



Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

7327th meeting

Thursday, 4 December 2014, 3 p.m.

New York

President: Mr. Cherif (Chad)

Members:

Argentina	Mr. Oyarzábal
Australia	Mr. Quinlan
Chile	Mr. Barros Melet
China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
France	Mr. Bertoux
Jordan	Mr. Hmoud
Lithuania	Mrs. Jakubonė
Luxembourg	Mr. Maes
Nigeria	Mr. Laro
Republic of Korea	Mr. Oh Joon
Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
Rwanda	Mr. Manzi
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . . .	Mr. Tatham
United States of America	Mr. Pressman

Agenda

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

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (S/2014/773)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).

14-67019 (E)



Accessible document

Please recycle



The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

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

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (S/2014/773)

The President (*spoke in French*): 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. Aleksandar Vučić, Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia, and I request the Protocol Officer to escort him to his seat at the Council table.

Mr. Aleksandar Vučić, Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia, was escorted to a seat at the Council table.

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

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

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2014/773, the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo.

I now give the floor to Mr. Farid Zarif.

Mr. Zarif: Almost six months ago, on 8 June, legislative elections were held in Kosovo that saw the politically courageous participation of Serbian majority municipalities of northern Kosovo, and now the Kosovo Assembly and Government are finally expected to be formally constituted in the coming days. On 18 November, the Democratic Party of Kosovo, led by Mr. Hashim Thaçi, who is with us in the Chamber today to represent the Kosovo institutions, and the

Democratic League of Kosovo, led by Mr. Isa Mustafa, reached a power-sharing agreement in principle. That compromise between Kosovo's two largest political parties excluded other parties, which had previously formed a post-election bloc. The two parties are now in negotiations on the structure and programme of a new Government with the participation of the Kosovo Serbs and other communities in order to reconvene the Kosovo Assembly. President Jahjaga played a key role in that respect by engaging with the leaders of the political parties in encouraging a solution. I urge Kosovo's political leaders to complete the process of constituting the new Government and institutions, and to focus their efforts on establishing good governance. It is also imperative that a spirit of inclusiveness and collective responsibility prevail at this critical time.

The six months' delay was damaging for Kosovo and led to increased public dissatisfaction with political leaders and further delays in bringing about pressing institutional reforms and the resumption of the political dialogue with Belgrade facilitated by the European Union (EU). In the interim, however, technical meetings have continued under the aegis of the EU, and I note with appreciation the consistent efforts of the Belgrade and Priština technical teams and welcome their agreements, which enhance the implementation of previously reached agreements on energy, the integrated management of crossing points, and the freedom of movement. I also wish to highlight, as an indication of further progress, the new arrangements for administering official visits agreed on between Belgrade and Priština, which took effect on 1 December. Nonetheless, I reiterate that new momentum must be generated and high-level meetings must resume as soon as possible, so that both sides can fulfil the promise of that process and avail themselves of the opportunities presented by the European Union integration process.

I welcome the cooperation and coordination demonstrated by the municipal structures functioning in northern Kosovo during the preparation of the 2015 municipal budgets, despite the complexity of the current municipal setup in the northern municipalities. I trust that all sides have now been convinced of the value of dialogue at the local level for delivering better governance. It is high time that the issues relating to construction in the ethnically mixed North Mitrovica suburb of Kroi i Vitakut/Brdjani were resolved through mutually agreeable steps. It is also essential that momentum be sustained towards the administrative integration of the four northern Kosovo municipalities.

In that context, advancing the establishment of a community/association of Serb-majority municipalities, in line with the 19 April 2013 agreement, remains vital.

I commend the Kosovo police and security bodies for their contribution to containing transnational violent extremism. The police operations of this past summer have been followed by more investigations and arrests in the months since. I also note the continued responsible guidance on those sensitive issues provided by the Islamic community of Kosovo and its leaders, as well as the public stance of other religious and secular leaders, unanimously denouncing extremism.

The protection of the religious and cultural heritage in Kosovo remains an issue and a concern. I welcome the cooperation between local authorities and the International Security Force in Kosovo in addressing illegal construction in the special protective zone surrounding the UNESCO World Heritage site of Visoki Dečani Monastery. Instances of offensive graffiti in the vicinity of the Monastery in early October are a clear indication that reconciliation efforts must be sustained and strengthened further on the ground. In that respect, I note with appreciation the prompt and strong condemnations of those incidents by President Jahjaga and other Priština leaders, as well as by representatives of other religious communities of Kosovo.

Recent developments reflecting improvements in community and religious interactions have also been encouraging. Members of the Islamic community of Kosovo and the Serbian Orthodox clergy at the Visoki Dečani Monastery exchanged visits and publicly emphasized the importance of dialogue for promoting religious tolerance in Kosovo. Additionally, on 24 November a delegation from the Islamic community of Kosovo attended the patron-saint day liturgy at the Monastery, at which the Patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church conveyed messages of tolerance and appealed to all Kosovo Serb displaced persons to return. I have also noted the 12 November visit of 32 Kosovo Albanian primary and high-school students to the Monastery as part of an awareness project of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe promoting cultural heritage preservation among young people. Such initiatives are vital to instilling mutual respect and appreciation for the value of cultural heritage in all communities in Kosovo.

The pace of the returns and reintegration of internally displaced persons has remained slow. The matter is of wide concern for both local and international

stakeholders. In the light of that issue, I note the initiative of the Serbian Office for Kosovo and Metohija to create a new consultative body that includes the Kosovo Minister for Communities and Returns as well as the United Nations and other international organizations. However, the continued occurrence of security incidents affecting returnees and their properties can only undermine confidence. I welcome the prompt and clear condemnation of such incidents on the part of the relevant Priština institutions. It is imperative that both local and central authorities demonstrate greater political will in effectively addressing the issues that are of most concern to current and potential returnees.

With regard to the progress made in the process of establishing the fates of persons still missing from the 1998-1999 conflict and its aftermath, I welcome the conclusion, on 13 October, of the repatriation of the bodily remains recovered from the Rudnica stone quarry in Serbia's Raška municipality. I commend the commitment and professionalism of both the Belgrade and Priština teams of experts, who conducted that sensitive process without politicization. I urge both sides to demonstrate greater political will and to be more proactive in addressing the cases of the remaining missing persons, allaying the terrible anguish suffered by their families, contributing to further conciliation and thereby bringing that painful chapter to a close.

As the Council is aware, the allegations of corruption made recently against current and former members of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) have drawn a considerable amount of public and media attention. The new EULEX Head of Mission, Ambassador Gabriele Meucci, has confirmed that investigations into the allegations have been and remain ongoing since 2013. On 10 November, the European Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Ms. Federica Mogherini, appointed an independent expert to review the implementation of the EULEX Kosovo mandate, with a focus on the handling of the corruption allegations. I would like to emphasize that, regardless of speculation, there should be no room for questioning the integrity of EU rule-of-law principles or indeed their central importance for future progress in Kosovo. At the same time, the work of the EU Special Investigative Task Force also remains critical to the process of justice and reconciliation in Kosovo. I urge the Kosovo Assembly, once it is fully constituted, to prioritize the adoption of the required legislation, so that a specialist court can become operational early next year and begin tackling the cases

that will be brought before it, in order to swiftly follow up on the work conducted by the Task Force.

Turning to regional developments, the ethnically motivated incidents that occurred in various parts of the Western Balkans in the wake of the interrupted football match between Albania and Serbia held in Belgrade on 14 October, demonstrated that both the authorities and the public must act responsibly, so that the momentum towards enhanced regional cooperation is not reversed. Despite the incidents, the visit of the Albanian Prime Minister to Serbia in November, the first of its kind in 68 years, was a welcome step in the right direction.

Likewise, the 23 October informal regional meeting between the EU and Western Balkan foreign and economic affairs ministers in Belgrade, with the participation of Kosovo ministers, was a clear signal of the improved atmosphere for regional cooperation. The joint ministerial statement issued by the participants also holds promise for much needed economic development in the Western Balkans.

Finally, I wish to express my deepest appreciation to all Council members for maintaining their engagement with the parties, particularly in the light of the many other pressing matters that demand the Council's attention. UNMIK will continue working closely with its local and international partners in accordance with its mandate, helping to ensure that the progress made to date will be sustained and further advanced.

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

I now give the floor to Mr. Vučić.

Mr. Vučić (Serbia): First of all, I am very honoured to be here. I thank the Council for the opportunity to present the perspective of the Republic of Serbia on the situation and events in Kosovo and Metohija in the period from July to October.

More than anything else, Serbia wants stability — political and economic — in the entire Western Balkans. That is the condition for the survival and progress of our Serbia, as well as of all others. It is precisely for this reason that Serbia is committed to peace and life and that, independently and without pressures from outside, it has commenced difficult and comprehensive reforms aimed at bringing about a healthier and more competitive economy and freer and richer citizens.

We do not invent problems outside the borders of our country and we do not raise nationalistic tensions

in the region because we have enough courage to face and solve our own problems courageously. Serbia therefore has stayed away from conflicts in the region — even verbal ones — for only weak and irresponsible politicians, whenever they have internal problems, open old nationalistic wounds and confuse issues, turning the region backwards. We have no part in that and we are not weak because of it; on the contrary, it is the sign of our strength and long-term strategic thinking.

All who are present in this forum know well the importance of Kosovo and Metohija to my country and all its citizens, as well as the attention with which the Republic of Serbia follows developments in its southern province administered under resolution 1244 (1999) by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). Our genuine and long-term commitment to a peaceful solution of the conflict in Kosovo and Metohija is well known to all members of the international community, both those who share our views on the status of Kosovo and Metohija and those who think otherwise. I believe that all Council members recognize just as well the resolve in the steps that the Republic of Serbia has taken lately to give momentum to reconciliation among the people living in Kosovo and to improve the living conditions of all its residents alike: Albanians, Serbs, Gorani, Roma and the members of other non-majority communities.

Serbia welcomes the efforts made by the United Nations and UNMIK, the European Union (EU), NATO and its presence in Kosovo and Metohija, and the Kosovo Force, as well as the efforts made by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe that are aimed at achieving the same goals of reconciliation, economic progress and security for all residents of Kosovo and Metohija.

Serbia trusts the United Nations. If it were not for UNMIK, the world would be without much of the data on the events in Kosovo and Metohija. We salute the activities of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Mr. Farid Zarif, Head of UNMIK, who presented the report on UNMIK for the period from 16 July to 15 October (S/2014/773).

Council members know that Belgrade is firm in its position not to recognize the secession of Kosovo and Metohija and its self-proclamation of statehood, carried out by force and contrary to international law. Yet that firm position is not an obstacle to negotiations or the ever more lively communication with Pristina

today. That is so because Belgrade, the Government of the Republic of Serbia, wants peace and stability in the entire region; it wants dialogue and a solution, as well as the ability of people, goods and ever more positive ideas to circulate freely throughout the region.

It is therefore right to say that our efforts — the new, positive approach of Serbia to the difficult Balkan questions — have eased the tensions in the region, where there is less and less fear among neighbours and more and more acceptance of the initiatives coming from Serbia. We have proved by our actions that we want, more than anything else, peace in the Balkans as the basis of development. We want a normal, decent and ordered Serbia and are well aware that it is possible only in such an environment.

