

Flaws and Strengths of International Mediation: United Nations Peacekeeping in the Republic of Kosovo

Jessica Homan

Fall 2023

Abstract: *The United Nations (UN) is the representative body of the international community. The UN is one of the first responders to interstate and intrastate conflicts. UN Peacekeeping utilizes diplomatic and military tactics to resolve or mitigate disputes. Peacekeeping methods that include persuasion, coercion, and inducement evolve with stages of conflict. Ethnically mobilized conflicts differ from traditional interstate disputes and require more extensive responses focusing on localized state-building. Using the Republic of Kosovo as a case study, the paper explores the history of ethnic strife between Kosovo-Serbs and Kosovo-Albanians. The UN mission in Kosovo displays flaws and strengths within peacekeeping, including institution-building and policing efforts. As the paper concludes, implementing the UN mission in Kosovo deterred significant violence, but reports of heightened tension in 2023 make for renewed concern.*

UN Peacekeeping Operations (PKOs) diverge from traditional military missions through the parties' consent and the forces' neutrality. The selection of Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) includes a vetting process requiring the disputant parties' consent. For example, UNMOGIP: The UN Mission in India and Pakistan emphasizes neutrality as India rejected American troops' participation due to their self-interests in the conflict. Without consent of the parties, military force²⁶ comes into play. The force, as described by Mays (2013, 39), is present as "peace enforcement operations and deployed to compel compliance on disputants refusing to adhere to a peace process." Funding and political mandates facilitate a mission's ability to enact resolutions. The UN pays TCC soldiers' salaries and reimburses countries for training and logistical expenses. Mandates are usually vague and broad, as many political landscapes remain complex or situational. Specifically, mandates "provide the operation with international legitimacy as a neutral military mission deployed in support of a peace process backed by the international organization" (Mays 2013, 54).

Figure 2: Stages of a Conflict and the Techniques Available

<i>Stages of Conflict and Techniques Available</i>	
Conflict Stages:	Techniques:
Pre-War	Preventive Diplomacy
Wartime	Peacemaking
	Peace Enforcement
Post-War	Peacekeeping
	Peacebuilding

(Bash 1994)

The UN aligns its responses to the stages of conflicts. Figure 2 depicts the tools the UN uses as conflicts change over time. Preventive diplomacy includes third-party facilitation of prisoner swaps, boundary concessions, and peace resolutions. PKOs utilize financial and political restrictions—economic sanctions, arms embargoes, and visa restrictions—as deterrents. If a conflict escalates into war, the UN uses diplomatic tools while deploying peacekeeping troops on the ground. Post-war development tactics focus on peacebuilding and policing.

Peacebuilding includes political institutions like impartial courts, election boards, and domestic police forces. Scholars argue that amplifying UN military equipment would ease peace enforcement, prompting quicker peacebuilding efforts. Bash (1994) suggests air power capabilities, similar to NATO,

individual interests during deployment. If more militarily advanced countries gain control of UN troops, they are more likely to use force to serve their self-interest, overriding the self-defense component.

²⁶ International Organizations' military capabilities used in self-defense are a cause of significant debate in peacekeeping literature. Bash (1994) explains how the use of force by TCCs makes it harder for the UN to control

would provide the UN versatility and fewer boots on the ground. As technology and conflicts evolve, peacekeeping remains the core of UN mediation.

PEACEKEEPING IN ETHNIC CONFLICTS

Ethnic conflicts require peacekeeping that differs from traditional interstate violence. Many states, like Kosovo, had ambiguous boundaries and weak proxy governments following the fall of the Soviet Union. Emerging states intertwined national identities with ethnicity and religion. Specific ethnicities are not the cause of violence but a trigger of social, economic, and political concerns. Intrastate conflicts with ethnic mobilization are more likely to intensify due to the ease of organization, recruitment, and credibility. Eck (2009, 370) describes disputes with groups who organize on ethnic lines as an ethnically mobilized conflict. People in such groups tend to live geographically close to others that share cultural practices. Proximity allows recruiting to be cheap and fast. The shared values of ethnicity also make organization and recruiting accessible as groups use shared beliefs to make their movement more credible. Group experiences based on social identity trump class and gender, making ethnicity more politically salient. Because ethnicity facilitates effective group organization, recruitment, and credibility, Eck hypothesized that “intrastate armed conflicts that mobilize along ethnic lines will be more likely to intensify to war than those that do not mobilize along ethnic lines” (2009, 374). Eck’s data, using five models²⁷, suggests “conflicts in which the participants mobilize along ethnic lines are

92 percent more likely to escalate to war than are nonethnically mobilized conflicts” (2009, 384). Ethnicity further complicates conflict resolution as it can lead to larger-scale violence.

