



Security Council

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United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction and Mission priorities

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution [1244 \(1999\)](#), by which the Council established the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and requested the Secretary-General to report at regular intervals on the implementation of its mandate. The report covers the activities of UNMIK, and developments related thereto, from 16 March to 15 September 2021.

2. The priorities of the Mission remain to promote security, stability and respect for human rights in Kosovo and in the region. In furtherance of its goals, UNMIK continues its constructive engagement with Pristina and Belgrade, all communities in Kosovo, and regional and international actors. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Kosovo Force continue to perform their roles within the framework of resolution [1244 \(1999\)](#). The European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo continues its presence in Kosovo, in line with the statement by the President of the Security Council of 26 November 2008 ([S/PRST/2008/44](#)) and the report of the Secretary-General of 24 November 2008 ([S/2008/692](#)). The United Nations agencies, funds and programmes work closely with the Mission.

II. Key political and security developments

3. Following legislative elections held in Kosovo on 14 February, in which the Movement for Self-Determination (Vetëvendosje) secured a parliamentary majority, the main political developments included the formation of the new government and resumption of the European Union-facilitated dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina. The legislature elected the leader of Vetëvendosje, Albin Kurti, as Prime Minister of Kosovo on 22 March and Vjosa Osmani (leader of the “Guxo” initiative) as President of Kosovo on 4 April. Ms. Osmani is the second woman in Kosovo to hold the office of President. With the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic still heavily affecting Kosovo, the new government has prioritized recovery from the related health, social and economic consequences. While the new government acknowledged calls from international actors on prioritizing the European Union-facilitated dialogue, the two high-level meetings held under the auspices of the European Union have revealed greater divergences between the parties.



4. The Vetëvendosje-led government, formed with the support of all caucuses from non-majority communities in the Assembly of Kosovo, with the exception of the Serbian List party, is composed of a Prime Minister, three Deputy Prime Ministers, two of whom are women, and a cabinet of 15 ministries, 5 of which are led by women. Notwithstanding an initial controversy stirred by the Serbian List insisting on more than one ministerial portfolio and referring the matter to the Constitutional Court on 29 March, the composition of the government reflects increased representation of non-majority communities. For the first time, the Kosovo Bosniak community is represented at the deputy prime minister level and three ministries are headed by representatives from the Serbian List and the Kosovo Egyptian and the Kosovo Turkish communities. As at the end of the reporting period, the Constitutional Court had not issued a decision on the referral by the Serbian List, and Belgrade had objected to the party's reduced representation in the government as compared with previous legislative periods.

5. The Democratic Party of Kosovo, the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo and the Serbian List caucuses boycotted the 4 April election of President Osmani, who received a total of 71 votes in favour, with 11 abstentions. The required quorum of 80 deputies in attendance (out of a total of 120) was achieved only after 3 individual deputies from opposition parties broke ranks to participate in the session alongside Vetëvendosje, the Guxo initiative, the Democratic League of Kosovo and the multi-ethnic caucus of other non-majority communities.

6. On 17 May, Prime Minister Kurti presented his governing programme to the Assembly, with the management of the COVID-19 pandemic as the government's main priority, followed by the tackling of socioeconomic issues, in particular unemployment, and by justice reform. Alongside plans to achieve 60 per cent immunization of the population by the end of 2021, the programme provides for the establishment of a fund to facilitate foreign investment and a new process for the vetting of judges and prosecutors. Within its first 100 days, the new government took steps to address alleged misconduct in public office, leading to the dismissal by the Kosovo Assembly of the boards of directors of several publicly owned enterprises, including Radio Television of Kosovo, and other public institutions. The dismissals triggered criticism by opposition parties, who perceived them as being politically motivated. Regarding relations with Belgrade, the new government pledged to "make every effort to achieve mutual recognition" and ensure the principle of "reciprocity" and expressed its intention to initiate a case against Serbia at the International Court of Justice for alleged crimes committed in Kosovo, including a claim of genocide.

7. The reporting period also featured an intensification by Pristina of its efforts to expand its engagement in the international arena and in multilateral forums. On 21 May, the Kosovo government endorsed an agreement on the freedom of movement of citizens and third parties that provides for visa-free travel between and among Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. The agreement, which requires the approval of the Assembly of Kosovo, was one of the outcomes of the regional meeting of ministers of the interior and security, held in Skopje, on 16 October 2020, in the framework of the Berlin process. The Kosovo government, however, continued to oppose the "mini-Schengen" initiative launched in October 2019 by the leaders of Albania, North Macedonia and Serbia, which was renamed, at their meeting in Skopje on 29 July, the "Open Balkan" initiative, with the aim of creating a free economic area and single labour market by 2023. Pristina considers that the initiative does not provide equal status for Kosovo and undermines the common regional market agreement, which was signed by all leaders in the region, including Kosovo, at the summit held in Sofia in 2020 as part of the Berlin process and which was aimed at achieving the free movement of people, goods, services and capital in the region, based on European Union standards.

8. Upon assuming office, the government also began to make preparations for the resumption of the European Union-facilitated dialogue with Belgrade. In May, in an attempt to reach consensus on the government's position in the dialogue, Prime Minister Kurti held consultative meetings with the leaders of the opposition, specifically the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo and the Democratic League of Kosovo. Both parties expressed support for the negotiations, provided that the territory, constitutional order and unitary character of Kosovo were preserved. The Democratic Party of Kosovo did not participate in the consultative meetings but declared its support for the continuation of the dialogue. For its part, the Serbian List expressed concern that the new authorities in Pristina were not prepared to accept previous agreements reached under the European Union-facilitated dialogue.

9. On 15 June, following consultations with political parties, President Osmani announced that the next municipal elections would be held on 17 October 2021. The announcement was preceded by the dismissal of the Chair of the Electoral Commission for "irregularities" noted during the early parliamentary elections held on 14 February, a move that sparked criticism from opposition parties and civil society organizations in Pristina.

10. An increase in tensions and a number of reported incidents were noted during the reporting period, in particular affecting the Kosovo Serb community and Serbian Orthodox religious and cultural sites. Following numerous allegations of harassment, intimidation and theft, a Kosovo Serb woman who returned to Gjakovë/Đakovica on 9 June was placed under the protection of the Kosovo police. On 9 August, a Kosovo Serb man was reportedly attacked by three unknown individuals in Novo Brdo/Novobërdë municipality. Other reported cases involved physical attacks against a Kosovo Serb boy in Gojbulë/Gojublja village, Vushtrri/Vučitrn municipality, by a group of Kosovo Albanian youths on 1 July and against another Kosovo Serb in Graçanicë/Gračanica by Kosovo Albanian men on 13 April. A total of 15 incidents affecting Kosovo Serb religious and cultural sites, including theft, damage to property and hateful graffiti, were also recorded during the reporting period. On 21 July, the Basic Court of Pristina found a citizen of Montenegro guilty of "inciting discord and intolerance" for allegedly chanting Serbian nationalist slogans during a Serbian Orthodox religious gathering in Kosovo on 28 June marking Vidovdan (St. Vitus Day). The individual was banned from entering Kosovo for five years and sentenced to six months of imprisonment or the payment of a fine. His arrest sparked protests in Podgorica, and was condemned by the Serbian Government's Office for Kosovo and Metohija.

