



Security Council

Seventy-fourth year

8655th meeting

Thursday, 31 October 2019, 3.20 p.m.

New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Matjila/Mr. Mabhongo (South Africa)

Members:

Belgium	Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve
China	Mr. Wu Haitao
Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Moriko
Dominican Republic	Mr. Trullols Yabra
Equatorial Guinea	Mrs. Mele Colifa
France	Mrs. Gueguen
Germany	Mr. Heusgen
Indonesia	Mr. Syihab
Kuwait	Mr. Alsabab
Peru	Mr. Duclos
Poland	Ms. Wronecka
Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Clay
United States of America	Mr. Barkin

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 in Kosovo (S/2019/797)

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19-34419 (E)



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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 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/2019/797)

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. Zahir Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Vlora Çitaku 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/2019/797, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo.

I now give the floor to Mr. Tanin.

Mr. Tanin: The holding of early general elections in Kosovo on 6 October, which gave the people an opportunity to select their representatives from among 1,067 parliamentary candidates, including 343 women, has brought about the most significant change in Kosovo's political landscape in 12 years. Allow me to make some observations about those election, in which the turnout was the highest since 2010. The decision to call a snap election came at a time that was characterized by internal political division, a broken unity with the governing coalition and, most importantly, public perception of the inability to deliver on promises to the people of Kosovo. The preliminary results point to a victory by the opposition Vetevendosje, or Self-

Determination, party and the Democratic League of Kosovo. The two parties are currently exploring coalition options.

The change in the political environment was manifested by the decision of most voters to rally behind unconventional political candidates who do not share the background or vision of past leaders. The Kosovo Serb majority areas have recorded the highest voter turnout in recent times, confirming a trend of active participation by that community in Kosovo elections. The Serbian List may become the only Kosovo-Serb parliamentary group represented in the legislature. Overall, the elections were assessed positively by international observers but challenges such as campaign financing, intimidation and voter pressure in the Kosovo Serb-majority areas were also highlighted.

In terms of women's political participation, the election marked the first time that a major political party in Kosovo had nominated a woman as the candidate for Prime Minister. Other encouraging signs were campaign pledges made towards greater gender parity in Government and the high turnout among young voters.

I remain hopeful that the new leadership can use the momentum of the election to deliver on its promises to the people by advancing the rule of law, fighting against corruption and organized crime and tackling unemployment. The international community also expects the new leaders to affirm their commitment to the negotiations with Belgrade and to ensure that obstacles to dialogue are removed. A particular effort should be made to ensure that political rhetoric and actions are conducive to the resumption of and progress in the dialogue after a year of stalled negotiations.

I welcome the continuous efforts by many international players to give new momentum to the political dialogue. While I am convinced that an agreement between Belgrade and Pristina can be sustainable only if it is based on responsible action and local ownership of the process, it is also imperative that during the transition in Kosovo the international community stand united and firm in its support towards a viable agreement. Let me turn to an issue that was raised during the previous debate on Kosovo on 10 June (see S/PV.8541).

As the Council is aware, on 28 May two staff members of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) were arrested by the

Kosovo police. The arrest took place in the course of a police operation targeting smuggling and organized crime. As I told the Council on 10 June, UNMIK stands fully behind the efforts of the Kosovo institutions to combat organized crime and corruption.

I wish to recall that during their arrest, both staff members were badly beaten and injured. They were subsequently detained and later released. In addition, criminal proceedings were instituted against both staff members, including a detention hearing against one of them. To ascertain the facts, I established an investigation team, comprised of United Nations Secretariat staff members from outside UNMIK with extensive investigative and legal expertise.

The team carried out a thorough investigation, interviewing more than 50 witnesses and examining photographic, video and documentary evidence. International partners and Kosovo institutions, including the Kosovo police, cooperated with the investigation. The investigation team has now submitted its report to me. These are the facts.

The investigation team found no evidence to support the accusation of wrongdoing by the two UNMIK staff members. The team confirmed that both were on official duty when they were arrested. Their arrest and detention occurred despite their having clearly identified themselves as United Nations staff. The team found substantial evidence of the use of excessive force by the Kosovo police: Mr. Krasnoshchekov had suffered fractures in the back and side of his skull, cheekbone and upper jawbone and was assessed to have acute stress and anxiety-related depressive reactions. Mr. Dimovic suffered multiple contusions and skin excoriations on his head and thorax, in addition to hearing loss in both ears and a deviated septum. He has also been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder.

Without the prior authorization of the United Nations, the Kosovo police drove and retained an UNMIK vehicle, and forensic examinations were conducted on an UNMIK-owned telephone and two SIM cards. The arrest and detention of Kosovo staff members while on official duty and the institution of criminal proceedings against them were in clear violation of their immunity from arrest, detention and legal process. The use of excessive force, interference with Mission property and the continuation of criminal proceedings against staff members are in clear breach of the applicable legal framework, including resolution

1244 (1999), UNMIK regulations and international human rights law standards.

The international staff members were also declared *persona non grata* — a concept that is not applicable, to or in respect of, a United Nations person. These actions are unacceptable and should be deplored. All ongoing criminal proceedings against the two staff members must therefore be terminated immediately. The status, privileges and immunities of United Nations personnel must be fully respected at all times. The Kosovo authorities should investigate the Kosovo police officers involved in the incident to ensure appropriate accountability, and steps should be taken by the institutions of Kosovo to ensure that such incidents will not be repeated.

In recent days, UNMIK has engaged with the Kosovo authorities on the outcome of the investigation. I am pleased to report that the discussions have been taking place in a positive spirit. As long as the Council maintains the mandate for international presence in Kosovo, I look forward to the institutions of Kosovo and UNMIK operating with full respect for one another. We are proud that UNMIK played a central role in the formation of the Kosovo police and judiciary, and we are hopeful that they intend to address any failure in their operations and to act in accordance with international norms and standards.

In advancing our mandate, we continue to foster the rule of law and human rights, an essential element of which is access to justice for every individual. An UNMIK-funded legal aid centre provides free legal assistance to people from vulnerable groups. In support of court infrastructure across Kosovo, we continue to assist the investigation into the integration of the judiciary in northern Kosovo. In addition, we are assisting the local authorities in northern Kosovo to establish the first-ever shelter in the region for survivors of gender-based violence. We have also launched a platform that brings together civil society organizations across Kosovo to empower people in advocacy and grass-roots monitoring of their fundamental rights.

Within our trust-building framework, which remains central to our vision, the Mission has advanced support for language rights and cooperation with the Language Commissioner of Kosovo and the International Organization for Migration. We have engaged language experts from Belgrade and Pristina

to prepare the first Albanian-Serbian dictionary since 1984, which is available online.

Today marks 19 years since the Council adopted resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. On this occasion, I would like to underline the importance of a gender-inclusive and responsive political process. Our Mission continues to support such efforts with women leaders and international partners, including UN-Women and the European Union, through concrete projects.

I would like to reiterate the Secretary-General's call for assistance for the most vulnerable communities in Kosovo through contributions to the United Nations trust fund established to support the Ashkali, Egyptian and Roma communities in Kosovo. I welcome the initial contribution to the trust fund received earlier this year. However, I would urge the making of additional contributions to enable a meaningful response to the pressing needs of the affected communities.

As we approach the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, we are reminded of the central importance of "we the peoples". These first three words of the Charter of the United Nations remind us that the vital work of Governments in the maintenance of international peace and security can endure only if anchored in strong societal foundations. This vision of our founders inspires UNMIK's work.

I wish to express my deep appreciation to the Security Council for its sustained engagement and continuous support for our Mission.

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

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia.

Mr. Dačić (Serbia) (*spoke in Serbian; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): For seven long years now, I have taken part in the meetings of the Security Council. This is my twenty-second statement. Regrettably, this is the twenty-second time that I have had to say that nothing has been done in Kosovo to help the Serbs and other non-Albanians lead decent human lives there. My obligation is therefore to continue to speak on behalf of those whose voices are not heard, whose rights are not respected and who have not been able to return home for more than 20 years.

Some of those present may remember that the phrase "standards before status" was used for many years in the Security Council. All of a sudden, following the unilateral declaration of independence by so-called Kosovo, the standards of respect for human rights and the rule of law have disappeared from the Council's considerations. Today standards are a rare topic, given that, by and large, most of the discussions in this organ are focused on the need to achieve a so-called lasting solution for the question of Kosovo and Metohija. Nevertheless, it is the duty of all of us not to allow the people of Kosovo and Metohija to be held hostage to a solution that we have yet to find.

Even before any agreement is reached, the physical safety, freedom of movement, employment and property rights, the right to return, religious freedom and the right to participate in political life of the people of Kosovo and Metohija must be ensured. Ordinary people in Goraždevac, Orahovac, Klina, Mušutište, Zubin Potok and Zvezdan have no time to wait for us to reach an agreement, for they have to go on with their lives. Unfortunately, as elsewhere, the quest for solutions to conflicts is not an easy or short-term process.

The Brussels Agreement that I signed in my capacity as Prime Minister six years ago was perhaps a ray of hope. The Agreement was the result of difficult negotiations and of even more difficult political decisions. It was the manifestation of my country's willingness to compromise, and it has been borne out by our implementation of the Agreement. That is why I can credibly say that the people of Kosovo must not be dependent on Pristina's whims and one-sided acts aimed at aborting the continuation of dialogue.

Let me be clear. Serbia is ready to resume negotiations as of tomorrow, provided that the conditions are right. Let me remind the Council that last November, Pristina decided to increase tariffs on goods from central Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina by 100 per cent. That decision was taken in the wake of so-called Kosovo's unsuccessful attempt to join INTERPOL. Considering that two weeks ago we saw Pristina abandon its renewed attempt to join INTERPOL, I now wonder what the purpose of the tariffs was and how Pristina justifies them. Instead of resuming the dialogue after two years of failure, Pristina submitted a new application to INTERPOL only two months later. At INTERPOL's General Assembly, held in Santiago earlier this month, it decided to take back the application at the very beginning of deliberations,

once it realized that it would end in an even bigger debacle. I spoke with 82 Foreign Ministers before the General Assembly, and far from supporting Kosovo's actions, many disparaged them.

