

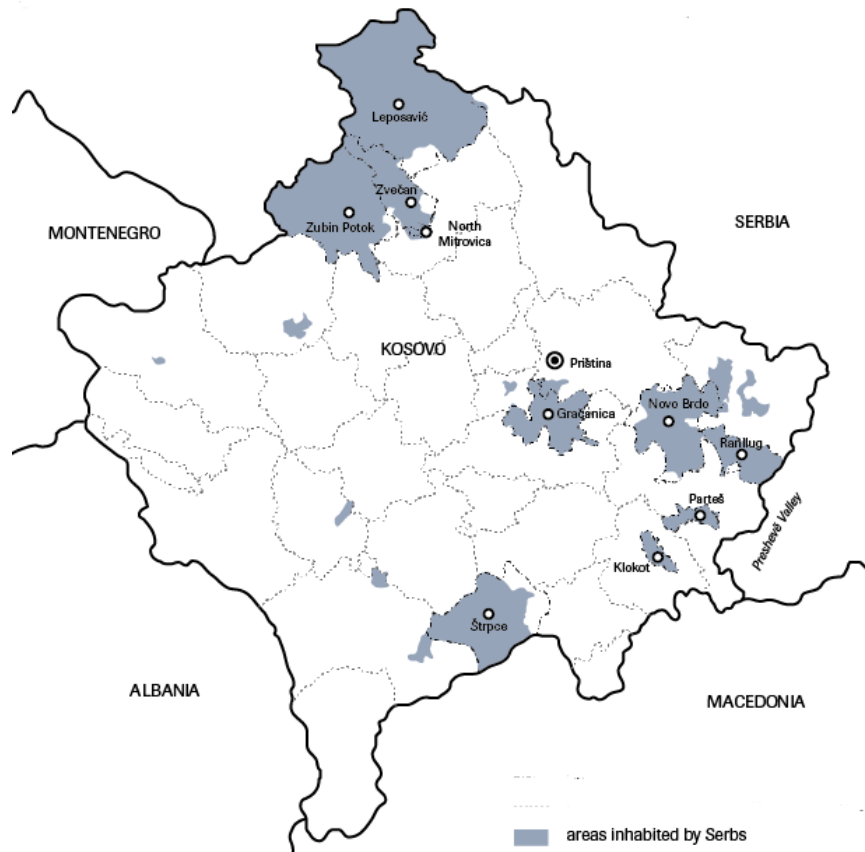
Saving Kosovo from Communal Slaughters or Wars

Avoiding Extension of Ukraine war to Kosovo

December 24, 2022: Aleksandar Vucic, Serbian President, threatened to send Serbian Police and Army into some areas of Kosovo and asked NATO for permission.

23 years after President Clinton forcefully intervened and ended the killings of Muslims in Bosnia, tension is rising in Kosovo, in south-eastern Europe. Kosovo is a small country of 1.8 million people with 92% Muslims of Albanian descent and 6% Serbs.

PRESENT ISSUE: Serbia and even the Serbs in Kosovo do not recognize Kosovo as an independent country. The government of Kosovo decided that all those, who live in ethnic Serb areas (marked in grey in the map below) should change the car number plates, issued by the Serbian government with the ones issued by the government of Kosovo. But about 50,000 ethnic Serbs in these areas do not agree to do it. It resulted in barricades and firing of shots by the Police in these areas.



EU tried to diffuse the situation by asking Kosovo to drop its plans to fine those, whose cars have name plates, issued by Serbia. It persuaded Serbia not to issue name plates, which have initials of the names of the towns in Kosovo.

However, a new issue has arisen after Kosovo arrested Srdan Trajkovic, a former Serb police officer, living in Serb-dominated areas. He was a member of the Army of the then Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) during the Kosovo war. For the last 9 years, he was working in the Kosovo Police. Kosovo wants to try him for war crimes, for a war, which ended in 1999. Kosovo has arrested one more police officer and another person from Serb-dominated areas of Kosovo. Serbs in northern Kosovo are maintaining roadblocks and they will not remove barricades till the three persons are released by the government of Kosovo.

Another issue is the postponement of the municipal elections in Serb-dominated areas and the municipal offices were taken over by the government of Kosovo.

Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic accuses Kosovar Prime Minister Albin Kurti of provocative acts and he says a dialogue to discuss a permanent solution of the separation of Kosovo is not possible till he stops persecution of Serbs, living in Kosovo.

RUSSIA: Russia has good relations with Serbia and has agreed to supply gas at concessional rates to Serbia. Serbia has refused to apply sanctions on Russia for the Ukraine war.

Vjosa Osmani, Kosovo's President, suspects that Russia wants to use the Kosovo-Serbia issues to widen the war in Ukraine and to bring the war to Serbia-Kosovo region.

BACKGROUND: When President Clinton came into office on January 20, 1993, the US policy was not to get involved in Central Europe. Europe was working with UN Peace Keeping Forces (UNPKF). UNPKF was being continuously humiliated and was unable to establish peace.

Yugoslavia had a bloody break-up in 1990s. Ethnic Albanians in Kosovo sought independence and Serbia started a bloody crackdown on them. Then started daily slaughter between groups of armed Muslim Bosnians and groups of armed Christian Serbs. In July 1995, occurred the massacre of about 7500 Muslims in Srebrenica by Serbs

and 20,000 Muslim civilians were forced to leave the area. This Ethnic Cleansing stirred the conscious of the world. It galvanized President Clinton's team to force a ceasefire for ending the war in Bosnia. NATO started a bombing campaign between March -June 1999 against Serbia. Serbia withdrew from Kosovo and NATO deployed a Kosovo Force (KFor) in the area. In 2008, Kosovo unilaterally declared independence. US, UK and 22 out of 27 EU countries recognize Kosovo.

Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic said that Serbia Would never recognize Kosovo as an independent country. Moreover, Russia and China have blocked Kosovo's entry to UN.

Serbia has applied to be a member of EU. Kosovo may apply for NATO membership soon.

WAR CRIMES and RECONCILIATION between Serbia and Kosovo: The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia decided that senior officers of the Serb army were responsible for the genocide in Srebrenica

In 1999, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan accepted that UN failed to do its duty for helping save the people of Srebrenica from the Serb campaign of mass murder.

During the last decade UNO and the Security Council have again failed to stop wars or killings in Syria and Ukraine. It is because USA is not the pre-eminent power, it was in 1995.

Fifty years back, millions had been killed during the Holocaust of Jews and the Great Ethnic Cleansing of 1947 in Pakistan & East Punjab**. But the world had been inured to violence of Holocaust and World War II. So, 1947 did not bother many public intellectuals of the west.*

In 2010 the Serbian National Assembly apologized for having failed to prevent the killings through a resolution, passed by a narrow majority.

Though the war ended in 1999, there has been no reconciliation among the communities.

**<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/estimated-number-of-jews-killed-in-the-final-solution>*

***The British had presided over Ethnic Cleansing of Hindus and Sikhs in Lahore, Karachi and vast swathes of rural areas in the new country of Pakistan. More than a million people died and millions had to leave their thousands-year old ancestral villages and cities in Pakistan and in the adjoining areas in East Punjab, to save themselves. But it had occurred in a far-off corner of the world.*