11. On 17 July, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Public Administration announced that 11 Kosovo residents (6 men, 1 woman and 4 children) had been repatriated from the Syrian Arab Republic to Kosovo. The Special Department of the Basic Court of Pristina placed the six men in detention and the woman returnee under house arrest on suspicion of "organizing and participating in a terrorist group". The Ministry also announced that all returnees had received appropriate medical attention.

12. From 29 August to 3 September, the Assistant Secretary-General for Europe, Central Asia and the Americas visited UNMIK. He met with government officials, municipal leaders, international actors and civil society representatives in Pristina, Mitrovica and Belgrade and expressed the solidarity and support of the United Nations with regard to efforts to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic, strengthen human rights and the rule of law and promote intercommunity trust-building and reconciliation.

III. Pandemic impact and response

13. Kosovo continued to be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic throughout the reporting period, with the highest wave of new infections recorded in August, when the daily number of deaths reached 36, the daily number of new cases rose to more than 2,500 and the daily number of active cases surpassed 27,000. By the end of the reporting period, more than 163,000 cases of COVID-19 and 2,940 fatalities had been reported in Kosovo since the beginning of the pandemic.

14. The vaccination process in Kosovo started on 29 March, with a first batch of vaccines delivered through the advanced market commitment of the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility. With 201,420 vaccines received through the COVAX Facility, alongside bilateral donations from other partners, as well as the purchase of 1.2 million doses of vaccines, the government is seeking to achieve its 60 per cent vaccination target by the end of 2021. As at 12 September, 676,755 individuals in Kosovo had received at least one dose of the vaccine and 357,197 had been fully vaccinated. Mobile teams were established to ensure access to vaccines for non-majority communities and people who cannot travel easily to vaccination centres. In addition, Kosovo residents, mainly from the Kosovo Serb community, continued to receive vaccinations in select locations in Serbia.

15. In April, to counter the rise in COVID-19 infections, the government announced a new set of pandemic mitigation measures and allocated €6 million to support economic recovery. In July, the Assembly of Kosovo passed an increase to the government's 2021 budget to finance a new 420 million euro socioeconomic recovery package to further mitigate the impact of the pandemic. COVID-19 mitigation measures were relaxed at the end of June, as the infection rate declined, but were reintroduced in late August, following a resurgence of infections.

16. UNMIK and the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes remained operational throughout the reporting period. In addition to comprehensive measures taken previously, UNMIK completed its vaccination campaign for United Nations staff and dependents in early August. As at the end of the reporting period, there was one confirmed and active case of COVID-19 infection among United Nations staff members and their dependents in Kosovo, bringing the total number of cases since the beginning of the pandemic to 202.

17. In close coordination with the United Nations Kosovo team, UNMIK continued to support public health institutions and communities in Kosovo in responding to the pandemic. The United Nations in Kosovo supported initiatives to encourage compliance with vaccination guidelines, including through communication and outreach partnership between the United Nations Children's Fund and the United States Agency for International Development. UNMIK delivered COVID-19-related humanitarian assistance and medical equipment to Kosovo municipalities, in order to meet the needs of persons in vulnerable situations, including survivors of gender-based violence. Following a contribution from the European Union, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and International Organization for Migration (IOM) provided access for asylum seekers and migrants to pandemic-related information, legal aid, education and psychosocial counselling. In addition, through a European Union-funded humanitarian assistance project, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) strengthened the capacity of social work centres to support 7,700 vulnerable families living in extreme poverty by providing monthly vouchers for food, hygiene and other essential items.

18. COVID-19 testing capacity in Kosovo increased tenfold since the beginning of the crisis, with direct contributions by the United Nations of vital equipment, testing materials and mobile and remote diagnostic services. The United Nations Office for

Project Services continued to procure medical equipment and medicines essential to the fight against COVID-19 for the Ministry of Health and supported the design and construction of a centralized vaccine storage facility. The World Health Organization continued to support the Ministry and other public health institutions through training on COVID-19 detection, infection prevention and control, and contact tracing.

IV. Northern Kosovo

19. On 6 May, in an attempt to address the issue of unpaid energy consumption in northern Kosovo, the Assembly of Kosovo directed the Kosovo Electricity Transmission System and Market Operator to assume responsibility for costs incurred for the subsequent six months, while the government would include the four municipalities in northern Kosovo in the Kosovo billing system during the same time period. The entity had become a member of the European Network of Transmission System Operators for Electricity in 2020, taking over the responsibility for the transmission system in northern Kosovo from the Electric Network of Serbia. The 2013 European Union-facilitated agreement on energy provides for the establishment of a new electricity company under the Kosovo legal framework that would have responsibility for billing in the four northern municipalities.

20. During the reporting period, a series of incidents were reported in northern Kosovo. On 1 June, a group of 30 to 40 young people celebrating the end of the school year approached the main bridge over the Ibër/Ibar River, seeking to cross from North to South Mitrovica and chanting “Kosovo is the heart of Serbia”. The Kosovo police responded and dispersed the group. On 19 June, the Kosovo authorities reportedly turned back a bus with Serbian pilgrims en route to South Mitrovica. The Serbian Orthodox Church Diocese of Raška and Prizren condemned the incident. On a few occasions, the Kosovo authorities declined to authorize visits by the Director of the Serbian Government’s Office for Kosovo and Metohija, claiming that they were being used to strengthen Belgrade-supported “illegal” structures. Belgrade protested those restrictions and accused Pristina of violating the European Union-facilitated agreements concerning such visits.

