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Disinformation Alerts – Russian Media Monitoring is a monthly report of the news containing disinformation and misinformation targeting Kosovo, published by Russian media in English and Serbian Language

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The views presented in this publication are solely those of the Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development (KIPRED).

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# KOSOVO DISINFORMATION ALERTS

## RUSSIAN MEDIA

August 2020

## INTRODUCTION

**Kosovo Disinformation Alerts: Russian Media Monitoring** aims to counter the disinformation that targets Kosovo, by monitoring, on a monthly basis, the preselected media outlets originating in Russia, in both, English, and Serbian languages. The preselected media in English language are Russia Today, Sputnik, Meduza, Russia Insider, TASS, The Moscow Times, Newsfront, Unz, The Duran, and Pravda Report, whereas, in Serbian language is Sputnik Serbia. In addition, the Kosovo Disinformation Alert monitors news, documents, and statements related to Kosovo, published by Kremlin and the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

During August 2020, TASS has published 1 news, Russia Today 5, The Duran 1, Newsfront 7, Unz 1, The Moscow Times 5, whereas Sputnik Serbia has published 139 news related directly or indirectly to Kosovo. Meanwhile, Sputnik International, Russia Insider, Meduza, and Pravda Report have not published any news related to Kosovo. On the other hand, during this monitoring period, there were no Kremlin news that directly or indirectly relates to Kosovo, while there was one interview by Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov posted on their website.

Due to the large number of articles with disinformation content generated by these media, in this edition are analyzed only the articles with most blatant disinformation content. The provided disinformation aims to undermine the legality of Kosovo's independence, by presenting it as illegal and in violation of the international law, drawing parallels between Kosovo and Republika Srpska, degrading the international military presence in Kosovo by accusing the West for the annexation of a part of the Serbian territory, and by claiming falsely, on the other hand, that there are still 18,000 usurped properties of the Serb community citizens in Kosovo.

# THE DECONSTRUCTION OF THE DETECTED DISINFORMATION

## **Disinformation Alert 1**

**Headline:** Trump and Kosovo: what is the deal? **The Duran, August 20<sup>th</sup> 2020.**<sup>1</sup>

The article claims that the quasi-creation of the Republic of Kosovo “according to the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, and the UN Resolution 1244, as well as all the other international legal norms, is still a part of the Republic of Serbia.”

### **The Deconstruction of the Disinformation: Facts and Figures**

#### **a) According to the UN Resolution 1244 (1999), or the international legal norms, Kosovo is not part of Serbia**

First and foremost, there is not even a single UN resolution, nor any other international legal norms, that explicitly assign Kosovo to Serbia. The UNSC Resolution 1244 recognizes Kosovo as part of the, now, non-existent Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.<sup>2</sup> The leftover of the Federation, that is, of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which later became the Union of Serbia and Montenegro, also split in 2006, when 55.53% of the Montenegrin citizens voted for independence, which ultimately diluted and blurred any legal connection between Kosovo and Serbia. On 17 February, Kosovo declared independence based on the Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Trump and Kosovo: what is the deal? <https://theduran.com/trump-and-kosovo-what-is-the-deal/>

<sup>2</sup> United Nations, Security Council, Resolution 1244 (1999), [https://unmik.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/old\\_dnn/Res1244ENG.pdf](https://unmik.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/old_dnn/Res1244ENG.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement, [https://web.archive.org/web/20091015082628/http://www.unosek.org/docref/Comprehensive\\_proposal-english.pdf](https://web.archive.org/web/20091015082628/http://www.unosek.org/docref/Comprehensive_proposal-english.pdf)

In October 2008, the General Assembly adopted the Resolution 63/3 (2008), with the request for an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) with the question "Is the unilateral declaration of independence by the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government of Kosovo in accordance with international law? ".<sup>4</sup> On July 22, 2010, the ICJ delivered the advisory opinion confirming that Kosovo's declaration of independence of February 17, 2008 has not violated the UNSC resolution 1244, or any international legal norms.<sup>5</sup>

### **b) The Constitution of Serbia**

It is a fact that the Constitution of Serbia (2006) treats Kosovo as part of it,<sup>6</sup> but this cannot undermine the legality of the declaration of independence which has been confirmed by the advisory opinion of the ICJ. In despite of the fact that Serbia filed the request for an advisory opinion by the United Nations, it still doesn't accept it.