Likewise, we know that dialogue is the only way to achieve that goal and we shall do all we can to ensure that it continues in the way that Serbia has promoted it by taking decisions that improve the lives of the people in Kosovo and Metohija. Surely that will not prevent Serbia from continuing to insist on its position that the unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo and Metohija is illegal; yet, probably for the first time in many years, the position of the Government of Serbia does not impede life in the province. On the contrary, we are dedicated to that life, putting it before any other interest. At the same time, it gives us the right to request for the Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija exactly what we want for the Albanians — the possibility to live, work, be safe, communicate and move around normally.

We therefore believe that everything that Serbia has done in the past two years towards spreading and promoting those positions deserves attention, recognition and support. We do so primarily because our desire for peace and cooperation in the entire Balkans is the only way to make that region an equal part of Europe in a manner that will ensure that the Balkans region is in no way different from the rest of Europe. We do so also as we are demonstrating, day in and day out, that centuries-old conflicts, vast differences and completely opposed positions do not have to obstruct dialogue and solutions. We only need to promote dialogue and solutions as our supreme value and most important goal. That is exactly what this Government of Serbia has done.

The report is regular, yet far from routine for the Republic of Serbia. The fact that a document is submitted regularly must not mean that it is drawn up

lightly. We are therefore convinced that the authors of the report wrote it with special attention, well aware of its importance for the people of the province, the Republic of Serbia and the environs. We read the report carefully, not to maliciously find fault with it, but to present, with it in mind, proposals for the improvement of the situation in the province. The report is important to us; it is being heeded by the entire world today, while the Serbs of Kosovo and Metohija look to it, just as they look to our response, for the confirmation of their just demands. I shall therefore touch on a number of issues brought up in the document.

It is said in the introductory part of the report that “The priorities of the Mission remain to promote security, stability and respect for human rights” (S/2014/773, *para.* 2) in Kosovo and Metohija. Well, if the said areas were all right, they would not be priorities. Yet, regrettably, not even the basic preconditions for normal life have been created in Kosovo and Metohija so that today, more than 15 years after the arrival of international presences, the Security Council needs to discuss how to ensure in the first place the elementary living conditions for Serbs and other non-Albanians in Kosovo and Metohija. We therefore believe that the role of UNMIK should continue to be strengthened in the areas of the current competencies of the Mission, whereas the weakening of the role it has been entrusted with would lessen its capacity to fulfil its mandate, particularly in areas of vital importance for Serbs and other non-Albanians living in Kosovo and Metohija.

We must not disregard the importance of the trust that the Serbian and other non-Albanian populations in Kosovo have placed in UNMIK, either. That trust underscores the need for a more active and visible presence and engagement of the Mission in Kosovo and Metohija. Today, in the second decade of the twenty-first century, there are still people in one part of Europe who cannot tend their fields or frequent and pray in their places of worship without fear, while their children go to school in fear. That dark picture is the defeat of modern civilization and, sadly, a daily occurrence in the life of many Serbs and non-Albanians of Kosovo and Metohija.

In addition to the so-called northern Kosovo, which was singled out at one point as a separate area for monitoring, attention should also be accorded in accordance with the basic priorities of UNMIK, such as promoting “security, stability and respect for human rights”, the lives of Serbs and the numerous difficulties

they encounter every day in the so-called south of the Ibar River area and other parts of Kosovo and Metohija.

The lives of Serbs in enclaves all over the province are quiet, modest and difficult; they live in today's ghettos, to the shame of Europe and the world. That is the common knowledge of all UNMIK members who have been there, and it is the obligation of each and every righteous servant of the United Nations to report the plight and predicament of those Serbian towns and villages to the world. That is why the regular UNMIK reports should focus special attention on the harsh realities in which Serbs south of the Ibar River live. We must — and we want to — defend their life and their right to work, to move freely, to be free, to go to school, to receive medical treatment and to be able to protect themselves.

It is precisely for those reasons that nobody can speak of Serbian chauvinism, a new Republika Srpska or hegemonistic aspirations today. The right to life is universal and untouchable. Serbia, too, has the right to fight for this right. That is all the more so as, this time, Serbia does not demand of its people anything that it is not ready to give to other peoples. Life, as a foundation, calls for solutions like this, because, after all, we were given life to preserve, protect and respect — our lives and other peoples'. Serbia and its Government have decided unequivocally to respect each and every life in Kosovo and Metohija and requests that the term "each and every life" encompass the lives of the Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija as well.

That is why today, as we await and seek a solution to the Kosovo knot, we have nothing to be ashamed of and have no reason to respond to all the conditions that have been set, overtly or covertly, in any other way than the way in which we have already responded. Because, through our attitude and platform, we have done precisely every single thing that the world has asked us to do over the years. We have normalized relations with Pristina. We talk to Pristina. We seek joint solutions with Pristina. We respect the demands of Pristina, and our attitude towards Pristina and the Albanians is not the attitude that we would have towards anyone who did not have the same rights that we demand for our people. After a century of conflicts, wars and victims, this Government has made a step towards the Albanians that, surely, can be called historic. Instead of conflict, this Government chose agreement and solutions instead of problems and, most importantly, life instead of death.

That is the life and the rights that we demand for Serbs as well.

The Republic of Serbia is firmly committed to continuing its active and constructive participation in negotiations with Pristina at all levels and to implementing the agreements reached thus far. We are ready to continue the process. Yet our willingness to negotiate does not mean that we are weak; our constructiveness does not mean that we acquiesce easily, and our belief does not mean that we are naive. Unfortunately, we are lacking an interlocutor on the other side of the table. The administrative organs of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in Pristina have not been formed yet, half a year after the elections. We expect that they will be formed in the coming days.

However, without waiting for a Government to be formed in Pristina, the Republic of Serbia has implemented a whole range of measures that it committed itself to under the First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations, reached in Brussels. We have amended the Law on Higher Education and adopted a new Cadastre Regulation to make the implementation of the relevant agreements possible. With respect to the freedom of movement, we have given permission to the bearers of identity documents issued by the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in Pristina to cross the border crossings at Nikola Tesla and Niš Constantine the Great airports, in Belgrade and Niš respectively, and the four busiest crossings to Hungary, Croatia, Bulgaria and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Also, a number of high-ranking officials from the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government attended important regional conferences and other events in Belgrade during the reporting period.

We regret the lack of progress in the implementation of the key segment of the Brussels Agreement related to the establishment of a community of Serbian municipalities in Kosovo and Metohija. Prior to the dissolution of the Parliament in Pristina, no preparations were made for a legal framework for the effective implementation of the competencies of the future community in the field of economic development, education, health and urban and rural planning in the community's territory, as provided for by article 4 of the Brussels Agreement. For its part, the community's management team has drawn up a draft statute and is ready to send it to the Committee on the Implementation of the Brussels Agreement.

Let me highlight in this context the problem of the integration of 30 former members of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Serbia from Kosovo and Metohija into the Kosovo police service in the municipalities in northern Kosovo and Metohija. Although the Government of the Republic of Serbia has fully implemented the relevant agreements and terminated their employment, those members have not yet been advised of the status of their applications, let alone admitted or fully integrated into the Kosovo police service. Likewise, the integration of the former administrative staff of the Ministry of the Interior and the firefighters has not begun either.

The Republic of Serbia cannot accept the part of the report related to northern Kosovo and Metohija in which the situation in the locality of Brdjani, in northern Kosovska Mitrovica, is presented in a fragmentary manner and therefore inaccurately. To the disappointment of my country, that part of the report is silent on the basic problem in the area, which is the fact that, through land usurpation and illegal construction, the Kosovo and Metohija Albanians continue to press in every possible way for changes to the ethnic structure of northern Kosovska Mitrovica.

According to information provided by the officials of the municipality of Kosovska Mitrovica north, the Albanians plan to build 172 housing units in the locality of Brdjani for the veterans of the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army, who never — and I repeat never — lived there prior to 1999, and a small number of Albanians who did. That serves to put into perspective the actions of the local Serbian population, which were taken, rightly, in protest against the attempts to artificially change the demographic picture on the ground and paint it in negative colours as unfounded and unconstructive. On the other hand, it would be very easy to prove exactly what the previous situation was and take measures to prevent politically motivated changes to the demographic structure in northern Kosovo and Metohija.

Let me also point out here that the criminal proceedings against Zubin Potok mayor Stevan Vulovic and other Serbs from the municipality of Zubin Potok serve to bring political pressure to bear on — and prevent the running of — the municipality as a local institution of self-government with a Serbian majority. The prosecutions also serve to derail the implementation of the First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations between Belgrade and

Pristina, providing for the unencumbered running of municipalities with Serbian majorities in Kosovo and Metohija.

With respect to the security situation, the report does mention problems in the implementation of laws, in particular at the local level. The Serbs and their property are targeted in the majority of ethnically motivated attacks, while personal and property insecurity remain the main obstacles to the sustainable return of the Serbian population to localities from which they were expelled.

I have to bring to the attention of the Council the tragic death of Gendarme Stevan Sindelić. He was shot and killed by members of armed illegal logging gangs from Kosovo and Metohija in the Ground Safety Zone along the administrative boundary line between Kosovo and Metohija and central Serbia on 28 August. It is impermissible that groups of civilians armed with automatic rifles roam freely, cut wood illegally and attack the security forces of the Republic of Serbia as the latter attempt, quite legally, to prevent them from doing so.

It is also my duty to bring to the attention of the Council that, on 28 August, the Feast of the Dormition, once celebrated by the townspeople of Đakovica as their patron saint's day, the displaced citizens of that town of Serbian nationality were prevented once again from visiting the holy places in their place of birth because they had been told that international forces could not guarantee their security. The people of Đakovica had the same problem on Christmas Eve, when Albanians stoned their buses, while on All Souls' Day they were prevented from visiting the graves of friends and relatives.

The Serbs from Suva Reka were also prevented from marking the same religious holiday in a dignified manner. A few hundred Albanians in the village of Mušutište blocked the passage of displaced Serbs to the local Orthodox church in which they intended to celebrate the Feast of the Dormition. The extremists blocking the passage carried Albanian flags and posters with offensive messages. If the displaced Serbs cannot visit the towns and villages in which they were born or the graves of their relatives on even one day a year without fearing for their safety, the sincerity of the call of the provincial institutions to displaced Serbs to return is very much in doubt, as is the capacity of those institutions to ensure personal and property security for all residents of Kosovo and Metohija.

The Government of the Republic of Serbia is also deeply worried that a flag of the Republic of Serbia was removed from the fortress at Zvečan in the night between 14 and 15 October, and that another Serbian flag flown over the building of the Treasury Department in northern Kosovska Mitrovica was burned on 16 October.

The Republic of Serbia calls on all responsible and active actors in the international community to pay maximal heed to the conclusions of the Chief Prosecutor of the European Union's Special Investigative Task Force, Clint Williamson. He stated that compelling evidence has been found to file an indictment against senior officials of the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army for the persecution of Serbs, Roma and Kosovo and Metohija Albanians. The campaign of persecution included murders, abductions, disappearances, illegal detentions in camps in Kosovo and Metohija and Albania, sexual violence and other forms of inhumane treatment, such as forced displacement and the destruction of churches and other religious sites. Those responsible for the most heinous crimes must not be acquitted due to a lack of evidence caused by the brutal intimidation of witnesses.