I want to emphasize once again that since the beginning of the Brussels dialogue, Serbia has insisted that all matters, including the issue of membership in international organizations, should be subject to negotiations. The constructive way in which the question of Kosovo and Metohija's participation in regional forums was resolved, through dialogue and mutually acceptable agreements, provides telling evidence of the advantage of resolving all issues by agreement. The damages arising from these illegal measures amount to several hundred million dollars and increase with each passing day.

Let me point out that attempts in this regard to establish a false equivalency between Belgrade's and Pristina's responsibilities for the breakdown in the dialogue — and the explanation that the decision on tariffs was taken in response to Serbia's campaign to have so-called Kosovo's recognition withdrawn — make no sense and are unacceptable. Serbia's actions in that regard are motivated by the campaign by so-called Kosovo for recognition since its unilateral declaration of independence, with the wholehearted assistance of some Council members. Accordingly, if Council members are calling on Serbia to cease its campaign, they should also call on Pristina to stop its lobbying, and they should stop doing it themselves.

While they are asking Serbia to stop, representatives of so-called Kosovo are working all over the world hand in glove with Albanian diplomats on the recognition of its independence. While the Council is asking Serbia to stop its campaign, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation is calling on all Muslim countries to recognize so-called Kosovo. While the Council is asking Serbia to stop its campaign, representatives of the United States and the United Kingdom in particular are calling on Member States at nearly every Security Council meeting to recognize the independence of so-called Kosovo. We may be small, but we are not dumb.

Let me remind those who allege that our activities, and the withdrawal by 15 countries of their recognition of so-called Kosovo, are undermining the dialogue that after the negotiations began in 2012, 25 countries recognized the unilateral declaration of independence while all along Serbia participated in the dialogue,

despite Pristina's refusal to fulfil its obligations under the Brussels Agreement. How can the Council say now that the withdrawal of recognition undermines dialogue? Serbia continued to pursue dialogue even though Pristina refused to fulfil its obligations under the Brussels Agreement for more than six years, including through its failure to establish the community of Serb municipalities. It was not Serbia that discontinued the dialogue.

I repeat, trade blockades are virtually unheard of in today's world. We can only hope that Pristina will realize that it cannot achieve anything without an agreement with Serbia, that unilateral acts diminish the prospects for solutions and that there is no alternative to dialogue. For its part, Serbia is ready for that moment.

Allow me to say a few words about the recent general elections held in Kosovo and Metohija. Before they took place, Serbia warned that the election campaign would be used for political purposes and for propaganda hype against the Serbs. Regrettably, that is what came to pass. The Serbs were attacked, their shrines were vandalized, and there were multiple provocations. Nevertheless, despite these incidents and such administrative obstacles as a ban on the use of Serbian documents in the election process — despite the fact that their use had been permitted in previous elections — and a ban on Serbian officials entering the provinces, and other bans, Serbs participated in the elections and managed to survive in Kosovo and Metohija and fight for their future.

We saw that Pristina was not pleased with the election results, and in the days following the elections, it once again attempted to meddle by fabricating stories and incidents such as the alleged poisoning of members of the Central Election Commission through contact with election materials brought from central Serbia. After melodramatic scenes reminiscent of forensic television series parading investigators in surgical masks and gowns as if Ebola or a smallpox epidemic were involved, blood tests done in Pristina on those allegedly infected showed that there had been no poisoning. The epidemic was one of lies churned out by Pristina. Manipulations of this type may have worked in the past, but this time around the international community will surely recognize Pristina's true intentions and call them out.

The issue is very simple: either poisoning occurred or it did not. Doctors in Pristina established that there

was no poisoning. Why, then, were poll workers dressed in space suits or the clothes we have seen on TV shows about Ebola while they were counting Serbian votes? Was that racism towards Serbian voters? We are asking for an answer. When Albanians vote in Serbia, should someone count votes as Serbian votes are counted in Kosovo? Is this the democracy and the democratic society the Security Council fought for when it supported Kosovo?

The situation in so-called Kosovo and its society is illustrated by the rise of its new leader, Albin Kurti — a man who throughout his entire political career has called for the creation of a greater Albania. After he won the largest number of votes, we have seen him with the Albanian flag, not the flag of so-called Kosovo. He wants to be the Prime Minister of so-called Kosovo by flying the flag of Albania rather than the flag of Kosovo.

We therefore have a very serious question. If some diplomats from countries on the Security Council are photographed against that background, does that mean that members of the diplomatic community approve of those intentions? For years, the Council has asserted that Serbia is undermining the territorial integrity of Kosovo. But now that its representatives are sitting in Pristina in front of the Albanian flag with the newly elected Prime Minister of so-called Kosovo, who denies the territorial integrity of Kosovo? Where was the flag of so-called Kosovo in this picture? Why are Council members silent about this? The next time they visit my country, what would happen if I received them under the flag of Republika Srpska from Bosnia and Herzegovina? Would they be silent, as they are now?

I would like the Council to remind its diplomats that they are ambassadors to Pristina, not Tirana. I am being put in a very unpleasant position. It will be difficult to defend the territorial integrity of so-called Kosovo when Albin Kurti, who is supposed to be the next prime minister of Kosovo, says that he does not want to talk to the Serbian List, which, as the party that won in the parliamentary election, is the legitimate representative of the Kosovo and Metohija Serbs. How can a prime minister refuse to accept the results of an election because they are not to his liking? All the agreements reached to date will be re-examined once he assumes power and declares that the most important part of the Brussels Agreement, the establishment of a community of Serbs, is a dead letter.

Albin Kurti's statements have become increasingly sharp lately. He has said that he is going to demand that Serbia pay war reparations for Kosovo's alleged financial claims. Perhaps he is not familiar with the fact that Serbia has been paying annuities on the nearly \$1 billion in loans taken out by users in Kosovo and Metohija. If it is an independent State, as it claims, why does it not pay its own debts?

All of these counterproductive actions and rhetoric are very far from creating the atmosphere necessary for overcoming existing differences and building confidence among communities. I firmly believe that all who oppose dialogue are determined to undermine both Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo and Metohija. I hope that after the formation of the new Government, Pristina will remove the tariffs and thereby create conditions conducive to dialogue and the quest for peaceful compromise solutions to all outstanding issues. I also hope that Pristina will do away with the policies of hatred, intolerance and discrimination that radicalize the Albanian community, for which the Pristina Government bears outright responsibility.

The consequences of such policies are patently evident. The past year has been very difficult for Serbs and other non-Albanians in Kosovo and Metohija. The right of Serbs to life, freedom and property has been targeted. According to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Mission in Kosovo, there were 183 inter-ethnic incidents in the first half of this year, which is almost 30 per cent more than in the preceding six months. These facts must not be ignored.

The most dangerous methods of intimidation used against the Serbian population are the frequent raids in northern Kosovo and Metohija carried out under the guise of anti-organized-crime operations by the special Regional Operational Support Unit police. After the incident of 28 May, which we discussed in the Security Council in June (see S/PV.8541), there was another special-unit operation two weeks ago in which arrests were made. I want to explain that the raids in northern Kosovo and Metohija by heavily armed units composed exclusively of ethnic Albanians, conducted on various pretexts for various reasons using excessive force, are merely provocations with immense potential to destabilize the already fragile security situation on the ground. It is of paramount importance in that regard that the Brussels Agreement be strictly honoured and that the Kosovo Force (KFOR) act decisively to deter these kinds of actions, which may increase instability

and spark a spiral of violence that would be hard to control.

Let me remind the Council that in addition to the Serbs who have been injured, a Russian national, Mikhail Krasnoshchekov, was declared *persona non grata* by Pristina, in contravention of every possible rule and regulation, while Mr. Dejan Dimovic continues to be the subject of judicial proceedings. What are the Serbs of Kosovo and Metohija to expect if personnel from international missions are treated this way? I call on all Council members to condemn these unlawful acts by Pristina and demand that proceedings against the staff of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) cease.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Secretary-General for his report (S/2019/797). I would ask the Council to pay attention to the report's conclusions because at the most recent Council meeting on this subject, the UNMIK staff members were accused of abusing their power and of not being on duty when they were arrested, and it was said that no violence was used against them. However, the report says otherwise. They were on duty and force was used against them, in breach of their privileges and immunities as members of UNMIK. They were gravely injured and one of them was declared *persona non grata*. The conclusion in the report and by Mr. Tanin is that those responsible should be brought to justice, which Serbia was not expecting. We do expect the Security Council to respect the Secretary-General's Mission, reports and expertise, and that charges will be brought against those who breached the immunity of the UNMIK staff members.

Let me draw the Council's attention to a very important issue mentioned in the report, which is the return to Kosovo and Metohija of foreign terrorist fighters and their families from the Middle East, and Syria in particular. There are more than 250 of them, the greatest number of members of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham in any country in Europe. As the Secretary-General notes in his report, there have been arrests of people who have attempted to set up terrorist groups in Kosovo and Metohija, North Macedonia and Albania, with a view to attacking the Kosovo and Metohija Serbs and KFOR, which validates our warning about the real danger of terrorism not only in Kosovo and Metohija and the Balkans but throughout Europe.

The report of the Secretary-General also provides telling evidence of Pristina's arrogance with respect

to the Serbian cultural and religious heritage in Kosovo and Metohija and the flagrant desecration of monuments and attempts to pirate cultural identity. Novo Brdo, Dečani, Bogorodica Ljeviška and other cultural and religious shrines have never been nor will ever be Kosovar, regardless of Pristina's efforts to create a chasm between communities in Kosovo and Metohija and to usurp and falsify history so as to erase every trace of the centuries-long Serbian presence in Kosovo and Metohija.

This is the idea behind falsehoods such as the nonsense uttered by Vlora Çitaku at the June meeting, when she referred to decolonization, with no political or moral foundation. Let me remind the Council that Kosovo and Metohija have never once been mentioned in any United Nations document in connection with decolonization. That is an insult to all States that have been victims of colonization and have had to go through the process of decolonization.

