

Kosovo ‘precedent’ looks set to have long-lasting implications

By [Global Research](#)

Global Research, February 18, 2008

Ria Novosti 18 February 2008

Region: [Europe](#)

Theme: [Law and Justice](#), [United Nations](#)

MOSCOW, February 18 (RIA Novosti) – A day after [Kosovo declared unilateral independence from Serbia](#), the consequences of Sunday’s historic events looked set to resound in Europe and beyond for many years to come.

Russia to take account of Kosovo

Sunday’s unilateral declaration of independence by Kosovo gives Russia the right to forge new relationships with self-proclaimed states, the Russian parliament said in a statement issued on Monday.

“Now that the situation in Kosovo has become an international precedent, Russia should take into account the Kosovo scenario and the actions of other states with respect to Kosovo when considering ongoing territorial conflicts,” read the statement, adopted by both houses of parliament.

The statement was signed by Sergei Mironov, speaker of the Federation Council, the upper house, and Boris Gryzlov, speaker of the State Duma, the lower house of the Federal Assembly.

Russia’s position is that independence for the region, where the Serb minority accounts for less than 10% of the population, would be a violation of international law and Security Council Resolution 1244, adopted in 1999 after NATO bombings ended a war between Kosovo Albanians and Serb forces. The resolution established Serbia’s territorial integrity.

Recognition

The EU has failed to reach a consensus on Kosovo’s independence.

The U.S., the U.K., France, Germany and Italy have so far recognized Kosovo.

Spain announced on Monday that it would not recognize the former Serbian province.

Three other EU states, Cyprus, Romania and Slovakia, earlier informed other EU governments that they would also refuse. Vietnam and Indonesia have also said they will decline to acknowledge Pristina’s sovereignty.

Serbia fears a greater Albania

[Kosovo could eventually become a part of Albania, Serbia’s ambassador to Russia said](#) on

Monday.

"It is very difficult to imagine the existence of two [separate] Albanian states with a common border," Stanimir Vukicevic said, adding that this would eventually lead to the creation of "a Greater Albania."

He said Serbia was set to demand that the UN Security Council announce Kosovo's declaration of independence illegal.

The envoy said Serbia would take action against any country that recognizes Kosovo's independence.

He said recognition of the province's independence would set an international precedent and "provoke a similar [separatist] mood in Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and many other parts not only in Europe, but across the world."

He rejected Western assertions that Kosovo was a unique case.

"There is nothing unique about this," he said.

UN calls for calm

UN Secretary General [Ban Ki Moon called for calm](#) in the aftermath of Kosovo's declaration of independence as Western powers prepared to recognize the sovereignty of the world's 'newest state'.

"I call on all sides to reaffirm and act upon their commitments to refrain from any actions or statements that could endanger peace, incite violence or jeopardize security in Kosovo and the region," Ban Ki Moon said after emergency UN Security Council consultations called by Russia on Sunday.

Serbian Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica said on Sunday that Kosovo's declaration of independence "violates international order." China has expressed its "deep concern" over the situation.

The news of Kosovo's declaration was met with [street riots in Belgrade](#). Gangs of youths protesting against the secession of Kosovo carried on running battles with riot police all night, with 47 people reported injured. Symbols of 'Americanism,' including two fast food restaurants, were also reported to have been attacked by protestors.

A hand grenade was thrown at a UN court building in the mainly Serb northern Kosovan town of Mitrovica on Sunday night as Albanians celebrated independence in the south of the town.

The Serbian government has called for a massive demonstration on Thursday against what it has called the establishment of the "false state" of Kosovo.

Bidding farewell to real estate

[Serbia is set to lose real estate worth some \\$220 billion](#) following Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence on Sunday, the Tanjug news agency said on Monday.

The Belgrade-based Tanjug agency said the estimated value of private property belonging to the more than 30,000 Serbian families who fled Kosovo in 1999 was at least \$4 billion.

Serbia is set to lose agricultural land, forests, administrative, industrial and residential buildings, as well as government-owned facilities along with Kosovo, the country's historic heartland. It will also lose military property, with the Slatina airport alone estimated at more than \$100 million.

According to the World Bank, Kosovo's mineral resources are worth over \$19 billion. Kosovo holds substantial reserves of brown coal, tin, zinc, nickel, cobalt, bauxites, silver, iron, gold, platinum and copper.

Serbia invested some \$17 billion in Kosovo between 1960 and 1990.

A taste of troubles to come?

Abkhazia offered a possible taste of things to come when the president of the de facto independent Georgian republic said on Monday that it intended to ask Russia to recognize its sovereignty.

Asked whether Abkhazia intended to address Russia on the issue of independence in the wake of Kosovo's unilateral declaration of sovereignty on Sunday, [Sergei Bagapsh told journalists: "Yes, we do."](#)

Both Abkhazia and South Ossetia, another Georgian breakaway republic, declared their independence from Georgia in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, and bloody conflicts ensued. Georgia's current leadership has been seeking to recover its influence in the separatist regions and secure international support on the issue.

Both republics have expressed a strong desire to join Russia, and Moscow had hinted even before Kosovo's declaration of independence that it may recognize Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

"The declaration of sovereignty by Kosovo and its recognition will undoubtedly be taken into account in [Russia's] relations with Abkhazia and South Ossetia," the Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement last week.

South Ossetian President Eduard Kokoity, also on a visit to Moscow, told reporters that the two republics would hold talks with other unrecognized entities on efforts to seek independence.

Kokoity said his republic would like to seek independence through Russia's Constitutional Court.

"Two years ago we declared our intention to apply to the Russian Constitutional Court. We have a document on a united Ossetia voluntarily joining the Russian Empire in 1774," he said, adding that there were no documents in existence that confirmed the withdrawal of Ossetia from Russia.

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Global Research](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca