious coexistence of all communities and simultaneous economic and social development in Kosovo is in line with the common objective of the international community and the aim of our concerted efforts.

China appreciates the work of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) under the leadership of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Zarif. We support the continued implementation of the Security Council's mandate by the Mission. We hope that various international presences, including UNMIK, the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo and the Kosovo Force, will work in accordance with their respective mandates to strengthen coordination and cooperation and play a positive and constructive role in promoting an appropriate settlement of the question of Kosovo.

Mr. Nduhungirehe (Rwanda): Let me at the outset thank Mr. Farid Zarif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Kosovo, for his comprehensive briefing and for his continued leadership at the head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).

I also thank His Excellency Mr. Ivica Dačić, Deputy Prime Minster and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, and Mr. Enver Hoxhaj of Kosovo for their statements.

Rwanda welcomes the commitment of the new Government of Serbia to the dialogue with Pristina, facilitated by the European Union (EU), and to the full implementation of the First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations of 19 April 2013. We equally welcome the holding on 8 June of peaceful, transparent and well organized elections for the Assembly of Kosovo, following the dissolution of the previous Assembly. We commend the Kosovo authorities, working with the support of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, for the smooth organization of the elections. We extend our appreciation to the Kosovo police, which, in coordination with the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) and the Kosovo Force, provided security for the elections.

We note, however, that owing to electoral and political procedures on both sides, the EU-facilitated process slowed down, as no high-level meeting was held during the reporting period. But we are confident that the parties will soon resume dialogue to iron out the underlying differences in that respect, and we call for the leadership of the European Union in facilitating the dialogue. We believe it is one of the examples highlighting the crucial role that regional and subregional organizations can play in the maintenance of international peace and security.

We note that the security situation in Kosovo has remained generally calm and stable despite various incidents, such as the incident near the villages of Orlovac and Kushtovë/Košutovo, of which the Council was informed by the Special Representative. In northern Kosovo, we deplore the incidents that occurred in June in the area of the main Mitrovica bridge, which led to rising tensions and protests, during which 13 police officers and 12 civilians were injured. However, we are encouraged by the establishment by Belgrade and Priština of a working group, following a meeting held in July between both sides, under the auspices of the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy in Brussels, to discuss the matter. We hope that both sides will continue working together to avoid further security incidents.

Rwanda takes note with concern of the findings of the EULEX Special Investigative Task Force, as presented by its Chief Prosecutor on 29 July. We were also alarmed by reports of ethnic cleaning targeting minorities, organized by former senior officials of the Kosovo Liberation Army, as well as a climate of intimidation against current and potential witnesses. In that regard, we welcome the ratification by the Kosovo Assembly of the agreement between Kosovo and the EU establishing a specialized court to try cases arising from the findings of the task force. But it is important that the Government and the Assembly of Kosovo, as well as the European Union, take additional measures to expedite the establishment of the court in order to ensure that the perpetrators are held accountable.

It is unfortunate that the voluntary return of displaced persons to Kosovo remained low during the period under review. Nonetheless, we commend the Kosovo authorities for the implementation of the 2013/2014 confidence-building measures programme throughout the country, aimed at promoting genuine reconciliation among the communities. We believe that community-based initiatives and other projects, particularly those aimed at integrating minorities into the education system and into the public service, including the police, will eventually contribute to a higher number of returnees, thus fostering sustainable reconciliation.

In conclusion, Rwanda recognizes the commitment of Belgrade and Priština to the EU-facilitated dialogue, and we encourage both sides to remain constructively engaged, as we are convinced that the process will ultimately lead to long-term stability, reconciliation and development on both sides.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United Kingdom.

I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Kosovo, Mr. Farid Zarif, for his briefing today, not least because it is now very late at night for him, and for introducing the Secretary-General's quarterly report (S/2014/558). I am delighted to welcome Foreign Ministers Hoxhaj and Dačić to the Council.

The United Kingdom welcomes Kosovo's continued progress both internally and on the international stage. Kosovo is now recognized by well over half of the States Members of the United Nations. We encourage those countries that have not yet recognized it to do so. The United Kingdom commends Kosovo on the peaceful conduct of its elections on 8 June and the fact that both Kosovo and Serbia encouraged the people to vote. We hope that new leadership in Pristina will be decided soon, and in accordance with the law.