Oliver Ivanović, leader of the civic initiative Serbia, Democracy, Justice, was apprehended at the end of January and indicted at the beginning of August. The first hearing was held in the Mitrovica Basic Court on 26 August in a case consolidated with those of Dragoljub Delibašić, the retired Head of the Police Department of Kosovo and Metohija, Ilija and Nebojša Vujačić and Aleksandar Lazović, indicted for grave criminal offences and war crimes committed in 1999 and 2000. All the indictees pleaded not guilty on all counts of the indictment. The custody of Oliver Ivanović was extended until 26 October 2014 and then for another two months.

Yet only two days after the Prosecutor of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) raised the indictment against Ivanović and requested extension of custody for him, the Court released on bail Ismet Haxha, one of the indictees in the Drenica Group case, charged with war crimes against civilians committed at Likovac in 1998 and 1999. Haxha was absent for the rest of the trial, hiding in the Pristina Clinical Centre. The instances of double standards evident in the Kosovo and Metohija judiciary's practice instil fear and a sense of insecurity in Serbian and other non-Albanian communities in the province.

Telling evidence of the corruption and dysfunction of the Kosovo and Metohija justice system includes the striking from the record of key witness testimony in the so-called Klečka case because of changes in criminal laws; the acquittal of Fatmir Limaj and his co-defendants, who had been charged with murder, torture and threats to the health of Serbian and Albanian civilians and prisoners of war; the subsequent reopening of the case and the Pristina officials' untoward reactions to Limaj's and his co-defendants' arrests, which gave rise to a request for revision of the EULEX mandate being introduced in the Kosovo Assembly; and, finally, Limaj's release from prison to house arrest.

It is clear that the local justice system, like the international presences in the province, is under the strong influence of the political elites in Pristina. The Government of the Republic of Serbia's concern about the work of the judiciary in Kosovo and Metohija is relevant in the light of disclosures that bribes have been given to cease proceedings in dozens of cases against Kosovo and Metohija Albanians and that evidence has been fabricated in the increasingly senseless case of Oliver Ivanović, all of which casts serious doubt on whether EULEX is immune to corruption.

To fully implement the Brussels Agreement and the previous agreements in the technical dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, the Republic of Serbia has fulfilled its obligations. Pristina, however, has so far failed to take the necessary steps to comply with its obligations in such key areas as addressing inadequacies in the Amnesty Law, the Law on the Budget and the Law on Local Self-Government. Nevertheless, I would have to say the authorities have also taken a lot positive steps as well.

In assessing the constitutionality of the Amnesty Law, the so-called Constitutional Court of Kosovo found unconstitutional the articles of the Law that grant amnesty to perpetrators of acts of destruction or damage to the property of others or to movable property, arson, damage to items belonging to others, document forgery and special cases of document forgery, with the result that such acts are now excluded from amnesty. Acts that are also excluded from the Amnesty Law are those that can be used by the judiciary organs of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG) to prosecute persons of Serbian nationality in Kosovo and Metohija. In this context, we would point out that international judges of the Constitutional Court of Kosovo, Judge Robert Carolan, from the United States,

and Judge Almiro Rodrigues, from Portugal, wrote in dissent from the decision the Court that the amnesty for the aforementioned acts is not unconstitutional.

The Government of the Republic of Serbia expresses its deep concern over members of the majority community in Kosovo and Metohija regularly provoking incidents that prevent Serbs and other non-Albanians from returning to their homes from which they had been expelled. I would like to cite a few sad examples, which are indicative of kind of attacks that are being carried out on returnee houses and other property.

On 22 August, unknown perpetrators fired at the home of Tomislav Dabetić in the village of Saljinovica, in the municipality of Istok. Fortunately, the returnee family was not at home at the time of the attack. Upon their arrival at their home, however, they noticed damage to the house — a bullet had gone through a window and a door and ended up in the bathroom. The incident spread fear and anxiety among the people of Saljinovica, as well as among all those intending to return to that village, all the more so as the victims of the attack were a family who had never done any harm to anybody.

At the end of August, five houses were demolished in the centre of Đakovica. These houses belonged to the Serbian Stefić family, who were the original settlers who literally built the town from scratch. The demolition was carried out at the direct order of Municipal President Mimoza Kusari Lila, whereby a clear message was sent to the Serbs that they are not welcome back. In that regard, I recall that 12,000 Serbs lived in Đakovica prior to 1999; today, only four elderly ladies remain, living on the monastery premises.

In the night between 7 and 8 October, unknown perpetrators broke into the houses and appendant buildings of the Serbian returnee families of Miletić, Konić and Tošić in the village of Grabac, municipality of Klina, stealing much of their movable property and causing considerable material damage. There is no doubt that these acts were motivated by the intention to intimidate potential returnees and discourage them from returning to Kosovo and Metohija.

Accordingly, it may be noted that the overall trend of decelerating the returns of displaced Kosovo and Metohija Serbs continues and that the PISG in Pristina have not done enough to fulfil their obligations and facilitate the return of the expellees. The return of the

internally displaced persons (IDPs) is being prevented by numerous administrative obstacles, with the return procedures adopted being insurmountable practical barriers to Serbs and other non-Albanians returning to their centuries-old homes. They are also catalysts for lasting changes in the demographic picture of the entire province.

It is my duty to remind the Council that the Republic of Serbia is the country that has the greatest number of IDPs in Europe, with 230,000 people having that status, 18,000 of whom are in Kosovo and Metohija itself. Even 15 years after the expulsion, only 2,000 out of 4,000 IDPs who have returned home realize their right to sustainable return, as the lack of basic security, economic and social preconditions are a major impediment to it.

Of particular concern is the situation with respect to the protection of cultural and religious heritage in Kosovo and Metohija in the reporting period, as Mr. Farid Zarif has already mentioned. At the beginning of September, unknown persons removed the plaque on the Velika Hoča-Zočište road, which had been unveiled on 21 August by members of the Serbian Association of Journalists to honour the memory of abducted colleagues Đura Slavuj and Ranko Perenić at the place where the two Radio Pristina reporters were kidnapped in 1998. It is most likely that plaque and the concrete pedestal were uprooted with a tractor or a construction-type vehicle; the removal was noted on 11 September. It is the third time that the plaque has been vandalized and removed since it was first put in place.

The threat to the security of, and the pressure being constantly brought to bear on, the monks of one of the holiest Serbian places of worship, Visoki Dečani monastery, which is included in the UNESCO World Heritage List, is particularly worrisome. In the night between 11 and 12 October, red and black graffiti was scribbled on the walls of the appendant buildings on the monastery estate. The graffiti included the words “ISIS”, “The Caliphate is coming”, “UÇK” — the Albanian-language acronym for the Kosovo Liberation Army — and “AKSH” — the Albanian-language acronym for the Albanian National Army; two of the pieces of graffiti were written in Arabic. The Kosovo Police and KFOR were notified of the incident and they carried out an investigation. During the investigation, a group of Albanian extremists congregated in front of the monastery, provoking and intimidating the Serbian

monks as they shouted “UÇK”. As early as the next evening, the graffiti “ISIS” and “AKSH” were scribbled on the monastery gate all over again.

There is no doubt that, if allowed, the authors of the graffiti would conduct in Kosovo and Metohija the same policy of evil, hatred and death that is much in evidence these days in parts of Iraq, Syria and Lebanon, the so-called realm of the terrorists of ISIS, even though it is condemned by the entire civilized and justice- and freedom-loving world. The experience of decades past and the present practice frighten Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija. If the United Nations is unable to provide protection to a site that its specialized agency put on the World Heritage List, how safe then are the houses, schools and places of worship of non-Albanian residents of the province?

In our view, the report is deficient in the segment related to the protection of the property rights of the residents of Kosovo and Metohija. Apart from a short account of the work of the Kosovo Property Agency and information on the number of cases dealt with in the reporting period and the number of unsolved cases before the Agency, the report is silent on the situation of the property of Serbs and other non-Albanians. No mention is made of the manner in which property cases are solved by this Agency, that is, whether the expropriator has left the property in question, whether the owner has entered into possession of his or her property or whether the request for the restitution of property has been rejected. Also, in line with previous reports, no mention is made of the fate of the abandoned property of Serbs and other non-Albanians in Kosovo and Metohija, which is liable to renewed expropriation by Albanians as a result of fraudulent transactions between Albanian buyers and alleged owners and exposed to destruction and damage, as well as unfounded expropriation by municipal authorities without proper compensation or with no compensation at all.

The fate of the 18,500 complaints of Serbs and non-Albanians for compensation for destroyed or damaged property is mentioned nowhere in the report. Those complaints have been rejected en masse by the courts on account of the complainants’ failure to pay high litigation fees —despite the fact that they are IDPs in a difficult financial situation and had requested to be excused by the courts from paying the fees.

The report for this period also does not provide anything more than an accounting of the number of

completed cases before the Kosovo Property Agency: it indicates the number of decisions rather than the number of enforcement actions — the number of owners who entered into possession. A property restitution decision in Kosovo and Metohija still falls far short of the actual restitution of the property: an original owner’s entry into possession. In addition to personal insecurity, this is one of the main reasons that IDP returns to Kosovo and Metohija are far from satisfactory.

The privatization process conducted by the Kosovo Privatization Agency continues to evolve in contravention of international and European conventions on human rights. Public and socially owned companies in Serbian communities are privatized much more frequently. Their sale to persons of Albanian nationality deprives those communities of economic resources, thereby providing an additional impetus for the exodus of the Serbian population from Kosovo and Metohija.

Let me recall that in its reply of 22 April 2013 to the letters of the Office for Kosovo and Metohija of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, in which it was requested that an end be put to the privatization conducted contrary to resolution 1244 (1999), UNMIK stated that indeed the privatization through the Kosovo Privatization Agency was contrary to the resolution and UNMIK regulations, as the Agency was not a legal successor of the Kosovo Trust Agency and it was not established on the basis of a law that was in force in Kosovo and Metohija in accordance with the resolution.

A specific problem has been created by the decision of the Kosovo Privatization Agency to liquidate Hotel Junior in the municipality of Štrpce. The hotel is the site of a collective accommodation centre for 85 IDPs. Should it be sold, those persons would be displaced once again, which would be morally unacceptable from a humanitarian point of view.

I must also inform the Council of the serious intention of the PISG in Pristina to expropriate the immovable property of physical persons and legal entities in the territory of the municipality of Štrpce, under the pretext of the construction of a tourist centre. The property is owned by more than 820 physical persons and legal entities — including the Inex ski centre in Brezovica — preponderantly of Serbian extraction and the majority population in the municipality.

Bearing in mind that almost all owners and property holders are of Serbian nationality, we are

of the opinion that the intended expropriation is discriminatory and that confiscating land from persons of Serbian nationality will result in an exodus of the remaining Serbian population and a change in the ethnic structure of the municipality of Štrpce. The actions of the PISG are violating the rights of the Serbs from Štrpce guaranteed by the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

Also, the PISG in Pristina are attempting to appropriate the property of the Republic of Serbia in Kosovo and Metohija in an unlawful way, in disregard of the fact that the question of the property of the Republic of Serbia and of the economic entities in the territory of Kosovo and Metohija will be the subject of the negotiation process conducted by the Republic of Serbia with the PISG, with mediation provided by the European Union.