Proof of a serious outbreak of the mendacity epidemic in Kosovo and Metohija today is the big lie proffered by Ms. Çitaku in these Council meetings that Albanians in Serbia had no right to use the Albanian language and script. The document I am now showing the Council, which was issued by the Serbian authorities in the 1990s, when Vlora Çitaku was 10 years old, is evidence of that lie. It is a birth certificate issued in Kosovo and Metohija at that time. It is written in two languages, first in Albanian and then in Serbian, and it says, "Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia" and "birth certificate". Would Ms. Çitaku like to see it? She had one just like it, in Albanian and Serbian. How can she not be ashamed of lying about being unable to use Albanian in Serbia? Even Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija had documents in both languages, first in Albanian and then in Serbian.

With regard to documents, I would like to point out that Ms. Çitaku is still a citizen of the Republic of Serbia. Her name was entered in the Pristina birth register for the year 1980 under the number 6194. If Council members do not believe me, I can show them the entry. Perhaps she will now say that while she never asked to be released from her Serbian citizenship, her Serbian citizenship is irrelevant to her. She should discuss that with the representative of Germany in the Chamber today, as his country requires every Kosovo Albanian to submit a certificate of release from Serbian citizenship.

Pristina continues to spread misinformation and manipulate facts, even here at the United Nations. Look at how many people who work at the United Nations with Serbian citizenship are actually Albanian. How is it that when people want to get a job or claim their rights, or when Serbia has to repay their loans, they are Serbian? And yet while trying to fight for Kosovo, Ms. Çitaku should have asked to be released from her Serbian citizenship, but she has not, and she should know that it is not good to speak as she does about her own country.

Pristina claims that there have been 20,000 victims of conflict-related sexual violence, but its numbers are not supported even by its own commission set up to establish the status of victims of violence. The total number of applications received so far is 1,057, of which 406 have been granted survivor status. Let me point out once again that Serbia is firmly committed to establishing the facts and to punishing the perpetrators of these horrible crimes. I reiterate that we have called constantly for justice for all victims and for the depoliticization of the issue. The report before us shows that the numbers are quite different from the 20,000 victims claimed.

The report states that the reparation process falls short of being fully inclusive, needs a strengthened, rights-based approach, and currently excludes cases of sexual violence that occurred in the aftermath of the conflict. Serbia firmly believes that every crime should be punished, and we have cooperated with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia to that end. We hope that the Specialist Chambers, which have already summonsed 110 former Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) members, will soon issue their first indictments and that justice will finally be served for all the victims of the conflict in Kosovo and Metohija.

The review of the situation on the ground gives us reason to believe that the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, KFOR and UNMIK, with mandates as defined in resolution 1244 (1999), play a key role in ensuring the physical safety and fate of many in Kosovo and Metohija. As Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs Miguel de Serpa Soares pointed out in his briefing to the Council in June, UNMIK's legal framework continues to apply. We must therefore continue to discuss Kosovo and Metohija in the Security Council. The importance of the issue is

evidenced by the fact that the United States appointed two representatives to address it.

I know that Council members have prepared statements, and some will say that we do not need UNMIK anymore. Both sides will be called on to resume the dialogue, and some will extol the democratic achievements of so-called Kosovo. I would ask, however, that instead we proceed to discuss the issue of Kosovo and Metohija in a matter-of-fact manner. We have not had such discussions in the Security Council for years. But I have asked some very pertinent questions in our meetings and I will ask them again. Is it acceptable to the Council that democratic institutions do not implement agreements and fail to abide by their commitments? Will the international community stand aside and allow the Brussels Agreement and the community of Serb municipalities to truly remain a dead letter, as Kurti keeps telling us? Can the Council accept the daily intimidation of returnees, and attacks and other forms of discrimination against members of non-majority communities, as a normal state of affairs? What is the Council's response to the provocations, incidents, assaults and injuries, the stoning of buses, the destruction of clinics, the desecration of churches and tombstones, hate speech and KLA graffiti on Serbian houses? Does the return of 1.9 per cent of internally displaced Serbs meet the threshold of respect for human rights? Does it mean that the expulsion of 200,000 Serbs is a closed chapter now, never to be reopened?

Could the Council please make an effort to answer those very relevant questions? It is not I who am owed the answers to them but the Serbian children in Kosovo and Metohija whose future will most certainly be bereft of fundamental human rights. The Council owes it to them, to the Serbs living in enclaves, the internally displaced and the Serbian Orthodox nuns living their lives behind barbed wire. Serbia will continue to bring the trials and tribulations of these people, as well as violations of international law, to the attention of the international community. However, we will also continue to demonstrate in good faith our dedication to peace and to the quest for a compromise solution with a view to making the space where Serbs and Albanians have lived together for centuries a better place to live in the twenty-first century.

The President: I now give the floor to Ms. Çitaku.

Ms. Çitaku: It is a great honour to be in the Security Council Chamber once again on behalf of the

youngest democracy in Europe, the Republic of Kosovo. Nevertheless, I must admit that it is neither pleasurable nor particularly productive to sit here and waste the Council's valuable time, listening to representatives of our northern neighbour tell their same old tales of a parallel universe. Therefore, as befits the importance of this occasion, I will share with the Council, as I always do, nothing but facts.

I must say that I appreciate my Serbian colleagues' interest in Kosovar political figures, although I must also say it borders on the obsessive. I am proud of my heritage and my past. I am a proud ethnic Albanian and citizen of Kosovo. I am not sure that the same can be said about Mr. Dačić.

My presence here today is not a sign of crisis but of confidence. While the long shadows of conflict continue to chase us, we meet today in an atmosphere of rising hope. On 6 October, Kosovo successfully held its fourth parliamentary elections since it declared independence. These elections were not extraordinary for their organization alone but were special in many ways. For the first time in our history, a new generation of citizens — children who were born in freedom and raised in an independent country, Kosovars who did not know war — had a chance to cast their ballots and elect their future representatives.

Twenty years ago, 18-year-old Kosovars were refugees, subject to the most brutal of ethnic cleansing campaigns. Today, 18-year-old Kosovars are proud citizens of Kosovo and agents of change. To a large extent, this paradigm shift is a product of the efforts of the United Nations and its various agencies that helped us rebuild our country from the ashes and devastation of war. We will be forever grateful to all of them for being our voice when we did not have one. We will never forget the support that they lent us in our darkest hour of need. They should indeed take pride in how far Kosovo has come.

Democracy is not easy. But Kosovo has consistently proved that it is up to the task. After a competitive and cordial campaign characterized by robust debate and a plurality of ideas, Kosovo held free and fair elections with record-high participation from all communities. If that is not a sufficient testament to the maturity of our democracy, then the expeditious roll-out of the results and the manner in which the candidates greeted them should speak volumes. The humility of the winners'

acceptance was paralleled only by the grace with which the losers conceded, without drama or contestation.

During the electoral process, Kosovo's Central Election Commission took all the precautions necessary to ensure that each ballot box was treated with adequate care. However, the fact of the matter is that six commissioners had to be hospitalized because they exhibited worrisome symptoms after counting votes from a specific set of ballot boxes. We are not pointing fingers in any direction. However, considering the difficulties that these circumstances present, and especially given the complexity of the historical context, the truth is that extraordinary measures had to be taken. Nonetheless, Kosovo authorities made absolutely sure that every last vote was counted, no matter what.

I am not suggesting that there is cause for self-satisfaction here, but there is cause for hope and faith in our democracy. The parties that received the most votes during the recent elections, Vetëvendosje and the Democratic League of Kosovo, are currently in the process of negotiating the formation of a new coalition Government, which is on track to be concluded without delay. Accordingly, the overall assessment is that the climate of the electoral process was one of a healthy competition of ideas, with one exception, the Serbian citizens of Kosovo. Unfortunately, members of the Serbian community were threatened, intimidated and pressured to vote for one particular Serbian party. These violations were documented and reported by international observer missions. On 8 October, the European Union Election Observation Mission warned that the campaign had been marred by intimidation targeting non-Srpska Lista candidates and supporters.

Needless to say, there is only one Government that is perpetrating the disfranchisement of Serbs in Kosovo, and that is the Government sitting in Belgrade. The Government of Serbia is under the wrongful impression that Serbs in Kosovo are an instrument of its jingoistic foreign policy and not free citizens of Kosovo whose rights they are infringing on. These intimidation tactics are not a novelty. We see them being used every day on Serbian members of the Kosovo Security Force (KSF), who are constantly subjected to incredible levels of pressure and harassment. Their houses are attacked with grenades and their families are terrorized. Just last month, two Serbian KSF officers were unnecessarily detained for hours by Serbian authorities while travelling in Serbia with their families. I would

also like to remind the Council of what happened to one local Serbian leader who dared to speak his mind independently from Belgrade. Mr. Oliver Ivanović was assassinated in January 2018. The Kosovo police has since carried out a thorough investigation of his murder, questioning over 100 suspects and arresting several of them. Unfortunately, the main suspect remains in hiding. Can anybody guess where? He is hiding in Serbia. These kinds of practices must come to an end once and for all.

I want to take this opportunity to shed light on a topic that has been misinterpreted for far too long by our Serbian colleagues, which is the number of Serbian citizens living in Kosovo. For over two decades, we have tolerated the creative accounting of the Serbian State. Over and over again, we have heard its claims that 200,000 Serbs fled Kosovo after the liberation in 1999. Now, allow me to do some basic math. According to the 1981 census, 209,798 Serbs lived in Kosovo at that time. I am using data from 1981 because it provides the highest possible estimate of the size of the Serbian community in Kosovo, since the census that Kosovo conducted in 2011 was purposely boycotted by the Serbian citizens of Kosovo, who were pressured to do so by the Government in Belgrade. If, as Serbia claims, 200,000 Serbs have left Kosovo, that would mean almost all of them. If that is the case, can anyone tell me who the 60,000 Serbs are who voted in the general elections in Kosovo two weeks ago? Where in the world did they come from? I would like to point out that this number refers to Kosovo Serbs who are over the age of 18 and who actually chose to vote in the elections.

Despite Serbia's ambitions, we do not live in a post-truth world. We must stop using false data to concoct false narratives that are beyond belief even for those who propagate them. There is something fundamentally wrong with a people so consumed by bitterness and hatred from the past that they cannot find peace in the present. It will take an act of will for them to escape this vicious cycle. I long to see the day when Serbia owns up to the brutal savagery that it perpetrated in the Balkans and denounces the monsters who slaughtered our women and children. One must know when enough is enough and realize that the time has come to make a reckoning.