Mac Ginty and Robinson argue violence is more widespread in ethnic conflict and thus makes it more difficult to mediate (2001). Ethnic violence can be categorized in three distinct ways: systematic, multiplicity of motives, and small arms. Systematic violence is present in perceived discriminatory legislation or human rights violations. Kosovo experienced bouts of violence after Serbia instituted the teaching of Serbian, which most Ethnic Albanians do not speak. Hate speech, for example, targets specific identities and can be used politically within propaganda. Institutionalizing identity conflict reflects Mac Ginty and Robinson’s suggestion that “sensitivity over identity places extra responsibility on any group considering third-party intervention” (2001, 33). The multiplicity of motives is described as “the perpetrator and victim may variously interpret an action as criminal, political, or random, or motivated by religion, ethnicity, race, or identity” (Mac Ginty and Robinson 2001, 31). Broad interpretation makes it challenging to police ethnically driven crimes as judicial rulings may differ over the correct categorization or impose bias. Lastly, intrastate conflict occurs on a more localized level. Guerilla war tactics are more prevalent, increasing the use of small arms in conflicts. Demilitarization through peacekeeping authorities requires intensive resources, as small arms are easier to hide and obtain.

²⁷ Model 1: ethnic pluralism, Model 2: ethnic “fractionalism” substituted for pluralism, Model 3: ethnic “fractionalism” squared, Model 4:

military personnel, Model 5: secondary warring party (Eck 2009, 378)

The complexity of ethnic conflicts on social and cultural levels requires more than traditional UN peacekeeping. Traditional peacekeeping relies on top-down diplomacy, which is not usually prevalent when ethnic violence occurs. Intrastate conflict means that two official governments are no longer the disputants the UN is used to mediating. It requires peacekeepers to engage with rebel or guerilla groups outside the law, which the UN legislation does not discuss. This oversight leads to the loss of representation, possibly delegitimizing UN power on the ground, making troops targets. Post-Cold-War politics, as mentioned before, sometimes led to weak state governments that heightened the question of top-down diplomacy tactics. Weakened states struggle with refugee exodus, food insecurity, and human rights. Ethnically mobilized conflict within weak states magnifies the humanitarian consequences, requiring the UN to take a more holistic approach.

Figure 3²⁸: Historic Events within Kosovo



(Author 2023)

II. CASE STUDY: THE REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO

HISTORY OF KOSOVO

To fully understand the complexities of UN peacekeeping, one must understand the region's history. Each group traces back their ancestry to the geographical region with differing perspectives: “Albanians consider themselves to be the descendants of the Illyrians, a people who lived in the

Balkans before the arrival of the Romans, the Serbs consider Kosovo to be the territory of Old Serbia, and the cradle of Serbia” (Demjaha 2017, 183). The historic Kingdom of Serbia clashed with the Ottoman Empire, which held territory in the overlapping region. The reach of the Ottoman Empire led to the “Islamization of the majority of Albanians and deepened the existing cultural divide, adding the religious divide to the language divide between the

²⁸ During the Kosovar war, many Albanian women were raped and killed by enemy soldiers. The legacy of sexual violence is still present today. A coalition of Kosovar experts has researched the changes in reporting and legislative aid throughout the 2010s. For more information, see here: https://kgscenter.net/site/assets/files/1742/gender_base_violence_eng-1.pdf.

Serbs and Kosovar Albanians” (Bebler 2015, 151). Religious differences cemented the groups’ underlying differences and remained a core issue throughout Kosovo’s history.

The first contemporary change occurred during the First Balkan War 1912-1913, with Serbians’ desire for territorial gains and minority populations of Christian Orthodox in the Kosovar regions. In October 1912, Serbia, with the help of the Montenegrin military, completed a brutal conquest of Albanian Kosovars and Turks, with estimates of “25,000 deaths” (Bebler 2015, 153). After World War I, European powers allocated Kosovo to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Fast forward to the Paris Conference of 1946, the powers again decided Kosovo would remain in the new communist Yugoslavia “with a certain degree of autonomy within Serbia” (Demjaha 2017, 183).

Serb/Yugoslav authorities ostracized ethnic Albanians, causing mass expulsions throughout the next decade. Discrimination spurred ethnic Albanian protests, and the political liberalization of the Yugoslav government helped create the 1974 Yugoslav constitution. The constitution gave Kosovo more autonomy, including equal political rights to the other republics like Serbia. Although a win for Albanians, it “put into question Yugoslavia’s very name (‘The Land of the Southern Slavs’), its anthem (‘Hey Slavs’), the privileged legal status of the Slavs, the existing power relations and the Belgrade bureaucracy’s pivotal position in the federal state” (Bebler 2015, 156). In 1989, Albanian protests were amplified by the reign of the new Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) President Slobodan Milosevic—a Serb—as he rescinded the 1974 constitution and Kosovo’s autonomy.