Serbia looks forward to the resumption of negotiations with Pristina, because it brings peace and stability to the entire region. Serbia is committed to reforms and will make no compromises in that regard. Count on Serbia as a pillar of stability and, very soon, a modern and successful country.

I would just like to say a word in reference to what was said by Mr. Farid Zarif with regard to the drone incident that happened during a football match between Serbia and Albania. Serbia had nothing to do with that incident. We reacted very appropriately. Fourteen days after the incident, a flag made by Albanian supporters was placed in the centre of Belgrade. One can imagine what would have happened in some other countries under similar circumstances. I daresay as well — as Mr. Zarif also mentioned, and I thank him for doing so — that we received and were great hosts to the Albanian Prime Minister, who visited for the first time in 68 years.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Mr. Thaçi.

Mr. Thaçi (*interpretation from Albanian; English text provided by delegation*): Allow me, first, to express my gratitude for this opportunity to address the members of the Security Council as the year ends to inform them about the progress achieved in Kosovo in recent months and the challenges ahead of us.

The year 2014 marks the fifteenth anniversary of the end of the war in Kosovo, which was immediately followed by the establishment of a United Nations

protectorate. Fifteen years seems like a long time. However, as compared to many frozen conflicts that burden international relations across all continents, I believe that we can safely conclude that the United Nations in Kosovo has indeed been of the most successful missions in the Organization's entire history.

Kosovo is today a free and stable democracy with a growing economy, a Constitution and modern laws that guarantee the rights of all citizens, especially the rights of minorities. Kosovo has undertaken a genuine decentralization of power. Kosovo has formally entered into the European Union (EU) integration process by initiating the signing of a stabilization and association agreement, which just a few years ago was considered a very difficult task. Thanks to dialogue with Serbia and the historic Brussels Agreement, Kosovo has been transformed from an importer of security resources to an exporter of global initiatives for peace and tolerance.

On this occasion, I would like to extend my thanks to EU member States and the United States, as well as to our neighbours in Serbia, for their courage and commitment. That courage and commitment to the future of our children was in evidence when we decided to normalize relations between our two countries and to look to the future of our two States as neighbours that aspired to the ideals of the family of Euro-Atlantic nations.

The Council is already aware that, in the course of all of the meetings we have had here in the Security Council, the north of Kosovo has been in a constant state of crisis. That has raised concerns about a possible escalation of violence, as well as uncertainty as to what laws are in force and which constitution is applied there. We are aware that Kosovo Serb citizens have feared and distrusted the Government of Kosovo because of everything that has happened in the past decades. But let me also tell the Council that this year has been the year of the cementing of the territorial integrity of the Republic of Kosovo.

The participation of Serbs from the northern part of Kosovo for the first time in national elections organized under the laws of Kosovo, as well as the Serbian leadership's participation in negotiations for the establishment of governing institutions following the June elections, is a good omen and inspires great hope that even this painful chapter is beginning to be resolved. That is based on the wishes of the people of Kosovo, Albania, Serbia and others, who all share the same dreams, the same hopes and the same rights to

a secure future with a focus on the economy and the creation of new jobs. The citizens of Kosovo today — be they Albanian, Serb, Bosniak, Turk or Ashkali — are not interested in nationalistic speeches and their old ethnic dreams. They want jobs, they want progress and they want to see peace after decades of discrimination, war and uncertainty.

Therefore, the year 2014 will go down in Kosovo's modern history as the year when the entire territory of Kosovo, the north and the south, participated in the democratic process and worked together to create institutions that are responsible for reflecting and working for the welfare of the citizens of Kosovo. I would like to thank the missions of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the United Nations, the EU and the United States, as well as the civil society organizations that helped us organize excellent elections with the highest democratic standards on 8 June, elections that saw the participation of all the communities in Kosovo.

There are five major developments that I wish to emphasize during my appearance before the Council today, on behalf of the Republic of Kosovo, that will confirm that along with us, it, too, can be proud of this joint success in Kosovo.

The first one, as I mentioned earlier, is that Kosovo, in the span of six months, organized two successful elections: local ones at the end of 2013 and national ones in June 2014. They were considered by international observers to be free, well organized and democratic elections.

The elections included the election of Serb mayors in the north, who are now integrated into the Kosovo legal system and, above all, enjoy legitimacy and are accepted by the entire community living in the north. The results of the national elections were even better, because they were tallied throughout the entire territory of Kosovo. Kosovo today can be considered an established democracy capable of fully organizing elections independently and respecting the results.

The second thing I wanted to mention is that although we have experienced political gridlock, it never evolved into a violent crisis. While violent protests have occurred in neighbouring countries, with police violence and the delegitimizing of independent institutions such as the supreme and constitutional courts, Kosovo has proved that whether we are in the opposition or in the Government, whether we are in the

majority or in the minority, the political class respects the Constitution and obeys the law; it respects the decisions of the Constitutional court; and it respects the country's president, Mrs. Jahjaga. Our President happens to be the first woman President in the entire Balkans. All of this is a sign of Kosovo's political emancipation.

We had our share of disagreements during the months after the election. The winning party and the opposition could not find common ground. We had moments of uncertainty, but they never led to violence or threats to our common goal, which is to be future members of the EU family and the NATO alliance.

I am happy to inform the Council that through respect for the decisions of the Constitutional Court and, thankfully, the role of the President as facilitator, the two largest parties in Kosovo, the Democratic Party of Kosovo — the winning party — and the Democratic League of Kosovo, along with the parties representing minorities, have reached an agreement to form a government. I believe that this formula will be implemented next week, with new institutions of the Republic of Kosovo.

It is of particular importance that this coalition was achieved by Kosovo political parties without outside interference, which is a great achievement if we compare it to the United Nations protectorate or the situation at the beginning, when the international community played an important role. Now we finally have a process and local results that make us proud of the fact that Kosovo has passed the test of political maturity.

The third point I wanted to mention is that political stability has also helped Kosovo succeed internationally. This year was one of transition during which elections were held in Serbia, our partner in dialogue, as well as in the European Parliament, as I noted in Kosovo. There was also a change in EU commissioners, but despite all of this, international recognition of Kosovo remained an undeniable element of the Balkans policy architecture.

On this occasion, I would like to thank the countries of Tonga, Lesotho, Togo and the Solomon Islands, which recognized the independence of Kosovo, bringing the number of recognitions to 108. Our diplomacy called this a year of multilateral inclusion, during which Kosovo became a member of the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe and many regional organizations.

The dialogue with Serbia has continued. At the technical level, we have achieved many successes in the normalization of relations, although, to be honest, much remains to be done. Serbia has signed an agreement with Kosovo that ensures the normalization of relations, but there is still much resistance to its full implementation. I know that it is not an easy task. I wish to reaffirm that the Republic of Kosovo will implement every agreement and every obligation that we have undertaken in order to integrate the Serb minority. I often meet with Serb leaders, and there have been tendencies to locate Kosovo in the international arena, which does not help either Serbia or Kosovo.

Allow me to state with particular pride that Kosovo has become a member of the International Olympic Committee. The youth of Kosovo, from the world judo champion, Ms. Majlinda Kelmendi, to the thousands of young people who have dreamed of representing the colours of Kosovo in the international arena, will now have the opportunity to compete anywhere in the world as equals with other athletes. Just imagine; only six years after Kosovo became independent, we are already a part of the Olympic family and will have the Kosovo flag flown at the Rio Olympics.

On behalf of the Republic of Kosovo and its institutions, I would like to thank in particular all of the States members of the International Organization of la Francophonie for supporting Kosovo's recent accession. The organization offered its strong support during the Senegal summit in November, unanimously supporting Kosovo's membership as an observer in the large francophone family. Kosovo's membership in this community will reflect its cultural values and standards and best practices in terms of international cooperation.

The fourth point I wanted to make is related to global developments and the respective role of Kosovo. The global fight against terrorism and the spread of religious radicalism has affected Kosovo in the same way as it has many countries of the world. There are also marginal groups in Kosovo, as in all European countries, that are recruiting and advocating for the participation of Kosovars on the side of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria in Syria and in Iraq. This phenomenon is a source of concern, but the Government has taken important steps to put an end to such tendencies. We have arrested several dozen suspected militants and those who inspired them, including a number of imams who are believed to be inciting hatred. We will not

compromise with radicalism. We have already prepared a law against Kosovar participation in foreign wars and are working actively to promote Kosovo as a global dialogue platform for religious tolerance.

I want to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, and the United States Department of State, which in their reports this year have praised Kosovo's role in promoting religious tolerance. Kosovo is an example of peacemaking and of the building of a genuine democracy following genocide and war.

Yes, I am aware of and strongly condemn the occasional attacks against the Serbian Orthodox Church. Bishop Teodosije and other Serbian priests are an essential part of Kosovo, and Serbian churches are an important basis of our common heritage, but let me say that not every incident that is reported here has religious or ethnic connotations. Often they are acts of vandalism carried out by provocateurs or attacks for economic benefits. There are fewer interreligious incidents in Kosovo than in many neighbouring countries. I know one thing: that Kosovo will not be 100 per cent free if all of its citizens are not able to speak openly, to move fearlessly and to practice their religion freely. But I can promise the Council here today that Kosovo is and will remain free.

The last point I will discuss here today is our commitment to future projects. I also thank all present for their patience and for the concerns they have expressed in the course of this discussion.

Kosovo has achieved phenomenal success in the context of the World Bank's doing business index. In the last six years, Kosovo has had the highest economic growth rate in all of Eastern Europe, with an average rate of 4.5 per cent. Kosovo also has the lowest public debt in the Balkans, which does not exceed 10 per cent of the gross domestic product. Kosovo is the country with the most Internet connectivity in the Balkans; close to 90 per cent of the population has access to high-speed Internet, a result of our young demographic profile and of a large diaspora and the need to be in touch with our families. We are now in the final stages of bringing foreign investors into the tourism and energy sectors, and in the past eight years we have built 1,500 kilometres of roads and highways as well as 120 new schools. Thus, the old image that Council members may have for Kosovo has changed and is changing every day. In digital diplomacy, culture, sports and peacemaking, we have demonstrated innovation and vision.

Nevertheless, we still have many challenges ahead of us. We will establish a specialist court to shed light on the allegations concerning war crimes. Kosovo has faith in justice. We are working to combat corruption and organized crime. Those challenges also have a regional element of cooperation and the exchange of information. I therefore ask the Council today to recognize Kosovo's progress and our willingness to face new challenges. If Kosovo is to enjoy complete and irreversible success, Council members need to confirm the progress that we have made throughout the years since the late and much respected Sergio Vieira de Mello first led the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo. The new reality requires courage from Council members in order to open a new, normal political relationship between the United Nations and Kosovo. I am convinced that, thanks to the Council's understanding, that will happen very soon and Kosovo will be an equal member of the United Nations family.

The President (*spoke in French*) I shall now give the floor to members of the Security Council.

Mr. Laro (Nigeria): I thank Mr. Aleksandar Vučić, Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia, and Mr. Hashim Thaçi, Prime Minister of Kosovo, for their statements. I also thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Zarif for his briefing.

Nigeria takes positive note of the continued progress in technical talks between the parties. It is significant that through the dialogue both sides have reached an agreement on the integrated management of border crossing points, on telecommunications and energy, and on the use of Kosovar identification documents. These agreements, we believe, will go a long way towards strengthening bilateral relations between the parties. We urge both sides to work diligently towards an early resumption of high-level talks on the normalization of relations.

