

Kosovo's Legitimacy Receives Massive Blow After Another Withdrawal of Recognition

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In unexpected news today, the small West African country of Sierra Leone has withdrawn recognition of the so-called independence of Kosovo. This now means that of the 193 UN member states, only 92 countries recognize the self-proclaimed independence of Kosovo, putting the illegitimate country into a minority of recognition. The head of Serbian diplomacy also explained that 96 countries do not recognize Kosovo, while five countries are in a fluid stance, i.e. mostly recognize Kosovo, but no longer have much support for Kosovo.

The news was revealed by Serbian Foreign Minister Ivica Dačić, who is on an official visit today to the African country that is located on the Atlantic Coast. Sierra Leone is now the 18th state to withdraw recognition of Kosovo as an independent state since 2017.

"It is with great pleasure that I can show a note from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stating that Sierra Leone is withdrawing recognition of Kosovo as an independent state and will respect the results of the dialogue, with the mediation of the EU and the UN," Dačić said. "This means Kosovo no longer has a majority in the UN."

He continued to explain that this "recognition" of Kosovo's independence was of particular importance for Belgrade. This deals a powerful blow to Kosovo, not so much that Sierra Leone holds great diplomatic influence, but rather for the first that the African country was among one of the first countries to recognize Kosovo's independence in 2008. Dačić said he had successful talks with Sierra Leonean President Julius Maada Bio in the country's capital of Freetown and that it was agreed that bilateral relations, which had been stalled for years, will be improved. Bio is expected to visit Serbia in June.

Prior to Sierra Leone, Kosovo independence recognition was withdrawn by Suriname, Togo, Ghana, Nauru, the Comoros, São Tomé and Príncipe, Guinea-Bissau, Burundi, Liberia, Lesotho, Grenada, Madagascar, the Commonwealth of Dominica, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Palau and Central African Republic. Only last night Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić told reporters that after meeting with U.S. National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien, he expected new withdrawals of recognition of the self-proclaimed Kosovo in the near future.

Vučić and President of Kosovo Hashim Thaçi met on Monday at the White House. According to a statement by Vučić, two presidents had "the usual talks" that resolved and progressed nothing. However, with Freetown withdrawing their recognition of Kosovo, it appears that Vučić knew this was going to occur and is alluding that there are more states ready to withdraw their recognitions.

The [Greater Albanian project](#) is accelerating as Kosovo's statehood is in question. Kosovo-born Albanian Minister-in-office for Europe and Foreign Affairs Gent Cakaj and the Foreign Minister of Kosovo Glauk Konjufca in a meeting last month discussed the establishment of common economic space for free movement of people, goods and capital between Albania and Kosovo, as well as sharing embassies around the world. Although this is yet to occur, it is likely that because Kosovo now has minority recognition according to Dačić, Albania and Kosovo are likely to speed up this process of integration. With a minority recognition of Kosovo's independence and Vučić alluding that there will be more recognition withdrawals, the legitimacy of Kosovo's independence from Serbia is becoming increasingly tedious and will legitimize the reincorporation of the breakaway province, which is considered Serbia's heartland.

The U.S. historically has been indifferent to a Greater Albania project that incorporates further areas of Serbia, as well as Greece, Montenegro and North Macedonia. The U.S. has had no need to support such a project as Greece, Montenegro and North Macedonia are subservient states to Washington. Serbia on the other hand serves as a bulwark to U.S. hegemony in the Balkans and is the most Russian-friendly state in the region, meaning Washington fully backs Kosovo's illegal declaration of independence. Kosovo's return under Serbian sovereignty challenges U.S. control of the Balkans, suggesting that Washington may not oppose the incorporation of Kosovo into the Albanian state.

For this reason, Serbia should not give up its current policy of pushing states to withdraw their recognition of Kosovo's independence and Belgrade must maintain that Kosovo is an integral and historical part of their country. Serbia must continue its diplomatic campaigning to have more states withdraw their recognition of an independent Kosovo. With this achieved, Belgrade will have secured legitimacy to pursue all options necessary, including military, to prevent Kosovo from ever incorporating itself into Albania instead of Serbia.

Today marks a historic day when one of the first states to recognize Kosovo's independence has now withdrawn it. However, this also spells a dangerous time for Serbia as Kosovo can start behaving in more irrational ways to maintain their illegal independence and resort back to terrorism as it had in the 1990's and 2000 under the banner of the [so-called Kosovo Liberation Army](#). We can expect Belgrade to secure more withdrawals of recognition, meaning that it is only a matter of time until Kosovo is finally reincorporated into Serbia, striking a massive blow to the U.S. as it will lose a region that has been extremely loyal to it.

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