Belgrade's current policy has the sole purpose of hindering the future political generations in establishing good inter-state relations with the Republic of Kosovo. In this regard it should be emphasized that a condition for Serbia's membership in the EU is the normalization of relations with Kosovo,<sup>7</sup> and such a normalization can be achieved only through a mutual recognition. Therefore, the claim of this article, that according to the Constitution of Serbia, the UNSC Resolution 1244, and other international legal norms, the Republic of Kosovo is part of Serbia, is false and does not stand in reality.

### **Disinformation Alert 2**

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<sup>4</sup> United Nations, General Assembly, Resolution 63/3,

<https://web.archive.org/web/20121102102732/http://www.undemocracy.com/A-RES-63-3.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> International Court of Justice. Advisory Opinion on the accordance with international law of the unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo, July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2010, <https://www.icj-cij.org/files/case-related/141/141-20100722-ADV-01-00-EN.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Constitution of Serbia (2006), Articles 114 and 182,

<https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/74694/119555/F838981147/SRB74694%20Eng.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Conference on accession to the European Union – Serbia-, Chapter 35, Normalisation of relations between Serbia and Kosovo, <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/AD-12-2015-INIT/en/pdf>.

**Headline:** Српска доставила документ председнику Србије: Указали на антидејтонско понашање [Srpska (Republika Srpska) submitted a document to President of Serbia: It pointed out the anti-Dayton behavior], **Sputnik Serbia, August 21<sup>th</sup>, 2020.**<sup>8</sup>

The article highlights a document that Republika Srpska submitted to the President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić. While trying to draw parallels between Kosovo and Republika Srpska, the Serb member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Milorad Dodik, claims that they wanted to show that western countries have double standards on the case of Kosovo and Republika Srpska. Dodik claims that "If the international community believes that Kosovo is independent, and a part of it has already shown that it recognizes an independent Kosovo, we believe that we, as Republika Srpska, can have the right to regulate the status that suits us."

### **The Deconstruction of the Disinformation: Facts and Figures**

#### **a) The statements of Milorad Dodik violate the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and of the Dayton Peace Agreement**

While drawing parallels between Kosovo and Republika Srpska, Milorad Dodik, the Serbian member of the tripartite Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, made statements that violate the Dayton Peace Agreement, and the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, also known as the Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA), is a peace agreement reached at the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio, United States, in November 1995, and formally signed in Paris, on 14 December 1995.<sup>9</sup> These accords put an end to the three and a half year long Bosnian

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<sup>8</sup> Српска доставила документ председнику Србије: Указали на антидејтонско понашање [Srpska (Republika Srpska) submitted a document to President of Serbia: It points out the anti-Dayton behavior], <https://rs.sputniknews.com/vesti/202008211123246762-srpska-dostavila-dokument-predsedniku-srbije-ukazali-na-antidejtonsko-ponasanje/>.

<sup>9</sup> Dayton Peace Agreement, <https://www.osce.org/bih/126>

War, one of the armed conflicts in the former Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia. Annex 4 of this agreement comprise the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina which is the basis for the organization of the political system of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Article 1 of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina explicitly states that "In particular, the Parties shall fully respect the sovereign equality of one another, shall settle disputes by peaceful means, and shall refrain from any action, by threat or use of force or otherwise, against the territorial integrity or political independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina or any other State."<sup>10</sup> Moreover, the Preamble to the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina states the commitment to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in accordance with the international law.<sup>11</sup>

#### **b) Republika Srpska cannot be compared to Kosovo**

Kosovo is a "sui generis" case which cannot serve as a precedent for other cases<sup>12</sup> and certainly not for the Republika Srpska, which is an entity of Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>13</sup> In addition to the Dayton Peace Agreement, and the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the UN Resolution 787 (1995) calls to strictly respect the territorial integrity of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>14</sup> In the case of Kosovo, the UN Resolution 1244 did not prevent or exclude the possibility of Kosovo's independence, it only regulated the interim administration of Kosovo, but not its final or permanent status.<sup>15</sup> If the Security Council wanted to preclude a declaration of independence, it would have done so in clear and unequivocal terms in the text of the

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<sup>10</sup> The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/e/0/126173.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, <https://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/ba/ba020en.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> EU: Kosovo a sui generis case, no double standards, <https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2017/10/03/eu-kosovo-sui-generis-case-no-double-standards/#:~:text=As%20confirmed%20by%20the%20European,respectful%20of%20it%2C%20she%20said.>

<sup>13</sup> Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Article 1.