21. On 24 August, the Court of Appeals upheld the December 2019 judgment of the Basic Court of Pristina sentencing Ivan Todosijević, a member of the Assembly of Kosovo and representative from the Serbian List and a former Minister of Local Government Administration, to two years of imprisonment for “inciting national, racial, religious or ethnic hatred, discord or intolerance” on the basis of his alleged denial of the 1999 massacre in Rečak/Račak village. The Serbian List and Belgrade both condemned the verdict, pointing out that the composition of the appeals panel, which consisted exclusively of Kosovo Albanian judges, was in violation of the European Union-facilitated First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations of 19 April 2013, under which the Appellate Court is required to establish panels with a majority of Kosovo Serb judges for all cases in Kosovo Serb-majority municipalities. That contention was rebutted by the Kosovo Ministry of Justice, which, despite comments by the Spokesperson of the European External Action Service that the verdict was not in conformity with the agreement, insisted that there had been no violation. The appeals verdict led to a temporary boycott of the Basic Court of Mitrovica by Kosovo Serb judges and calls by the Serbian List and Kosovo Serb municipal leaders to boycott the municipal elections on 17 October. On 6 July, the main trial in the case of Oliver Ivanović, a Kosovo Serb politician who was killed in North Mitrovica in January 2018, commenced at the Special Department of the Basic Court of Pristina. During the proceedings, the six defendants pleaded not guilty to charges of aggravated murder as part of an organized criminal group.

V. Normalization of relations between Belgrade and Pristina

22. Following the formation of the new government in Kosovo, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, Josep Borrell, and the European Union Special Representative for the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue and other Western Balkan regional issues, Miroslav Lajčák, expressed the readiness of the European Union to work together with Belgrade and Pristina on bringing the dialogue process to a “successful close”. In addition, France, Germany and the United States, among other countries, expressed their support for an early re-engagement by the parties in the dialogue.

23. On 15 June, after a nine-month hiatus in high-level talks, the Prime Minister of Kosovo, Albin Kurti, and the President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, met in Brussels, under the auspices of Mr. Borrell and Mr. Lajčák. In a communiqué following the meeting, Prime Minister Kurti indicated that he had presented several proposals that were largely rejected by Belgrade. Those proposals included transforming the Central European Free Trade Agreement into a free trade agreement for south-eastern Europe, where Kosovo would enjoy equal status; signing a joint pledge not to “attack each other”; ensuring the principles of “mutual recognition” and “bilateral reciprocity”, including on the issue of minorities, with the establishment of a Kosovo Serb National Council, similar to the Albanian National Council in Serbia; and replacing the Chairperson of the Serbian Government’s Commission on Missing Persons owing to his past association with Kosovo during the conflict. President Vučić stated that Pristina’s interventions during the meeting were an attempt to “end the dialogue” and that no progress was made on any issue, with the exception of the agreement to meet again.

24. During the second meeting in Brussels, held on 19 July, Pristina presented a six-point peace declaration, based on its previous proposals, that called on both sides to refrain from threats or the use of force against the other; to “strictly respect the borders of each other”; to ensure reciprocity on the protection and promotion of minority rights; to seek a peaceful resolution to disputes; and to support each other’s European Union integration processes. Pristina also emphasized the need to include in the declaration a reference to “dealing with the past” as a necessary condition for dialogue. For his part, President Vučić referred to Pristina’s proposals as “irrational” and said that they had been aimed at making the dialogue “meaningless”. Technical-level talks held in Brussels on 7 and 8 September did not result in significant progress made, although the parties reportedly agreed on some forward steps on the issue of missing persons and agreed to meet again in October. During the discussions, it was reported that Pristina had raised issues related to freedom of movement, the implementation of the agreement on energy and the electricity billing system in the Kosovo Serb-majority municipalities in northern Kosovo and the matter of missing persons. Pristina also warned of the possible non-extension of the interim agreement on licence plates once it expired on 15 September, seeking instead to introduce the principle of “reciprocity”. Belgrade continued to stress the need for Pristina to fulfil its obligation under the First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations to establish the Community/Association of Kosovo Serb-majority municipalities. Describing the outcome of the meeting, Mr. Lajčák said that the positions of both sides on a number of issues “remain far apart”.

25. On 23 June, pursuant to the commitments regarding economic normalization concluded on 4 September 2020 in Washington, D.C., the Government of the United States presented to Belgrade and Pristina a report providing an assessment on the use of water resources of the Gazivode reservoir in northern Kosovo for power generation needs. The report contained a number of recommendations on the efficient use of

water resources, including through technical coordination arrangements between Belgrade and Pristina.

VI. Returns, reconciliation, cultural heritage and community relations

26. UNHCR recorded 261 voluntary returns by members of the non-majority communities who had been displaced within and outside Kosovo. The returnees included 127 women and 134 men (212 Kosovo Serbs, 28 Kosovo Roma, 10 Kosovo Ashkali, 7 Kosovo Egyptians and 4 Kosovo Albanians). This brings the total number of displaced members of the non-majority communities who have found durable solutions in Kosovo since 2000 to 28,957, including 14,218 women and 14,739 men (12,518 Kosovo Serbs, 7,723 Kosovo Egyptians and Ashkali, 4,028 Kosovo Roma, 1,878 Kosovo Bosniaks, 1,464 Kosovo Gorani, 1,302 Kosovo Albanians, 21 Kosovo Montenegrins, 19 Kosovo Turks and 4 Kosovo Croats). There remain 15,728 displaced persons within Kosovo (7,242 women and 8,486 men), as well as 69,627 persons with displacement-related needs across the Western Balkans, out of the approximately 200,000 displaced persons from Kosovo residing in the region, most of them in Serbia.

27. The return of the first Kosovo Serb since 1999 to Gjakovë/Đakovica, an area with one of the highest number of civilian casualties during the 1998–1999 conflict, was followed by a number of reported actions against her, including the circulation of a petition signed by 12 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the municipality opposing her return and calling for her eviction. In July, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Kosovo and other international actors in Kosovo recalled the importance of protecting the rights of all returnees and urged Kosovo institutions, in cooperation with civil society and local communities, to provide an enabling environment for all returnees. UNMIK also followed up with relevant special procedures of the Human Rights Council on this specific case. In a preliminary hearing held on 9 August, the Basic Court of Gjakovë/Đakovica rejected the request of the local municipality to evict the returnee from her flat. Additional court hearings are pending.

28. During the reporting period, municipal authorities of Klinë/Klina organized a series of meetings with Kosovo Albanian, Kosovo Serb and Kosovo Egyptian community members in Krushevë e Madhe/Veliko Krusevo, aimed at improving relations between returnees and receiving communities. The meetings were organized with the support of UNHCR and attended by representatives of UNMIK, the Kosovo Force and OSCE. On 23 March, in coordination with the Ministries for Communities and Return and for Local Government Administration, UNMIK and UNHCR organized an online workshop, attended by local municipal and other local officials, who called for increased cooperation between central and local-level institutions to address challenges faced by displaced persons.