The fact of the matter is that Kosovo will never be deterred or dictated to by Serbia. But for a moment let us reflect on the level of resources and energy that Belgrade used for its smear campaign against Kosovo

in order to prevent us from joining INTERPOL. It is unfortunate that as a result of our current domestic context we had to withdraw our bid for INTERPOL membership this year, but the Council can rest assured that we will be ready to apply again next year. Why would anyone have anything against our police force joining that organization? Who stands to win from Kosovo's absence from this police organization? The answer is criminals, terrorists and organized crime. Serbia is willingly adding itself to that list of beneficiaries.

This Chamber is not a courtroom for our politicians or our political leaders. Mr. Kurti has won the elections in Kosovo. He has stated several times very clearly that he is committed to dialogue. I must say that I am amused that my Serbian colleague is defending the Kosovar flag. I want to assure the Council that there will always be a Kosovar flag in the office of the Prime Minister of Kosovo. My Serbian colleague failed to mention one very important element of Mr. Kurti's biography, which is that he was a political prisoner in Serbia when Mr. Dačić was a Cabinet minister.

Kosovo has already demonstrated its ability to make a smooth transition from a consumer of security to a contributor of it. Since its transformation, the Kosovo Security Force has already made enormous strides in capacity-building, modernization and harmonization with NATO standards. We are an active member of the Global Coalition against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS). Our police and intelligence agencies have been part of operations that prevented several terrorist attacks, both in our region and beyond, and we are ready to do more. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the United States military forces on the successful operation that killed the notorious ISIS leader Al-Baghdadi. The world will be a safer place without him. However, that does not mean that our struggle against extremism is over.

In Kosovo, we fight hard to preserve the secular nature of our State, Constitution and society, which affords the same rights to adherents of all religious and non-religious denominations. The religious tolerance and harmony that we have cultivated for centuries is a badge of honour that we wear proudly. In Kosovo there are cities where a Catholic church, an Orthodox church and a Muslim mosque all share the same backyard. There is no hierarchy of religions in Kosovo, and that is a value we cherish.

I must touch on an issue that was debated ad nauseam the last time we gathered here (see S/PV.8541). I will be concise this time. The Kosovo police acted with the utmost professionalism when it decided to arrest an employee of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) who willingly decided to become a human shield for criminal gangs in the northern part of Kosovo and thereby prevent law-enforcement institutions from carrying out their duty. I asked the Council last time and will ask it again. What would happen if any of us tried to prevent an ongoing police operation against criminals here in New York or Washington or in Berlin or Moscow or Paris or anywhere else? The police operation was filmed and made available to the public in its entirety. The footage makes it clear that the UNMIK officers refused to show identification or cooperate with the police. In addition, we have information that the UNMIK leadership provided prior notice to United Nations employees in northern Kosovo about this operation and advised them to avoid certain areas that day. This particular employee nevertheless did the opposite. The question that arises is this: was this individual in that spot on that particular day on behalf of the United Nations or someone else? Our police and judiciary are currently in the process of conducting an investigation into the matter. We will share the results with the Council as soon as it is completed.

As we have stated many times before, we see no purpose whatever in congregating this often in this Chamber to discuss Kosovo. It is paradoxical that the Council gathers here more often to discuss Kosovo than it does to discuss Syria or other pressing issues that need its attention. UNMIK's mandate was overtaken long ago. Valuable resources that could be put to much better use elsewhere are being wasted to maintain a mission totally devoid of purpose. The bottom line is that Kosovo is a free, independent and sovereign country. That will never, ever change. The only thing that these meetings are accomplishing is enabling Serbia to maintain its acute case of denial and reduce reality to sensational headlines. Let me make it crystal clear. Just because Serbia refuses to recognize us as a State does not make us any less of a State. That simply makes us a young republic that has to deal with an obnoxious neighbour.

That is what makes dialogue with Serbia so important. But dialogue does not happen in a vacuum. How can we believe that Serbia is earnest in its

intentions to participate in the process of reconciliation leading to mutual recognition when so far all it has done is fail to implement nearly everything that we agreed on in Brussels? Dialogue is not about leaders shaking hands in Brussels, Berlin or Paris. It is about accepting each other as equals. Kosovo's right to exist as a State is not and never will be a subject for discussion. Kosovo is not a temporary project. It is here to stay. As the International Court of Justice has clearly stated, Kosovo was within its rights when it declared independence and did not break any international law by doing so. And there is no Greater Albania. That is a myth. There are ethnic Albanians who live in Kosovo, in Albania and elsewhere in the Western Balkans.

At the risk of sounding like a broken record, I will once again state that Kosovo's independence was indeed a product of decolonization. Serbia's only interest in Kosovo was to exploit our territory and resources while treating our people as inherently inferior, second-class citizens. If that is not colonization, I would like to know what is. We want peace and we are prepared to continue a dialogue, but not at the expense of the truth. We are vigilant in defence of our hard-won freedom. It is an ideal that we were prepared to die for and will fight to preserve. Reconciliation must be both retrospective and proactive. There can be no peace without justice, and it is time to make justice a priority. We owe it to the victims — those who made the ultimate sacrifice and those who survived and have already suffered too much. Most importantly, we owe it to our children. We owe it to future generations to deliver peace not just in our lifetime, but in all lifetimes to come. We have to put an end to the culture of impunity. Is it too much to ask that the perpetrators of systematic rape and murder not remain at the helm of security institutions? Resolution is not synonymous with absolution. Those who committed these horrendous crimes must be held accountable by the court of justice and the court of conscience.

In our lifetime we have had to grapple with moments of great crisis. Our lives have been marked by debate on monumental issues, issues of war and peace and prosperity and depression. But while we talk here about the past, young Kosovars are writing the future. They do not have time for pointless debates. They are out there, working hard, often against the odds, challenging the status quo and raising the bar for all of us. Kosovar children are growing up with new heroes, like the judoka Majlinda Kelmendi, who has raised our

flag on the highest podium and continues to bring home an endless stream of gold medals. Thanks to athletes like Majlinda Kelmendi, Nora Gjakova and Distria Krasniqi, the phrase “fight like a girl” has acquired a different meaning in Kosovo. We were overjoyed by the international success of our fantastic soccer team. Imagine — 20 years ago, English soldiers came to Kosovo, like saints marching in, to liberate our country. In November, we will be hosting Englishmen again, this time for a soccer match, and hopefully beating them in the European qualifiers.

We are driven and defined by the expectations of our youth. Just last week, Open Data Kosovo published a report that shows that the number of information-technology companies in Kosovo has increased by no less than 187 per cent during the past 10 years. That should come as no surprise, given the quality of our workforce and our highly skilled young people, who are eager to learn and compete in the global market. We are emboldened by the grit of our free media. Only days ago, three Kosovar journalists, all of whom happen to be women, were presented with awards by the European Union for their investigative journalism and work in exposing and combating corruption and crime. We are inspired by Fahrije Hoti and the brave women of Velika Kruša, who used the restorative power of freedom to turn misfortune into hope and strength. After suffering so much loss, these women rebuilt an entire village from the ashes of war. When confronted with tragedy, resilience was the only answer. These are the new heroes of our young republic. They represent the best of us, and they will break the cycle of fragility and violence. They will write the new chapter of our history. It is because of them that I persist in being hopeful for the future of my country.

The President: I now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Clay (United Kingdom): I would like to begin by thanking Special Representative Tanin and his team for his statement and for their continued commitment to Kosovo’s development, as laid out in the comprehensive report (S/2019/797) on the activities of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). I would also like to thank Deputy Prime Minister Ivica Dačić and Ambassador Vlora Çitaku for their interventions this afternoon.

We welcome the focus in the report on the Government of Kosovo’s commitment to respecting human rights,

ensuring equal access for minority communities, improving transparency and strengthening the rule of law. We take note of the progress made in this reporting period, including the reopening of the Special Chamber of the Supreme Court, efforts to standardize judicial practice across Kosovo, progress in the prosecution of war crimes, the return of displaced persons and the identification of missing persons, the adoption of child protection legislation and the first report on respect for human rights.

There is still more to do, however. We urge Kosovo to redouble its efforts to address the high levels of corruption and organized crime and to work to strengthen its judicial system. We welcome the important work of UNMIK and the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo to that end. As regards the fight against crime, we agree that it is legitimate and necessary for the Kosovan police to operate across Kosovo, including in the northern municipalities, in accordance with the law. The Council should welcome the arrests of individuals suspected of involvement in smuggling or organized crime, whether Kosovo Albanian or Kosovo Serb, as was the case during the recent Kosovo police operation. However, noting the concern expressed by the Special Representative about the arrest of two UNMIK officials during this operation, it is also important that international personnel carrying out their duties should be treated in accordance with international law, just as they must adhere to their missions’ mandates and codes of conduct. I welcomed Mr. Tanin’s briefing this afternoon on the outcome of UNMIK’s internal view of the incident. We will consider those findings carefully.

We welcome the progress made by the Kosovo Specialist Chambers and the Specialist Prosecutor’s Office over the past few months. We urge Pristina, Belgrade and the members of the Council to cooperate fully in the interest of achieving justice for victims, and we call on both Pristina and Belgrade to press ahead with domestic prosecutions for historic crimes. The interests of all victims and their families must be at the centre of judicial proceedings, efforts to locate missing persons and the provision of support to survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, regardless of their ethnicity. We particularly welcome the joint declaration of representatives of religious groups in Kosovo in support of survivors of sexual violence. The United Kingdom is committed to supporting victims and preventing sexual violence in all its forms as shown during Her Royal Highness the Countess of Wessex’s

recent visit to Pristina, during which she focused on support for survivors from all communities.

With regard to the Kosovo elections on 6 October, we echo the statement of the European Union Election Observation Mission. The elections were calm and well administered, and the Central Election Commission worked with dedication, professionalism and transparency, although we continue to be concerned about reports of pre-election intimidation in some Kosovo-Serb areas. We have been following the reports of staff suffering ill health at the national counting centre and await the outcome of the investigation. We must not allow this incident to sow suspicion and distrust.

