



**Meetings in
Prishtina/Pristina:
Municipal and Religious Leaders**

July - October 2024

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Supported by:



The information in this publication is provided as part of the "Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation" project, implemented by the Kosovo Institute for Policy Research and Development (KIPRED) in partnership with AKTIV NGO, and funded by the Kosovo Foundation for Open Society (KFOS). It is intended to offer an overview of the outcomes and discussions from the multi-ethnic dialogues in Prishtina/Priština. The views and opinions expressed herein are those of the participants and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of KFOS.

Foreword

The civil society initiative "Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation" includes 10 representatives from the Albanian and Serbian civil society communities, led by the Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development (KIPRED), based in Prishtina/Priština, and NGO Aktiv, based in North Mitrovica. This initiative is supported by the Kosovo Foundation for Open Society (KFOS).

The "Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation" aims to foster dialogue, understanding, and cooperation between different ethnic and religious communities, and to contribute to strengthening inter-ethnic cohabitation in Kosovo.

A unique aspect of this initiative is the "Letters of Desires and Expectations," written by the Caravan participants. These letters express their hopes and visions for cohabitation and mutual respect between different ethnic groups. They serve as a basis for our discussions with mayors and religious leaders, and they also include suggestions for improving relations and cohabitation between ethnic communities.

We invite you to support the goals of this initiative in strengthening the foundations and building a multi-ethnic, democratic, and liberal society in Kosovo.

Lulzim Peci
Executive Director
KIPRED

Miodrag Miličević
Executive Director
NGO AKTIV

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I. Introduction

The "Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Coexistence" is an innovative civil society initiative implemented by the Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development (KIPRED) and NGO AKTIV supported by the Kosovo Open Society Foundation (KOSOF) (With operational bases in Prishtina/Priština and North Mitrovica, these organizations lead a group of ten civil society representatives from both the Albanian and Serbian communities.

The "Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Coexistence" aims to address the deep-seated inter-ethnic tensions in Kosovo, primarily between the Albanian and Serb communities, which have persisted due to historical conflicts, political challenges, and cultural and religious differences. These tensions have hindered efforts towards reconciliation and cohabitation, exacerbated by limited opportunities for meaningful dialogue and interaction between the communities. The project's main goal is to foster a sustainable environment of mutual understanding, respect, and cooperation among Albanian and Serb communities in Kosovo through innovative dialogue and engagement strategies.

To achieve this, the project has set specific tasks, including:

1. Promoting Inter-Ethnic Dialogue: Establishing new platforms for dialogue between communities, utilizing the collaboration between NGOs, municipal authorities, and religious leaders to bridge divides, and cultivate multi-ethnicity.
2. Fostering Inter-Ethnic Understanding: Enhancing mutual understanding and empathy among communities by confronting stereotypes and misconceptions, and promoting respect and goodwill.
3. Facilitating Collaboration: Encouraging joint initiatives and collaborative actions among civil society organizations, local governments, and religious leaders across ethnic lines to work towards common goals for the betterment of communities and societal change in Kosovo.

Through these efforts, the project seeks to not only mitigate the immediate tensions but also lay the foundation for a peaceful and cohesive multi-ethnic society, contributing to the broader goal of peace and stability in the region and European integrations.

As the first stop of the Caravan's journey, the capital of Kosovo, Prishtina/Priština, provided an opportunity for its members to engage with influential municipal leadership and religious leaders. These included Mayor Përparim Rama, the Grand Imam of the Islamic Community of Kosovo, Vedat ef. Sahiti, Bishop Dodë Gjergji of the Bishopric of Kosovo, Archpriest Staniša Arsić of the Saint Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church, and the Head of the Kosovo Protestant Evangelical Church Pastor Artur Krasniqi. The meetings took place on 30 July, 15 August and 18 October 2024 respectively.

Central to this endeavor are the "Wishes and Expectations Letters," which are thoughtfully composed by the participants of the caravan. These letters are more than mere formalities; they embody the sincere hopes and visions of their authors for a future where different ethnic groups live together in respect and peace. The letters are foundational to the dialogue process, guiding discussions with mayors and religious leaders. They contain insightful suggestions that are aimed at improving interethnic relations and enhancing daily cohabitation among communities.

Prior to the meetings, all members of the Caravan wrote "Letters of desires and expectations" to the key interlocutors in Prishtina/Priština: Mayor Mr. Përparim Rama, the Head of Islamic

Community of Kosovo – Mufti of Kosovo Naim ef. Tërnavë, Bishop of the Diocese Prizren-Prishtina - H.E. Monsignor Dodë Gjergji, the Head of the Kosovo Protestant Evangelical Church - Pastor Arthur Krasniqi, and the Administrator of the Saint Nicholas Church of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Prishtina/Priština - Archpriest Staniša Arsić.

