

# The Creation of Kosovo's Armed Forces

Discussion at the UN Security Council

By [Michael Averko](#)

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Region: [Europe](#)

Theme: [United Nations](#)

*The [December 17 UN Security Council meeting](#), on the announced creation of a Kosovo armed forces, featured some noticeable contrasts.*

In accordance with Kosovo not being a UN member state and the Serb position on UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (recognizing Kosovo as a continued part of Serbia), the disputed former Yugoslav territory wasn't formally represented at the discussion as a nation. Kosovo's leader, Hashim Thaci, sat with a nameplate having his name, as opposed to Kosovo. Countries recognizing Kosovo's independence made it a point to state Thaci as the president of Kosovo and Aleksandar Vučić as president of Serbia. Nations not recognizing Kosovo's independence referred to Thaci as either Mr. Thaci or Mr. Hashim Thaci and Vučić as the president of Serbia.

The UK was excessively biased against Serbia. Vučić noted the difference between the UK's stance, versus a comparatively more objective approach among some other countries that recognized Kosovo's independence. Kosovo's independence is partly premised on a non-binding 2010 International Court of Justice advisory opinion, which said that Kosovo's declaration of independence didn't violate international law, while not saying whether Kosovo is properly independent, or should be independent. Having the right to declare independence doesn't by itself mean that such a declaration should be fully recognized by others.

The Serb and Kosovo leaders expressed differences of opinion on the conflict in Kosovo over the years. Vučić was the more even handed. Not mentioned was the casualty figure in Kosovo before the 1999 Clinton administration led NATO bombing campaign against Yugoslavia (then consisting of Serbia and Montenegro). In that period, the Serbs had the disproportionately greater casualty number. Within a 18 to 24 month period before the NATO action, 1,500-2,000 were killed out of a Kosovo population put at about 2 million. Serb casualties were in the 500-600 range. At the time, Kosovo had an Albanian population that was listed as high as 90%, with Serbs being somewhere around 10%. Serb sources note that their proportionate number in Kosovo has dwindled over the decades for several reasons, which include Albanian nationalist terrorism, some Serbs finding better opportunities elsewhere, a comparatively higher Albanian birthrate and a migration of Albanians from Albania to Kosovo.

Thaci stated a wildly unproven figure of 20,000 raped in Kosovo by Serb forces. In the former Yugoslav wars, the purpose of number trumping casualties was for the losing party/parties to make the suffering look worse than reality, for the purpose of goading foreign military support for their side. In addition to Kosovo, this tactic was evident in the earlier Bosnian Civil War.

In that Bosnian conflict, I very much recall the claims of a 200,000-350,000 casualty figure range, as well as some far fetched rape figures, said without meaning to diminish the seriousness of such a crime, regardless of the ethnicity of the perpetrator and victim. At the end of the Bosnian Civil War, others like myself, deduced that the actual fatality number was somewhere between 75,000-125,000. Years later, there has been a universal acknowledgement that the Bosnian Civil War death toll was in the area of 100,000. Those who wrongly hedged on the higher 200,000-350,000 figure, are nevertheless more likely to get greater Western mass media access, than the ones that got it right from the get go. (A related Bosnian Civil War fatality issue, concerns the [different numerical takes](#) of summary executions in and near Srebrenica.)

As the UN Security Council discussed Kosovo, the [UN General Assembly voted in favor of a non-binding pro-Kiev regime resolution on the Azov Sea](#). Notwithstanding, most of the UN member states didn't vote for that resolution, with numerous abstentions and some no shows. Regarding the recent Kerch Strait incident (where the Azov Sea and Black Sea meet), a [December 13 Consortium News feature](#), includes some comparisons that you'll be hard pressed to find in US mass media circles.

Excerpt –

“As I said, I think the Russians had every right to be suspicious of the intent of the Ukrainian vessels. The Ukrainians know that these are Russian territorial waters. They know that the only way to go through the Kerch Strait is by making use of a Russian pilot. They refused to allow the Russians to pilot the ships through the strait. Whatever the Ukrainians' ultimate intent was—whether it was to carry out an act of sabotage, to provoke the Russians into overreaction and then to demand help from NATO, or simply to go through the strait without a Russian pilot in order to enable President Poroshenko to proclaim the strait as non-Russian—whatever Kiev's intent was, the Russians were entitled to respond. The force the Russians used was hardly excessive. In similar circumstances, the US would have destroyed all of the ships and killed everyone on board. Recall, incidentally, Israel has seized Gaza flotilla boats and arrested everyone on board. In 2010, the Israeli Navy shot nine activists dead during a flotilla boat seizure, and wounded one who died after four years in a coma.”

I'm not so sure about the aforementioned US hypothetical. The Israeli example underscores that Russia acted in a peacefully responsible way, followed by some hypocrisy against it at the UN. Nikki Haley is right about a biased element at the UN. The likes of her don't acknowledge their contribution to some of the unfair biases.

This excerpt from the Consortium News feature brings into play the matter of Kosovo –

“During the recent incident, the Ukrainian Navy acted provocatively, deliberately challenging the Russians. As for what the UNSC accepts, how would NATO respond if Serbia entered Kosovo on some pretext or other?”

The last thought hits home on a point I repeatedly make on how the 1999 bombing of Yugoslavia has served to impress Russia that pious BS aside, might essentially makes right. BTW, Kosovo doesn't stand out as being socioeconomically and multi-ethnically better off

than Crimea.

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*[Michael Averko](#) is a New York based independent foreign policy analyst and media critic.*

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