

# THE AIRLIE DECLARATION

JULY 23, 2000

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Representatives of the Serb and Albanian communities within Kosovo met together in Airlie, Virginia, from July 21-23, 2000, with the facilitation of the United States Institute of Peace. This meeting followed earlier meetings held September 9-13, 1999, in Lansdowne, Virginia, with representatives of the Albanian community, December 10-12, 1999, in Sofia, Bulgaria, with representatives from the Serb community, and May 3-6, 2000, with representatives of both communities living in the Gnjilane/Gjilan area of Kosovo. These earlier meetings had resulted in declarations outlining many shared elements for a vision of Kosovo's future and steps toward achieving this vision.

At the Airlie meeting, representatives of the Serb and Albanian communities sought to identify specific steps that members of the two communities could take together to begin to convert the bold words of these declarations to real accomplishments on the ground in Kosovo. Representatives pledged to continue the process begun at Airlie when they return to Kosovo.

At the Airlie meeting, both Albanians and Serbs have faced each other in a spirit of searching together for positive steps which can be taken toward building a peaceful accommodation, despite the great pains and sorrows suffered in past conflicts. Some of these wounds are so fresh and so deep that they make it difficult to proceed without more time for healing, more evidence of a mutual confronting of these pains, more reaching out to one another in a spirit of sharing and understanding for past suffering.

Representatives recognize that their two communities are only at the start of a long journey. This journey must begin by dealing with present-day reality. For Serbs, this means recognizing that they should work with the Albanians and others to build democratic institutions and society in Kosovo. For Albanians, this means recognizing that Serbs and others must have equal rights and protection.

Recognizing that both Albanians and Serbs must move on for the sake of their children and grandchildren, and their society, both communities reach out in good faith to overcome grief and to join all others of good will who commit themselves to building peace and democracy in Kosovo. It is for this reason that they have pledged to each other to undertake the steps outlined in this document.

**Elections:** The development of democracy in Kosovo deserves the highest priority, and all participants agreed that free elections are a key element in this process. The positions of the two communities on elections are outlined as follows:

- **Albanian views:** Albanian representatives insisted upon full participation by the Serb community in registration and voting for municipal councils for this year's elections. They noted that participation in the electoral process would provide evidence of Serbian commitment to a free and democratic Kosovo. They also noted that there will be difficulties of movement in some parts of Kosovo during the electoral process.
- **Serbian Views:** While recognizing the need for elections, Serbian representatives indicated that the conditions have not been created for the Serbs to participate. They pointed out that the Serbian community still does not have full freedom of living and movement, while many others remain displaced outside Kosovo.

With registration having closed, only a small minority of potential Serbian voters has been registered. It is therefore quite likely that the municipal elections will unfold without significant Serb participation.

All representatives agreed that the municipal councils in Kosovo should include all ethnic groups. They noted the authority of the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the UN (SRSG) to make appointments to municipal councils. All agreed that such appointees should be from the municipalities to which they are appointed. Although the Albanians at the Airlie meeting made clear that this appointive alternative was not optimal, they were prepared to accept appointed Serb representatives. All representatives at the Airlie meeting agreed to respect the legitimacy of the elections and of electoral outcomes as they are declared free and fair by the SRSG.

**Media:** Free media are crucial to democratic development. All representatives at the Airlie meeting agreed that the media can and should work together to prevent violence and promote coexistence. Journalists within the group agreed to cooperate on a professional basis and to share information. They pledged to endeavor to professionalize journalism, uphold democratic values, and respect codes of conduct as steps toward media self-regulation.

Representatives heard a briefing by a representative of the OSCE on measures being taken to license media outlets operating in Kosovo. They agreed that actions should be taken by the SRSG to prevent the import of hate-filled print, radio, and TV media into Kosovo. Eventually, the crime of hate speech should be incorporated in the final civil and penal codes of Kosovo and prosecuted by the court system. In the meantime, representatives acknowledged the authority of the SRSG to act against those who engage in hate speech. Representatives called attention to the coming launch of a multilingual news service in Kosovo, and they pledged to promote coverage by each ethnic group of others in the Kosovo community.

**Civil Society:** Decades of tension and conflict have left civil society in Kosovo deeply divided and weak. All acknowledged the importance of stimulating the development of multiethnic elements within civil society. The wounds of the recent past are still too deep to permit anything but the possibility of beginning the vitally needed process of reconciliation. Representatives agreed on the importance of looking boldly toward the future and finding ways to witness to their experiences in conflict. They agreed that their meeting at Airlie House was an ambitious first step in dialogue. They pledged that upon their return to Kosovo, they would act jointly through the media to promote awareness of this new beginning.