The following text outlines the key insights drawn from these important discussions, as well as the letters expressing the aspirations and expectations shared by the Caravan members.

Key takeaways from meeting with the Mayor of Prishtina/Priština

Meeting with Mayor Përparim Rama – Prishtina/Priština Municipality, August 15, 2024.

Through the letters of desires and expectations, members of the Caravan expressed their desire for a greater role of municipality of Prishtina/Priština in advancement of multi-ethnicity and tolerance, and have put forth concrete proposals for consideration.

Key proposals from the letters of desires and expectations addressed to the Mayor:

- Events like the common market (where residents in the Prishtina/Priština suburb would be invited to exhibit and sell their products) to cultural festivals, sports tournaments and public celebrations can create opportunities for residents to connect, celebrate each other's traditions and make friends.
- The Municipality of Prishtina/Priština, being a part of the Sunny Hill festival, could promote the festival in Serb-majority municipalities and invite and offer free opportunities to the Serbian community to participate in this important event for young people.
- Engage with non-majority communities, address their concerns, ensure their representation in local government and enable the return of Kosovo Serbs.
- Organizing events that highlight Prishtina/Priština 's diverse heritage, encouraging programs that promote understanding and cooperation among students from different backgrounds, and actively ensuring that all ethnic groups feel represented in the Prishtina/Priština administration can be significant.
- Actively engage in building a peaceful and inclusive community by supporting inter-ethnic initiatives, promoting policies that ensure equal opportunities for all and encouraging open and respectful dialogue between different ethnic groups.
- Establishment of a permanent forum with representatives of the population in Bernica, where open issues in the area of governance would be discussed and addressed; Establishing a council for inter-religious dialogue with representatives of the Islamic Community, The Catholic Church, protestant Church and Serbian Orthodox Church. Prishtina/Priština Open City for All initiative – this action would include a vision for a peaceful and inclusive capital.
- Using the opportunities offered to emphasize multiethnicity as value is extremely useful. This may include joint press releases, or social media in the languages of the communities, for example on the occasion of their national days or religious holidays. This may also include published visits to community centers in the municipality, such as the Serbian community center near the Serbian Orthodox Church of Prishtina/Priština, Bosniak centers in Prishtina/Priština, or a similar place for the Roma community. Encouraging peaceful coexistence and multiethnicity, joint declarations regarding these visits would be extremely welcome.

- Undertake the initiative for joint inter-municipal projects led by Prishtina/Priština and carried out by selected multiethnic municipalities, such as Gračanica/Gračanica, Kamenica or Štrpce/Shtërpçë.
- Organizing events in Prishtina/Priština 's primary and secondary schools that highlight different cultures, foods and traditions can foster a sense of unity. Teachers can be empowered to investigate the topics of equality, tolerance and acceptance through art and classroom activities. Creating active debate clubs in schools can teach critical thinking and help students understand different perspectives.
- Organizing cultural visits for students to experience Kosovo's richness of the creation of a "Council for Coexistence" with representatives of different ethnic groups can be an important step towards this goal and diversity can be transformative.
- The Municipality of Prishtina/Priština may set an annual Multi-ethnicity Day, on any given date during the year, in which a meeting of citizens of all ethnic communities, and especially Albanians and Serbs, would be organized in a square in Prishtina/Priština, and which would be followed by a Multiethnic March through the city, and their joint visit to the cafes and restaurants of Prishtina/Priština.

During the meeting, members of the Caravan expressed concerns about increasing ethnic tensions in Kosovo and the country's trajectory, particularly regarding social cohesion and its perception internationally. They proposed a variety of activities to bring together all ethnic groups, such as cultural, artistic, music, and sports events, to make each group feel integrated within the capital. They emphasized the importance of Prishtina/Priština assessing the needs of all its citizens, especially the youth, to better familiarize them with the capital. For example, they highlighted that the Sunny Hill festival was relatively unknown to the Serbian youth in nearby Gračanica/Gračanica, suggesting that more effective promotion of such events could help unite the youth.

The members urged Mayor Rama to be more vocal in promoting multiethnicity and suggested adopting the motto "We are together" to strengthen the public message of unity. They emphasized the importance of making this message clear to all citizens and suggested that while religious communities often maintain more private forms of cooperation, the Mayor should publicly advocate for multiethnic harmony to set a positive example. Additionally, they recommended fostering cooperation with other municipalities to enhance regional solidarity.

Mayor Rama detailed various activities already being undertaken by the municipality to foster a multicultural environment, deliberately avoiding divisive political themes. He spotlighted venues like the Barabar Center and the Brick Factory, which are designed also for multiethnic events. He recounted the Manifesta Biennale in Prishtina/Priština, open to all, which unfortunately did not receive a response from the Gračanica/Gračanica municipality and the Orthodox Church despite outreach efforts. He also mentioned a recent meeting with the Orthodox Church in Prishtina/Priština concerning parking issues and expressed hope for future cooperative meetings. Mayor Rama discussed new initiatives, including "Workshops," a proposed art space where people from all ethnic backgrounds affected by the war can share their experiences. He also talked about "Kalabria Cite," an upcoming project aimed at providing a space for all religious communities, including the Orthodox community, ensuring each has a place to foster religious harmony.

