

Why Self-determination?

Self-determination is the right of all colonized peoples. The absence of preparation in the fields of politics, economics, society or education cannot be used as a pretext to delay independence. (UN SC Resolution 1514, 1960)

VETËVENDOSJE!
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Newsletter from the Movement for SELF-DETERMINATION!

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Meeting of the 'Elephants' in Vienna

On Monday 24th, 800-1000 people joined us to demonstrate against the start of negotiations over the 'status' of Kosovo. The Kosova Negotiation Team agreed to hold direct talks with Serbia despite the fact that in Parliament a Resolution had been moved that status was non-negotiable.

Not surprisingly, the only conclusion from this meeting was that without a resolution of the 'technical issues' of decentralization and special protection zones for Orthodox sites, 'status' could not be discussed. This merely proves that 'status' IS negotiable. It depends on the resolution of these two issues, both of which inherently undermine the potential sovereignty of an independent Kosovo. Decentralization before sovereignty will create autonomous ethnic enclaves with legalized parallel structures of administration directed by Belgrade. Special Protection Zones around Orthodox sites will create ex-territorial areas claimed exclusively as the heritage of Serbia, rather than all the people of Kosovo. These two processes serve to maintain Belgrade's control of parts of Kosovo, and thus to ensure that conflict will continue. They attempt to solve a problem of colonialism along ethnic lines and ensure that any final 'status' will be a farce that excludes sovereignty.

A 'status' that depends upon the resolution of these 'technical issues' means a compromised 'status'.

Photographic Exhibition in Gjilan

On 14th July, in Gjilan, we opened an exhibition of 258 photographs which depict the development of our movement since June 2004. This exhibition was first opened in Prishtina.

It shows our actions, for example, writing the slogan, 'No Negotiations, Self Determination' on walls across Kosovo, writing 'F' and 'D' around the logo on UN jeeps so that it spells the word 'FUND' meaning 'END' in Albanian, removing the valves from the tires of UN jeeps, and holding hundreds of public meetings in towns and villages across Kosovo. The photos also clearly show the disproportionate use of force by the authorities against us.

Who are we?

A non-violent movement for self-determination of people in Kosovo

We began in June 2004 with a protest on the 5th anniversary of Resolution 1244

Our origins are in Kosovo Action Network

We have 16 centres of Self-Determination in Kosovo and 8 abroad

Why do we demonstrate against the UN in Kosovo?

UNMIK was established by UN Security Council Resolution 1244 which clearly reaffirms the commitment of all member states to preserve the territorial integrity and sovereignty of ex-Yugoslavia, now held by Serbia.

Point 11 of the Resolution foresees the solution of 'status' in accordance with the Rambouillet Accords of 1999. These Accords clearly treat Kosovo as part of Serbia. Thus UNMIK is an institution established to preserve Kosovo as an autonomous region of Serbia.

Point 4 of Resolution 1244 also foresees the return of Serbian military & police personnel to patrimonial sites and border crossings. Through this treaty, Serbia has the right to send its forces to guard the 'special protection zones' being negotiated now around Orthodox churches.

UNMIK is undemocratic. We have never been consulted about our governance as a UN protectorate for 7 years. Nor are we consulted over who rules this administration. UNMIK is unaccountable for its actions here & all its employees are immune from prosecution. An institution that prides itself on being here to build democracy, is itself completely undemocratic.

Politicizing the Orthodox Church with 'Special Protection Zones'

Currently 1476 hectares of land have been set aside as 'Special Protection Zones' around 10 Orthodox churches and monasteries. There are another 5 churches for which the size of the zone has not yet been determined.

We are told that the primary goal is to protect the sites from unregulated building, industry, and destruction of the environment. No

one would dispute that this is a worthy goal. The majority of these objects are 14th century churches & a rich part of Kosovo's heritage. But, why is environmental protection an essential part of negotiations over Kosovo's status? If the environment were really the objective, then over the last 7 years, we would have seen real and concrete efforts by Belgrade to cooperate with institutions here to achieve this goal.

This is fundamentally a political project to expand territory which is outside the control of Prishtina, and to usurp our culture and history, claiming that it is only Serbian. This means that details such as the borders of the zones, the 'management boards', 'management plans' for each site, and provisions for security are critical. For example, the majority of these protected monuments will be in Albanian majority municipalities - if Serbia has a representative on each board, this means it will still be controlling the lives and property of Albanians.

A zone that is managed by a board with a representative from Serbia, that is a security zone & that is tax exempt, is not a zone that is being created to protect the environmental sustainability of a monument. It is a zone that is being created to further conflict and undermine the sovereignty of Kosovo.

Why no negotiations over cultural heritage?

Right to culture: The Orthodox history in Kosovo is the heritage of all the people of Kosovo

Right to property: Serbia is using the Church as an instrument to extend its territories inside Kosovo, and denying our right to use private property

Freedom of movement: is being and will be restricted

Intimidation of activists in Klina

Last week, the police arrested for a second time 6 of our activists in Klina in connection with a previous action when they blew whistles to disrupt a visit of UNMIK's head, the SRSG, to discuss decentralization. The supposedly impartial judges accused them of collaborating with Serbia & dishonouring the blood of those who died to save Kosovo.