The change in leadership exacerbated the conflict, and as Demjaha suggests, “a de facto apartheid began as Albanians were dismissed from their jobs, denied education in their language, and exposed to massive abuse of their human rights and civil liberties” (2017, 184). By 1998, war broke out between the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) of Ethnic Albanians and the Serbian special police force. The violence spiraled with the FRY government refusing to interfere. As of March 1999, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) believed neither side was willing to agree to a ceasefire; thus, they began airstrikes to deter Serbian forces. NATO hit Serbian targets in Kosovo for 78 days. On June 3, 1999,

the FRY Parliament ratified the Ahtisaari-Chernomyrdin Plan, which included a total (verifiable) withdrawal of FRY military forces from Kosovo, the safe return of all refugees, and an UN-based civil mission to implement the Rambouillet Agreement’s peace plan, which would be secured by NATO troops (Demjaha 2017, 185).

The war killed hundreds of thousands of people, left many displaced or refugees, and decimated the country’s infrastructure. One week later, UN Resolution 1244 passed, creating the UN mission UNMIK: The United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo. The resolution also implemented KFOR, a NATO-led Kosovo force of 50,000 international troops (Bebler 2015, 159).

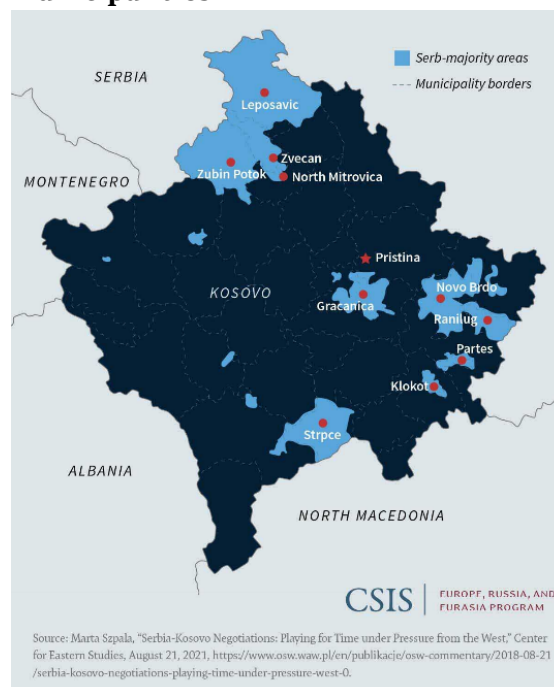
During the early 2000s, the regional split of Kosovo became more evident. With an Orthodox Christian Serb majority, the northern regions instituted closed borders. The southern region has a majority of Muslim Albanians, as does the capital of Pristina (See Figure 4). In 2004, violence escalated into riots triggered by boundary

disputes. These riots focused on Albanians targeting Serbians and Orthodox religious monuments. Demjaha explains, “this was the worst violence since the end of the war in Kosovo and left nineteen dead, with nearly 900 injured” (2017, 186). Kosovo declared independence on February 17, 2008, but the four Serb majority regions refused inclusion. With the help of the EU, dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade was attempted in April 2013. Kosovo and Serbia signed “The First Agreement of Principles Governing Normalization of Relations” (Bebler 2015, 167). The agreement created an association for Serbian majority municipalities. It recognized the KP as the only police force in Kosovo and the judiciary in all municipalities would subscribe to Kosovar legal frameworks and parallel security structures (Government of the Republic of Serbia 2013).

Ethnic Albanians retain a majority over the Serb population, a 180-degree turn from the beginning of Kosovo’s story. Scholars emphasize national and ethnic identity clashes as the main concerns moving forward. Religion does seem to play a part in this question. With small portions of Catholic and Orthodox, Albanians are Muslims, and Serbians are predominantly Orthodox Christians. Interestingly, Pratto et al. (2018, 123) explains how Serbs perceived religion as a part of their ethnicity, while Albanians perceived it as an identifier given by birth, separate from their ethnicity. In addition, since Kosovo’s established independence, national identity has been difficult for citizens to ascribe to in their personal lives. Ethnic Albanians and Serbs describe experiencing an identity crisis within nationality, as each group perceives Kosovar identity differently. Pratto et al. found that “although Albanians embrace the new national identity, participants in our sample have for the

most part considered it a vague and an imposed political identity” (2018, 121). In comparison, “Serb participants mainly rejected it because the Kosovar identity was perceived as threatening to their ethnic identity” (Pratto et al. 2018, 121-122). Extensive historical turmoil and a national identity crisis loom over the present Kosovar government, setting the stage for future disputes.

