



## **THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA**

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73<sup>rd</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly  
Fifth Committee  
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Agenda item 159  
Financing of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo

*Check against delivery*

### **S T A T E M E N T**

by

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FIRST SECRETARY  
PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

New York, 6 May 2019

Madam Chair,

I would like to thank Mr. Pedro Guazo, Officer in Charge, Office of the Programme Planning, Finance and Budget for introducing the reports of the Secretary-General on the budget performance of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) for the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018 and the proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 under agenda item 159. I would also like to thank the Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), Mr. Cihan Terzi, for presenting this body's related report.

Serbia has continually supported the principles of international law and called for a consistent respect of the legally-binding United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999) adopted under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. The presence and activities of UNMIK in Kosovo and Metohija is of paramount importance for Serbia: the United Nations framework, based on this Resolution, guarantees the status neutrality of international presence in the Province.

Some of the main objectives of the Mission, i.e. of the Resolution, the defining document of the mandate of the Mission that, still unchanged, continues to be in force, have not been achieved yet; the political and security situation in the Province, riddled with tensions and frequent incidents, continues to fluctuate; and the Serbs and other non-Albanians continue to trust the Mission nonetheless. These all-important facts make it incumbent upon us to ensure that the Mission remains committed to addressing all the questions related to a consistent implementation of the Resolution, undiminished in scope and unchanged in mandate.

The Mission has failed to carry out one of its main tasks: return home of expelled Serbs and other non-Albanians in Kosovo and Metohija. Let me recall that over 200 000 internally displaced persons continue to live in central Serbia 20 years after the arrival of international presences. The data presented in the most recent Report of the Secretary-General on UNMIK are particularly worrisome and self-defeating: only 32 internally displaced Serbs returned voluntarily to Kosovo and Metohija in the reporting period. Also, ethnically motivated attacks and incidents involving Serbs and their property continue unabated on a daily basis. A large number of them are directed at internally displaced persons and are aimed at intimidating them and sending a message that their return, even though symbolic, is not welcome.

Madam Chair,

UNMIK's presence in Kosovo and Metohija is necessary also for the reasons of the implementation of the agreements reached in the Brussels dialogue between Belgrade and Priština facilitated by the European Union; at this point in time the implementation is being stalled due to the absence of inter-ethnic trust. To achieve reconciliation and regional stabilization, Serbia has made, all along, courageous efforts to render a constructive contribution to the quest for mutually acceptable solutions to many existential questions, including achievement of genuine compromise that would guarantee stability, enable economic development and, by the same token, ensure better life to all inhabitants of Kosovo and Metohija.

Priština, however, has been seriously opposing and drastically violating the agreements achieved thus far. Evidently, the steps it continues to take consistently are intended to put an end to the dialogue. Following a failure to fulfill its obligations, including, among others, to establish the Community of Serbian Municipalities, it went on to impose senseless 100-per cent tariffs on

goods originating from central Serbia and adopt a Law on transforming the 'Kosovo Security Force' into the so-called armed forces.

Serbia firmly believes that the negotiations are the only way to resolve all outstanding issues and refrained, even after the imposition of tariffs, from reciprocal measures or any other act that would aggravate the situation. It continues to invest efforts in finding sustainable compromise solutions to the question of Kosovo and Metohija through dialogue. For these reasons, and in view of the importance and the specific nature of UNMIK and the complexity of the circumstances, political and others, in which the Mission carries out its mandate, it will continue to insist, if not on the increase, then on the preservation of its current budget. For, it should always be borne in mind that the worsening of the situation on the ground may multiply the costs, wherefore provision of adequate personnel and financial resources to UNMIK is of paramount importance. Short-handed, it will not be able to carry out its mandate and make an efficient and effective contribution to the stabilization of the situation in Kosovo and Metohija. The Secretary-General and ACABQ Reports provide a solid basis for the upcoming negotiations in the Fifth Committee on this issue. My country is ready to consider them extensively in order to ensure that sufficient funds are provided for an unencumbered and successful operation of the Mission in the coming period.

Madam Chair,

It is with regret that we note that many posts within UNMIK remain vacant. It is pointed out in the ACABQ Report that 24 of them (as many as 18 international) have not been filled, 2 for more than 2 years. These numbers are extremely high for a Mission numbering only 355 civilian personnel. This situation runs contrary to the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly on missions' budgets and the Secretariat should take necessary steps to fill all these posts as soon as possible.

In this context, let me point out that Serbia is not in agreement with the contention of the ACABQ that all posts vacant for more than 2 years should be re-evaluated in order to establish if they are in fact needed. These posts should be filled without delay. Re-evaluation should instead be given to why these posts, approved by the budget, have remained vacant for such a long period of time and made sure that the ongoing vacancy rate, brought about by the postponement by the Secretariat to embark upon recruitment process, be not reflected as a parameter in the assessment of the next budget.

Serbia welcomes the Secretary-General's appropriation of relevant funds this year for programmatic activities and confidence-building projects; they proved useful and meaningful in ensuring the Mission's proactive contribution to the improvement of the situation in certain areas covered by its mandate. We trust and believe that the full amount of the proposed funds will be approved this year, primarily to contribute to the building of confidence among communities and the promotion of human rights and the rule of law.

I thank you, Madam Chair.