The absence of a Government in Pristina is delaying the resumption of negotiations on issues concerning municipal governance. That is an outcome of the ongoing political crisis in Kosovo. We encourage the political leaders to reach an early agreement on the election of the President of the Assembly and the formation of a Government. We believe that this would help to consolidate the gains made in Kosovo's democratic process. We welcome the engagement of the four Serb-majority municipalities in northern Kosovo with the central authorities in Pristina in the preparation of the municipal budgets. We note that the

process also involved consultations with the authorities in Belgrade. Those are positive developments, and we urge all concerned to maintain their engagement.

The problem of foreign terrorist fighters is an ongoing threat to international peace and security. Resolution 2178 (2014), which the Council adopted in September, underscores the urgent need to prevent the movement and recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters. In that regard, we commend the Kosovo police for its operations conducted to detain suspected former combatants and supporters of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and the Al-Nusra Front. We look forward to the debate on the draft law prohibiting the participation of Kosovars in armed conflicts outside Kosovo. Its early adoption, we believe, would help to strengthen the legal framework and aid the fight against foreign terrorist fighters.

During the debate in August (see S/PV.7257), we encouraged the return of internally displaced persons and called for projects that would promote their reintegration, education and access to services. We are therefore pleased to note that a new consultative body has been launched to promote discussion on improving outcomes for internally displaced persons. Of particular significance is the inclusive nature of the body's composition. It involves Serbian and Kosovar institutions, as well as the United Nations and other international and regional organizations. We see this multi-stakeholder approach as having the potential to help in resolving the many challenges faced by internally displaced persons in Kosovo.

Reconciliation remains crucial to strengthening cohesion and laying a foundation for peace and progress in Kosovo. In that regard, we take positive note of the outcome of the meeting of the Interministerial Working Group on Dealing with the Past and Reconciliation, which met on 16 October and established various working groups to assist in the design of a comprehensive strategy on transitional justice. With a focus on institutional reform, as well as the right to truth, justice and reparations, we are hopeful that the working groups will help to identify ways of promoting reconciliation among the different communities in Kosovo.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome the participation in today's meeting of the Prime Minister of Serbia, Mr. Aleksandar Vučić, and we share his concerns. We take note of the statement of Mr. Hashim Thaçi. We thank Mr. Farid Zarif for submitting the report (S/2014/773) of the Secretary-

General on the activities of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), as well as his assessment of the situation in the region.

Much of what happened in Kosovo during the reporting period demonstrates the failure of State-building in Kosovo. The clear and protracted political crisis has been provoked by the inability of local elite and engendered by the infamous Kosovo Liberation Army to find agreement without guidance from the outside. We believe that, in the building of new institutions of State, the ideas and approaches of Serbian and other non-Albanian communities must be fully taken on board. To uphold the interests of the Kosovo Serbs, there is also a need for the swift establishment of the community/association of Serb municipalities in Kosovo, in line with the Brussels agreements. For the time being, unfortunately, no progress has been forthcoming. Delays in the constitution of Government structures also slow down the resumption of negotiations between Belgrade and Pristina.

We are concerned by the negative consequences of the political crisis in establishing the specialist court to investigate the allegations of crimes against humanity committed by the Kosovo Liberation Army during the armed conflict. The interim findings of the investigations conducted by the Special Investigative Task Force, led by Mr. Williamson, clearly point to a sufficient body of evidence corroborate reports of numerous murders, kidnappings, rapes, unlawful detentions, inhumane treatment and the desecration of churches, leading to the ethnic cleansing and expulsion of Serbs from southern and central Kosovo, as well as the trafficking in human organs. The perpetrators must be brought to account, irrespective of their current standing. It is also crucial that the protection of all the witnesses be duly ensured during the trial. We call on the Secretary-General to actively follow-up on the situation regarding the constitution of the specialist court.

Many years have passed, yet Kosovo has made no manifest progress in the judiciary or in combating corruption, organized crime, including drug trafficking and human beings, restrictions on freedom of speech and political influence on the judiciary. That is confirmed by recent reports of the European Commission and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. There are also clear signs of backsliding in other areas, including the social and economic fronts. The

unemployment rate remains very high, and people are leaving Kosovo en masse to seek better lives.

We express our serious concern over reports that high-ranking staff members of the European Union Rule of Law Mission (EULEX) have been implicated in corruption. These are the very individuals who should be encouraging Kosovar Albanians to commit to the rule of law. We call for an impartial investigation into these cases since, according to available data, perpetrators of serious crimes could remain at large as a result of corrupt arrangements. We welcome the appointment of Italian diplomat Gabriele Meucci as Head of EULEX. We hope that he will be able to address these issues related to the Mission, and spare no effort to fulfil, in an impartial and consistent manner, the tasks entrusted to him by the Security Council to ensure law and order in Kosovo.

We are disturbed by a wave of anti-Serbian actions in Kosovo following the football match between Serbia and Albania on 14 October. We have heard the usual formal condemnations of the anti-Serb attacks from Pristina, but no more. Yet Serbian houses in the region continue to burn, and there is no sign that the perpetrators are being brought to justice. In addition to the desecration of Orthodox monasteries in the region, including the gem of cultural heritage — the Visoki Dečani Monastery — this is a clear indication that interethnic intolerance endures among Kosovar Albanians. It is no accident that there is an ongoing exodus of ethnic minorities from the region. Mere laws ensuring their rights will not suffice; laws have to be enforced.

With regard to the participation of Kosovars in the conflict in the Middle East, ongoing and decisive measures are required to halt that dangerous trend.

The United Nations Mission remains the primary international presence in Kosovo. The European Union's mediation between Belgrade and Pristina and the handover of part of UNMIK's functions to EULEX does not mean that the United Nations role is in any way diminished. Given the wide array of problems, we call upon the United Nations Mission in Kosovo to carry out its mandate fully and dynamically. That means that it must have all the necessary resources and staff to do so. We categorically object to attempts to devalue the role of UNMIK, and we call on the Kosovar Albanian side to fully cooperate with the United Nations presence.

To conclude, I would like to stress that the Russian position regarding the matter of Kosovo and the territorial integrity of Serbia has not changed. Resolution 1244 (1999) remains fully relevant and obligatory as the internationally accepted legal basis for a settlement to the situation in Kosovo.

Mr. Barros Melet (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Farid Zarif for his briefing. We also welcome Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić and Mr. Hashim Thaçi.

We are concerned by the scant progress in the negotiations between Pristina and Belgrade. Although the dialogue facilitated by the European Union is continuing, there have been only technical meetings with regard to specific sectoral issues. It is essential for the political leaders on both sides to continue to pursue dialogue at the highest level.

Along those lines, we urge all the actors in Kosovo, especially the political parties, to make every effort to find compromise solutions that will end the stalemate we have seen in recent months. In that regard, we welcome the in-principle reached by the main political parties on 18 November. We hope that their dialogue will reach a successful conclusion.

It is also urgent to resume the dialogue facilitated by the European Union in order to tackle contingent issues that involve the municipal administration of the region in order to ensure that the tense climate between the Albanian and Serbian communities of Kosovo does not persist. The lack of a political agreement following the elections has direct repercussions on the stability and governance of the north of Kosovo.

Turning now to security, we are concerned by incidents on the administrative border of Kosovo, a situation that requires close follow-up and the continued implementation of effective measures to prevent recurrences. It is essential to maintain a climate of security while negotiations proceed.

On a related theme, with a view to the global character that terrorism has recently acquired, Chile welcomes the measures Kosovo has adopted to address the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters, particularly in Syria and Iraq. We urge the political and religious leaders of Kosovo to continue working to combat violent extremism and terrorism with a view to dissuading young people from those narratives and

from the danger of joining groups identified as terrorist by the Security Council.

We wish to highlight the work of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in supporting decisive post-conflict actions. Specifically, we mean the quest for truth and justice. It is difficult to speak of reconciliation policies without addressing the need to search for the more than 1,600 people missing as a result of the conflict. Such facts are fundamental in order to begin healing the wounds left by the war. We call on all authorities, political leaders and civil society to continue to communicate any information that could lead to the location of missing persons. The forensic collaboration of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo is also helping to make this a comprehensive rehabilitation process.

To conclude, as we have noted on other occasions in the Security Council, we would like to call attention to the work and central role that UNMIK continues to play in promoting security, stability and respect for human rights, which is a priority for progress towards reconciliation among the communities. Only in the context of respect for and appropriate protection of fundamental human rights will it be possible to hope for reconciliation and to imagine a peaceful future.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Farid Zarif for his briefing. I welcome the presence of His Excellency Mr. Aleksandar Vučić, Prime Minister of Serbia, who has also made a statement. I also listened attentively to the statement by Mr. Hashim Thaçi.

China respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Serbia and understands Serbia's legitimate concern on the question of Kosovo.

China believes that resolution 1244(199) provides the key legal basis for resolving the crisis in Kosovo. The best way to resolve the issue of Kosovo is to engage in dialogue and negotiations according to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, within the framework of the relevant Council resolutions, in order to reach an appropriate solution acceptable to all parties.

Recently, the overall security situation in Kosovo has remained stable, but it still presents a number of complex factors. China appreciates the positive efforts made by the Serbian Government and Prime Minister Vučić himself to seek a political settlement to the

issue of Kosovo. We support continued practical and constructive dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina to implement the agreed bilateral agreements and to concretely protect the legitimate rights and interests of ethnic communities in Kosovo so that its people can enjoy the dividends of peace and development as soon as possible. Staying the course of dialogue to resolve differences and conflicts and avoiding action that might complicate or even escalate the situation, and seeking a lasting solution to the issue of Kosovo, will be conducive to the maintenance of peace and stability in the Balkans and Europe at large. The international community shares the goal of appropriately resolving the issue of Kosovo.

China appreciates the work done by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) under the leadership of Special Representative Zarif and supports UNMIK's continued implementation of the Council's mandate. We hope that international presences such as UNMIK, the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo and the Kosovo Force will produce a synergy based on their mandates and that they will play a positive and constructive role in pressing for an appropriate settlement to the issue of Kosovo.

Mr. Hmoud (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to express my gratitude to Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) Farid Zarif for his comprehensive briefing. I would also like to welcome Mr. Aleksandar Vučić, Prime Minister of Serbia, and Mr. Hashim Thaçi, Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo. I thank them for their statements.

The announcement that elections for the presidency of the Kosovo Assembly would be held on 8 December is a sign that political tensions in Kosovo have eased. The subsequent constitutional steps to be taken, specifically the election of a new President and the members of a new Cabinet, are further indications of Kosovo's serious commitment to a democratic constitution and civilized path forward. The level of political maturity enjoyed by the politicians of Kosovo is reflected in the way they have handled the constitutional tasks before them and is cause for optimism in the future of the country. Although the announcement was made rather late, the lengthy consultations among the various party blocs on the accompanying complications did eventually lead to a more stable political environment.

In that context, Jordan commends the role of the Constitutional Court of Kosovo and the way it dealt with the complications referred to it following the announcement of the results of the most recent elections for the Assembly of Kosovo, which led eventually to the formation of alliances among the winning parties. The spirit of professionalism exhibited by the Court in its dealing with the complications was clear-cut evidence of the major progress achieved in the administrative system in Kosovo.