Figure 4. Map of Serbian Majority Municipalities



(Conley and Saric 2021)

UNMIK: UNITED NATIONS INTERIM ADMINISTRATION MISSION IN KOSOVO

UNMIK: the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo represents the international community’s role in the conflict. UNMIK was established in 1999 by the UN Security Council’s Resolution 1244 to ensure peace in Kosovo while establishing a sustainable autonomous government. The United Nations (2023) puts forth “inter-community trust building, respect for human rights and

rule of law, gender equality and empowerment of women and youth” as the mission's primary goals. For organizational purposes, Resolution 1244 created a Four-Pillar structure: the UN, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the European Union (EU), and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Each organization handled different administrative jobs, functioning as a “surrogate state” of Kosovo. Once the violence subsided in 2001, a multinational policing force replaced the UNHCR as the fourth pillar.

A Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) leads PKO missions and retains an executive-legislative role, thus representing the UN pillar. The OSCE handled institutional building, including human rights monitoring, and the EU managed economic reconstruction (Cockell 2002, 491). UNMIK and the SRSG retained control of all legislative, executive, and judicial matters, supposedly acting on behalf of Kosovo's Provisional Institutions of Self-Government, a governing body within Kosovo. Ethnic Serbians dominate four northern municipalities. Thus, the UNMIK solution created parallel government structures in the north but was unable to blend administrative functions with the south.

Due to FRY president Milosevic's influence on pre-UNMIK political structures, a reinvention of judicial and legislative institutions comprised the main tasks of the UN. Within UNMIK's mandate, the Interim Self-Government—now the Assembly—retained the ability to create policy and institute legislation.

Nonetheless, the SRSG held final authority over all appointments, policy, law enforcement, and “retained the power to amend the Constitutional Framework either on his own initiative or upon the request of two thirds of members of the assembly” (Murati 2020, 63). A new judicial system was created, with the Kosovo Judicial Council (KJC) suggesting and approving candidates while establishing a rule of law. The President of Kosovo holds the power of appointment, while the SRSG reserves the right to override appointments (Murati 2020, 67). In addition, a hierarchy of courts, similar to the United States, was created, including the Supreme Court of Kosovo.²⁹

Legally, UNMIK struggled with how to reintroduce trust in the legal system. As Kosovo changed hands and authority many times, the legal systems from previous constitutions remained discriminatory, failing to meet human rights standards. July 25, 1999, UNMIK and local actors agreed to use the “laws of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia...to the extent that they did not conflict with the accepted standards of international human rights law” (Murati 2020, 32). The provisional government created a Criminal Procedural Code to oversee human rights laws not explicitly described in the previous FRY legal code. Since independence, the Kosovar government has continued to update and implement legal changes using this code.

Militarily, UNMIK created the Kosovo Force (KFOR) under NATO jurisdiction. According to AP reports, the force has had 4,500 troops since 1999 (Zhinipotoku and Semini 2023). KFOR's original tasks were to enforce the ceasefire, ensure Serbian troops withdrew, and demilitarize the KLA. Over

²⁹ For more in-depth judicial practices and court information from the Kosovo Judicial Council:

<https://www.gjyqesori-rks.org/pyetjet-e-shpeshta/?lang=en>.

time, their main focus has been “ensuring public safety; for supporting and coordinating with the international civilian presence; for conducting border monitoring duties; and for ensuring the protection and freedom of movement of international organizations” (Murati 2020, 11). After a decrease in violence, KFOR transferred its policing duties to the UNMIK police unit CIVPOL, establishing 4,000 police officers under the direct authority of UNMIK. CIVPOL acts as a traditional police institution: patrolling, investigating crimes, immigration, traffic control, etc. (Murati 2020, 18). The establishment of Kosovo’s self-governance in 2008 created the additional Kosovo Police Force. The police force includes Albanians, Serbs, and other minorities to reflect the multi-ethnicity of the state. Many officers are former militants as part of UNMIK’s goal to demilitarize the KLA and redirect their capabilities. Officers train in a twenty-week course that covers community policing and human rights (Ryan 2001, 124).

