

The normalisation of relations between Kosovo and Serbia remains vital

Thank you Mr President. We thank the Special Representative for her briefing. And we welcome the representatives of Kosovo and Serbia to the Security Council.

The United Kingdom welcomes the continued progress made by the Government of Kosovo on a number of important issues, this includes:

Its continued commitment to reform, notably important work on the rule of law, and tackling organised crime and corruption.

It includes Kosovo's efforts to improve support to victims of Sexual and Gender based violence, and the integration of the Istanbul Convention into its Constitution.

And it includes its work on transitional justice, not least for survivors of conflict related sexual violence, as well as the work of the Government Commission for Missing Persons.

Recent reports from both the EU and the OSCE also show good progress on countering terrorism, public administration reform, the rule of law, the fight against corruption and organised crime, and the protection of human and fundamental rights.

We welcome the government's increased engagement with minority communities. Dialogue between communities is vital for the stability of Kosovo as a multi-ethnic state, and we encourage the Kosovan government to continue such engagement.

In particular we encourage greater outreach to Kosovo Serb political leaders and representatives to resolve outstanding issues.

President, the normalisation of relations between Kosovo and Serbia remains vital. We reiterate our full support for the EU-facilitated Dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo.

Now is the moment for both parties to engage in the Dialogue in good faith, honour their Dialogue commitments, and avoid actions or rhetoric that could reduce prospects for reaching a comprehensive and sustainable normalisation agreement, benefiting the people of both countries.

The progress referred to in the Secretary-General's report, for example on the adoption of an energy agreement roadmap, is encouraging. But we were concerned to witness the rise in tensions on 31 July over the implementation of government decisions on car number plates and ID cards. Such decisions should not be used as an excuse for blockades or violence.

We therefore welcome the resolution of the disagreement over ID cards,

facilitated through the determined efforts of the EU Special Representative and international partners. This is a clear example of what can be achieved when both parties approach the process with pragmatism.

Finally, President, UNMIK has played a vital role in the incredible progress Kosovo has made since resolution 1244 was adopted in 1999. Conditions on the ground are of course unrecognisable from 1999, and it would be the right time now to undertake a thorough review of UNMIK's shape and role, and of the Council's process that we have around it.

In the meantime the UK would like to reiterate its gratitude to the Special Representative and the mission for all of their work, and for the professional implementation of their mandate.

Thank you.