The meeting concluded on a positive note, with Mayor Rama reiterating his commitment to supporting these initiatives. He affirmed his readiness to assist and collaborate with civil society, declaring, "I am ready to help, and consider me as a partner." This statement underscored his dedication to promoting peace and cohabitation in Kosovo.

Key takeaways from the meetings with religious leaders

Key messages from the letters of expectations and desires addressed to the religious leaders were centered along the lines of further advocating understanding and coexistence between ethnic communities, including joint activities. Key proposals from the letters were the following:

- In transmitting messages of tolerance and peace, encouraging believers to accept these values as important to coexistence, joint humanitarian initiatives and community service programs can help overcome divisions and foster solidarity between the Albanian and Serbian communities.
- Support community programs and shared service projects that bring together people from diverse backgrounds, while public sermons and speeches can emphasize unity, tolerance and respect for all.
- Issuing public statements condemning acts of intolerance and promoting interfaith cooperation would send a strong message of unity and inspire others to follow suit.
- Establishing sustainable programs that promote cultural diversity education, supporting shared community projects and ensuring equal representation of all ethnic and religious groups in local government; actively engage in building a peaceful and inclusive community by supporting inter-ethnic initiatives, promoting policies that ensure equal opportunities for all, and encouraging open and respectful dialogue between different ethnic and religious groups.
- Consider to establish interfaith dialogue at the local municipal level to start creating a Culture of Peace. Visiting local Serbian Orthodox religious leaders would have a significant impact on the advancement of peaceful inter-ethnic coexistence in our country. Consider organizing visits to the authorities and religious institutions of the Serbian Orthodox Church on the occasion of their religious celebrations.
- Undertake the initiative to establish an interfaith council, which would coordinate and advise the state and international donors on the protection and rehabilitation of vulnerable religious objects throughout Kosovo.
- Regular meetings of all religious leaders in Kosovo to promote dialogue and cooperation. These meetings can result in joint statements and initiatives that promote unity and understanding.

Meeting with Mr. Vedat ef. Sahiti, Grand Imam of the Islamic Community of Kosovo – July 30, 2024.

Civil society representatives highlighted the polarization between ethnic groups in Kosovo due to historical grievances and the current political climate. They stressed the importance of religious leaders in promoting peace and cohabitation.

Mr. Sahiti, representing the largest religious community in Kosovo, shared the Islamic Community's ongoing efforts in fostering reconciliation, particularly between Islamic and Orthodox youths, supported by OSCE initiatives. He described the Islamic Community's involvement in various initiatives aimed at promoting understanding and unity. These include cultural visits, student exchanges, and regular participation in interfaith dialogue. He emphasized their engagement in educational outreach, specifically mentioning joint workshops for students of Medrese and Bogoslovija, with the goal to learn from each other's cultures and foster mutual understanding. He highlighted the community's good relationship with all religious groups, especially the improved dynamics with the Serbian Orthodox Church.

During the meeting, the civil society representatives presented 10 “Letters of Desires and Expectations” authored by notable community figures, which Mr. Vedat received positively. He expressed his intention to read the values these perspectives bring to promoting inter-ethnic understanding and cooperation.

He expressed concerns about political barriers and the destructive role of the media in fostering negative perceptions, emphasizing efforts to work with media partners to spread positive messages.

The meeting concluded positively and collaboratively, with commitments to continue these dialogues and projects to improve inter-ethnic relations. Mr. Vedat’s open approach and the civil society’s proactive stance underline a shared commitment to building a peaceful and inclusive Kosovo.

Meeting with Bishop Dodë Gjergji – Catholic Cathedral “Mother Teresa” Prishtina/Priština, July 30, 2024.

The civil society representatives discussed the tense inter-ethnic relations in Kosovo, highlighting polarization due to historical grievances and the current political climate. They emphasized the urgent need for messages promoting reconciliation and peace and urged religious leaders to advocate actively for these principles.

Bishop Gjergji affirmed the Catholic Church's dedication to reconciliation and peace building, maintaining neutrality regarding political influences. He addressed a major obstacle: the absence of communication with the Serbian Orthodox Church, which hinders broader religious unity. Despite this, he remains open to engagement and recounted a failed initiative where he proposed gathering all religious communities on the Mitrovica Bridge to symbolize unity. The Bishop reflected on the church's role in supporting marginalized communities underscoring a consistent commitment to aiding those in need. He vowed to continue promoting cohabitation, peace, and reconciliation across communities.