<sup>14</sup> United Nations, Security Council, Resolution 787 (1992), [https://undocs.org/S/RES/787\(1992\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/787(1992))

<sup>15</sup> International Court of Justice. Advisory Opinion on the accordance with international law of the unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo, July 22nd, 2010, <https://www.icj-cij.org/files/case-related/141/141-20100722-ADV-01-00-EN.pdf>

Resolution, as it did in the Resolution 787 (1995) concerning the Republika Srpska in Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>16</sup>

### **Disinformation Alert 3**

**Headline: Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov’s interview with Trud newspaper, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, August 21th, 2020.**<sup>17</sup>

Among other things, the Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, in this interview claims falsely that, “I would prefer to focus not on the conflict between Belgrade and Pristina, but on the consequences of the shameless annexation of part of Serbian territory”; “Following this outrage, a self-proclaimed quasi-state was created on the territory of a Serbian autonomous region. This was done unilaterally, in circumvention of UN Security Council Resolution 1244, which is the basis of the settlement. Later, very important decisions were agreed upon, including on the creation of the Association of Serbian Municipalities in Kosovo. Plans called for a gradual transition to the mutually acceptable agreements, first of all, on ensuring the safety of Serbs in the region. However, Kosovo stonewalled all of these decisions.”

#### **a) Annexation of the Serbian territory**

First and foremost, it should be emphasized that the military presence in Kosovo was established by the UNSC resolution 1244, which authorized the creation of an international military presence and an international civil presence in Kosovo.<sup>18</sup> In this regard, it should be noted that Russia had

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov’s interview with Trud newspaper, published on August 21, 2020, [https://www.mid.ru/en/web/guest/foreign\\_policy/international\\_safety/conflicts/-/asset\\_publisher/xIEMTQ3OvzcA/content/id/4293771](https://www.mid.ru/en/web/guest/foreign_policy/international_safety/conflicts/-/asset_publisher/xIEMTQ3OvzcA/content/id/4293771)

<sup>18</sup> United Nations, Security Council, Resolution 1244 (1999), [https://unmik.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/old\\_dnn/Res1244ENG.pdf](https://unmik.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/old_dnn/Res1244ENG.pdf)

voted in favor of this resolution,<sup>19</sup> but it ironically issues statements like these about the “annexation of part of Serbian territory.”

Furthermore, Lavrov falsely claims that the UNSC Resolution 1244 is the basis for the settlement of the Kosovo issue, by ignoring the Advisory Opinion on the accordance with the international law of the unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo. This Advisory Opinion clearly stated that the Declaration of Independence of Kosovo has not violated International Law, UNSC Resolution 1244 (1999), or the Constitutional Framework.<sup>20</sup>

### **c) The Association/Community of Serb majority municipalities**

In 2015, Kosovo and Serbia reached an agreement on the general principles of the Association/Community of Serb majority municipalities in Kosovo.<sup>21</sup> The agreement stipulated that the Community/Association will be a legal entity defined by a statute.<sup>22</sup> In accordance with this agreement, the drafting of the statute was the task of the Management Team, with facilitation, if necessary, of the Ministry of Local Government.<sup>23</sup> It should be emphasized, in this regard, that the Management Team consisted of four Serb officials,<sup>24</sup> which had the task to draft the statute, and it is not known whether they have performed this task to date.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, in 2015 when the agreement was reached, the Minister of Local Government was from the Serb List (Lista Srpska), and The Ministry of Local Government is even today governed by the chairman

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<sup>19</sup> United Nations, Digital Library, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/285560?ln=en>.

<sup>20</sup> International Court of Justice. Advisory Opinion on the accordance with international law of the unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo, July 22nd, 2010, <https://www.icj-cij.org/files/case-related/141/141-20100722-ADV-01-00-EN.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> Serbia and Kosovo Reach Four Key Agreements, <https://balkaninsight.com/2015/08/26/serbia-kosovo-reach-four-key-agreements-08-26-2015/>.