29. As part of the “Skopje process”, a regional initiative facilitated by UNHCR and OSCE to promote durable solutions for displaced persons from Kosovo, the technical working group composed of representatives from Belgrade, Podgorica, Pristina and Skopje met online in July to review progress in the implementation of a programme of durable solutions. The members of the working group agreed to develop a joint action plan and to hold their next meeting in October 2021.

30. UNHCR continued to support the Kosovo Ashkali, Kosovo Egyptian and Kosovo Roma communities in obtaining personal documentation and resolving civil status issues to enable their access to public services. Legal aid was provided to 63 individuals (36 women and 27 men) with regard to processing their civil registration,

while 55 individuals (7 women and 48 men) were provided with access to education, social assistance, property and pension rights. UNHCR also provided psychosocial support to 18 survivors of gender-based violence (16 women and 2 men) from these communities.

31. No further contributions were made during the reporting period to the United Nations trust fund in support of the Kosovo Ashkali, Kosovo Egyptian and Kosovo Roma communities affected by lead poisoning in Kosovo, leaving the fund without the ability to support their needs.

32. Mixed migration into Kosovo continued, with a total of 729 new registered arrivals, of whom 313 lodged asylum claims. Some 200 to 300 migrants remained unregistered outside reception centres, without access to government resources. A total of 45 migrants were confined at a detention centre in Vranidoll/Vrani Do in Pristina, most in poor medical condition. All asylum seekers and refugees were included in the national vaccination plan for COVID-19, and UNHCR ensured that they received free legal aid, psychosocial assistance and language interpretation support. In early September, Kosovo authorities also provided temporary shelter for approximately 1,000 Afghan evacuees, on the basis of agreements between the Kosovo authorities, the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

33. On 21 May, the President, Prime-Minister and President of the Assembly of Kosovo addressed a joint letter to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), pledging the government's commitment to the protection of cultural heritage and requesting the removal of the Visoki Dečani monastery, the Patriarchate of Peć, the Gračanica monastery and the Church of the Holy Virgin of Ljeviš from the List of World Heritage in Danger. They also requested that Kosovo be designated as the sole party responsible for those sites and expressed interest in having Kosovo granted membership in UNESCO. Representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Kosovo accused Kosovo authorities of seeking to make Kosovo "an ethnically clean Albanian territory" and called for the protection of Serbian heritage from the "irresponsible behaviour of Kosovo institutions". The letter followed the announcement on 8 April by Europa Nostra, an NGO based in The Hague and committed to the preservation of cultural and natural heritage, that it would include the Visoki Dečani monastery on its list of the seven most endangered heritage sites in Europe. The announcement triggered reactions from members of both the government and the opposition in Kosovo, who argued that the monastery did not meet the criteria to be included on the list. At its session held from 16 to 31 July 2021, the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage decided to maintain all four sites on the UNESCO List of World Heritage Sites in Danger. Notwithstanding that decision, and despite calls by the Serbian Orthodox Church and international actors to implement the 19 May 2016 ruling by the Constitutional Court of Kosovo upholding the ownership rights of the Visoki Dečani monastery to 24 hectares of adjacent land, no progress has been made in that regard.

34. In addition, the serving on 10 June of the first liturgy in the unfinished Church of Christ the Saviour in Pristina, which is the subject of a property dispute between the University of Pristina and the Serbian Orthodox Church, led to protests by the University of Pristina and its Kosovo Albanian students, and hate graffiti sprayed on the Church building.

VII. Rule of law and human rights

35. During the reporting period, in line with the priorities of the government to strengthen the judiciary and fight corruption, the Ministry of Justice began its work

on the vetting of the Kosovo justice system and the drafting of a law on the confiscation of illegally acquired property. The government also approved a strategy and action plan for strengthening its rule of law for the period 2021–2026.

36. Kosovo institutions have intensified their fight against organized crime and corruption, resulting in an increased number of arrests and indictments. From March to May, several large-scale operations led to the arrest of more than 30 suspects for the smuggling of migrants, fraud, narcotics and the illegal trade of weapons. In April and June, Kosovo police arrested 33 employees of the Ministry of Agriculture and related agencies for alleged misuse of agricultural subsidies. In June, the Chairperson of the Independent Media Commission and another official were arrested on suspicion of bribery. The publication in July of information alluding to alleged abuse of official positions, trading in influence and serious misconduct led to the resignation of a senior judge and member of the Kosovo Judicial Council and the dismissal of the Director of the Financial Intelligence Unit.

37. On 14 June, the mayor of Istog/Istok was sentenced to one year of imprisonment for granting a tender to a company owned by a family member, and the mayor of Kllokot/Klokot was indicted for election-related crimes in July. In addition, two separate indictments were filed against the mayor of Malishevë/Mališevo for abuse of office and for fraud and money-laundering. On 7 July, the Special Prosecution filed an indictment against the former Minister for European Integration and four other officials for abuse of their official positions in relation to a contract with a foreign consulting firm. On 12 August, the Court of Appeals confirmed the indictment of the former Secretary of the Ministry of Infrastructure and three other officials for abuse of their official positions, money-laundering and trading in influence.

38. Kosovo courts also issued judgments in two cases on war crimes and related offenses. On 23 March, the Special Department of the Basic Court of Pristina found two former members of the Serbian police forces guilty of war crimes committed against the civilian population in 1999 in the village of Nerodime e Epërme/Gornje Nerodimlje in the Ferizaj/Uroševac municipality, sentencing one to 14 years and 6 months of imprisonment and the other to 7 years. In addition, a Kosovo Albanian man was arrested in Pejë/Peć on 30 March and placed in pretrial detention on suspicion of committing war crimes against the civilian population in March 1999, in the village of Izbicë/Izbica in the municipality of Skënderaj/Srbica. In June, following amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code, Kosovo courts assumed jurisdiction in absentia for criminal proceedings involving alleged violations of international humanitarian law and international criminal law.

39. The government finalized two different frameworks for monitoring the implementation of the law on protection from discrimination and the implementation of all the recommendations issued by the Ombudsperson Institution of Kosovo to advance human rights. Despite some progress, most of the recommendations by the Ombudsperson remain to be implemented.

40. UNMIK launched a pilot initiative to monitor incitement to hatred and hate speech on social and online media, in line with the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech and the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence.

41. UNMIK continued to support efforts to clarify the fate of 1,630 persons (1,367 men and 263 women) still missing since the events of 1998 and 1999 in Kosovo. On 16 April, UNMIK participated in a meeting of the Pristina-Belgrade Working Group on persons who are unaccounted for in connection with events in Kosovo, which included representatives of the families of missing Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo

Serbs. In May, exhumations were completed at the mass grave site in Kiževak, Serbia, and the identification of remains through DNA testing has commenced.