Today, UNMIK’s activities in Kosovo concentrate on administrative roles. Per their website, the main activities they oversee include the Human Rights Office, Community Support, Office of Rule of Law, and Political Affairs. The variety of offices emphasizes the United Nations’ broad mandates in mediating conflict. It also reflects the importance of peacebuilding tactics in post-war settings. For example, the Office of Rule of Law implicates UNMIK’s ability to maintain neutral judicial and legislative institutions. The Office’s primary focus as the country evolves is to

support “the integration of the judiciary in northern Kosovo” (UNMIK 2023). Since 2008 Independence, the role of UNMIK has been questioned by native political leaders. However, UNMIK continues to serve as an international third-party that has participated in the reduction of violence and aided in the state building of Kosovo.

Figure 5: UNMIK Boundary



(United Nations 2023)

III. IMPACT AND LEGACY

UNMIK: EFFECTIVE AND INEFFECTIVE³⁰

In several cases, UN missions have effectively reduced violence and instituted peace. Howard (2019) discusses how the UN completed mandates through persuasion, inducement, and coercion. Persuasion is

effectiveness by becoming untrustworthy, corrupt, and violent. For more resources: <https://giwps.georgetown.edu/resource/reducing-sexual-abuse-and-exploitation-in-un-peacekeeping-missions/>

³⁰ Sexual violence is not mentioned in this argument as it deserves its own space and expert analysis. A lack of accountability and corruption has been reflected in sexual violence perpetrated by deployed peacekeepers. Sexual violence by peacekeepers undermines their

the power to “mediate, shame, symbolic displays, outreach, and education and training” (Howard 2019, 188). Coercion, in contrast, is the use or threat of military force to deter violence. Inducement is the use of financial restraints or promises. These usually include sanctions, foreign aid, trade embargoes, and tariffs. For example, the United Nations mission in Lebanon successfully built social services that deterred violence in the state’s southern region (Howard 2019, 84-85). Although a short-term success, introducing social services has caused the UN to be the biggest employer of Lebanese citizens, effectively creating a new sector in their economy. Similarly, using persuasion in the form of education at native church services in Namibia helped bring opposing sides to the negotiating table (Howard 2019, 77). The Namibian mission, UNTAG, was completed a year after its creation. The UN has effectively created institutional structures that mitigate disputes and implement sustainability in self-governance.

UNMIK has effectively minimized large-scale violence and democratic law and order. First, the international community displayed coercion as it deterred Serbia’s invasion in 1999 through NATO airstrikes. Institutionally, UNMIK coordinated military support to civil authorities to provide optimal security. The Four Pillars system delegates institutions with the resources that will most positively impact Kosovo. The EU focused its efforts on the economy by investing in infrastructure and raising employment (Cockell 2002). UNMIK, a civil authority, and KFOR, a military authority, combine their efforts to better interact with the community. For instance, KFOR and UNMIK perform joint patrols with civilian advisors and participate in joint security meetings (Cockell 2002, 488). Field

structures are also organized based on the five congruent sectors of Kosovo that include all municipalities, thus enabling the headquarters of KFOR to establish centralized standards practiced by each sector successfully.

One of the most significant achievements of UNMIK is the demilitarization of the KLA. In 1999, SRSG Bernard Kouchner authorized the creation of the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC). The leader of the KLA at the time, Hashim Thaçi, agreed to participate in demobilization. The KPC allowed the international community to observe and organize former militants. The force essentially created a standing army, giving members repurpose and employment. The KPS now provides employment for many ex-KLA members. The UNMIK mandate built the KPS from scratch, emphasizing neutrality. The extensive education and training system showcases its purpose to rebuild the community’s trust in the legal process. Cockell explains the process, stating (2002, 495):

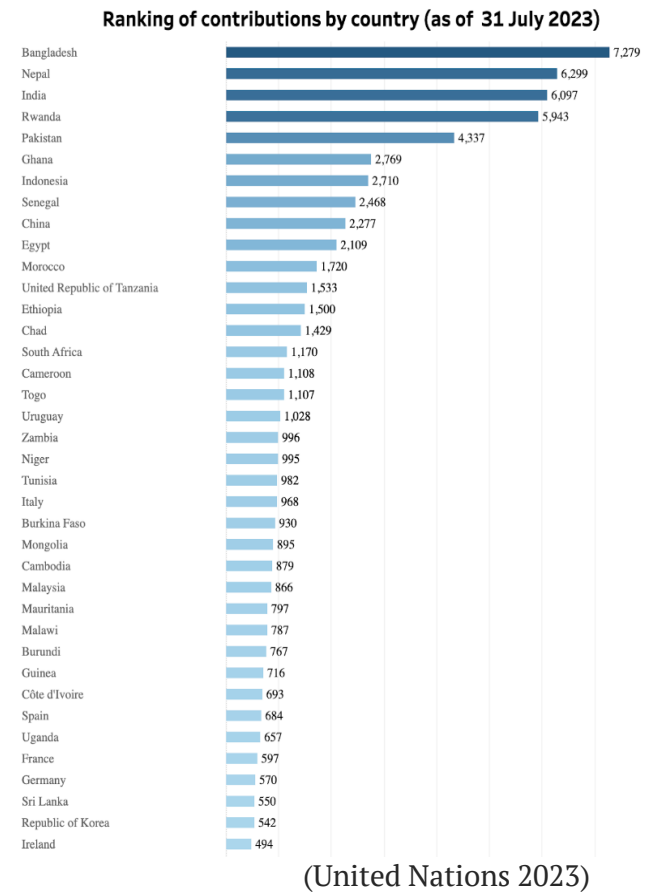
Upon successful completion of a basic nine-week training course at the school, each recruit is then assigned to an UNMIK Police station to undertake a further seventeen weeks of field training, interspersed with eighty hours of follow-up KPSS classroom instruction.