Security and stability in the region can be achieved only through good neighbourly relations built on the basis of mutual respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each State and on the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other States. We therefore emphasize the important need to make progress on the implementation of the 19 April 2013 Agreement between the two neighbouring States of Kosovo and Serbia. We also welcome the continued technical discussions between the two countries, especially during the recent elections in Kosovo. We reiterate our call for the high-level dialogue under the auspices of the European Union to continue as soon as possible.

I would like to welcome what was mentioned by the Prime Minister of Serbia regarding the willingness of his country to resolve the conflict peacefully through dialogue and the readiness to engage in negotiations with Pristina to that end.

Jordan commends the continued development and progress achieved by Kosovo in various areas, especially when it comes to the rule of law and human rights. We urge Kosovo to continue on that path. We reaffirm the importance of the activities of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo in assisting the country in consolidating rule-of-law and justice institutions. We call on the authorities to step up efforts to achieve comprehensive reconciliation among all sectors of society in Kosovo and to give particular attention to the treatment of all citizens on an equal basis in accordance with the law. We also urge them to protect the rights of minorities effectively, in particular those of the Serbian minority. The State of Kosovo must also try to prevent attacks against holy sites belonging to any religious group or sect.

Since its independence, Kosovo has taken major strides towards strengthening its international standing. To date, 108 States Members of the United Nations have

recognized Kosovo. Jordan therefore calls for Kosovo's accession to the various international organizations and forums to be facilitated. We also support the proposal to lengthen the period between progress reports of the Secretary-General on UNMIK, in the light of the stability of the situation Kosovo.

In conclusion, we express our appreciation to the Head and the personnel of UNMIK for their efforts in carrying out their mandate.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): I thank Special Representative Farid Zarif for his briefing. I also acknowledge the report by the European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security on the activities of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX). The United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and EULEX continue to promote peace, security, human rights and the rule of law in Kosovo, in close cooperation with the relevant international partners, including the Kosovo Force and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

I welcome Prime Minister Vučić of Serbia and Prime Minister Thaçi of Kosovo.

Robust debate in the formation of Governments can be a sign of vibrant and mature democracies, but the prolonged political deadlock in Pristina following the successful elections on 8 June has risked diluting the progress achieved so far in the dialogue with Belgrade and damaging Kosovo's economy. We therefore welcome the in-principle agreement reached recently to form a coalition Government in Pristina and the announcement that the Assembly of Kosovo will reconvene on 8 December. We urge the new Kosovar Government to re-engage as a matter of priority in a new phase of dialogue with Serbia. We also urge it to focus on responsible Government and fighting corruption, and to work to stabilize the country's economic and fiscal situation.

Australia welcomes the recent progress achieved in technical talks between Kosovar and Serbian authorities despite the stalled high-level political dialogue. The agreements on crossing points, telecommunications and energy should make a real difference to people's lives and facilitate economic activity. The progress and cooperation in municipal governance, including between the four Serb-majority municipalities and authorities in Pristina, and in police integration are also welcome developments. The full establishment

of the Community of Serb Municipalities should now be a priority, along with concrete improvements in the overall situation facing Kosovo's internally displaced persons.

The security situation in Kosovo continues to normalize, with a steady decline in politically motivated security incidents. But the intensification of inter-ethnic tensions in Kosovo following the suspension of the 14 October football match between Serbia and Albania in Belgrade, including incidents directed at Kosovo-Serb returnees and their property, shows that much more needs to be done to strengthen inter-ethnic harmony. We commend Kosovar security authorities and EULEX for their prompt and effective handling of incidents in the aftermath of the match. We urge Kosovo's leaders to continue their efforts to build understanding and reconciliation among different ethnic communities.

Australia appreciates the efforts of the Kosovar authorities to safeguard the country's cultural and religious heritage, but we remain concerned that episodes of desecration of sites of particular significance continue to occur. The spraying of provocative messages praising the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant at the Visoki Dečani Monastery on 12 October was of particular concern.

In that context, Australia also appreciates the steps taken by Kosovo to address the problem of extremism and foreign terrorist fighters. We, like the Secretary-General and others, commend all those Kosovo moderate religious and secular groups who work to address the root causes of extremism and to combat foreign fighters.

We note the steps taken by UNMIK and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to monitor the situation and assist in the voluntary return of displaced persons. The return of displaced persons and refugees from the Kosovo conflict is an essential component of long-term reconciliation, and we once again call on all parties to increase efforts in that regard.

As this will be Australia's final statement on Kosovo in the Security Council during our term of membership, it is appropriate to reflect on the past two years — a period of substantial progress in the relations between Serbia and Kosovo. For both, the 19 April 2013 Agreement and the concrete results delivered by technical talks set a high benchmark for Serbian and

Kosovo leaders elected over the past year to achieve the full normalization of relations in a new phase of high-level European Union-facilitated dialogue. We welcome the recent visit by Foreign Minister Hoxhaj to Belgrade as a sign of the determination of both parties to make that happen.

In the light of such progress, there is now scope to reduce the frequency of Security Council debates on Kosovo so as to redirect Council resources — already facing unprecedented demands — to other, more acute challenges to peace and security. A good first step would be requesting the Secretary-General to submit his reports on UNMIK at six-monthly intervals. The Council could also start to consider whether the current mandate of UNMIK is appropriate for the contemporary political and security situation of Kosovo.

Mr. Pressman (United States of America): I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Zarif for his briefing. We welcome Prime Minister Thaçi and Prime Minister Vučić to the Security Council and we thank them for their statements.

The European Union-facilitated Kosovo-Serbia dialogues in implementation of the April 2013 Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations continue to be critical elements for building a strong, inclusive and integrated democracy in Kosovo. We are eager to see high-level meetings resume and expeditious progress continuing towards the full implementation of the Brussels Agreement, including the full functioning of all of Kosovo's municipalities in accordance with Kosovo law. In that regard, the United States welcomes the recent progress by Kosovo political leaders to overcome the political impasse that has prevented the formation of a Kosovo Government following the June elections.

We call on Kosovo's political party leaders to move lawfully and quickly to constitute the Assembly and form the Government fully in line with Kosovo's Constitution, laws and rulings by its Constitutional Court. As the Secretary-General observes in his report (S/2014/773), there are many pressing issues affecting the future of all people living in Kosovo, and there are opportunities to continue the historic process of normalization with Belgrade and to reconcile with the past. Sustaining momentum in the Belgrade-Pristina dialogues and the full implementation of all agreements reached to date remain integral to the welfare of the people of Kosovo, to both Kosovo and Serbia's progress on their respective paths towards European integration,

and to a stable, peaceful and prosperous region. To that end, we will continue to back the intensive engagement of the European Union (EU) and the EU High Representative in advancing the dialogue.

While there has been a pause in progress at the political level while awaiting the Kosovo Government's formation, progress does continue to be made on the technical level, including on important agreements on integrated border management, the freedom of movement, energy and reciprocal recognition of vehicle insurance, which will allow citizens of both countries to travel easily across the borders. We welcome the cooperation between international and local authorities that helped facilitate visits by Serb pilgrims to Kosovo for religious holidays in November.

The United States condemns those who seek to oppose the work of building an inclusive democracy in Kosovo by committing acts of violence or intimidation or by sowing tension, mistrust and fear among the communities. Threats against returnees and their property, the deplorable acts of vandalism at the Visoki Dečani monastery on 11 and 12 October and the incendiary rhetoric that surrounded the suspension of the soccer match in Belgrade between Serbia and Albania are all grounds for concern. Those incidents demonstrate the need to intensify outreach, redouble efforts to promote dialogue and understanding and to further strengthen security where it is needed.

The Kosovo Force (KFOR) and the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) continue to exercise indispensable roles in cooperation with Kosovo authorities in ensuring security and strengthening the rule of law throughout the country. Their work has also been instrumental in ensuring an environment conducive to advancing the implementation of the dialogue agreements between Kosovo and Serbia. KFOR's support for security and its presence as a third responder in Mitrovica following the Serbia-Albania soccer match helped prevent tensions from escalating into violence.

EULEX personnel remain essential in mentoring and training Kosovo's judicial and police personnel. Their work continues to facilitate the identification and repatriation of remains from previous conflicts, as we witnessed in September and October. Colleagues have raised recent allegations against certain EULEX officials. Those allegations should be the subject of a full and transparent investigation. Nonetheless, inflammatory language directed against EULEX and

the lack of full cooperation in certain law enforcement matters are unacceptable. We continue to support the important European Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo.

Finally, the United States notes and welcomes Kosovo's growing involvement in regional cooperation forums and commends the 10 October decision of the multinational advisory group of the Regional Arms Control Verification and Implementation Assistance Centre for Security Cooperation in South-East Europe to invite Kosovo's full participation in the organization. Increased dialogue among the countries of the region is vital to addressing shared concerns such as the threat of foreign terrorist fighters. We call upon the countries in the region to work together to ensure that effective preventative and response mechanisms are in place to counter extremist individuals and violent extremist ideas. In connection with those efforts, the United States commends the work of Kosovo and Serbian law enforcement agencies in response to the threat of foreign terrorist fighters. Those are important lines of effort in the coalition to counter the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, of which we thank both Kosovo and Serbia for being members.

Mrs. Jakubonė (Lithuania): We welcome Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić of Serbia and Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi of Kosovo to the Security Council and we thank them for their statements. We also thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Farid Zarif for his briefing.

Every three months over the past two years, Council members invariably note the positive developments in the region and the irreversible changes taking place on the ground. We commend the Kosovo authorities on the agreement on the coalition Government, which we hope will be formed swiftly. We believe that a new Government will continue building a democratic, peaceful, economically successful and multi-ethnic Kosovo. We look forward to the new Government continuing along the path of reforms and the process of normalization of relations with Belgrade. The Government will have to focus on the rule of law, the fight against corruption and organized crime as well as on the comprehensive reforms required for further progress along the State's Euro-Atlantic path. Regional cooperation and good-neighbourly relations are an essential part of Kosovo's process of moving towards the European Union (EU). We gladly note the inclusion of Kosovo in various forms of regional cooperation, and we look forward to the next informal regional

conference of Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Finance to be organized in Pristina.

Serbia and Kosovo need to move ahead with the implementation of the 19 April 2013 Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations, while building trust among the communities. We note the progress achieved on integrated border management, telecommunications and energy through the EU-facilitated dialogue. We encourage the resumption of high-level talks as soon as possible. We also welcome the Mitrovica-Pristina cooperation in the preparations for municipal elections. We encourage resolving differences through dialogue, including over construction in the ethnically mixed areas of Kroi i Vitakut/Brđjani, North Mitrovica.

Ensuring justice is essential for reconciliation. In that regard, we welcome the meeting of the inter-ministerial working group on dealing with the past and on reconciliation, the first one in almost 10 months, as well as steps taken towards the adoption of a comprehensive strategy on transitional justice.

We commend Serbian, European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) and Kosovar experts on the professional completion of the repatriation of remains recovered in the mass grave in Rudnica. We call on the parties to expedite the process of enabling the specialist court to look into cases stemming from the work of the EU Special Investigative Task Force in 2015.