Kosovo has voted for change. We call on the party leaders to work diligently to form a new, stable Government to tackle the pressing issues facing the country. The United Kingdom expects the new Government to uphold and strengthen the rule of law, improve inclusivity in a multi-ethnic State and commit to strengthening regional security. Dialogue with Belgrade must be a priority. We call on both Belgrade and Pristina to remove obstacles to its resumption. Pristina must remove tariffs and Belgrade must stop its de-recognition campaign. For dialogue to succeed, both sides must refrain from provocative rhetoric and actions. We welcome Kosovo's completion of two more common crossing points, but we regret that the implementation of many other aspects of the Brussels Agreement remains unaddressed by both parties. The people of Serbia and Kosovo have much to gain from a resumption of talks and a comprehensive, sustainable, implementable deal to their mutual and lasting benefit.

The twentieth anniversary of the NATO intervention fell during this reporting period. It was an important moment for reflection. We remember the victims on all sides of this conflict and remind ourselves of the reasons for the intervention. We renew our commitment to building good-neighbourly relations so that peace can be safeguarded for future generations. The Kosovo of today is almost unrecognizable from the Kosovo that the media reported on across the world in 1999. We thank the members of the Security Council, the staff of UNMIK, the European Union, NATO, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Kosovo Force, the Special Prosecution Office of Kosovo, and most importantly the Government and institutions of Kosovo for their ongoing pursuit of Kosovo's progress and developments.

In conclusion, the United Kingdom pays tribute to the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and his team, and we look forward to continuing to support them in their endeavours.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) (*spoke in French*): I too would like to thank Mr. Zahir Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, as well as Mr. Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, and Ms. Çitaku, Ambassador of Kosovo to the United States, for their statements.

Respectfully, I would like to remind all members that paragraph 22 of presidential note S/2017/507, on the Council's methods of work, recommends that statements by invited speakers should last no longer than five minutes. I also believe it is equally important to ensure that our meetings are a place for constructive rather than polemic exchanges, which is essential if we want to work to overcome the traumas of the past — and we know how profound those traumas are.

With regard to the situation described by Mr. Tanin, I will briefly emphasize four points. First, I would like to congratulate the authorities and the people of Kosovo on the legislative elections held on 6 October, which represent an important moment in their lives as a democracy. As the European Union Election Observation Mission highlighted, the elections generally went well, despite attempts at intimidation in some places. We hope to see a new Government formed as soon as possible in order to enable it to implement reforms, especially in the area of the rule of law, which is the central criterion for the rapprochement of the countries of the region with the European Union.

Secondly, I also want to commend the work of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in support of the promotion of security, stability and respect for human rights in Kosovo and the region. France especially commends UNMIK's activities aimed at bringing communities closer together and promoting the women and peace and security agenda, and in a way that complements the initiatives of other regional and international actors, particularly the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX). The Special Representative informed us about the initial findings in the internal investigation of the incident involving two UNMIK personnel in May. Excessive physical force and disrespecting people's personal spaces are unacceptable. The Kosovo authorities must explain how something like this could

happen and that all parties put mechanisms in place that can ensure that such incidents never happen again.

Thirdly, I would like to come back to the key issue for which we should be mobilizing all of our efforts, which is the normalization of relations between Pristina and Belgrade in the context of the European Union-led dialogue. We deplore the fact that the dialogue has been interrupted for almost a year and hope that as soon as the new Kosovo Government is formed it will make it a priority and will find a committed partner in Belgrade. During his visit to Belgrade on 15 and 16 July, President Emmanuel Macron of France urged both parties to seek a compromise. The first step is a resumption of talks, and both parties should act quickly to take the necessary measures. As it stated at the 29 April summit in Berlin, France will continue its efforts in support of the work of the European Union and to move the dialogue forward with its European partners, particularly Germany.

Fourthly, I would like to reiterate that France believes firmly in a European future for Serbia and Kosovo. That involves making the necessary reforms to consolidate the rule of law. EULEX is contributing to that goal in Kosovo by focusing on the effectiveness, ethics and multi-community nature of the Kosovo judicial system. Beyond that, what is needed is a full normalization of relations between Belgrade and Pristina, which is an essential condition of both countries' European future, which itself can only be a shared future.

Finally, as this is the last Security Council meeting under the presidency of South Africa, I would like to commend the South African delegation for its leadership of the productive work we have done this month.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to thank Mr. Zahir Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), for his informative briefing about the situation in the province. We welcome the participation in today's meeting of Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, and we share the serious concerns he has expressed about the situation in Kosovo. We have also taken note of Ms. Vlora Çitaku's participation in the meeting.

The situation in the Kosovo settlement is not promising and does not inspire optimism. The dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina under the auspices of

the European Union, which has long been in a state of paralysis, now seems to be comatose. Nothing has been done in that format for a very long time, and it exists only on paper and in people's statements. We hope that the European Union will spring into action once the new membership of the European Commission becomes fully operational. We expect more productive efforts and unbiased mediation from our European partners in that regard. There must be an end to the damaging practice of condoning Pristina's provocations, which led the dialogue to wither on the vine, and we would like to point to Belgrade's restraint in that regard.

We see no improvement in the situation in Kosovo from the point of view of security and respect for the rights of non-Albanian communities. And I should point out to Ms. Çitaku that we are talking about today, not yesterday. We continue to see new instances of intimidation, seizure and vandalism of property, cemeteries and Serbian Orthodox Church sites. It is understandable that in such conditions there is no real room to talk about the return of refugees and internally displaced persons. The Kosovo-Albanian special force's incursions into Serb-populated communities on false pretexts of fighting crime, with the most recent incident on 16 October, are gradually bringing the situation to a dangerous point where conflict could erupt once again. The reluctance of the international presence, especially the Kosovo Force, to do anything to prevent such incidents is dispiriting. The indulgent attitude of Western partners to Pristina is encouraging increased aggression on the part of the authorities there towards UNMIK. I noticed that Ms. Çitaku listened to Deputy Prime Minister Dačić very carefully, but she clearly was not listening to the Head of UNMIK, or rather she preferred not to hear his statement and the conclusions drawn by the commission specially assigned to investigate the incident of 28 May. I can remind her of what happened, so she should now listen to me.

We agree with the findings of the United Nations representatives regarding the incident in northern Kosovo of the beating and detention on 28 May by a Kosovo-Albanian special force of two UNMIK staff members, Mikhail Krasnoshchekov, a Russian citizen, and Dejan Dimovic, a Serbian citizen. The conclusions accord with the results of the Russian investigative committee. Our investigators established that the goal of the Kosovo agents was to prevent Mr. Krasnoshchekov from carrying out his lawful duties in full compliance

with the provisions of resolution 1244 (1999). They ignored his United Nations immunity despite the fact that Mr. Krasnoshchekov showed his identification and introduced himself in English, and despite the fact that his car had United Nations plates, which meant that he could not be subject to arrest or detention.

The details are shocking. The agents dragged him out of his car by force, banged his head against the car door, punched him numerous times and then brought out their equipment and handcuffs. He was pushed into the back of his own car, where they continued to beat him up. They seized his identification and his United Nations staff driver's licence and broke his mobile phone. As a result, he suffered multiple injuries, including a concussion and a complex fracture of the jaw, not to mention emotional trauma and post-traumatic stress. The actions of the Kosovo agents showed a total disregard for the norms of international law, including the United Nations staff guarantees of immunity from arrest and detention. Separately, I would like to point out that the justifications we heard subsequently from the Kosovo security force and today from Ms. Çitaku, as well as the fabricated allegations against him, were not confirmed and are in fact disproved, including by video recordings of the events of 28 May.

That picture is evidence of the immaturity of the Kosovo-Albanian security force and its despicable culture. In that context, the idea of Kosovo joining international organizations, including INTERPOL, is mistaken and without foundation. We demand that those responsible be prosecuted and punished. We believe that the Security Council should definitively condemn this crime against United Nations staff.

But that is not the main thing. What we are witnessing is the Kosovo Albanian authorities' desire to force the United Nations Mission out of Kosovo. There are no longer any UNMIK personnel in northern Kosovo, and in general the Mission is having to operate in the difficult conditions of a de facto boycott by the Pristina authorities. Today Ms. Çitaku openly confirmed that the Pristina authorities' dream is to see the United Nations leave Kosovo as soon as possible so that there will be no one left to witness the lawlessness that is going on there and that we are discussing today. And of course Ms. Çitaku would prefer that the Security Council not discuss the situation in Kosovo and waste its valuable time, as she put it. The lawlessness we are discussing somehow does not fit the image of the

beautiful young democracy in Kosovo that Ms. Çitaku described to us today.

The participation of the Kosovo security force in the multinational military exercise Albanian Effort 19 was yet another gross violation of resolution 1244 (1999). The initiators of these military games openly ignored the provision of the resolution that requires that all Kosovo Albanian armed groups be demilitarized and certainly does not permit their inclusion in military manoeuvres or even their transformation into regular armed forces. Together with the promotion of the so-called Greater Albania project, such activity poses a serious threat to regional security.

Kosovo continues to be fertile ground for recruiting various types of terrorists. The return to Kosovo of former fighters for the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant is a threat to peace and stability in the region. Terrorists who have been trained to kill and who are spreading correspondingly radical ideas represent a ticking time bomb for security in the region. It is baffling that the architects of Kosovo's independence are attempting to ignore those problems. Nothing has been done through the European Union in Brussels either to resume full-fledged dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade and implement the key agreement on the establishment of a community of Serb municipalities in Kosovo or to abolish Pristina's 100 per cent customs tariff imposed on goods from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The real work of the Specialist Chambers in investigating the crimes of the Kosovo Liberation Army has not yet begun, despite the fact that a third prosecutor has already been appointed. We see all of that as a desire to roll up the investigation of the crimes uncovered by Dick Marty, the Council of Europe rapporteur.

All those guilty of heinous crimes must be brought to justice and duly punished. The slogans that we often hear in the Security Council with regard to other crisis situations should be translated into practical solutions. To put it bluntly, we are simply stunned by the utter helplessness of Pristina's patrons. And not one of them is capable of explaining what they are doing to restart the political process and make the Kosovo authorities see reason.

