

Six Years Since March Violence in Kosovo

By [Global Research](#)

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PRIŠTINA — Six years have passed since the largest ethnically motivated crimes since 1999 occurred in Kosovo, in which 19 civilians were killed. The two-day riots in Kosovo began on March 17, 2004, after UNMIK police found the bodies of two Albanian boys in the Ibar River in the village of Cabra in northern Kosovo.

Massive protests by Albanians who accused Serbs of the deaths broke out in southern Kosovska Mitrovica, after which they spread to other parts of Kosovo.

Some 800 homes and 35 Orthodox churches and monasteries were destroyed in the riots and about 4,000 Serbs were forced to leave their homes.

Eleven Albanians and eight Serbs were killed in the violence.

NATO and UN officials did not deem the violence ethnic cleansing.

Priština attorney Živojin Jaganović said that investigations into the violence have yet to be completed.

"There are no serious efforts in that direction. If we want to face the truth, which is available to all those with good intentions, it can be easily concluded that in these events, though I would not accuse the international forces of facilitating them, I would say that they did not even take the minimum measures for protecting property and the citizens," he said.

The Kosovo courts processed 400 cases, mostly for minor crimes committed during the violence.

The first serious verdict was confirmed in 2005 when six Albanians from Gnjilane were sentenced to a total of 38 years in prison.

They were found guilty of the murder of Serb Slobodan Perić and his mother.

In total, 143 Kosovo Albanians were convicted, of which 67 received prison terms of over a year.

Thousands of people protested in several Serbian cities because of the attacks on Serb enclaves in Kosovo. In these protests, mosques in Belgrade and Niš were set on fire. The windows of the Islamic community's headquarters in Novi Sad were also demolished.

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