We commend the efforts of Kosovo police and security institutions in fighting terrorism through a series of anti-terrorist operations, as well as legislative measures against foreign terrorist fighters.

The situation in Kosovo remains calm, and we commend the cooperation among the Kosovo police, EULEX and the Kosovo Force, including in managing incidents and launching measures to counter illegal logging. However, my delegation would like to recall that a year ago a Lithuanian officer serving in EULEX was killed while on duty in northern Kosovo. We call on the respective authorities to find the perpetrators and bring them to justice.

We continue to support the successful implementation of the EULEX mandate and the mission's impartial assistance to Kosovo in the consolidation of a sustainable and accountable rule-of-law sector. The recent allegations of corruption against EULEX staff members must be looked into immediately. We welcome

the decision by EU High Representative Federica Mogherini to appoint an independent legal expert in that regard.

Finally, having noted the progress on the implementation of the Belgrade-Pristina Agreement and on resolution 1244 (1999), Lithuania once again calls on the Council to review the current reporting and debating cycles of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) with a view towards reducing their frequency in 2015, as well as to consider a drawdown of UNMIK that reflects developments on the ground.

Mr. Manzi (Rwanda): I would like to thank Mr. Farid Zarif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Kosovo, for his impressive briefing and continued leadership of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo. I would also like to thank Mr. Aleksandar Vučić, Prime Minister of Serbia, and Mr. Hashim Thaçi of Kosovo for their statements.

During the Council's last debate on Kosovo, held on 29 August (see S/PV.7257), Rwanda welcomed the peaceful, transparent and reorganized elections to the Kosovo Assembly, held on 8 June following the dissolution of the previous Assembly. But today we are concerned about the current impasse over the election of the President of the Assembly and the formation of a Government, which may prevent the authorities from taking measures needed to enhance security, foster reconciliation and promote the economic well-being of the people of Kosovo. We encourage all the political parties to intensify their efforts to end this institutional gridlock.

We note that during the period under review no high-level dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina was organized through the facilitation of the European Union (EU). However, we commend the EU for its continued efforts to promote dialogue, including holding technical and working-level meetings that have led to agreements on crossing points, freedom of movement, telecommunications and energy. In that regard, since Rwanda believes in regional integration, we welcome the progress made by both Belgrade and Pristina towards their integration into Europe, and we hope the challenges pointed out in the European Commission's 2014 progress report for both countries will soon be overcome.

Regarding the situation in northern Kosovo, Rwanda welcomes the close cooperation between

both communities and the progress being made in municipal governance, including the coordination and harmonization of budgets between the North Mitrovica municipality and the Mitrovica North Administrative Office, and between the four Serb-majority municipalities in northern Kosovo and the central authorities. We also welcome other achievements, such as the integration of former Serbian Ministry of Interior police officers into the Kosovo police. In that context, we call on all sides to build on that momentum and resolve pending issues such as the construction in the ethnically mixed area of Brdjeni in North Mitrovica.

We note that the security situation in Kosovo has generally remained calm and stable, despite deplorable incidents such as those related to illegal logging and those against cultural and religious heritage. We commend the Kosovo police, supported by the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo and the International Security Force in Kosovo, for their continuing action in maintaining peace and security, as well as their resolve in combating violent extremism and the scourge of foreign terrorist fighters, as demonstrated in their action against supporters of the Islamic State. We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the important role of the Kosovo Islamic community, which has denounced the participation of Kosovan Albanians in foreign conflicts, and we hope that the draft law prohibiting Kosovar participation in armed conflicts outside Kosovo will soon be adopted by the Kosovo Assembly.

Rwanda is concerned at the continuing slow pace of the process of voluntary return of displaced persons to Kosovo. In that regard, we commend the Kosovo authorities on the confidence-building measures that have been undertaken with the aim of promoting reconciliation among the communities, including the integration of minority communities into public institutions and the police. We nonetheless believe it is important that all stakeholders continue to engage with communities in identifying and eradicating all obstacles to the return and safe settlement of displaced persons.

In conclusion, Rwanda recognizes the commitment of Belgrade and Pristina to the EU-facilitated dialogue, as well as the progress they have made towards their shared goal of European integration. We hope that the deadlock in electing the President of the Kosovo Assembly will soon be resolved and that both communities will remain constructively engaged

in finding long-term stability, reconciliation and prosperity for Kosovo and all its citizens.

Mr. Oyarzábal (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank Mr. Farid Zarif, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his presentation of the report (S/2014/773) on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). I also welcome the participation of Mr. Aleksandar Vučić, Prime Minister of Serbia, and Mr. Hashim Thaçi.

Argentina would like to emphasize the fundamental role the United Nations plays in Kosovo through UNMIK in promoting security, stability and respect for human rights, as well as in its cooperation with the International Security Force in Kosovo and the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, maintaining a neutral position with regard to the statute and under the auspices of the United Nations. I should point out that in 1999, when Argentina was also a member of the Security Council, we voted in favour of resolution 1244 (1999), and we believe it continues to form the international juridical foundation for Kosovo's efforts to achieve a comprehensive settlement through a political process and negotiations.

Regarding the security situation, we deplore the serious incidents that have occurred near the administrative border, although the situation has generally remained stable. However, we are concerned about the fact that we continue to see incidents affecting Serbian Kosovars, particularly in Pejë/Peć, in the western part of Kosovo. We condemn the repeated acts of vandalism in cemeteries and Serbian Orthodox church property. We note that the response of the Kosovo police to crimes against ethnic minorities continues to improve, and we urge that measures be taken to ensure that such acts do not recur.

We welcome the progress that Serbia has made in reforming Serb institutions and in taking steps towards integration with the European Union. We call on the parties to resume their European Union-facilitated high-level dialogue, and we would like to emphasize the significant progress that has been made in implementing the historic agreement of 19 April 2013. We urge the parties to continue their efforts and build on that progress. We would also like to stress the importance of UNMIK's work, which we believe is critical to ensuring maximum support for the political process and focusing particular attention on matters related to the 19 April agreement.

We highlight the progress that has made in integrating personnel from the Serbian Ministry of the Interior into the Kosovo police, a very sensitive area of the agreement. We call on the parties to continue on the path of dialogue and implementation of the agreement in order to make progress on the related issue of the judicial and rule-of-law issues. We encourage all those with an international presence on the ground to continue to work together in accordance with their mandates to consolidate the achievements that have been made and resolve outstanding issues.

Argentina believes it is critical that we work to ensure full respect for the human rights of displaced persons and minorities, regardless of their origins, so that they can enjoy their substantive rights and are not subject to discrimination. We also continue to be concerned about the low numbers of voluntary returnees to Kosovo since their displacement in 1999. We call on the competent authorities to continue to work and implement measures to resolve these outstanding issues, which impede the return and full reintegration of internally displaced persons. The work being undertaken by the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Danish Refugee Council and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, with the support and cooperation of UNMIK, is of the greatest importance in that regard.

We also note the establishment by the Serbian Government's Office for Kosovo and Metohija of a new consultative body, including the United Nations and the Kosovo Minister of Communities and Returns. We must also continue to prioritize the tasks to resolve the other legacies the conflict, including the outstanding cases of 1,690 missing persons. In that connection, we stress the need to repatriate the remains of those found in a mass grave discovered in Rudnica on 13 October. UNMIK must pursue and enhance its efforts to identify the fate of missing persons, and redouble its efforts and cooperation to ensure that no violation of human rights enjoys impunity.

We highlight the work of UNMIK in support of the rule of law, especially through its collaboration with all relevant interested parties with respect to the principal problems on the ground. There is also the need to ensure that the international presences in Kosovo continue to strengthen their mutual cooperation as they seek to establish conditions appropriate to the implementation of the agreement of 19 April 2013. We commend the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-

General to promote security, stability and respect for human rights in Kosovo, in accordance with resolution 1244 (1999).

Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea): I would like to thank Special Representative Farid Zarif for his briefing. We also warmly welcome Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić and Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi to the Council, and thank them for their statements today.

Since the elections in June, it has been expected that those first Kosovo-wide general elections would lead to the country's democratic stability. However, six months after the elections, we are still witnessing a continued stand-off among the political actors and the subsequent delay in the formation of a new Government. At this critical stage of Kosovo's path towards the normalization of relations with Belgrade and European Union (EU) integration, we hope that the next parliamentary session in the coming week will be an opportunity to find a way for a new Government to be established.

While there has been no high-level dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina due to the domestic political process, we do believe that both sides are steadily moving forward in their implementation of the 19 April 2013 agreement. Most importantly, the talks on a technical level remain ongoing, and progress on the ground has also been sustained in the areas of integrated border management, telecommunications and energy. It is also encouraging that the recent progress in the implementation of the agreement on freedom of movement, with additional border crossings, has brought substantial benefits to the people's daily life.

In order to maintain this positive momentum, it is vital that the EU-facilitated high-level dialogue resume without delay. There are remaining key issues — such as the integration of the judiciary in northern Kosovo — that need a political dialogue if they are to be resolved. In this regard, we encourage Belgrade and Pristina to continue to scale up their efforts towards the normalization of their relations.

Despite these positive developments in the political dialogue, we should not lose sight of the difficult road ahead in dismantling the emotional barriers between the ethnic communities. In that respect, the work of the Commission on Missing Persons and joint efforts to protect cultural and religious heritage are a good

starting point for promoting inter-ethnic tolerance and enhancing the culture of mutual respect.

Furthermore, more vigorous efforts should be made to ensure the full safety of ethnic minorities. In particular, a series of security incidents targeting ethnic minorities and their property continues to be of grave concern. With this shared concern, we encourage the Kosovo authorities to engage more with minority communities, including Kosovo Serbs, and to investigate any instances of violence against them. Close cooperation between the EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) and the Kosovo police is also highly important in this regard.

At the same time, we would like to commend the Kosovo authorities in continuing to address the issue of extremism and the participation of Kosovars in foreign conflicts, mainly in Syria and Iraq. We also welcome the public dissociation of religious leaders in Kosovo from violent extremism, radicalism and terrorism.

Finally, we once again commend the entire staff of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, EULEX and other international partners for their tireless efforts for the peace and stability of Kosovo and the wider region.

Mr. Tatham (United Kingdom): I thank the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Kosovo, Mr. Farid Zarif, for his briefing today. I welcome to the Council Prime Ministers Thaçi and Vučić.

The United Kingdom welcomes Kosovo's continued progress on the international stage, including the recent statement by the International Olympic Committee that Kosovo should be able to participate in the next Olympic Games. Kosovo is now recognized by well over half of the States Members of the United Nations. We encourage those countries that have not yet recognized Kosovo to do so.

The United Kingdom remains committed to the progress of both Kosovo and Serbia towards membership of the European Union. The normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia is integral to both countries' European Union accession paths and, as we have said before, full implementation of the dialogue agreement is necessary to unlock progress. I welcome the expressions of commitment to the dialogue that we have just heard from both Prime Ministers. We encourage both sides to implement existing agreements and to continue progress at the working level. It is

welcome that technical talks have continued to make some progress through working level meetings, including on the integrated management of crossing points and on telecommunications and energy.

But it is clear that there needs to be a resumption of high-level meetings once the new Government of Kosovo is in place. The formation of a new Government in Kosovo can give renewed momentum to implementation of the dialogue. We hope that there will be decisive progress to this end at the constitutive session of the Kosovo Assembly, which we expect to take place on 8 December.