Russia's position on Kosovo has been consistent. We support enabling Belgrade and Pristina to arrive at a viable and mutually acceptable solution on the basis of resolution 1244 (1999). It should first and foremost

be in line with international law and approved by the Security Council, because this is a matter of ensuring international peace and security. In our view, forcing any so-called final normalization between Belgrade and Pristina tied to artificial deadlines is destructive.

All of this is testament to the fact that the problems in Kosovo are piling up rather than being resolved. In that context, we consider that the calls that we have frequently heard in this Chamber for UNMIK's withdrawal or conducting a so-called strategic review are baseless. We once again want to draw the attention of the Secretariat to the importance of carefully monitoring the developing situation, which, as the facts have shown, requires vigilance on the part of the international community. In the light of that, we believe that the Security Council must react to the current situation. We have prepared a draft presidential statement that reflects the issues outlined in our statement, and I ask the Secretariat to circulate the text to the members of the Security Council. We hope that the Council will be able to approve it.

Mr. Heusgen (Federal Republic of Germany): I would first like to subscribe to what my French colleague said earlier. Considering that our time is limited in the Council, I find these long initial interventions lasting 20 minutes or half an hour unacceptable. My advice to future Presidents is that they either obtain a commitment from the speakers limiting themselves to five minutes or that they be asked to speak at the end, after all Council members have spoken.

In terms of substance, I agree with what my colleagues from the United Kingdom and France have said previously, and I would like to highlight a few points, starting with the elections. Of course I listened carefully to what my Russian colleague had to say about the state of affairs and democracy in the country. I just want to say, and to point out, that in Kosovo the opposition was actually able to conduct a campaign. No parties were prevented from participating, there were free and fair elections in most areas, and a change of Government was possible. Therefore, in the words of my Russian colleague, it is a young, beautiful democracy. The only problems we witnessed were in the areas with a Kosovo Serb majority, which were marred by the intimidation and targeting of non-Serbian List candidates and their supporters. Although the statement delivered by the Serbian Foreign Minister was very long, I did not hear him mention that part of the elections. Perhaps next

time he could explain what happened in the Kosovo Serb-majority areas.

I should like to reiterate that we need to ensure a swift formation of Government. The new Government will need to pursue reforms and abide by the rule of law. We also need to ensure the continuation of dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia. In that regard, I subscribe to what my Russian colleague said — dialogue has to continue. I would not go as far as to say the dialogue is in a coma, but I would say that it is urgent that the dialogue continue. I am hopeful that with a new European Commission in place, the European Union-facilitated dialogue will continue and we may see constructive negotiations; too much time has already been lost in that regard. Both Serbia and Kosovo share responsibilities, and I can only reiterate what we said last time (see S/PV.8541). We call on the Government of Kosovo to revoke the tariffs imposed on products from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the same time, we urge the Serbian Government to end its efforts to persuade other countries to withdraw their recognition of Kosovo. I know the Serbian Foreign Minister likes to travel to Pacific islands and the Caribbean, among other destinations, but I think that Serbian taxpayers' money can be put to better use than for travelling to persuade other countries to withdraw their recognition of Kosovo.

With regard to the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), I would like to thank Special Representative Tanin for his briefing and work. Twenty years after UNMIK was first mandated, we still believe that the Mission needs to adapt to the new reality. The situation in Kosovo has drastically changed, including the operating environment. We therefore believe that it is time for a formal transition of many of UNMIK's tasks either to Kosovar institutions or other international institutions that have taken over UNMIK's role. Having listened to Mr. Tanin's briefing, I note that he expressed support for the launching of a Serbian-Albanian dictionary. While that is fantastic, I believe that country embassies or other organizations could do that — with all due respect, we do not need UNMIK for that. With regard to the Kosovar authorities, we need to keep working with UNMIK on the ground in a spirit of trust and collaboration regarding the incident on 28 May. We can only repeat what our colleagues have said on the need to ensure respect for international law. I heard the plea of my Russian colleague and his call for respect for

international law. I listened very carefully to that, and I hope our Russian colleague also insists on respect for international humanitarian law.

I would like to make two further points. First, we continue to support the efforts of Kosovo in its survivor-centred approach to addressing conflict-related sexual violence. We welcome the ongoing work on the Kosovo Government commission responsible for the verification and recognition of the status of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. We note that 406 applicants have already been granted survivor status, and we ask the Government to pursue that work in order to empower women, enable them to overcome isolation, contribute to the well-being of their families and elevate their status and role within their communities. I heard our colleague from Serbia mention that he was requesting indictments against the perpetrators of sexual crimes. Perhaps next time in his briefing he could inform us of how many indictments have been launched in Serbia for sexual crimes committed.

Let me conclude with a practical example of the necessity and benefit of closer regional cooperation. Together with our French partners, we have initiated a regional road map for the Western Balkans with a view to strengthening the control of small arms, which are all too readily available in the region. We are encouraged by the progress achieved so far, and we are working towards a ministerial review conference in Berlin on 31 January 2020.

Mr. Trullols Yabra (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the convening of this meeting and to Special Representative Tanin for his briefing and the laudable work carried out by his team on the ground. We also thank Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, and Ambassador Vlora Çitaku for their briefings today.

The Dominican Republic would like to commend the electoral authorities in Kosovo and the population in general for the success of the parliamentary elections held on 6 October. However, we note with concern the apparent impasse in the process of normalizing relations between Belgrade and Pristina. If that deadlock were to endure, it could jeopardize the stability achieved so far. We therefore urge the parties to pursue formal talks in the current format, and we call on both parties to reconsider all unilateral measures that are slowing the return to dialogue.

Measures aimed at building confidence among the population play a decisive role in fostering the aforementioned negotiations. The activities of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in promoting youth empowerment, multilingualism, intercommunal dialogue and respect for human rights are fundamental in that regard. Similarly, the participation of women and young people in the democratic process and in decision-making is a necessary tool to advance towards a leadership that contributes to achieving a peaceful society on the path towards development and inclusion for future generations. In that regard, the Dominican Republic also welcomes the renewed work to search for missing persons through, *inter alia*, the amendment made to the Law on Missing Persons in Kosovo. In addition to being a key element for reconciliation, we wish to recall that families have a right to know the whereabouts of their loved ones.

A final aspect that should be highlighted is the importance of making headway in addressing the needs of victims of sexual violence, who continue to be affected after the conflict and are currently excluded from the Government's reparation plans. We believe that the counting of victims should not stop upon the cessation of conflict, especially when it comes to cases of sexual violence. The harm done to victims must be assessed and taken into account in any Government action on that conflict-related scourge. We take this opportunity to applaud the work carried out by the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo through its monitoring and operations pillars.

We hope that the outcome of the investigations being carried out by the ad hoc investigation team regarding the detention of two members of the Mission will be able to provide a detailed explanation of the incident and respond to the concerns of the international community in relation to that confusing situation in order for the necessary measures to be taken to correct any irregular action. We reiterate our support for and recognition of the work carried out in Kosovo by UNMIK, the Kosovo Force, the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe with a view to achieving sustainable peacebuilding. We call on the parties to honour their commitments under the Brussels Agreement and to comply with resolution 1244 (1999).

In conclusion, we take this opportunity to congratulate the delegation of South Africa on the

extraordinary work carried out in the Council under its presidency.

Mr. Barkin (United States of America): Let me join others in congratulating South Africa on its extremely successful presidency of the Security Council this month. We also thank each of the briefers, although that may not be the appropriate word today.

The United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) was established in 1999 to resolve what was then a grave humanitarian situation in Kosovo. I was personally privileged to be there on the ground that year as part of the team that set up the United States Mission, which is now the United States Embassy. At the time and over subsequent years, we worked closely with other missions and with the United Nations on the ground to carry out the requirements of the mandate, including guaranteeing public safety and providing an interim administration for Kosovo, which is now the Government of Kosovo. Twenty years later, every one of the goals enumerated as a mandate obligation and a Security Council resolution has either been substantially completed, or become obsolete, as the sovereign, independent Government of Kosovo has assumed responsibility for them. It is high time for the United Nations and the Security Council to acknowledge that fact. The simple truth is that while the international community and the United Nations can provide a useful supporting role in Kosovo's democratic development, it no longer needs a peacekeeping mission to do that. Today, we reiterate our call for a clear plan to reform or phase out UNMIK.

To further such efforts and move the parties towards a stable peace, President Trump appointed Ambassador Richard Grenell as the Special Presidential Envoy for Serbia and Kosovo Peace Negotiations. Ambassador Grenell has already visited the region to urge progress towards an agreement. That is a clear demonstration of the United States commitment. That appointment is not about choosing sides but rather seeking a resolution. For example, the tariffs imposed by Kosovo on Serbian goods worsen the situation, while Serbia's campaign against the recognition of Kosovo's independence fuels unnecessary tensions. In addition, with respect to the two countries, we encourage the leaders of Kosovo, following its democratic October elections, to quickly form a Government that is in favour of dialogue and prepared to suspend tariffs on Serbian goods.

Likewise, we urge Serbia to refrain from provocations and cease its campaign against the recognition of Kosovo. Serbia and Kosovo must both accelerate reforms to strengthen the rule of law and address corruption and organized crime. We also encourage both countries to involve wide segments of society in their political processes, including women, the importance of whose meaningful participation we have reiterated so many times this week. I would note that we have heard a great deal today about the incident on 28 May. I thank Special Representative Tanin for sharing the results of the investigation, and we hope to see them in written form. Like every country represented here, the United States strongly supports Kosovo's efforts to combat smuggling, corruption and organized crime throughout the territory of Kosovo.

The United States expresses serious concerns about excessive police force against any United Nations staff member and supports the safety and security of all United Nations personnel. However, we continue to find the presence of UNMIK staff at that police operation troubling, as it risked, and ultimately resulted in, a confrontation that could have been avoided. Incidents such as that raise many questions from different perspectives and underscore the need for a thorough review of UNMIK's mandate and standard operating procedures in order to ensure that the Mission does not inhibit Kosovo's democratic development or obstruct legitimate law enforcement efforts.