The education and emphasis on multi-ethnic forces further politicize security institutions that previously held strong bias.

UN peacekeeping has also been ineffective in several conflicts due to institutional flaws of the UN. Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) are predominantly from the Global South. Ten of the twelve active peacekeeping missions are located in the Global South, as seen in

Figure 6. TCCs being neighbors with the disputant parties could be effective through contextual education and understanding. Still, none of the TCCs have explicit power over mandates created by the UN before policing. The UN Security Council comprises Western powers: the United States, Russia, France, and the United Kingdom—plus the People’s Republic of China. They are empowered to create and grant peacekeeping mandates, with TCCs unable to create formal policy or legislation. In addition, vague and unsupported mandates reflect the power imbalance in the Security Council (Jett 2019, 63). For instance, the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) oversees a referendum of Western Saharan people to become an independent state or merge with Morocco. With support from France and the United States, Morocco has been able to strong-arm negotiations, including limiting resupplies of peacekeepers and using their military to put UN troops at risk (Jett 2019, 65).

Figure 6: Number of Soldiers Supplied by Top 38 TCCs



Additionally, powers vested to a UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), who leads UN peacekeeping missions, are broad and vague. The Kosovo case study explores a lack of checks and balances on the SRSG. The SRSG of Kosovo retained ultimate veto power acting as a ruler instead of conciliator. Ryan explains their omnipotence: "With a large NATO army, a well-armed international police force, and an indigenous police force, the SRSG had ample resources to secure this sovereign position" (2010, 117). After declaring independence in 2008, UNMIK’s legitimacy on the local level decreased, causing public dissent of the SRSG’s power. But, as long as

UNMIK remains active, so does the SRSG. In addition, UNMIK has not established any institutional change in Serbian-held northern Kosovo. Mitrovica, a major city in the north, repeatedly pushed back on UNMIK's presence. Ethnic Serbs have attacked police stations, set fire to UNMIK vehicles, and impeded police patrols in the region (Cockell 2002, 490). UNMIK inability to reach northern citizens effectively exacerbates the underlying tensions. Parallel structures coupled with the independence of the National Assembly trends the public's relationship with the SRSG and UNMIK negatively.

Human security is still not guaranteed in Kosovo. Public relations with UNMIK-backed police are an extension of this distrust. Previously, the paper discussed the negative effects of small arms on peacekeeping in ethnic conflicts. Ryan found that “a survey by the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons revealed that more than 317,000 guns were illegally held by citizens and arms groups in Kosovo.” (2010, 126). Thus, the police have yet to gain full support from everyday citizens, and UNMIK has not made headway on small-arm programs.

International personnel immunity reemphasizes inadequate checks and balances within UNMIK. UNMIK personnel are immune from arrest according to UNMIK Regulation 2000/47 (Ryan 2010, 122). The UN implemented immunity for international personnel in all PKOs to prevent interference of state governments in the mediation process. Murati (2020) argues that because UNMIK originally functioned without an established state government and virtually became an overseer of the administration, it allows officers not to be adequately investigated. For example, “cases involving trafficking in

women that linked both UNMIK personnel and KFOR remained uninvestigated. Those involved in such cases were mainly repatriated home and the files closed” (Murati 2020, 132). In addition, during the February 2007 protests, an Austrian officer was implicated for using torture. UNMIK lifted the officer's immunity but allowed the Austrian government representatives to extradite him before he faced consequences (Murati 2020, 132). The complex role of UNMIK in the now-established government causes checks and balances on the system to be challenging.

