

Speech: Sustainable normalisation through dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia

Statement by Ambassador Karen Pierce, UK Permanent Representative to the UN, at the Security Council Briefing on Kosovo

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Thank you Mr President. Thank you to the Under-Secretary-General for his briefing.

I've listened very carefully to what President Vučić and President Taçi said today.

Mr President, we believe that the development of its own armed forces is within Kosovo's sovereignty as a self-governing independent state in close consultation with KFOR and we urge Kosovo to do this – and I hereby join the French representative – in close consultation with NATO and the wider international community. And I note from the Kosovo announcement that this development is to take place over the course of ten years.

Since Resolution 1244 was passed in 1999, Kosovo has become an independent, self-governing state recognized by over 100 members of the United Nations and its decision to extend the mandate of the Kosovo Security Force should be viewed in this context. The United Kingdom's interpretation of Resolution 1244 Mr President is that it does not – I repeat, not – contain anything that precludes the future transition of the mandate of the KSF. In fact Mr President, I re-read it at lunchtime. I then went on to read the document that followed it, the constitutional framework and the UN Ahtisaari Plan, the so-called "comprehensive settlement." I can assure the Council that nothing in any of those three documents precludes the transformation of the KSF. The constitutional framework set up a Kosovo Protection Force. The Constitution builds on that proposal and this recent decision builds on the Constitution so I just wanted to set that out Mr President.

That said, we continue to urge Kosovo to act responsibly, to act transparently and in consultation with NATO allies and to uphold Kosovo's existing commitments to arrangements with KFOR and what President Taçi said

about his assurances today in that respect are welcome, but of course Mr President, we look for them to be put into action.

I've noted the claim that the transition of the KSF is a threat to the Kosovo-Serb community. This claim is not borne out by Kosovo's genuine efforts to make the KSF a multi-ethnic force as NATO allies have requested and the United Kingdom regrets that these multi-ethnic efforts have been undermined by external pressure. We encouraged the Kosovo Government to continue its outreach to the Kosovo-Serb community to allay any anxieties. And it's a long time Mr President since the Council visited Kosovo, but I was on one of the earlier trips and we went into the Kosovo Serb community in the north where we heard from many people, but not all of them, supported the account given by President Vučić and the Russian Ambassador today.

We don't share Belgrade's perception that the expansion in size and mandate over the next decade risk jeopardizing regional stability either and we look to Belgrade to respond in a measured way, including in their public statements.

In this light Mr President, the United Kingdom considers assertions made by senior politicians and officials about the use of force by Serbia to be unhelpful and rejects the idea that such use of force might even be floated. I think it is irresponsible that they should have been repeated by one member of the Council today. I do agree with that member that there is a risk of a return to turmoil, but it is not Mr President caused by this decision. It is caused by those from outside Kosovo who would seek to exploit it for their own ends.

I do however take encouragement from listening to the Russian support today for NATO, which I think may be a first in this Chamber.

Mr President, as other speakers have noted, the reason that we are here, the fundamental reason these problems persist is because of the lack of normalisation. At every step, settlements, progress have been blocked. The UN has tried, the EU, the US and Russia have tried, and unfortunately Mr President, at every stage of trying to settle this issue, there has been a blockage and I am sorry to say that it has come from Belgrade. But the only way is normalisation and we look to both Kosovo and Serbia to make progress in that way.

We note with optimism the resolution passed by the Assembly of Kosovo on 15 December to establish a cross-party negotiating team and I join my French and other colleagues in urging both sides to return to negotiations through the EU-facilitated dialogue. Progress on the dialogue is vital for stability, security and prosperity in the two countries in the region. Final agreement itself needs also to contribute towards local, regional and global stability. And the two sides need to keep in mind that any proposals they put forward through the negotiations need to enhance the safety and security of all – I repeat, all – their citizens.

Mr President I don't find it surprising that there was an EU-8 statement today. Obviously, I took part in it but it's not surprising because it is our

region. We have cared and still care very deeply about what happens in the western Balkans and EU countries and the EU itself have put a lot of effort into helping stability and security there. But it is their future. It is the future of Kosovo and Serbia. I urge them, as other speakers have done today, I urge them to make all the steps necessary to normalise their relations through the EU-facilitated dialogue and I call on all their leaders who have been elected to represent their people's interests. I call on all their leaders to enable this to happen. Both countries must now focus on a sustainable normalisation agreement through the dialogue which enhances security, enjoys popular domestic support and benefits both countries. And we stand ready Mr President, as we have always done, to support such an agreement. Thank you.

Speech: Looking to the new year for progress to peace in Afghanistan

Statement by Ambassador Karen Pierce, UK Permanent Representative to the UN, at the Security Council Debate on Afghanistan

Speech: Looking to the new year for progress to peace in Afghanistan

Thank you to the SRSG for his latest report and also to Mr Fedotov and to Ambassador Umarov for their briefings today. And thank you also, may I join other colleagues in thanking Ms Ghizaal Haress for her insights into the elections process and it's very helpful as others have said to have you here as we discuss this important issue.