The United Kingdom notes with concern continuing inter-ethnic incidents, including an increased number of thefts targeting the Kosovo Serb community in western Kosovo and reports of violence against Serb returnees and their property. There can be no tolerance of such incidents or complacency about the need to tackle them vigorously and hold perpetrators accountable. We commend the efforts of the Kosovo authorities, in particular the Kosovo police, to address these incidents promptly. As the Secretary-General's report (S/2014/773) notes, their timely intervention in Mitrovica on 14 October to disperse crowds following the suspension of the Serbia-Albania football match successfully averted an escalation and possible violence.

The United Kingdom continues to give strong support to the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX). The allegations in the press about EULEX need to be looked into. The High Representative has announced an external, independent investigation into EULEX, which we fully support.

The United Kingdom joins the Secretary-General in welcoming the shared determination of the Kosovo authorities and the leadership of the Islamic community in Kosovo to tackle the issues of extremism and foreign fighters. The multiple arrests carried out by the Kosovo police on 11 August and 25 September underline their commitment to preventing Kosovars travelling overseas to participate in conflicts. We encourage the continued close cooperation of police and security services in the region to tackle those risks. The role played by the leadership of the Islamic community of Kosovo and other religious and secular leaders in dissociating themselves and their communities from extremism has been a very positive one.

Finally, the United Kingdom reiterates its view that a reduction in the frequency of these debates is

overdue, given the progress in Kosovo over the last 15 years and the improved relations between Pristina and Belgrade. As the workload of the Security Council continues to expand, the Council needs to be focusing on situations and issues that constitute a genuine threat to international peace and security. Kosovo is not, in our view, one of them. The current frequency of these debates, during which we tend to hear largely familiar restatements of well-established positions by Council members, does not strike us as a productive use of Council time.

I also support the suggestion made by other representatives that the time has come to consider whether the configuration of the mandate of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo requires downward adjustment to reflect the current circumstances in Kosovo.

Mr. Bertoux (France) (*spoke in French*): I want to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Farid Zarif, for his briefing and the Prime Minister of Serbia, Mr. Vučić, and the Prime Minister of Kosovo, Mr. Thaçi, for their statements.

Today we are reviewing the events of 2014, the year of the implementation of the historic Agreement of 19 April 2013 reached between Serbia and Kosovo and facilitated by the European Union. As it happens, there have been fewer major advances in the past year, but the dialogue between the two countries has continued, enabling technical enhancements necessary for the normalization of their relations. We would like to congratulate and encourage the parties to continue their discussions despite the slowdown caused by the electoral context in both countries. The hopes that were raised continue to be fulfilled by the facts.

The report of the Secretary-General (S/2014/773) covers the period after the elections of 8 June in Kosovo, which took place, we would recall, calmly and in a transparent matter. Three months ago in this very Chamber (see S/PV.7257) we were expressing the hope that a compromise could be found for the rapid formation of a Government. It seems that today the Kosovo parties are finally about to achieve it. An agreement was reached in principle among the main political parties for a formal Government agreement, and we look forward to the appointment of a Cabinet, if possible as soon as 8 December.

That process took time, therefore requiring increasing attention by the Council, but it took place

in line with democratic procedures. Today it seems that the political crisis has been avoided, and we see in this a new sign of the Kosovar parties' maturity. While continuing to carefully observe their work to come in Pristina, we reiterate our trust in them.

Kosovo needs a stable Government. Having one is in the interest of Kosovars, given the pressing economic challenges facing the country and the expectations that the entire population, including the north, has expressed through its appropriate participation in the national elections. It is also an expectation that the Council has.

We will remain particularly attentive to issues beyond internal reforms, such as the rapid resumption of political dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina. Technical progress certainly continues to be made, but it is essential that the Governments of both countries restore political momentum towards a normalization process, as such a process will not drive itself. This also involves the pursuit of their European rapprochement, a subject to which I will return.

Kosovo will not be able to calmly face the future without light being shed on its past. It is now up to Kosovo to take responsibility and facilitate the establishment of a tribunal to follow-up on the work of the Special Investigative Task Force. Again, given the gravity of the alleged crimes, the expected formation of a Government and the resumption of the work of the Parliament in Pristina are necessary developments for a situation that should not, in any case, be neglected.

We have no doubt about the willingness of Kosovars to engage in a legal process that will address all the aspects of the difficult times experienced by Kosovo in the late 1990s. We again count on the political parties in Pristina, who must show their maturity and their determination as they have done in the past.

I will not go over the incidents that occurred at the end of August or the police operations in the country against possible support to the terrorist group Daesh, but would simply like to acknowledge how responsible the Kosovo security forces were in their effective and measured response. For us, the security situation in Kosovo remains stable.

We note with satisfaction the progress made in the integration of former Serb policemen into the Kosovo police, which is a sign of the effective implementation of the Agreement of 19 April 2013. The establishment of a common Serbian community with real authority was another sign of progress, which the Special

Representative of the Secretary-General urged us to consider early this year. Those two processes are inseparable and will serve to strengthen the confidence of the local population in Kosovo's institutional framework. We hope to quickly see progress on that front as well.

Finally, we encourage the parties to ensure respect for the rights of persons belonging to minorities. The low numbers of refugees returning to Kosovo remains a concern. The restoration of mutual confidence between communities remains the only way to allow Kosovo and Serbia to open a new chapter in their history.

I will conclude by commending the joint progress by Kosovo and Serbia towards the European Union. Important steps have been taken. Serbia has made substantial institutional changes, and we welcome the efforts already made. The technical process of negotiations for accession to the European Union, formally launched on 21 January, continues. We now hope that the efforts by Serbia will be recognized and a first round of negotiations can soon begin.

The European Commission has in turn welcomed the commitment of Pristina to the conclusion of a stabilization and association agreement, which we hope will be finalized soon. It is important that the progress by each of the two sides be made in step, so as to avoid any delay of one slowing the progress of the other.

Mr. Maes (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I, too, would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), Mr. Farid Zarif, for his briefing. I welcome His Excellency Mr. Aleksandar Vučić, Prime Minister of Serbia, and His Excellency Mr. Hashim Thaçi, Prime Minister of Kosovo, and thank them for their contributions.

We welcome the fact that the security situation in Kosovo remained calm and stable during the period since our most recent debate in the Security Council (see S/PV.7257), including in the four Serb-majority municipalities in the north of the country. Another positive fact is that Serbia and Kosovo have continued the process of normalizing their relations at the technical level through the dialogue facilitated by the European Union pending the formation of the new Government of Kosovo following the elections of 8 June.

We encourage those newly elected to establish as soon as possible conditions for the resumption of

the high-level dialogue facilitated by the European Union. Recent progress in the talks between the two parties that received the most votes in the elections offer the hope that a Government supported by a stable majority in Parliament will be formed shortly. It is the responsibility of those newly elected to show a spirit of compromise and to give priority to the national interest and respect for Kosovo's Constitution above and beyond other considerations.

Luxembourg welcomes the important steps taken by the Kosovo police and security agencies to contribute to the fight against the global problem of violent extremism. I am speaking in particular of the measures taken to prevent Kosovo's citizens from participating in conflicts abroad. We encourage the new Parliament to make the adoption of the draft bill prohibiting the participation of Kosovars in armed conflict outside Kosovo one of its priorities.

Other priorities that await those newly elected, in addition to the 2015 budget, include the establishment of a specialist court to follow up on the work of the Special Investigative Task Force of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo on the allegations set out in the report by Dick Marty. That court will prosecute the perpetrators of any crimes committed while allowing those wrongly accused to prove their innocence.

With respect to the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX), given that some delegations referred to the allegations of corruption against EULEX judges, I would like to emphasize that we have full confidence in the ability of Jean Paul Jacqué, the independent expert appointed 10 November by High Representative of the European Union Federica Mogherini to shed light on those allegations. These allegations should not be used to undermine the important role that EULEX continues to play in strengthening the rule of law in Kosovo.

The imminent formation of the new Government in Kosovo should be followed by an immediate resumption of high-level dialogue facilitated by the European Union in order to ensure the full implementation of the historic agreement concluded on 19 April 2013. In that regard, special attention needs to be given to two points: the establishment of a community/association of Serb-majority municipalities and the full dismantling of parallel structures, in particular security structures.

The process of normalizing relations between Belgrade and Pristina under the auspices of the

European Union has permanently changed the nature of relations between Serbia and Kosovo. Gradually, as the two countries advance along the path of European integration, United Nations involvement in the field will become less and less relevant. We encourage the United Nations to adjust its presence to the lasting stabilization of the situation in Kosovo, as the European Union has done, *inter alia*, by reconfiguring EULEX. It would also be appropriate to review the Security Council's reporting and meetings cycle devoted to the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo.

To conclude, while our Security Council mandate is nearing completion, I would like to take this opportunity to encourage again the leaders of Serbia and Kosovo to continue to demonstrate the political will and courage needed to achieve reconciliation between their countries and bring them closer to the European Union. Kosovo and Serbia can continue to count on the active support of Luxembourg to realize their European future.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Chad.

First of all, I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Farid Zarif, for his briefing. I would also like to welcome Mr. Aleksandar Vučić, Prime Minister of Serbia, and Mr. Hashim Thaçi, Prime Minister of Kosovo, to the Security Council and thank them for their statements.

The report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (S/2014/773) describes a tense political situation with an institutional impasse that is a challenge to the democratic process in Kosovo. We note with concern that in the five months since the early legislative elections of 8 June, which took place in a unified legal framework, Kosovo has still not formed a new Government. The crisis provoked by the search for a balance of forces has not found a solution either, despite the matter's having been referred to the Constitutional Court. Furthermore, Kosovo organized municipal elections on 3 November, which took place, according to international observers, in a proper manner, except in the north, in northern Mitrovica, where violence and low voter turnout were reported.

We believe that this ongoing political tension and the institutional vacuum could exacerbate an economic situation that is already quite difficult. Chad calls upon Kosovo's political actors to enter into a dialogue to find

a way out of the impasse, with a view to allowing a Government to be formed, and thereby preserve the country's fragile cohesion. In a similar vein, Chad encourages the authorities to pursue the dialogue being facilitated by the European Union, in accordance with the 19 April 2013 agreement on the normalization of relations between Belgrade and Pristina.

Chad welcomes and encourages the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in fulfilling its mandate and specifically reiterates its support for the work on disappeared and displaced persons. According to High Commissioner on Refugees, there are still more 17,200 internally displaced persons in Kosovo. We note the progress made on the issues of return and identification as well as the improvement of access of minority communities to employment opportunities in the Kosovo public institutions.

With respect to the judiciary, Chad also notes the progress achieved on the issue of war crimes, the fight against organized crime and corruption, human trafficking, property rights and institutional capacity-

building in the justice sector. We invite the Kosovo authorities to further strengthen the appropriate measures to curb the phenomena of foreign terrorist fighters and the desecration of holy places.

Finally, we recall that the Mission's highest priority remains the promotion of security, stability and respect for human rights in Kosovo and the region. In this regard, we welcome the fruitful cooperation between the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Kosovo Force, the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo and UNMIK as they pursue their efforts to achieve peace, stability and development in Kosovo.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

There are no more speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.