THE FUTURE OF KOSOVO

Figure 7: NATO Troops Policing the Kosovo-Serbian Border



(Bytyci 2023)

The United Nations' pivotal role in conflict resolution has created a safer world. The UN has instituted 71 Peacekeeping Operations, with 12 still active (United Nations 2023). They have made positive political, economic, and social changes. With the rise of intrastate conflict, the UN must evolve to respond correctly. Third-party intervention, especially in intrastate conflict, has to toe the line of occupation vs. mediation. UNMIK, with the aid of NATO, effectively ended the all-out war in Kosovo. The border troops continue to keep relative peace on the Serbia-Kosovo border. Since 2008, there

have been years of relative quiet, minimal skirmishes, and economic investments. Kosovo's economy has moved towards green energy, infrastructure projects, and established relationships across the EU. For instance, the World Bank's MENA Report stated (2023):

Since 2020, the EIB has unlocked 108.8 million under the Team Europe initiative to facilitate Kosovo's social and economic recovery. The funds were allocated to the railway sector, small and medium enterprises, and the construction of wastewater plants in Mitrovica and Gjilan.

International cooperation continues to impact Kosovo and its status on the global stage positively.

However, violence and political tensions between Kosovo and Serbia have amplified in 2023³¹. Post-COVID, the Kosovo government attempted to make Serbs re-register cars, effectively changing license plates to Kosovo. Seen as a provocation by Serbs living in Kosovo and the Serbian government, tensions amplified. On May 26th, 2023, major protests erupted in Kosovo after local elections as Kosovo government officials took control of municipal buildings in the four Serb-majority cities. This comes after Serbs boycotted recall elections, leaving only Ethnic Albanians at the voting polls. In response, Serb protesters armed themselves, resulting in a confrontation with KFOR troops. Prelec (2023) explains

the possible consequences of tensions because of severe fighting in northern Kosovo, targeting of the Serb minority population in the south, and a Serbian push for de facto partition. All these could erase efforts made over the last two decades. At the end of September, ethnic Serbians barricaded themselves in an Orthodox monastery after storming a village in response to perceived infringements of autonomy by the Kosovo government. Following an hours-long gun battle, a Kosovo policeman was killed, as were three of the gunmen. The BBC quoted the incident as "the worst escalation of violence in years" (Kovacevic 2023). The incident reiterates the distrust many ethnic Serbs have in the Kosovo Police Forces. To make matters worse, Milan Radoicic, a Kosovo-Serb politician, admitted to organizing the armed group, further delegitimizing peaceful politics (Kovacevic 2023). In response to amplifying tensions, NATO announced they would send 1,000 extra troops to the Serbia-Kosovo border. Reuters reported on November 25th, "NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said the organization is reviewing whether a more permanent increase of forces was needed" (Bytyci 2023).

While the current situation in Kosovo seems worrisome, it's essential to highlight the positive intervention of UNMIK since 1999. Future recommendations specific to ethnic conflict peacekeeping may aid UNMIK as the conflict progresses³².

³¹ Gender disparity in Kosovo has been a consistent issue since the amount of sexual violence in the Kosovo War. Scholars continue to monitor the introduction of women into the political and economic landscape in Kosovo. There is a significant need for more support for women in Kosovo, as only 20% of women in

Kosovo participated in the labor force in 2023 (Asia News Monitor 2023).

³² Further discussion on the future of peacekeeping highlights women in the political arena: "Research has shown that adding more women improves peacekeeping operations, as women increase access to local communities and

Scholars suggest small-scale intervention focused on institution building, which could alleviate the issues created by Serbian and Kosovo parallel structures. Increased training and education of police forces may minimize the threat of scapegoating minority Serbs (Wilén 2018). Using Kosovo as a case study, it is evident that United Nations peacekeeping persists as an international necessity despite its flaws.