Mr President I'd like to start by congratulating every Afghan who participated in October's Parliamentary elections in the face of violence and intimidation. I think they show what the Afghan Representative said but also say what the Dutch Representative said; there is a new generation of Afghans knocking on the door of a new Afghanistan. Peace needs to be durable and it needs to increase political, social and economic opportunities for every Afghan as the Afghan Ambassador makes clear. And I think that's a message that the Taliban need to hear loud and clear from all members of this Council because they live in an Afghanistan of the past and they live in an Afghanistan that no one wants to see return, and I think the Council can really help make that message understood and make it loud and clear.

And we call to that end Mr President, we do call on the Taliban to recognise that in the election the wishes of Afghans from across the country to have a say in their country's future and their strong desire for a peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan have come through loud and clearly. In contrast we are forced once again to condemn the intimidation and condemn the attacks on civilians.

A number of speakers Mr President have looked forward to next year's presidential elections. It's important that the Afghan people get the transparent and credible presidential elections that they deserve next year. And there are I think, as today's debate and the report have shown, there are a number of technical and operational challenges that affect the election and which need to be ironed out, lessons learned and the necessary reforms implemented so that these issues are resolved before the next presidential elections. And I wanted in this context to welcome UNAMA's support for these efforts and their work to capture lessons learned. And as part of that process, can I urge the Mission to consider what more UNAMA could do and what additional resources UNAMA needs to strengthen support ahead of 2019 elections? And we would welcome Mr President, could I, through you, ask for an update from the UN on this issue in the new year?

Turning to peace, recent developments including the efforts of the new US Special Representative for Afghan Reconciliation Ambassador Khalilzad who I used to know in this Chamber. His appointment, the creation of a High Advisory Board for Peace and the announcement of an official Afghanistan negotiation team offer a real opportunity to move the Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process forward. And to give it the best chance of success, it's vital that all other peace efforts underpin Afghan efforts in a way that reinforces the indigenous progress. And can I say that only any parallel process will simply risk undermining progress and empowering the Taliban. And I think the recent GA resolution on Afghanistan made clear that Member States in the UN want the efforts to be driven by Afghanistan and want all other efforts to reinforce the Afghan government's efforts in this respect. And it's critical that the international community gives that its full support. It's also critical that the countries in the region give it their full support.

I wanted to take a moment to commend the efforts of President Ghani and his government so far and to encourage them, as other speakers have said Mr President, to focus on inclusivity, particularly of women and youth and ensuring engagement at community levels in electoral and peace processes. And I think what Ms Haress said about women's rights and human rights is absolutely vital in this connection. It's important that we think about how we might approach supporting Afghanistan's reform and development after any peace settlement even if it seems today some time away. And today's briefing by Ambassador Umarov on the 1988 Sanctions Committee reminds us of the important role sanctions play in the pursuit of peace. But for a sanctions regime to be credible and effective it's essential that relevant procedures are followed at all times and in particular any requests for travel ban exemptions need to be submitted in a timely manner.

Others have mentioned the humanitarian situation. We join them in worrying

very much about the dire situation and the food insecurity issue should only add impetus to the peace process. We call on all partners to do more, not just to respond to the current crises – particularly the ongoing drought – but to help strengthen the resilience of Afghanistan’s most vulnerable people in the long term.

Mr President, I think we all know 2019 will be a critical year for Afghanistan and has a significant opportunity for progress on her path to peace and democracy. The United Kingdom is fully committed to supporting the Special Representative UN Mission in Afghanistan and the Afghan government to continue their important work to help the Afghan people, to help the government and to help the peace process.

Thank you.

[Press release: UK welcomes resolution of the political situation in Sri Lanka](#)



Following the swearing in of Ranil Wickremesinghe as Prime Minister by President Sirisena on 16 December,

Minister for Asia and the Pacific Mark Field said:

I welcome progress made towards the peaceful resolution of the political situation in Sri Lanka. The outcome is a welcome indication of the resilience of Sri Lanka’s judicial and democratic institutions, and of effective checks and balances between state powers. The UK will continue to stand by Sri Lanka as a close partner and friend, supporting Sri Lanka as it works to deliver sustainable and accountable reform to reinvigorate the economy, improve governance, and safeguard human rights across the country.

UK Ministers have made a number of statements since the current outbreak of political tension in Sri Lanka on 26 October, calling on all parties to uphold the constitution and due legal and political process.

The UK is committed to supporting the Sri Lankan Government's efforts to improve the human rights situation in the country. The UK is providing Sri Lanka with £8.3 million of Conflict, Stability and Security Fund funding over three years, to include support for police reform and training, reconciliation and peace building, resettlement and demining in the north of the country.

Further information

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