



Genocide Watch
Alliance Against Genocide

Kosovo Country Report
May 2025
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Kosovo was once an [autonomous province](#) of Serbia within the former Yugoslavia. Kosovo has two main ethnic groups: Kosovar Albanians and Serbs. Kosovars have been Muslims since the Ottoman era. They [held most governmental positions and pushed for greater autonomy](#) within Serbia. Serbs [faced discrimination and sought closer ties with Serbia](#). When [Slobodan Milošević](#) became Serbian president in 1980, he [announced](#) he intended to [establish a greater Serbian nation](#). Milošević [revoked Kosovo's autonomous status](#) and replaced Kosovar-Albanians with Serbs in government.

Kosovar Albanians protested peacefully, but futilely. They organized an armed resistance, the [Kosovo Liberation Army \(KLA\)](#), in 1993. [From 1995 to 1999](#), the KLA fought the Serbian Army for independence. As they had earlier done in Bosnia and Croatia, Serbian Army and militias used genocidal tactics against Kosovar Albanians, including [murder](#), [abduction](#), [forced displacement](#), and [mass rape](#). The KLA [employed similar tactics](#) against Serbs, Roma, and Ashkali "Egyptian" Muslims. A few KLA leaders promoted a '[greater Albania](#)' ideology.

Serb militias massacred over 10,000 Kosovar Albanians. 45 were killed in the [Račak massacre](#). Serb militias forced over [14,000](#) Kosovar-Albanians to flee from their homes. After US War Crimes Ambassador David Scheffer announced on April 9, 1999 that there were "[indicators of genocide](#)" in Kosovo, the US and NATO intervened with [a bombing campaign](#) on Belgrade. Serbian forces surrendered and quickly withdrew. The civil war cost [13,535](#) killed or disappeared, [20,000](#) rape victims, [600,000](#) refugees, and [400,000](#) internally displaced.

NATO claimed legal justification for its 1999 intervention under [U.N. Charter ch. 8 art. 52, 53, & 54](#) which provides for enforcement action authorized by the Security Council by "regional arrangements or agencies" "for the maintenance of international peace and security." NATO established a peacekeeping force, [KFOR](#), which operates to this day. The U.N. established [an interim government](#) that lasted nine years.

Kosovo [declared independence](#) on February 17, 2008. [119 countries currently recognize Kosovo](#) as a sovereign independent nation. [Serbia still does not recognize Kosovo's independence](#).

Kosovo and Serbia agreed in [2013](#) and [2015](#) to normalize relations. The pacts were never implemented. They agreed to establish an [Association of Serb Municipalities](#) in Serb-majority Northern Kosovo, but it has never functioned. [Each side routinely blames the other for non-action](#). Following the Kosovo Judicial Council's suspension of a Serb judge in March 2022, Serbian President [Aleksandar Vučić](#) declared, "[The Brussels Agreement no longer exists](#)." In February 2023, Kosovo and Serbia agreed to another [framework](#) for normalizing relations, but it has also not been implemented.

Ethnic conflicts erupted in the 2020's in Leposavić, Zvečan, Zubin Potok, and North Mitroviça. [On April 23, 2023](#), Kosovar Albanians swept municipal elections that Serbs boycotted. [A month later](#), Kosovo Police forcibly took over municipal buildings in Serb areas to install Kosovar Albanian mayors. These actions galvanized Serb protests, resulting in violent clashes with KFOR [on May 29, 2023](#), leading to 82 injuries. The US blamed the violence on Kosovo authorities. [In April 2024](#), recall elections were held to depose Kosovar mayors in Serb municipalities, but only 253 people voted out of 46,000 registered, so the electoral commission held the elections to be [invalid](#).

[In September 2023](#), Serb militants entered Banjska, Zvečan, ambushing Kosovo police and killing four. In September 2024, Kosovo Prime Minister Albin Kurti said that Serbia "orchestrated and financed" the attack and "[should be held accountable](#)." Vučić retorted that [the militants' actions were of Kurti's doing](#). Such divisive rhetoric characterizes Vučić's disdain for Kurti, with whom Vučić says he has "[no relationship at all](#)."

[In November 2024](#), Kosovo Police raided northern Serb municipalities following an explosion that damaged the Ibar-Lepenc canal. Kurti accused Serbia of orchestrating a "criminal and terrorist attack," [a claim strongly denied by Vučić](#). No conclusive evidence of Serbian involvement has been found.

Genocide Watch considers **Kosovo** to be at **Stage 3: Discrimination** and **Stage 6: Polarization**.

Genocide Watch recommends:

- Serbia must officially recognize Kosovo as an independent sovereign nation.
- Kosovo should implement formation of the Association of Serb Municipalities in Northern Kosovo.
- Kosovo should reopen the Mitroviça bridge over the Ibar River after reconciling with northern Serbs.
- The EU should condition Kosovo's membership on strengthening Kosovo laws to protect minorities.
- Kosovo and Serbia should step up negotiations to normalize diplomatic and economic relations.