**Security.** We agree to launch a new initiative—a Campaign Against Violence—that will include the following elements:

- We agree beginning today to a Pact Against Violence to promote tolerance, condemn violence, prevent negative exploitation of ethnic issues, and enable physical integration and political participation by all.
- The Campaign will include a Day Against Violence on a date set by the Kosovo Transitional Council—a date before the beginning of the electoral campaign—when Kosovo leaders will publicly appear together in Pristina and later in other centers in Kosovo.
- These leaders will visit local communities throughout Kosovo to promote the Campaign Against Violence and seek to convince citizens that the time for re-integration has come.
- We will establish local multi-ethnic citizens' dialogues on practical issues of interest to all citizens of Kosovo and ask that UNMIK and KFOR provide the security required.
- Particular attention will be given to eliminating ethnic hatred and violence by and among chil-

dren and to preventing the use of children to promote violence.

- We agreed to seek release of prisoners and kidnapped persons and location of missing persons.
- A media campaign will be an integral part of this effort.

To reduce the power of extremists we:

- ask that members of all communities hand in illegal weapons and call on KFOR and UNMIK to confiscate all illegal weapons,
- call on KFOR and UNMIK to guard and control more effectively all entry into Kosovo,
- request that UNMIK move immediately to stand-up a functioning court and prison system,
- ask members of our own communities to identify perpetrators of crime, including crimes committed against other ethnic groups,
- request that UNMIK establish a safe channel (“hot line” or other) for citizens to assist in the identification and apprehension of perpetrators of crime,
- support the work of the Hague Tribunal, as well as criminal courts, in dealing with crimes against humanity and all other crimes in Kosovo, and we want to bring all responsible, inside or outside of Kosovo, to justice,
- insist on the immediate dissolution of all parallel governing and security structures.

**Returns.** In order to facilitate return of displaced people and refugees to their homes, we:

- recognize that return is a fundamental right and is essential to the future of Kosovo, and we will promote returns, in accordance with international law, with clear, unambiguous statements and actions within our respective communities,
- urge people illegally in Kosovo to leave, especially those occupying the homes of others,
- encourage—and pledge to cooperate in—organized visits of displaced persons to their homes under UNMIK/KFOR auspices,
- commit ourselves to preparing local communities for returns by members of the other ethnic group,
- encourage augmented communication between the displaced and their towns of origin,
- insist on fresh efforts by UNMIK and KFOR to provide greater security for implementing returns, and to expand aid for reconstruction and economic revival in those communities accepting returns,
- invite the international community to encourage returns by providing those municipalities that organize them effectively with the economic wherewithal to sustain them.

KFOR and UNMIK are responsible for public safety and civil law and order under the current post-war arrangements pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1244. The representatives agreed that the levels of security and freedom of movement in Kosovo today are not acceptable. A new model of security and law enforcement is needed. Establishing this new model will be a two-way street between citizens of Kosovo and the international community. On the one hand, the Serb and Albanian communities must cooperate to do what they can to enhance security, both on their own and in cooperation with UNMIK and KFOR. A number of steps in this regard have already been described. On the other hand, the international community must overcome its differences so that UNMIK and KFOR can take much stronger measures to carry out their security and law enforcement responsibilities. KFOR and UNMIK must engage in a coordinated effort to assert their authority equally in all parts of Kosovo, including countering the influence of the Milosevic regime

in Kosovo. UNMIK and KFOR must close down all unauthorized security forces operating in Kosovo, whether they originate from Kosovo or outside.

The representatives want the international community to remain committed to the future of Kosovo. But they recognize that the international community will not support a Kosovo cleansed of some of its ethnic communities. Rather, all these communities must work together to build a multi-ethnic Kosovo respecting the rights of all its citizens.

Representatives participating in the meeting:

Mahmut Bakalli  
Ethem Ceku  
Father Kirilo Djurkovic  
Vjosa Dobruna  
Baton Haxhiu  
Arben Hoxha  
Ylber Hysa  
Skender Hyseni  
Father Sava Janjic  
Januz Januzaj  
Kaqusha Jashari  
Petar Jeknic  
Naim Jerliu  
Margarita Kadriu  
Aferdita Kelmendi  
Nekibe Kelmendi  
Slavisa Kolasinac  
Mark Krasniqi  
Ismajl Kurteshi  
Eqrem Kryeziu  
Naim Maloku  
Esat Marovca  
Basri Musmurati  
Dragan Nikolic  
Sonja Nikolic  
Randjel Nojkic  
Pajazit Nushi  
Luljeta Pula-Beqiri  
Bishop Artemije Radosavljevic  
Nenad Radosavljevic  
Dusan Ristic  
Slavisa Ristic  
Bajram Rexhepi  
Ibrahim Rugova  
Edita Tahiri  
Hashim Thaci



Rada Trajkovic  
Father Petar Ulemek  
Dragan Velic  
Ariana Zherka