<sup>22</sup> Association/Community of Serb majority municipalities in Kosovo – general principles/main elements, Article 2, [https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/statements-eeas/docs/150825\\_02\\_association-community-of-serb-majority-municipalities-in-kosovo-general-principles-main-elements\\_en.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/statements-eeas/docs/150825_02_association-community-of-serb-majority-municipalities-in-kosovo-general-principles-main-elements_en.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, Article 21.

<sup>24</sup> Koha.net: Çka thuhet në procesverbalet e ekipit menaxhues për Asociacionin? [What is said in the proceedings of the Management Team on the Association], <https://www.koha.net/arberi/111137/cka-thuhet-ne-procesverbalet-e-ekipit-menaxhues-per-asociacionin/>

<sup>25</sup> Radio Evropa e Lirë, Draft-statuti i Asociacionit nuk i është dorëzuar as Prishtinës dhe as BE-së [Radio Free Europe, The Draft-Statute of the Association was submitted, neither to Prishtina, nor to the EU], <https://www.evropaelire.org/a/draft-statuti-i-asociacionit-nuk-i-eshte-dorezuar-as-prishtines-dhe-as-be-/29568500.html>

of the Serb List.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, the responsibility for the prolongation of the Association/Community implementation lies on the Management Team and the Serb ministers.

#### **Disinformation Alert 4**

**Headline:** Весли Кларк и даље ратује за независност Косова (Wesley Clark continues to fight for Kosovo's independence), **Sputnik Serbia, August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020.**<sup>27</sup>

In an interview for Sputnik, the foreign policy analyst, and former diplomat, Zoran Milivojević, commented on the statement of General Wesley Clark who had said that “The indictment-proposal against the President of Kosovo, Hashim Thaçi, is a continuation of activities to hinder Kosovo's progress.”<sup>28</sup> In the interview, Mr. Milivojević states that “for these reasons, the 19 countries that took part in the NATO aggression have strong reasons not to prosecute high-ranking KLA leaders, and therefore believes that the blame will fall on some KLA members who were not important or were not used in the whole process.” He also stated that “it also shows the extent to which the trial of KLA leaders would be problematic, not only for America, but for the entire structure that participated in the NATO aggression, because any compromise of the KLA, at the same time compromises the entire project of independent Kosovo, the policy behind it, and everything that is a consequence of that policy.”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, GORAN RAKIĆ, Minister, Ministry of Local Government Administration, <https://mapl.rks-gov.net/en/organizimi-en/ministri-dhe-kabineti-i-ministrit-en/>.

<sup>27</sup> Sputniknews.com: Весли Кларк и даље ратује за независност Косова (Wesley Clark continues to fight for Kosovo's independence), 04/08/2020, <https://rs.sputniknews.com/analize/202008041123129622-vesli-klark-i-dalje-ratuje-za-nezavisnost-kosova-/>

<sup>28</sup> Koha.net: Clark: Aktakuzat e Speciales pengojnë Kosovën në përparim [Clark: The indictment of the Special Court hinder Kosovo's progress], 01/08/2020, <https://www.koha.net/arberi/231733/clark-aktakuzat-e-speciales-pengojne-kosoven-ne-perparim/>

<sup>29</sup> Sputniknews.com: Весли Кларк и даље ратује за независност Косова (Wesley Clark continues to fight for Kosovo's independence), 04/08/2020, <https://rs.sputniknews.com/analize/202008041123129622-vesli-klark-i-dalje-ratuje-za-nezavisnost-kosova-/>

