

## Serb media say Kosovo to declare independence after Jan 20.

By [Global Research](#)

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A Serb newspaper has cited a 'well-informed international diplomat' as saying Kosovo plans to unilaterally declare independence after January 20.

The Blic daily quoted on Friday a foreign diplomat involved in talks on the status of the Albanian-dominated province as saying that Kosovar Albanians expect the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to be the first country to acknowledge their sovereignty, with France and the United States to follow suit.

"Final talks between Belgrade and Pristina on resolving the status of the province are most likely to continue after December 10, when the 'troika' of international mediators reports its results to the UN, but it is hardly possible that they [the talks] will end in success," the source said.

The latest round of negotiations, held in Austria this week, failed to break the long-running deadlock over the province's status.

The UN has set December 10 as a deadline for the parties to reach an agreement. Kosovo has repeatedly said it will unilaterally declare independence if the UN fails to give its approval, while Serbia has warned it may impose an economic blockade on the small impoverished region if Kosovo Albanians carry out their threat.

Kosovo's drive for independence is backed by the U.S. and some European nations, while Russia, Serbia's long-time ally, has repeatedly warned that independence would serve as a precedent and could have a knock-on effect, provoking instability in other secessionist territories, including those in the former Soviet Union.

Serbian Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica said on Friday that responsibility for peace and stability in the Balkans lay primarily with the U.S.

"If the U.S. had announced its commitment to UN Security Council resolution 1244 on Kosovo, which in particular guarantees Serbia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, thereby ensuring that the rights of the Albanian minority in the country were observed, a compromise and a mutually acceptable decision would then have been reached," Kostunica told Belgrade-based news agency Tanjug.

He called for compliance with international laws and said a proposal to replace the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo with an EU mission would also run counter to Resolution 1244.

The command of the Kosovo Force, a NATO-led international force deployed in the region since 1999, said it would increase its contingent in the near future by some 500 servicemen to enhance security against possible disturbances in northern Kosovo, home to a Serbian ethnic minority. The Kosovo Force contingent currently numbers some 16,000 troops from 32 countries.

Kosovo has been a UN protectorate since 1999, when NATO's bombing of the former Yugoslavia ended a bloody war between Serb forces and ethnic Albanians in the region.

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