Today, we have heard a great deal of rhetoric, which does not promote a peaceful resolution of this situation. We all know exactly what is needed: Kosovo and Serbia must together reach an agreement to comprehensively normalize relations.

We, the international community, must work together and separately to encourage both countries to recognize that actions that work against the normalization of relations are fruitless and counterproductive, hindering their economic development, social progress and integration with Europe and the West. They will never lead to a resolution. If we take our mandate seriously, it is progress towards the goal of a stable peace for all citizens of Kosovo that needs our attention and resources, not an outmoded mission whose goals have already been achieved.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): At the outset, let me thank Special Representative Tanin for his briefing today. I would also like to thank Deputy Prime Minister Dačić

and Ambassador Çitaku for their statements before the Council.

Let me start by congratulating Kosovo on the conduct of the 6 October elections. We hope that the change in the political spectrum will bring about an effective Government able to continue the reforms.

Since this is not only the last meeting of the Council on the situation in Kosovo this year, but also the last such meeting with Poland in its seat, let me make some brief general remarks to reinforce the messages that we have been conveying over the past two years.

First, as concerns the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), let me repeat the call for a strategic review of the Mission. With each statement more time passes since the last strategic review, and the need for a fresh assessment of the Mission's comparative advantage becomes even more apparent.

The historical role of UNMIK cannot be overstated. It played a crucial role in bringing a bloody conflict to an end but since then, the situation on the ground has changed beyond recognition, while other international presences have overtaken substantial parts of the Mission's mandate. We express our deep appreciation for UNMIK's historical role and commend the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo and the Kosovo Force for their efforts in fostering a safe and secure environment and the rule of law.

Poland is vitally interested in the stability of the Western Balkans. We continue to view the normalization of relations between Belgrade and Pristina as the key not only to unlocking the potential of both countries on their way to European integration but also to the stability of the whole region.

We would like to see the meaningful resumption of the European Union-facilitated dialogue and call on both sides to show commitment towards reaching a legally binding agreement on the comprehensive normalization of relations.

In that context, we encourage Kosovo to remove punitive tariffs on goods from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. We hope that the new Parliament and its Government will do that swiftly. We equally encourage Serbia to desist in its actions aimed at undermining Kosovo's international position. We call on both sides to show goodwill and openness.

In terms of our assessment of the overall picture in Kosovo, while commending the progress towards reforms and in strengthening the rule of law, we also note that more remains to be done.

It is incumbent upon the political elites, regardless of their affiliation, to continue their efforts to create a just and inclusive environment and lay solid foundations for the future prosperity of all citizens.

Let me conclude by saying that Poland regards Kosovo as being fully capable of managing its own future. We will continue to follow with interest and to remain engaged in the developments in the country and the region, ready to extend our assistance and share our experiences, as we have done so far.

Since this is the last meeting under the auspices of the South Africa presidency, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your leadership and very professional and efficient conduct of other work during the month of October.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Mr. Zahir Tanin for his briefing. I also welcome Mr. Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, and thank him for his statement. I also listened carefully to the statement of Ms. Çitaku.

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

China respects Serbia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We understand its legitimate concerns with regard to the Kosovo issue and commend its efforts to find a political solution to it. We hope that Kosovo will demonstrate the necessary political will, rescind its unilateral tariff increases, commit to implementing the Brussels Agreement and make efforts towards resuming the dialogue between the two parties.

Achieving inclusion, reconciliation and harmonious coexistence across all ethnicities in Kosovo is in the fundamental interests of peoples from all communities and of meeting their development needs. China hopes that all parties concerned will refrain from any rhetoric or actions that could complicate or escalate the situation and that they will create conditions for the proper

settlement of the Kosovo issue, so as to jointly safeguard peace, stability and development in the Balkans.

It is important at this juncture for the Security Council to remain seized of the Kosovo issue. China commends Special Representative of the Secretary-General Tanin and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) for the important role they are playing in bringing about a definitive solution to the issue of Kosovo and firmly supports the Mission in the diligent implementation of its mandate and its important role.

China is gravely concerned about the obstruction encountered by UNMIK personnel in the normal course of mandate delivery. Relevant independent investigations have shown that UNMIK personnel have been threatened and the performance of their duties obstructed. The Council should express grave concern at incidents of that nature and call on the relevant parties to fully respect the privileges and immunities of United Nations personnel and effectively ensure their safety and security, so as to create conditions conducive to enabling UNMIK to implement its mandate within agreed parameters. That will be conducive to upholding the Council's authority and, more importantly, to bringing about a political settlement to the issue of Kosovo.

Mr. Syihab (Indonesia): At the outset, Indonesia would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, His Excellency Zahir Tanin, for his briefing on the recent situation in Kosovo. I would also like to welcome the presence of the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, His Excellency Ivica Dačić, in New York.

We took note of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/797) and would like to join others in expressing our deep concern at the recent situation in the field. Today I would like to bring the following three points to the attention of the Council.

First, concerning the de-escalation in the region, we call on both parties to actively engage in sincere actions to de-escalate the tensions on the ground, including urging all parties to refrain from vandalizing any religious sites, as indicated in the report. Religious sites are sacred sanctuaries aimed at creating a positive spirit. We therefore condemn the vandalism and call on law-enforcement institutions to ensure a swift investigation and to bring those responsible to justice.

We support the Secretary-General's steadfast commitment to the protection of religious sites, which is also in line with the United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites. I call on all relevant stakeholders from both parties to give priority to the protection of religious sites.

Secondly, there is a need to resume dialogue. Dialogue is the only feasible way to achieve a win-win solution for both parties in the most peaceful possible way. Both parties need to resume dialogue under the auspices of the European Union, without further delay, to bring unity back to the region. All stakeholders should be involved in that dialogue. We regret that no high-level meetings were held between Belgrade and Pristina within the framework of the European Union-facilitated dialogue.

All obstacles to dialogue should be removed. We welcome efforts aimed at ensuring the greater involvement in the political process of wider segments of society and encourage women to engage and lead in the dialogue. We also second the Secretary-General's view that trust-building cannot be successful if the rule of law is not strengthened and the judiciary is not perceived as credible, independent and impartial.

My third point concerns the important role of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). Indonesia greatly appreciates UNMIK's multifaceted approach to engaging grassroots communities through various forums, conferences and trust-building projects.

We are deeply saddened by the incident in Zubin Potok involving the arrest of UNMIK staff by the authorities in northern Kosovo. We welcome the thorough internal investigation into the incident, as presented by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. The incident clearly violated international law and the immunities of international United Nations staff members. We therefore urge an immediate termination of the criminal proceedings against the two staff members as well as the restoration of their status, privileges and immunities.

We welcome the reintegration process that is being monitored by UNMIK and international partners and are pleased by the voluntary return by members of non-majority communities who had been displaced. The reintegration process is an important step towards establishing a strong and stable community in the region.

Ultimately, Indonesia recognizes that what people want is happiness, not selfishness. What is most important is peace, not hatred. These are important building blocks in order for people to live side by side. That is the goal whose achievement UNMIK must ultimately support.

Finally, Sir, let me join others in congratulating your delegation on having successfully presided over the Council during the month of October.

Mr. Alsabah (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank Mr. Zahir Tanin for his briefing on the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) (S/2019/797). We stress our full support for the Special Representative and appreciate the vital role of the United Nations throughout the past period in helping Kosovo to build its institutions in line with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, notably resolution 1244 (1999).

I would also like to welcome His Excellency Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, and Ms. Vlora Çitaku, Ambassador of Kosovo to the United States in Washington, D.C., and I thank them for their statements.

The State of Kuwait welcomes the parliamentary elections held on 6 October. We believe that this is an opportunity for the parties in Kosovo to uphold democracy and encourage discussions and general dialogue at all levels. This opportunity must be seized in order to focus on socioeconomic priorities and to strengthen the rule of law, good governance, justice and accountability, as well as to resume the dialogue, under the auspices of the European Union, between Belgrade and Pristina. This dialogue remains the most suitable framework for resolving the outstanding issues between the two parties and the only way to reach solutions that will lead to a comprehensive settlement.

We listened a while ago to the conclusions of the team that investigated the two incidents relating to the arrest and detention of two UNMIK staff members. We reiterate the importance of respecting the diplomatic immunity of United Nations staff pursuant to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. It is also important that the perpetrators of those violations of and encroachments on diplomatic immunity be brought to justice. We reiterate the importance of guaranteeing

the neutrality of United Nations mission staff and to ensure commitment to their mandate.

The report of the Secretary-General mentions the forty-ninth meeting of the joint Working Group on persons who are unaccounted for in connection with events in Kosovo, during which the International Committee of the Red Cross indicated that 1,653 persons out of 6,063 remained missing as of 18 May. We welcome the efforts undertaken by the Working Group in this regard and commend the amendment to the Law on Missing Persons, which was promulgated by the Government of Kosovo to provide protections and rights to the families of the missing.

As set out in resolution 2474 (2019), it is important to shed light on the fate of missing persons. It is one of the most important humanitarian issues leading to long-term reconciliation and the creation of an environment conducive to good-neighbourly relations.

We also welcome the continual work carried out by UNMIK in cooperation with the United Nations country team in Kosovo and in partnership with local and international stakeholders to implement the joint recommendations of the United Nations Kosovo Trust-Building Forum, which was held in May 2018 to provide support for trust-building among the various communities. Such efforts cannot be successful without strengthening the rule of law and a judiciary with credibility, independence and integrity.

In conclusion, it is important for the international community to continue making efforts to urge Pristina and Belgrade to set aside their differences and reach consensus-based solutions that would be fair, lasting and accepted by both parties and would lay the foundations for peace, security and stability in the region.

Mr. Moriko (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomes His Excellency Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, and Ms. Vlora Çitaku, Ambassador of the Republic of Kosovo to the United States of America, to today's meeting on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). We also commend Mr. Zahir Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNMIK, on his detailed briefing.

Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the successful holding of legislative elections on 6 October, which serve to help entrench democracy and build the country's

institutions. In order to strengthen that positive momentum, my country calls on the political parties that emerged victorious in the elections to make the necessary compromises, with a view to forming a new Government, which will have to provide lasting solutions to the many challenges facing Kosovo, in particular the normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia, reconciliation among the various communities in Kosovo and the country's economic development.

With regard to the normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia, my delegation notes with satisfaction that the dialogue that has been facilitated by the European Union since 2011 has resulted in the signing of 32 agreements between the two parties. However, it deplors the scant progress made in implementing some of those agreements and the delays in the process of normalizing relations between the two countries.

With regard to reconciliation among the various communities in Kosovo, Côte d'Ivoire urges the country's political authorities to work towards easing the tense sociopolitical climate. In particular, it invites them to take all necessary measures to eliminate the obstacles to establishing an association or community of Serb municipalities in Kosovo. In addition, my delegation calls for the early resumption of negotiations, under the auspices of the European Union, in order to build new momentum in the reconciliation process, the promotion of human rights and on the path to settling the issue of the full international recognition of Kosovo and its participation in all international organizations.

With regard to that last point, my country would like to reiterate its call for the total elimination of customs duties on goods imported from Serbia and Bosnia, in accordance with regulations applicable to countries that have signed the Central European Free Trade Agreement in recent years. Indeed, that tariff barrier hinders not only efforts to reach an agreement between Kosovo and Serbia but also initiatives aimed at Kosovo becoming a member of the European Union. An agreement between the two countries should also allow Serbia to suspend its international campaign to persuade countries that have recognized Kosovo as an independent State to revoke such recognition.

In conclusion, Côte d'Ivoire reiterates its support for the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and all the personnel of UNMIK and the Kosovo Force, as well as the European Union.

It calls on the international community to provide significant support to the special trust fund in support of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Kosovo.

I would like to end by congratulating, on behalf of my delegation, the entire South African team, led by Ambassador Jerry Matjila, on its excellent presidency during the month of October.

Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Special Representative Zahir Tanin for his briefing and welcome Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, and Ms. Vlora Çitaku, Ambassador of Kosovo to the United States of America, to today's meeting. However, following in the footsteps of other colleagues, I would like to respectfully encourage them to keep to their allotted speaking time in future.

The recent elections in Kosovo were well organized and demonstrated the political maturity of Kosovar society. Nonetheless, we deplore the fact that, within the Serbian Kosovar community, the elections were marked by a climate of intimidation and limited choice for voters. It is also important that the verification and count process be completed in order to prevent the election results from being contested. We hope that the formation of the new Government will provide an opportunity to ensure the active and meaningful participation of women.

We encourage the next Government of Kosovo to continue the reform process, in particular in the area of the rule of law. We would like to acknowledge the indispensable role of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo in that regard.

We deplore the fact that no progress has been made in resuming the dialogue between the authorities of Belgrade and Pristina, under the auspices of the European Union. Both sides can only benefit from maintaining regional stability, and a comprehensive and legally binding agreement on the normalization of relations is essential in that regard. It is important that the parties honour all their commitments in order to create a climate conducive to normalizing their relations. Unilateral actions and declarations must give way to a spirit of compromise. We call on the Kosovar leadership and the Serbian leadership to demonstrate responsibility and political will. In that context, we reiterate our call on the Kosovar authorities to eliminate

customs duties on imports from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina and call on both sides to make a greater commitment to regional integration.

Reconciliation also requires justice. We call on the Kosovar authorities to cooperate fully with the Specialist Chambers. It requires also that greater progress must be made with regard to missing persons. We call on the parties to intensify their cooperation to resolve this vital humanitarian issue.

The future of Kosovo, as a secure and stable democracy, has been shaped, among other things, by the efforts of the United Nations and the presence of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). We reiterate the importance of respecting the immunities of United Nations personnel on the ground, in accordance with the norms of international law. We took note of the information provided by the Special Representative in his briefing with regard to the internal report compiled following the incident that occurred on 28 May. The excessive use of force against UNMIK personnel is unacceptable. We call for a follow-up to the recommendations made in the report. It is vital that UNMIK be able to safely discharge its mandate. In conclusion, the international community continues to invest in Kosovo and to help create the conditions for the normalization of relations between Serbia and Kosovo. However, it is up to the parties to create such conditions and to reach an agreement.

Mrs. Mele Colifa (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): Let me begin by thanking Mr. Zahir Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), for his informative briefing on the progress made in recent months in Kosovo. I would also like to extend my thanks to Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, and Ms. Vlora Çitaku, Ambassador of Kosovo to the United States, for their statements.

The delegation of Equatorial Guinea notes with great concern the political impasse in the resumption of talks between Belgrade and Pristina, as reflected in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/797) and Mr. Tanin's briefing. In addition to the lack of progress in the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, we deeply regret the inflammatory rhetoric and provocative actions of the parties, which is having a negative effect

on the situation on the ground and hampering initiatives aimed at resuming a productive dialogue between the parties. By the same token, we regret that no high-level meetings were held between the parties during the reporting period within the framework of the European Union-facilitated dialogue. Likewise, we regret that the meeting scheduled to take place in Paris at the beginning of July was cancelled. In this regard, we wish to remind both parties that ensuring security and stability in Kosovo requires the commitment of both in order for the dialogue to continue. We therefore encourage them to continue their efforts with the aim of achieving stability on the ground, respecting the implementation of the agreements reached. We also encourage them to take advantage of the European Union-facilitated talks with a view to normalizing relations.

In conclusion, we believe that all parties must continue to act in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and within the framework of resolution 1244 (1999) and the existing agreements, so that through dialogue they may find a peaceful and lasting solution for the benefit of all. The Republic of Equatorial Guinea once again reaffirms its respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Republic of Serbia and appreciates its continued efforts to facilitate an inclusive, peaceful and political solution to the situation.

We encourage UNMIK to continue to fulfil its objectives and priorities in promoting security, stability and respect for human rights in Kosovo. Similarly, we commend the support it provides to all communities in Kosovo and to all regional and international stakeholders, and above all its efforts to empower women in Kosovo in various areas of development.

Mr. Duclos (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for Mr. Zahir Tanin's comprehensive briefing, and we welcome the presence among us of Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, and Ambassador Vlora Çitaku.

Peru is closely following the situation in Kosovo, and despite the progress made, we are concerned about the progressive deterioration of the process of normalizing relations between Belgrade and Pristina, which we believe is fundamental to consolidating peace, stability and prosperity, both in Kosovo and the region. In this respect, we regret that it will soon be one year since the European Union-facilitated dialogue

between the parties was suspended. We support the efforts of the international community in this regard but emphasize that the responsibility for resuming the process lies primarily with Belgrade and Pristina. Accordingly, we echo the call of the Secretary-General to remove all obstacles to dialogue. We believe that the tariff on imports and the continuing exacerbation of confrontational rhetoric, particularly from the political class, do not contribute to achieving this goal.

Given that the parliamentary elections have now been completed, we await the swift formation of a Government that, in a constructive manner and in good faith, will undertake the necessary measures to resume the dialogue. We recall the commitment of the parties under the Brussels Agreement and resolution 1244 (1999). With regard to this process, we wish to reiterate the importance of involving the citizens of both parties, particularly women and young people. We welcome the work of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in promoting the women and peace and security and the youth and peace and security agendas with a view to contributing to their full and substantive implementation. These efforts contribute to the reconciliation process, which is indispensable to overcoming the divisions of the past. It also entails the recognition of cultural diversity, respect for the rights of ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities and the protection of historical and cultural heritage.

In that regard, it is essential to continue strengthening institutions and the rule of law, and we recognize the role of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo and the Specialist Chambers in supporting this complex task. In the same vein, we also wish to recognize the initiatives undertaken by UNMIK, in coordination with the entities of the United Nations system, in promoting human rights, the protection of children, intercommunal dialogue, the safe and dignified return of internally displaced persons and the provision of assistance to victims of sexual violence. Also in this context, we wish to highlight the importance of initiatives aimed at combating corruption and organized crime, in accordance with the law, human rights and international agreements and standards. We regret the incident stemming from a 28 May police action involving United Nations staff members. Peru reaffirms the responsibility of Governments to respect the immunity of United Nations officials, and that

those officials themselves have a responsibility to be impartial in carrying out their duties.

We wish to conclude by reiterating our recognition of the work of UNMIK, the Kosovo Force, the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and all other international organizations committed to our shared task of consolidating sustainable peace in Kosovo.

We commend the South African presidency of the Council for the efficient and professional work carried out during the month of October.

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

At the outset, we thank Mr. Zahir Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), for his briefing. Allow me to also welcome the presence among us of the representatives of Serbia and Kosovo, respectively, who have joined us for today's meeting.

South Africa reiterates its support for the important work of UNMIK in creating an environment conducive to compromise, reconciliation and stability. We commend UNMIK's continued engagement with all stakeholders in pursuit of building trust among communities through dialogue and through initiatives aimed at empowering youth and women. My delegation expresses its concern at the arrest of UNMIK personnel, and we welcome the conclusion of the investigation team and the submission of its report.

The continued stalemate in the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina is of concern, and we call on the two sides to refrain from actions or rhetoric that may increase tensions and further entrench divisions between the two parties. Such actions create instability on the ground and jeopardize the gains that have already been made through dialogue. Through its own history, South Africa can attest to the fact that pursuing the path to achieving long-term solutions to what seem like intractable situations may not be easy but is vital to peace and security in the region. South Africa's own experience has shown us that we would not have succeeded if we had not engaged in sincere and constructive dialogue.

In conclusion, South Africa encourages all parties to show flexibility and take the necessary steps to actively pursue the resumption of dialogue, with the aim

of working towards a viable and mutually acceptable solution and the normalization of relations between the two sides. This approach is important not only to stability in Belgrade and Pristina but to the security of the wider region in its entirety.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

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 October, I would like, on behalf of the delegation of South Africa, to express our sincere appreciation to the members of the Council and the Security Council

Affairs Division team for all the support they have given us. It has indeed been a busy month in which we rallied to consensus on several important issues within our purview. We could not have done that alone or without the hard work, support and positive contributions of every delegation and the representatives of the Secretariat, including the conference service officers, interpreters, verbatim reporters and security staff. We also appreciate the kind words expressed by various delegations at this meeting with regard to our presidency of the Council. As we end our presidency, I know I speak on behalf of the Council in wishing the delegation of the United Kingdom good luck for the month of November.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.