## The Deconstruction of the Disinformation: Facts and Figures

The article makes a false claim that 19 NATO member states that took part in bombing Serbia in 1999 “have good reasons not to prosecute high-ranking KLA leaders.”<sup>30</sup> This is completely untrue, given that the Special Court of Kosovo was established by the insistence of the United States of America and the European Union, and, on the other hand, these countries are also members of NATO. The former President of Kosovo, Mrs. Atifete Jahjaga, and the former High Representative of the European Union, Catherine Ashton, have exchanged letters for the establishment of the Special Court of Kosovo, to address the allegations raised in the 2010 report of the Council of Europe.<sup>31</sup> Also, for the establishment of the Special Court of Kosovo, the former Vice President of the United States of America, Joe Biden, had sent a letter to the former Prime Minister of Kosovo, Hashim Thaçi, requesting that Kosovo should fully cooperate with the European Union to establish the Special Court for war crimes.<sup>32</sup> It should also not be forgotten that the functioning of the Special Court is funded by the European Union.<sup>33</sup>

### **Disinformation Alert 5**

**Headline:** Срби, признајте да сте једини злочинци, па ћемо вам опростити што смо вас протерали! (Serbs, admit that you are the only criminals, so that we will forgive you for expelling you!), **Sputnik Serbia, August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020**<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid

<sup>31</sup> President of the Republic of Kosovo Atifete Jahjaga statement after meeting with leaders of parliamentary parties of Kosovo, <https://www.president-ksgov.net/sq/lajme/deklarate-e-presidentes-atifete-jahjaga-pas-takimit-me-lideret-e-partive-parlamentare-te-kosoves>

<sup>32</sup> Balkaneu.com: US vice President, letter to PM Thaci: Kosovo must establish the Special Court on war crimes, <https://balkaneu.com/vice-president-letter-pm-thaci-kosovo-establish-special-court-war-crimes/>, 24/04/2014

<sup>33</sup> Statement of Samuel Zbogar to Gazetaexpress: Zbogar: SC shall be financed by the EU (Video), <https://www.gazetaexpress.com/lajme-zbogar-gjykata-speciale-do-te-financohet-nga-bashkimi-evropian-video-10202/>

<sup>34</sup> Sputniknews.com: Срби, признајте да сте једини злочинци, па ћемо вам опростити што смо вас протерали! [Serbs, admit that you are the only criminals, so that we will forgive you for expelling you!], <https://rs.sputniknews.com/analize/202008051123134687-srbi-priznajite-da-ste-jedini-zlocinci-pa-cemo-vam-oprostiti-sto-smo-vas-proterali/>

This article comments on the statement of General Wesley Clark regarding the filing of the indictments for war crimes by the Special Court of Kosovo.<sup>35</sup> The author tries, in the second part of the article, to present Serbia as a victim, by claiming that it has handed over all those responsible for committing crimes during the war in Kosovo, and that it has apologized for the crimes committed. The author states that “Serbia, without exception, is fulfilling its historic sentence – it has handed over generals and presidents, offered a hand of forgiveness to its neighbors, it does not celebrate its crimes, and it only lights candles for its victims.”<sup>36</sup>

### **The Deconstruction of the Disinformation: Facts and Figures**

In 1993, the United Nations established the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, based in the Hague, Netherlands, to try the crimes committed between 1991 and 2001 against members of various ethnic groups in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.<sup>37</sup> After the end of the mandate of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, the United Nations established the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals.<sup>38</sup> This mechanism has had the mandate to assist states in prosecuting fugitive war crimes suspects,<sup>39</sup> where under Article 6 of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, fugitives suspected of War Crimes will have to be tried in the national courts of that country.<sup>40</sup> The mechanism obliges the states of former Yugoslavia to prosecute persons suspected of crimes against humanity in local courts.<sup>41</sup> Until today, 35 Albanians have been convicted in Kosovo for war crimes. Whereas, for the killing of 10,794 Albanians during the war in Kosovo there were only 4 Serbs who were convicted.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid

<sup>36</sup> Ibid

<sup>37</sup> International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia: <https://www.icty.org/en/about>

<sup>38</sup> International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals: <https://www.irmct.org/en/about>

<sup>39</sup> International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals: <https://www.irmct.org/en/about/functions>

<sup>40</sup> Statute of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals: Article 6 ,

[https://www.icty.org/x/file/About/Reports%20and%20Publications/ResidualMechanism/101222\\_sc\\_res1966\\_residualmechanism\\_en.pdf?fbclid=IwAR199bMnI4zwmdmFeEmTbzAHT9jjuBJ65K4jcvrm2Mjzb2S7dIN4v3QyFWc](https://www.icty.org/x/file/About/Reports%20and%20Publications/ResidualMechanism/101222_sc_res1966_residualmechanism_en.pdf?fbclid=IwAR199bMnI4zwmdmFeEmTbzAHT9jjuBJ65K4jcvrm2Mjzb2S7dIN4v3QyFWc)