42. On 18 August, the government held the first meeting of a working group tasked with drafting a strategy for transitional justice and which included representatives of Kosovo institutions and civil society organizations. The strategy is expected to reflect the experiences, needs and rights of all victims, both men and women. UNMIK continued to advocate for a victim-centred approach and the inclusion of all communities in transitional justice processes.

43. At the end of June, following extensive consultations by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, with the support of UNMIK and in partnership with the intergovernmental organization, “Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative”, the Kosovo authorities endorsed a regional road map to combat corruption and illicit financing. The aim of the road map is to bring efforts to fight corruption and illicit financing in line with the relevant United Nations and European Union frameworks.

VIII. Women and peace and security

44. Since its establishment in February 2018, the Kosovo government commission responsible for the verification and recognition of the status of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence has received 1,528 applications. To date, 987 applicants (949 women and 38 men) have been granted survivor status, while 222 applications (from 189 women and 33 men) have been rejected. On 5 July, the Special Department of the Basic Court of Pristina issued a landmark verdict against a former member of the Serbian reserve police force, who was found guilty of having committed war crimes, including rape, against the civilian population in May 1999, in the municipality of Vushtrri/Vučitrn. The accused was sentenced to 10 years of imprisonment, representing the first-ever conviction for conflict-related sexual violence by local Kosovo courts. UNMIK has provided some 180 survivors of conflict-related sexual violence with vocational training, psychosocial counselling, legal assistance and medical care and produced a video to help to combat the stigmatization of survivors.

45. The alleged murder of a young woman by her partner in Ferizaj/Uroševac in late August provoked a public outcry and a series of protest marches by civil society groups across Kosovo. Although Kosovo police subsequently arrested the perpetrator and an alleged accomplice, protesters criticized the Kosovo judicial system for allowing the main suspect to remain free despite previous indictments, including an attempted murder case in 2013 for which he has yet to stand trial. On 24 August, the multi-stakeholder Security and Gender Group, comprising international, government and civil society representatives, called on relevant institutions to take concrete actions to prevent violence against women and girls, protect victims and prosecute and sentence perpetrators. Kosovo institutions continued to take steps to prevent and combat violence against women, including through the work of the Kosovo Coordinator for Protection against Domestic Violence and the interministerial working group against domestic violence. Work has also begun on the drafting of a domestic violence protection strategy and action plan and on the review and amendment of the laws on free legal aid and on domestic violence.

46. On 23 June, UNMIK and the United Nations Kosovo team organized the Global Open Day on Women, Peace and Security in Kosovo, which provided a platform for women and men from different sectors of society to discuss the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on women’s health, education, employment, safety and social protection. The participants highlighted the importance of ensuring the meaningful participation and leadership of women in all COVID-19 decision-making processes.

47. During a visit to Kosovo on 7 and 8 July, the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Ann Linde, and the Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, Åsa Regnér, discussed opportunities to advance the women and peace and security agenda in Kosovo with senior government officials, women's rights organizations and international actors.

IX. Trust-building, partnership and cooperation

48. UNMIK continued to work closely with the United Nations Kosovo team and local and international partners to help to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on communities and to advance trust-building efforts throughout Kosovo.

49. The Mission continued to support the integration of the judiciary and the administration of justice in Kosovo, helping to reduce the backlog of court cases by providing translators and legal associates, equipment and other assistance to the Basic Court of Mitrovica. In cooperation with UNDP, UNMIK supported the establishment of a fully equipped translation office in the Basic Court of Pristina and training for court translators. With support from UNMIK and the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, an industrial-scale bakery was established at the Lipjan/Lipljan correctional centre for women and juveniles to serve as a vocational training centre for women and juvenile inmates to facilitate their reintegration into communities.

50. The UNMIK-supported Legal Aid Centre of the Kosovo Law Institute provided free legal assistance to 572 individuals (205 women and 367 men) on issues related to property rights, labour and pensioner rights and domestic violence. On 21 June, as part of a Mission-funded project, a local non-governmental organization, Initiative for Justice and Equality, held an online regional conference to present a report on women's access to financial resources and property in the Western Balkans, in which the organization identified the non-implementation of legislation and the lack of harmonization of judicial practice as key challenges.

51. On 20 May, UNMIK, in cooperation with IOM, presented the print edition of a new Albanian-Serbian and Serbian-Albanian dictionary, a project that had brought together linguistic experts from Pristina, Mitrovica and Belgrade for the first time in over 30 years. With 40,000 words, it is one of the most comprehensive dictionaries of its kind. In July, following several years of advocacy and support by the United Nations, OSCE and other international and local partners, the University of Pristina received reaccreditation, for a period of three years, for its Balkanistics Study Programme as a four-year Bachelor of Arts programme, marking an important step in promoting multilingualism at the tertiary level in Kosovo.

52. The United Nations Human Settlements Programme facilitated the use of spatial planning for social integration and trust-building by supporting four municipal administrations in northern Kosovo to develop municipal development and sustainable urban mobility plans that provide space for inter-ethnic interaction and community participation in policy formulation. Community participation in the design of a cultural mobility map for ethnically mixed villages in the municipality of Skënderaj/Srbica fostered, for the first time, a shared vision of a multi-ethnic neighbourhood based on joint cultural and natural heritage.

53. In May, with UNMIK support, a group of civil society organizations published their second joint annual report on the human rights situation in Kosovo. The report fills a gap in local monitoring and reporting and provides concrete recommendations to Kosovo institutions for advancing the realization of human rights. In April,

UNMIK and the United Nations Kosovo team co-chaired a meeting of the International Human Rights Working Group, which includes other international partners in Kosovo, to enhance coordination on human rights issues in the context of the COVID-19 crisis. UNMIK subsequently facilitated the adoption of an advocacy paper to help to guide all international actors in their engagement with local authorities on human rights issues.

54. The Mission continued to support the economic empowerment of women and youth-led multi-ethnic initiatives in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Partnering with local women's organizations, UNMIK engaged more than 140 women in the production of reusable face masks for distribution to municipalities across Kosovo. UNMIK also supported a series of online focus group meetings between municipal officials and young people from various communities to discuss youth-specific concerns and opportunities for cooperation during the pandemic. In addition, the Mission funded an online awareness campaign in which young peacebuilders partnered with various stakeholders to produce solution-focused podcasts, videos and blogs on key challenges facing youth in Kosovo. It also provided education on economic and social rights in the context of the pandemic for more than 140 young people from different ethnic backgrounds.

