

An opportunity to adapt UNMIK to serve current conditions in Kosovo: UK at the UN Security Council

Let me begin by congratulating Special Representative Ziadeh on her appointment, and thank her for her briefing. We welcome the opportunity new leadership provides for an improved relationship with the Kosovo government, and a fresh look at how UNMIK can adapt to serve the current conditions in Kosovo.

We encourage continued constructive engagement between the new SRSB, UNMIK and the Kosovo government. UNMIK has played a vital role in the incredible progress Kosovo has made since resolution 1244 was adopted in 1999. But conditions on the ground are unrecognisable from 1999, and a review of UNMIK's role and responsibilities is needed.

Kosovo's democracy and institutions continue to show their maturity. In this context, we must condemn last weekend's violent attacks against the Kosovo Police, who represent and protect all of Kosovo's citizens.

We congratulate the current government of Kosovo on its first year in office. In particular, we welcome:

the renewed commitment to prioritising the rule of law and fighting corruption, including through legal reforms and anti-corruption initiatives;

the government's continuing commitment to addressing the legacies of the 1998/99 conflict, including through commissions for missing persons and victims of sexual violence; and

Kosovo's ongoing international contribution, through its support to the evacuation from Kabul, and the humanitarian response to Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine.

We note, however, perceptions in some quarters that the Kosovo Serb community's concerns and views sometimes go unheard. The recent decision on voting in Kosovo, in Serbia's elections, is an example. We encourage the government to refocus its efforts to meet its Constitutional duty to integrate minority communities and address their concerns.

We are concerned by the increase of dangerous rhetoric in Kosovo and the region leading to security incidents. The deployment of fighter jets to the Kosovan border in September is an example of this.

Reports of the United Kingdom supplying anti-tank missiles, referred to by the Russian Federation, are baseless. But to be clear, the UK supports Kosovo's right to develop its own armed forces.

Finally, I would like to emphasise the UK's renewed commitment to peace and

security in the region, including through our Prime Minister's appointment of a Special Envoy to the Western Balkans, Sir Stuart Peach.

We fully support the EU-facilitated Dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo under EU Special Representative Miroslav Lajcak. Now is the moment for both parties to engage in the Dialogue in good faith, honour their Dialogue commitments, be open to compromise and creativity, and avoid actions or rhetoric that could reduce prospects for a comprehensive and sustainable normalisation agreement that benefits the people of both countries.