We welcome the new Government of Serbia's commitment to continuing the high-level dialogue with Pristina facilitated by the European Union. The normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia is integral to both countries' European Union accession paths. The full implementation of the dialogue Agreement is necessary to unlock progress. We encourage both sides to resume higher-level meetings on further agreements once the new Government of Kosovo is in place, and urge that continued progress be made at the working level in this interim period. Both sides must work to implement existing agreements. This is a priority, especially for those elements that require further unilateral work, such as telecommunications and the adjustment of relevant legal frameworks.

We condemn the violence that arose during the demonstrations in South Mitrovica on 22 June. We join the Secretary-General in commending the professionalism shown by the Kosovo police, the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) and the Kosovo Force in responding to the violence. It is important for the continued progress of the dialogue that communities are consulted about decisions that affect them, in order to lay the ground for their peaceful and cooperative engagement with such changes. The United Kingdom welcomes the extension of EULEX's mandate for a further two years, especially

its work continuing the strengthening of Kosovo's rule-of-law and justice institutions.

We welcome the recent Kosovo police operation on 11 August to arrest 40 individuals alleged to have been fighting in Syria and Iraq on charges of terrorism, and the seven arrests that have been made since. We applaud the Kosovo authorities' determination to tackle extremism and foreign fighters, and encourage more close cooperation between police and security services in the region, and more widely, to deal with such risks.

Like others, we have taken careful note of the 29 July report issued by the Chief Prosecutor of the European Union Special Investigative Task Force, Mr. Clint Williamson, following his team's two-and-a-half-year investigation of the allegations in the 2010 report by Council of Europe Rapporteur Marty. We welcome Kosovo's renewed agreement on cooperating with establishing judicial proceedings for the investigation and the European Union's agreement to support a court through EULEX.

Finally, given Kosovo's continued progress and the improved relationship between Pristina and Belgrade, the United Kingdom agrees with Lithuania that we could meet less often in this format. We should not lose our focus, but we should recognize progress when we see it.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to Mr. Hoxhaj, who has asked to make a further statement.

Mr. Hoxhaj: I am aware that this has been a fairly long meeting, so I will be fairly brief. I would like to make a couple of points in response to the statement made today by the representative of the Russian delegation.

Kosovo is seriously concerned about the escalation of the conflicts in Iraq and Syria and about Russia's increasing aggression against Ukraine. Like the rest of the international community, Kosovo is shocked by the brutal acts of violence being committed in those countries and has condemned them. Regarding Syria, a small number of citizens from our region have participated in the ongoing conflict there. Kosovo has condemned them for taking part in a foreign conflict and has taken preventive and legal measures against them. Some of them have been arrested.

We are also against the participation of citizens of Serbia in support of the pro-Russian separatist groups in eastern Ukraine. I do not think that the Russian Federation is in any position today to preach about the situation in Kosovo or to express concerns about our region. Russia is crossing every red line of international order, law and practice. We condemned Russia's occupation of Crimea as we now condemn the current aggression in eastern Ukraine. Because of this, Russia has lost most of the international credibility and legitimacy that would allow it to preach about international peace, justice and stability. Russia is currently becoming the main threat to international peace and stability.

Here I would also like to reiterate the concern of the Republic of Kosovo about the Russian-Serbian air-force drills that have been announced for 2015, and other military activities organized between those two countries, as a dangerous development for security and stability in south-eastern Europe.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Serbia, who has asked to make a further statement.

Mr. Dačić (Serbia) (*spoke in Serbian; interpretation provided by the delegation*): I am surprised at Mr. Hoxhaj's words. Kosovo is not in a position to lecture anyone about international law, considering that it unilaterally declared independence from our country without any kind of agreement. Do we want to re-examine the past or talk about the future? I do not know why Mr. Hoxhaj is involving Serbia in his discussion with Russia. If he has something to say against Russia, what kind of joint Russian-Serbian activity is he talking about? He is misusing this meeting of the Security Council for the purposes of purveying classic propaganda.

When we were in Berlin two years ago, we talked about peace and security and about consolidating and normalizing the situation. Does Mr. Hoxhaj think this is his contribution to that? In the more than 10 times I have been here with Prime Minister Thaçi I have never discussed such things with him. I would therefore like to ask every other member of the Government of Kosovo to try not to be more Catholic than the Pope. I want our relations to be normalized. Serbia does not participate in any acts of aggression anywhere in the world. If our citizens go to Syria and Iraq or our Islamist citizens participate in jihadist activities, we would condemn that most strongly, and the same goes

for those who volunteer to be on the side of pro-Russian forces in Ukraine.