<sup>41</sup> Ibid

<sup>42</sup> Koha.net: IKD: Out of 117 people accused in Kosovo for war crimes, 62 are Albanians , <https://www.koha.net/arberi/237778/ikd-nga-117-persona-te-akuzuar-ne-kosove-per-krime-lufte-62-i-perkasin-nacionalitet-shqiptar/>

Based on this, Serbia has not yet handed over all persons suspected for war crimes in Kosovo, and, according to the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, the justice institutions in Serbia are obliged to continue the investigation and trial of persons who are suspected of war crimes.

### **Disinformation Alert 6**

**Headline:** Ђурић: Тешки и непријатни разговори у Бриселу! (Ђурић: Difficult and unpleasant talks in the Brussels), **Sputnik Serbia, August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020.**<sup>43</sup>

Marko Ђурић, the Director of the Office for Kosovo in the Government of Serbia, talks about the difficulties of the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia in Brussels, where, among other things, he states that 18,000 Serb properties are usurped in Kosovo. In his statement, Marko Ђурић claims that, “In many ways it is unpleasant because we had to face the claims of the other side that there are no problems of missing and internally displaced persons and refugees, with the denial of the claim that there are 18,000 usurped houses and apartments in Kosovo and Metohija, which is even mentioned in the OSCE reports, as well as with claims that every person who wanted to return to Kosovo and Metohija could have done it so far, and that Serbs did not return because they did not want to.”<sup>44</sup>

### **The Deconstruction of the Disinformation: Facts and Figures**

In regard to the statement of Marko Ђурић that there are still 18,000 properties of citizens of the Serb community usurped in Kosovo, the Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development (KIPRED) has requested, through e-mail, the clarification from Kosovo Property Comparison and

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<sup>43</sup> Sputniknews.com: Ђурић: Тешки и непријатни разговори у Бриселу! [Ђурић: Difficult and Unpleasant Talks in the Brussels],

<https://rs.sputniknews.com/politika/202008271123282949-djuric-teski-i-neprijatni-razgovori-u-briselu/>

<sup>44</sup> Ibid

Verification Agency (KPCVA).<sup>45</sup> In the response to KIPRED's questions, the Kosovo Property Comparison and Verification Agency stated that:

- After the end of the war in Kosovo, the UNMIK Administration had established the Housing and Property Directorate (HPD), which was the decision-making authority for property matters. During the mandate of this institution 29,000 requests of citizens of all communities in Kosovo have been implemented and properties returned to citizens.<sup>46</sup>
- After the end of the mandate of the Housing and Property Directorate (HPD), international institutions have established Property Agency of Kosovo (PAK), which had also had the mandate to address property issues. PAK had inherited 42,000 property issues from the HPD, which were reviewed and decided by the Property Claims Commission, and all these claims have been implemented based on the applicable legal framework.<sup>47</sup>
- Three of these institutions HPD, PAK, and KPCVA, have executed the deportation order for 8,229 properties which have been occupied. Meanwhile, 476 criminal charges have been filed for non-release of property, or for other issues.<sup>48</sup>
- Currently, there are pending eviction orders for a total of 61 properties, where 22 of them are located in the North of Mitrovica.<sup>49</sup>
- Until today, the number of properties under the administration of KPCVA with the will of the owners, is 12,190 properties. Meanwhile, 8,237 is the number of properties in the lease scheme, where, so far, there were 5,279,154.00 € transferred to the owners from this scheme.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>KIPRED on 02 / October / 2020 through email has requested information from AKKVP regarding the statement of Marko Đurić that there are 18,000 properties usurped from Serbs in Kosovo.

<sup>46</sup> Response attached with a report that the Kosovo Agency for Property Comparison and Verification (KCPA) sent to the KIPRED Institute on 07 / October / 2020.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

Therefore, according to the report submitted by the Kosovo Property Comparison and Verification Agency (KPCVA), we see that the statement of Marko Đurić about the usurped properties, is altogether false.