55. On 25 June, the Prime Minister of Kosovo and the United Nations Development Coordinator in Kosovo co-chaired an inaugural meeting of the joint steering committee on the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for 2021–2025. The areas of cooperation between the United Nations development system and Kosovo partners with regard to the Sustainable Development Goals are set out in the Framework, in line with the government's priorities and European Union integration objectives. The government and the United Nations Kosovo team will jointly monitor the implementation of the Framework with participation of government institutions, UNMIK and other local and international partners.

56. UNMIK continued to provide document certification services to Kosovo residents, with 1,969 civil status documents processed. The Mission also facilitated the issuance of 35 Red Notices, 2 Yellow Notices and 11 extradition requests from members of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) to Kosovo and opened 1,172 cases for investigation within the INTERPOL database. This leaves a total of 717 open cases related to the territory or population of Kosovo.

X. Observations

57. I welcome the expressed commitment and initial steps by the new government of Kosovo to implement an ambitious reform agenda, reflecting strong support for change among the population of Kosovo. Genuine institutional reform is a long-term challenge that requires both commitment and the professional application of legislative and executive powers to change the culture of governance. It also requires focus on a long-term strategic vision based on respect for the rule of law, human rights and social inclusion.

58. I welcome the renewed dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, facilitated by the European Union. I call on the sides to engage constructively, including on the implementation of existing agreements, and prevent setbacks in a process that has been ongoing for many years. Such an approach can give hope to a new generation for progress, overcoming obstacles to building trust and reconciliation and making way for a renewal of economic opportunities and cooperation.

59. The adoption of the rule of law strategy for 2021–2026 and the accompanying action plan are important steps in strengthening the judiciary, also through vetting of officials in the justice system, improving criminal justice, increasing access to justice and empowering strengthening the fight against corruption. Like other international partners of Kosovo, the United Nations stands ready to support the strategy's objectives.
60. I strongly encourage Pristina and Belgrade authorities to fully participate in the activities of the Working Group on Missing Persons, in close cooperation with the family members, and to put differences aside in the process of enlightening the fate of the missing.
61. I also urge all central and local institutions, in cooperation with civil society organizations and local communities, to provide an enabling environment for the safe, dignified and sustainable return of all internally displaced persons and returnees and their reintegration into Kosovo society.
62. I remain very concerned about the incidents of gender-based and domestic violence in Kosovo. I encourage government institutions, civil society and international organizations to continue to enhance the legal and policy frameworks addressing gender-based and domestic violence and to take concrete steps to ensure their effective implementation.
63. The United Nations continues to support the full and equal participation of women in political processes and all aspects of social and political life in Kosovo, which I hope will remain at the forefront of the agenda of the new government.
64. The United Nations remains committed to supporting all communities in Kosovo, especially the most vulnerable. In this regard, I regret the continuing lack of voluntary contributions to the United Nations trust fund established to support the Ashkali, Egyptian and Roma communities in Kosovo and renew my appeal to Member States, other actors and other organizations to make contributions to the fund.
65. In line with the recommendations put forward in my report on Our Common Agenda, I encourage solidarity and cooperation among Kosovo institutions and international partners in the fight against the major challenges confronting every facet of life in Kosovo and beyond, including the ravages of the COVID-19 pandemic, and a commitment to sustainable development and combatting climate change, including through strengthened regional cooperation.
66. I thank my Special Representative, Zahir Tanin, for his leadership, and the staff of the Mission, as well as the United Nations Development Coordinator and the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes for their unified support on the ground. Having placed priority on the health and safety of all United Nations staff and on support for Kosovo communities, the Mission has ensured the continuity of its activities and provided support towards mitigating the consequences of the pandemic.
67. I also express my gratitude to long-standing partners, such as the European Union, the Kosovo Force and OSCE, for their close and strategic collaboration with the United Nations, working in solidarity to provide support to the people of Kosovo in the face of continuing complex challenges.

Annex I**Report of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to the Secretary-General on the activities of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo from 16 March 2021–15 September 2021****1. Summary**

On 18 May 2021, the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo presented its “Special Report on the Impact of COVID-19 on the Rule of Law in Kosovo”, covering the period from March 2020 to March 2021, in which the main challenges faced by the justice and the correctional system during the pandemic were identified. The report provides concrete and actionable recommendations for the Kosovo rule of law institutions to better respond to the ongoing health crisis.

The Mission assisted the Kosovo Correctional Service Women’s Association by holding online training courses and conducting a two-day workshop on further strengthening female staff in the Correctional Service, with the focus on the empowerment of female Correctional Service staff. It was the first in-person event conducted within the framework of Mission projects after a nine-month pandemic-related hiatus.

In support of the Kosovo Institute of Forensic Medicine in its work on missing persons, the Mission continued to support the exhumations at the Kiževak quarry in Serbia, a site identified last year with substantial Mission support. The Institute confirmed the identities of six persons missing as a result of the Kosovo conflict and handed over their remains to the families.

2. Monitoring

The monitoring of cases continued throughout the pandemic in 2021. Physical presence in courts and meetings with police, prosecution and judges were conducted whenever feasible and in line with the applicable restrictions. Long-established relations of trust with all local counterparts ensured that Mission monitors were well informed about all developments at all times, even when contacts were restricted to telephone and video calls.

Since its inception in 2018, the Mission’s Case Monitoring Unit has drafted four systemic and thematic reports, which were shared and discussed with local counterparts and relevant international partners. In addition to systemic and thematic reports, which will continue to be produced and issued publicly on a regular basis, the Mission produces special reports on different issues and aspects of its work. In May 2021, the Mission issued the “Special Report on the Impact of COVID-19 on the Rule of Law in Kosovo”, covering the period from March 2020 to March 2021. It was the first report in which the main challenges faced by the Kosovo justice and correctional authorities during the pandemic were systematically identified. The report contains observations, an analysis and a set of concrete and actionable recommendations, some of which have already been addressed by the Mission’s local counterparts. One example is the government’s “Rule of Law Strategy 2021–2026”, which was approved in August. It is based on the “Functional Review of the Rule of Law” process that was launched in 2016 with the aim of providing a thorough analysis of problems in the field of rule of law in Kosovo and proposing ways to address them. The Mission supported this process by participating in the various working groups established to address specific aspects and by submitting its views and recommendations to the Ministry of Justice. The findings and recommendations set

out by the Mission in its “Special Report on the Impact of COVID-19 on the Rule of Law in Kosovo” were taken on board.

Starting in 2020, the Mission assisted the Kosovo Police War Crimes Investigation Unit in the successful establishment of an electronic war crimes database. The database is not only a significant tool for administering complex criminal cases, it also enables qualitative case analysis. The Mission further supported the introduction of the database by providing several training workshops to Investigation Unit staff. The establishment of the database was assessed positively by other international actors in Kosovo, resulting in further support for the Unit. In June, the Mission conducted an assessment of the introduction of the database, in close cooperation with the Investigative Unit, and determined that the process had made good progress. The database was being used and updated regularly and already contained more than 400 war crime cases. In addition, and likewise on a positive note, the Unit had launched police investigations in all missing persons cases and had started linking them to existing war crimes investigations.