REFERENCES

- Asia News Monitor. 2023. "Kosovo: More Reforms are Needed in Kosovo for Women to Fully Contribute Towards Country's Economy and Prosperity." *Thai News Service Group*, March 13, 2023.
- Bash, Brooks L. 1994. "Discussion of Peacekeeping." In *The Role of United States Air Power in Peacekeeping*. Air University Press.
- BBC. 2022. "Kosovo profile - Timeline." <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-18331273>.
- Bebler, Anton. 2015. "The Serbia-Kosovo Conflict." In *Frozen Conflicts in Europe*, edited by Anton Bebler, 1st ed., 151–169. Verlag Barbara Budrich.
- Bytyci, Fatos. 2023. "British troops patrol Kosovo-Serbia border as tensions remain high." *Reuters*, November 25, 2023. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/british-troops-patrol-kosovo-serbia-border-tensions-remain-high-2023-11-25/>.
- Conley, Heather A., and Dejana Saric. 2021. "The Serbia-Kosovo Normalization Process: A Temporary U.S. Decoupling." CSIS. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/serbia-kosovo-normalization-process-temporary-us-decoupling>
- Demjaha, Agon. 2017. "Inter-Ethnic Relations in Kosovo." *South East European University Review* 12, no. 1: 181-196.
- Donjeta, Morina. 2019. "Gender Based Violence in Kosovo: Critical Review on Police Response." Equal Rights for All Coalition.
- Eck, Kristine. 2009. "From Armed Conflict to War: Ethnic Mobilization and Conflict Intensification." *International Studies Quarterly* 53, no. 2: 369-388.
- The Government of the Republic of Serbia. 2013. "Brussels Agreement." <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/specijal/en/120394>.
- Howard, Lise Morjé. 2019. *Power in Peacekeeping*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jett, Dennis. 2019. "Why Peacekeeping Fails" *Middle East Policy* 26, no. 1: 89-96.
- Kovacevic, Tamara. 2023. "Kosovo Why is violence flaring between ethnic Serbians and Albanians?" *BBC News*, October 2, 2023. <https://www.bbc.com/news/62382069>.

intelligence and are better at de-escalating tensions...Yet women should not carry the

burden for improving peacekeeping (Wilén, 2018, 7).

- Mac Ginty, Roger, and Gillian Robinson. 2001. "Peacekeeping and the violence in ethnic conflict." In *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Ad Hoc Missions, Permanent Engagement*, edited by Ramesh Chandra Thakur and Albrecht Schnabel. Tokyo: United Nations University Press.
- Mays, Terry M. 2013. "Peacekeeping under the League of Nations: Setting the Foundation for the Modern Concept of UN Peacekeeping." *Global War Studies* 10, no. 2: 38-55.
- MENA Report. 2023. "Kosovo: EIB Vice-President Reiterates Support for Sustainable Key Infrastructure Investments, Helping Kosovo Build a Resilient Economy." *The World Bank*, May 10, 2023. <http://libproxy.temple.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/wire-feeds/kosovo-eib-vice-president-reiterates-support/docview/2811740899/se-2>.
- Murati, Gjylbehare Bella. 2020. *UN Territorial Administration and Human Rights: The Mission in Kosovo*. Routledge: London.
- Pratto, Felicia, Iris Žeželj, Edona Maloku, Vladimir Turjačanin, and Marija Branković, eds. 2018. *Shaping Social Identities After Violent Conflict*. Palgrave Macmillan Cham.
- Prelec, Marko. 2023. "Behind the Renewed Troubles in Northern Kosovo." *Crisis Group*, June 7, 2023. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/behind-renewed-troubles-europe-balkans-northern-kosovo>.
- Ryan, Barry J. 2010. "Policing the state of exception in Kosovo." In *Kosovo, Intervention and Statebuilding: the International Community and the Transition to Independence*, edited by Aidan Hehir, 114-131. London: Taylor & Francis Group.
- United Nations. 2021. "United Nations Field Missions." <https://www.un.org/globalcall/content/field-missions>.
- United Nations. 2023. "Global Peacekeeping Data." July 31, 2023. <https://peacekeeping.un.org/fr/data>.
- United Nations. 2023. "Mandate." <https://unmik.unmissions.org/mandate>.
- United Nations. 2023. "UNMIK Deployment February 2023." February 1, 2023. <https://www.un.org/geospatial/content/unmik-deployment-february-2023>.
- UNMIK. 2023. "Shared responsibility, concerted action and compromise, the only route to progress, SRSG Ziadeh tells the Security Council." October 23, 2023. <https://unmik.unmissions.org/shared-responsibility-concerted-action-and-compromise-only-route-progress-srsg-ziadeh-tells-security>.
- UNMIK. 2023. "UNMIK Office of Rule of Law." <https://unmik.unmissions.org/https%3A/unmik.unmissions.org/rule-law>.
- Wilén, Nina. 2018. "Improving Peacekeeping Performance — Dilemmas and Goals." *Egmont Institute* 21: 1-9.

Zhinipotoku, Zenel, and Llazar Semini.
2023. "NATO equips peacekeeping force
in Kosovo with heavier armament to
have "combat power." *AP News*, October
10, 2023.
[https://apnews.com/article/kosovo-
serbia-kfor-nato-troops-heavier-
armament-
1b85756299b57fabdf7910f4fe0ab316](https://apnews.com/article/kosovo-serbia-kfor-nato-troops-heavier-armament-1b85756299b57fabdf7910f4fe0ab316).