But I believe that what Mr. Hoxhaj is doing in using this Security Council meeting to lecture others, including Serbia, is a classic example of abuse of that privilege. Today we are discussing Kosovo and the situation of human rights there. We are discussing the commitments that Kosovo has made under the Brussels Agreement that I myself signed, together with Hashim Thaçi. What about the Agreement's stipulations on an amnesty law and on the creation of a community of Serbian municipalities? What is going on with that? I am trying to arrive at agreements and an understanding so that we can move forward and make progress.

I think the representative of France put it best when he spoke to Mr. Hoxhaj in Pristina, but I agree that what he said also applies to Belgrade. He said that we cannot face our future if we do not shine a light on our past — but do we want to continue to live in the past? We want to reach a political solution with Kosovo. Does the representative of Kosovo believe that the solution has already been found? Kosovo unilaterally declared independence, which some other countries now support. The President of the Security Council invited all members to recognize the independence of Kosovo, and I did not react, although I believe that it is very much in contravention of international law. Yesterday, Council members discussed the issue of declarations of independence in other parts of the world without the agreement of the country that is being divided. Today, however, we talked about the fact that Serbia has really paid a lot for its mistakes. Are we going to continue to live in the past, or does the representative of Kosovo want to move forward? Otherwise I do not see the reason for this discussion.

I believe that the representative of Kosovo and I will not resolve the world's problems. We will not resolve the crises in Syria, Ukraine or in Iraq. However, let us resolve our own crisis. I advise the representative of Kosovo to devote himself to that endeavour.

I have never exercised the right of reply in the past. It was not until now, when the representative of Kosovo did so, that I, too, am now replying. I think we should be careful about what words we utter in this Chamber. I did not want to insult any member of the Security Council. I wanted to be nice and polite to my colleagues with whom I participated in the Brussels negotiation process. I had several meetings with Prime Minister Thaçi. Together we signed the Brussels Agreement. Yesterday we were in Berlin, where we discussed the future with Angela Merkel and the representatives of all of the countries of the Western Balkans. However, if our future is to be determined only by what happened in the past, it is useless to talk about the future.

We respect everything that Mr. Hoxhaj said. I think that he is just trying to provoke a discussion about something that does not really have to do with our mutual relations. I do not want to give myself too much historical importance by saying that my decision is crucial for the resolution of international crises.

The President: The representative of the Russian Federation has asked to make a further statement.

Mr. Iliichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I believe that Mr. Hoxhaj's comments are an attempt to lead the discussion away from the topics that we have been discussing today.

With regard to the events in Crimea, I would like to recall that over 80 per cent of voters in Crimea took part in the referendum there, unlike in the elections in Kosovo, which some members of the Council have said involved a high level of participation and in which only 41 per cent of voters took part. As a result of the referendum in Crimea, over 90 per cent of voters voted in favour of independence. Only then was a decision made to include Crimea as part of the Russian Federation.

With regard to the comments that Mr. Hoxhaj did not like concerning the fact that the most recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2014/558) does not mention the participation of Kosovars in the conflict in Syria and Iraq and the fact that Kosovo has adopted legislation that prohibits such activity, the point was to draw attention to the fact that in his previous report (S/2014/305) the Secretary-General specifically mentioned those issues, and today, in spite of the fact that the report was in fact published two weeks late, those facts were not duly reflected.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

Before adjourning the meeting, as this is the last scheduled meeting of the Council for the month of August, I want to express my delegation's very sincere appreciation first of all to the Secretariat. When one sits in the President's chair, one realizes quite how much the Secretariat does quietly behind the scenes, and I for one hugely appreciate it. I also want to express

my appreciation, and that of my delegation, for the interpreters who have worked extremely hard, but who have had a particularly tough time this month, as we have enforced the five-minute rule. That has meant, however, that some delegations, instead of shortening their statements, have read them faster.

I would also like to thank very much the members of the Council. This has been an exceptionally busy month. We have had six resolutions before the Council in the month of August and five unscheduled meetings. We have covered some very controversial issues, including some thematic issues, that have required real compromise. Therefore, I really want to thank all Council members and their teams for the spirit of compromise and dynamism that they have shown, which has allowed us to get through the enormous amount of business.

I also want to wish the United States delegation very good luck for the month of September. I hope they will not take this the wrong way, but I hope I do not see Council members over the weekend.

The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.