Together with the Kosovo Police, the Mission initiated a project aimed at strengthening cooperation between environmental inspectors and the police, with a view to enhancing law enforcement in cases of environmental crimes. The project will be launched in autumn and be implemented jointly by the municipality of Gjakovë/Đakovica, local police officers and local non-governmental organizations operating in the field of environmental protection.

The Mission adapted its monitoring activities in the Kosovo Correctional Service facilities to the pandemic-related restrictions, while maintaining regular contact with the management of the Correctional Service and all 11 correctional facilities in order to assess the way the Service was handling the new challenges posed by COVID-19. Special attention was given to ensuring that pandemic-related restrictive measures in correctional facilities were in line with international and European guidelines on respect for human rights and the treatment of specific categories of inmates, such as vulnerable, juvenile, female, high-profile or radicalized prisoners. In-person visits to all facilities were resumed as soon as was feasible. The Mission shared its observations and recommendations on how to best deal with pandemic-related restrictions with the Correctional Service management and the directors of all facilities on a regular basis.

With the aim of enhancing awareness with regard to the need to increase the number of women working in the Correctional Service, including in management positions, the Mission supported the work of the Kosovo Correctional Service Women’s Association by providing online training courses and facilitating the Association’s contacts with relevant local and international actors and similar associations worldwide. In July, the Mission conducted a two-day workshop on further strengthening female staff in the Correctional Service. The workshop was part of a Mission-funded project providing training and empowerment to female Correctional Service staff on stress management, communication and problem-solving techniques in the workplace. It was the first in-person event conducted within the framework of Mission projects after a nine-month pandemic-related hiatus.

The Mission continued to support the Kosovo Correctional Service in addressing two major shortcomings identified last year. It organized training workshops for Correctional Service staff on dealing with prisoners with mental health problems and on the contingency plan for cases of suicide and self-harm, which had been designed by the Mission upon the management’s request. In July, the Mission forwarded to the management a report on the treatment of prisoners with mental health problems in Correctional Service facilities and in hospitals. The report was based on findings by Mission experts during visits made to various facilities,

exchanges with Correctional Service staff and observations made during the series of workshops on dealing with this group of prisoners. It contains recommendations for the Correctional Service, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Health to change their policies on dealing with this category of prisoners and to increase the placement capacity for these prisoners in Correctional Service facilities.

The Mission and UNMIK jointly donated equipment for a new bakery in the Female Correctional Centre in Lipjan/Lipljan, which was officially inaugurated at the end of July. The bakery is aimed at empowering female inmates by training them in the processes of producing bread and pastries and running a bakery, which would provide them with better employment opportunities upon their release from prison.

In support of the European Union Special Representative for the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue and other Western Balkan regional issues, Mission experts continued to facilitate the implementation of the IBM technical protocol reached within the framework of the European Union-facilitated Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue. With no formal communication in place between the two parties at the six Common Crossing Points, the Mission provided the only channel of communication, through its regular visits to the crossing points and contact with both sets of authorities. In July, the Minister of Internal Affairs approved the establishment of a unit for measures and procedures for the acceptance and use of Advanced Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Record (PNR) data within the National Centre for Border Management (NCBM) and the re-establishment of the IBM Tasking and Coordination Group (TCG), which had not been operational for several years. The establishment of the API/PNR Unit, as well as the need to revive the TCG had been advocated by the Mission for a long time, and the Mission participated in the working group preparing the instruction for the unit. These ministerial decisions are paramount for making the system operational and constitute an important step in bringing Kosovo in line with European Union guidelines for improving its border management.

In July, the Mission observed considerable improvements in adherence to the agreements reached under the European Union-facilitated Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue on maintaining and refurbishing the premises at the six common crossing points between Serbia and Kosovo. The Mission's advocacy with both parties on implementing the provisions of the IBM technical protocol as part of the dialogue had yielded only modest progress in that specific aspect in recent years. The coordinated introduction of eased traffic controls by both parties proved very successful in addressing the increased vehicle influx during the summer period, resulting in a dramatic decrease in waiting times on both sides in comparison with previous years.

The Mission provided support to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Public Administration and the Civil Registration Agency in implementing the technical agreements on freedom of movement, as agreed in the European Union-facilitated Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue. This remains a slow and cumbersome process, given the extent of the agreements and the difficulties and delays resulting from frequent government changes. The Mission assisted and advised the Ministry and the Agency and advised them on the continuation of existing administrative instructions and the extension of ministerial decisions aimed at facilitating the recognition of documents and ensuring tax exemption for vehicle registration for Kosovo Serbs. The recognition by Kosovo authorities of documents issued by the Serbian authorities (birth, marriage and death certificates and driving licences) and facilitating the registration of vehicles with Kosovo plates for owners of vehicles with former Yugoslav or similar plates are of paramount importance for ensuring real freedom of movement, primarily, but not exclusively, for the Kosovo Serb population. A decision on extending those decisions and on the validity of "KS" licence plates has been pending since September 2020 and remains a serious obstacle for ensuring full freedom of movement for Kosovo Serbs.

The Mission continued to provide assessments upon request to the team of the European Union Special Representative for the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue and other Western Balkan regional issues on the situation at the common crossing points between Kosovo and Serbia with regard to the use of relevant documents (passports, ID cards, driving licences, vehicle registration certificates and entry/exit documents).

The Mission continued to advise the President of the Basic Court of Mitrovica, the Head of the Court of Appeals Division in Mitrovica and other judicial authorities, in order to provide support in the implementation of the First Brussels Agreement and of the Justice Agreement, and in order to ensure full establishment of the rule of law mechanisms in the northern municipalities in Kosovo. Furthermore, the Mission closely followed developments at the Kosovo Judicial Council, the Kosovo Prosecutorial Council, the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals and the Ministry of Justice, which had an influence on the successful implementation of the aforementioned agreements. The Mission has repeatedly flagged shortcomings in their implementation, in close cooperation with the European Union Special Representatives in Kosovo and for the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue and other Western Balkan regional issues.

3. Operations

Operational functions are undertaken by the Mission's Operations Support Pillar, which maintains a limited residual capability as a second security responder and provides continued support to the Kosovo Police crowd and riot control capability through advice and joint training sessions. The three-tier security responder mechanism in Kosovo consists of the Kosovo Police as the first security responder, the Mission as the second responder and the Kosovo Force as the third.

