

## **Kosovo Declaration of Independence**

*Convened* in an extraordinary meeting on February 17, 2008, in Pristina, the capital of Kosovo,

*Answering* the call of the people to build a society that honours human dignity and affirms the pride and purpose of its citizens,

*Committed* to confront the painful legacy of the recent past in a spirit of reconciliation and forgiveness,

*Dedicated* to protecting, promoting and honoring the diversity of our people,

*Reaffirming* our wish to become fully integrated into the Euro-Atlantic family of democracies,

*Observing* that Kosovo is a special case arising from Yugoslavia's non-consensual breakup and is not a precedent for any other situation,

*Recalling* the years of strife and violence in Kosovo, that disturbed the conscience of all civilised people,

*Grateful* that in 1999 the world intervened, thereby removing Belgrade's governance over Kosovo and placing Kosovo under United Nations interim administration,

*Proud* that Kosovo has since developed functional, multi-ethnic institutions of democracy that express freely the will of our citizens,

*Recalling* the years of internationally-sponsored negotiations between Belgrade and Pristina over the question of our future political status,

*Regretting* that no mutually-acceptable status outcome was possible, in spite of the good-faith engagement of our leaders,

*Confirming* that the recommendations of UN Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari provide Kosovo with a comprehensive framework for its future development and are in line with the highest European standards of human rights and good governance,

*Determined* to see our status resolved in order to give our people clarity about their future, move beyond the conflicts of the past and realise the full democratic potential of our society,

*Honouring* all the men and women who made great sacrifices to build a better future for Kosovo,

1. We, the democratically-elected leaders of our people, hereby declare Kosovo to be an independent and sovereign state. This declaration reflects the will of our people and it is in full accordance with the recommendations of UN Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari and his Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement.
2. We declare Kosovo to be a democratic, secular and multi-ethnic republic, guided by the principles of non-discrimination and equal protection under the law. We shall protect and promote the rights of all communities in Kosovo and create the conditions necessary for their effective participation in political and decision-making processes.
3. We accept fully the obligations for Kosovo contained in the Ahtisaari Plan, and welcome the framework it proposes to guide Kosovo in the years ahead. We shall implement in full those obligations including through priority adoption of the legislation included in its Annex XII, particularly those that protect and promote the rights of communities and their members.
4. We shall adopt as soon as possible a Constitution that enshrines our commitment to respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all our citizens, particularly as defined by the European Convention on Human Rights. The Constitution shall incorporate all relevant principles of the Ahtisaari Plan and be adopted through a democratic and deliberative process.
5. We welcome the international community's continued support of our democratic development through international presences established in Kosovo on the basis of UN Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). We invite and welcome an international civilian presence to supervise our implementation of the Ahtisaari Plan, and a European Union-led rule of law mission. We also invite and welcome the North Atlantic Treaty

Organization to retain the leadership role of the international military presence in Kosovo and to implement responsibilities assigned to it under UN Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) and the Ahtisaari Plan, until such time as Kosovo institutions are capable of assuming these responsibilities. We shall cooperate fully with these presences to ensure Kosovo's future peace, prosperity and stability.

6. For reasons of culture, geography and history, we believe our future lies with the European family. We therefore declare our intention to take all steps necessary to facilitate full membership in the European Union as soon as feasible and implement the reforms required for European and Euro-Atlantic integration.
7. We express our deep gratitude to the United Nations for the work it has done to help us recover and rebuild from war and build institutions of democracy. We are committed to working constructively with the United Nations as it continues its work in the period ahead.
8. With independence comes the duty of responsible membership in the international community. We accept fully this duty and shall abide by the principles of the United Nations Charter, the Helsinki Final Act, other acts of the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the international legal obligations and principles of international comity that mark the relations among states. Kosovo shall have its international borders as set forth in Annex VIII of the Ahtisaari Plan, and shall fully respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all our neighbors. Kosovo shall also refrain from the threat or use of force in any manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations.
9. We hereby undertake the international obligations of Kosovo, including those concluded on our behalf by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and treaty and other obligations of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to which we are bound as a former constituent part, including the Vienna Conventions on diplomatic and consular relations. We shall cooperate fully with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. We intend to seek membership in international organisations, in which Kosovo shall seek to contribute to the pursuit of international peace and stability.

10. Kosovo declares its commitment to peace and stability in our region of southeast Europe. Our independence brings to an end the process of Yugoslavia's violent dissolution. While this process has been a painful one, we shall work tirelessly to contribute to a reconciliation that would allow southeast Europe to move beyond the conflicts of our past and forge new links of regional cooperation. We shall therefore work together with our neighbours to advance a common European future.
11. We express, in particular, our desire to establish good relations with all our neighbours, including the Republic of Serbia with whom we have deep historical, commercial and social ties that we seek to develop further in the near future. We shall continue our efforts to contribute to relations of friendship and cooperation with the Republic of Serbia, while promoting reconciliation among our people.
12. We hereby affirm, clearly, specifically, and irrevocably, that Kosovo shall be legally bound to comply with the provisions contained in this Declaration, including, especially, the obligations for it under the Ahtisaari Plan. In all of these matters, we shall act consistent with principles of international law and resolutions of the Security Council of the United Nations, including resolution 1244 (1999). We declare publicly that all states are entitled to rely upon this declaration, and appeal to them to extend to us their support and friendship.