The Mission provided support for the core activities of the Kosovo Institute of Forensic Medicine in its work on missing persons. The Mission's forensic experts continued to support the exhumations at the Kiževak quarry in Serbia, a site identified in 2020 with substantial support by the Mission. As a result of the excavations conducted in May 2021, the Institute exhumed the bodies of at least seven individuals, still awaiting DNA results for identification. In addition, during the reporting period, the Institute was able to confirm the identities of six missing persons found earlier at other sites and hand over their remains to the families.

The Mission continued its support to the Kosovo Police in the field of international police cooperation. Since Kosovo is not a member of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the Mission facilitates information exchange between the Kosovo Police International Law Enforcement Coordination Unit and the National Central Bureaus of INTERPOL under the umbrella of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo. The Mission also continued to facilitate information exchange between the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) and the Kosovo Police on serious crime investigations through its Swedish Europol liaison desk, as well as between the Kosovo Police and the Serbian authorities, in accordance with the relevant protocol between the Mission and the Serbian Ministry of the Interior.

The Mission continued to support the Kosovo Specialist Chambers and the Specialist Prosecutor's Office in line with relevant Kosovo legislation.

Annex II

Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecutor's Office

Judicial activity at the Specialist Chambers continued to increase during the reporting period, with two cases in the pretrial stage and two cases that were transmitted to trial panels. The President of the Specialist Chambers, the Pre-Trial Judge, the trial panels and the Court of Appeals panels issued 250 orders and decisions. During the reporting period, 12 hearings were held before the Pre-Trial Judge, and 25 before the trial panels. The hearings were attended by the parties, both in person and by videoconference.

With the arrest of Pjetër Shala on 16 March, there were eight detainees in the custody of the Specialist Chambers. Mr. Shala was arrested in Belgium by the Belgian authorities, pursuant to an arrest warrant and confirmed indictment issued by the Pre-Trial Judge of the Specialist Chambers. Mr. Shala was transferred to the Specialist Chambers detention facilities in The Hague on 15 April and made his initial appearance before the Pre-Trial Judge on 19 April.

On 5 May, the President of the Specialist Chambers assigned Trial Panel I, following notification by the Pre-Trial Judge that the complete case file in the proceedings against Salih Mustafa was ready for transmission. On 7 May, the Pre-Trial Judge transmitted the case to Trial Panel I and the Registrar of the Specialist Chambers assigned the first Victims' Counsel to represent a group of victims in that case. On 18 June, Trial Panel I decided that the trial proceedings in the case against Mr. Mustafa would commence on 15 September 2021. This was the first case before the Specialist Chambers to commence trial proceedings.

On 15 July, the President assigned Trial Panel II, following notification by the Pre-Trial Judge that the complete case file in the proceedings against Hysni Gucati and Nasim Haradinaj was ready for transmission. On 16 July, the Pre-Trial Judge transmitted the case to Trial Panel II. The Panel scheduled the first trial preparation conferences to take place on 1 and 2 September.

On 19 March, the judges of the Specialist Chambers gathered online for their sixth plenary meeting.

The budget of the Specialist Chambers and the Specialist Prosecutor's Office for the two-year period from 15 June 2021 to 14 June 2023 was approved by the Council of the European Union on 3 June.

During the second half of June, the Specialist Chambers announced the resumption of in-person family visits to detainees of the Specialist Chambers starting from 15 July 2021, in accordance with the advice of the Medical Officer and following the successful vaccination campaign carried out at the detention facilities. Visits will be phased, beginning with immediate family members and, later, expanding to other family members if the first phase goes well.

By the end of August, the Pre-Trial Judge had admitted 18 applicants as victims participating in two cases.

The publicly available list of Specialist Counsel eligible to practise before the Specialist Chambers includes 211 Counsel of whom 100 are qualified to represent victims. The application process remains open.

The Specialist Prosecutor's Office has continued to interview suspects, victims and witnesses and to collect and review other evidence during the reporting period. On 20 April, the Specialist Prosecutor provided an update to the Political and Security Committee of the Council of the European Union.

The Specialist Prosecutor's Office continues to require the engagement and support of the international community, international organizations and individual States in all its activities. This includes, in particular, the expeditious clearing of documents requested by the Specialist Prosecutor's Office for use in court and with respect to allowing former staff members of diplomatic missions or international organizations involved in Kosovo during the mandate period to give comprehensive witness statements and to testify at trial.

The Specialist Prosecutor's Office has sought to move to trial as expeditiously as possible and, to this end, has asked the Specialist Chambers to set trial dates as soon as feasible. The Specialist Prosecutor's Office has also been systematically fulfilling the disclosure obligations set out in the rules of procedure and evidence of the Specialist Chambers. The Specialist Prosecutor's Office has successfully opposed interim release, arguing in a series of filings that there was a very real risk that, if freed, the accused would seek to obstruct court proceedings and interfere with witnesses.

COVID-19 mitigation measures at the premises of the Specialist Chambers and the Specialist Prosecutor's Office remained in place throughout the reporting period. March 16 marked one year since the Specialist Chambers and the Specialist Prosecutor's Office moved to remote working arrangements, with only a limited number of staff members allowed on the premises for overall management purposes and to ensure adequate support for the continuation of operations. The Specialist Chambers and the Specialist Prosecutor's Office continue to work closely with the Dutch authorities to ensure adherence to all national public health measures and recommendations.

The Specialist Chambers actively continued its outreach activities throughout the reporting period. Videos on a number of topics such as victims' participation were broadcast 239 times on 12 television channels in Kosovo. In addition to engaging with students, legal practitioners and media representatives, the Specialist Chambers continued to conduct outreach activities with non-governmental organizations and civil society through online briefings. For example, on 19 May, the President and the Registrar virtually addressed a group of law school students in Kosovo, and, on 23 June, the Registrar and the Specialist Prosecutor addressed a group of civil society representatives. The President and the Registrar visited Kosovo from 6 to 9 September, during which they met, in person, a wide variety of members of the diplomatic community, government officials and civil society.

Annex III

Composition and strength of the police component of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo

(as at 15 September 2021)

<i>Country</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Total</i>
Austria	1	–	1
Bulgaria	1	–	1
Finland	–	1	1
Germany	–	1	1
Russian Federation	1	1	2
Slovenia	–	1	1
Turkey	–	1	1
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	–	1	1
Total	3	6	9

Composition and strength of the military liaison component of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo

(as at 15 September 2021)

<i>Country</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Total</i>
Czechia	–	2	2
Poland	–	1	1
Republic of Moldova	–	1	1
Romania	–	1	1
Turkey	–	1	1
Ukraine	1	1	2
Total	1	7	8

Map