The representatives presented 10 “Letters of Desires and Expectations” authored by notable community figures, which Bishop Gjergji received positively, expressing his intention to respond in writing. These letters called for sustained efforts in fostering a multiethnic Kosovo where peaceful coexistence prevails.

The meeting concluded on an optimistic and cooperative note, with all parties committing to more future meetings, collaborative projects, and community events aimed at enhancing inter-ethnic relations. The civil society representatives reinforced their support for the Bishop's leadership in these endeavors, firmly believing that reconciliation and peace are achievable goals.

Meeting with Pastor Artur Krasniqi, Head of the Protestant Evangelical Church of Kosovo – Protestant Evangelical Church in Prishtina/Priština, July 30, 2024.

Civil society representatives raised concerns about increasing tensions between ethnic groups in Kosovo, and human rights for Serbian ethnicity are violated.

Pastor Krasniqi acknowledged that Kosovo has struggled to promote peace effectively. He noted that the Protestant Evangelical Church maintains good relationships with all religious communities. Pastor Krasniqi highlighted the rise of nationalism on both sides as a significant barrier to peace. He also expressed concerns about the lack of legal recognition for Protestant and

other religious communities in Kosovo, stating that the government has shown little willingness to enact necessary legislation. This absence of legal support, he noted, leaves religious communities operating in a precarious situation.

He expressed expectations that the Kosovo government would not overlook any further its duty to bring religious communities together, suggesting that this neglect exacerbates division. Despite the small size of the Protestant community, he emphasized the shared participation in conferences with Serbian Protestant pastors. He recounted an instance where he organized a conference in Prishtina/Priština attended by pastors from Serbia, promoting reconciliation.

Despite these challenges, he committed to reading the 10 “Letters of Desires and Expectations” presented by civil society representatives. He reaffirmed his dedication to continuing efforts to promote peace and cohabitation in Kosovo.

The meeting ended with a recognition of the obstacles yet a shared commitment among attendees to strive for peace and unity in Kosovo. Pastor Krasniqi's engagement in dialogue and community outreach highlights an ongoing effort to bridge divides and foster a more inclusive society.

Meeting with Archpriest Staniša Arsić at the Orthodox Church in Prishtina/Priština, October 18, 2024.

This focused dialogue with Archpriest Staniša Arsić explored significant challenges and opportunities for interfaith cooperation in Prishtina/Priština. The discussion centered on several operational issues confronting the Orthodox Church, such as property management and parking facility challenges,

A major concern discussed was the inadequate municipal services, notably the insufficient street lighting around the church premises, which not only poses security risks but also signifies neglect by local authorities—a stark contrast to the support other religious establishments receive.

The conversation also delved into the slow progress in reclaiming property rights historically associated with the Orthodox community, with Archpriest Arsić emphasizing the need for stronger advocacy and legal support to address these long-standing grievances.

Despite these challenges, Archpriest Arsić highlighted positive interfaith relations within the community, recounting successful instances of cooperation with leaders from Muslim and Catholic communities. This cooperation has fostered a spirit of mutual respect and camaraderie among different faith groups.

He shared a poignant testimonial about the power of collective efforts: "It is through our united efforts and mutual understanding that we can overcome the challenges facing our community," underscoring his optimism and dedication to fostering communal harmony.

The meeting concluded with Archpriest Arsić expressing strong support for the Caravan and a shared commitment to enhancing cooperation aimed at fostering inter-ethnic and inter-religious coexistence among the diverse communities in the municipality.

This meeting underscored a reaffirmation of the shared goals of peace and cooperation within Prishtina/Priština 's diverse religious communities, setting a hopeful tone for future efforts to strengthen the bonds of understanding and collaboration.

II. Conclusions and Commitments for Future Actions

The "Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Coexistence" initiative has successfully facilitated a series of pivotal dialogues in Pristina, leading to significant commitments from key community leaders to enhance inter-ethnic understanding and cooperation. The collective efforts displayed during these dialogues underscore a robust determination to confront challenges and capitalize on opportunities for cultivating a harmonious multi-ethnic society in Kosovo.

Strategic Commitments from Religious Leaders: The discussions with prominent religious figures such as Grand Imam Vedat ef. Sahiti, Bishop Dodë Gjerhji, Pastor Artur Krasniqi, and Archpriest Staniša Arsić have underscored the vital role that religious communities play in fostering peace and unity. Religious leaders pledged to:

- Initiate and maintain interfaith dialogue platforms that address existing tensions and promote enduring relationships among diverse religious groups.
- Facilitate and endorse community-centered initiatives that highlight the significance of mutual respect and understanding, fostering a grassroots commitment to peace and cohabitation.

Municipal Leadership's Role in Enhancing Community Cohesion: Mayor Përparim Rama's conversations have illuminated the municipality's crucial role in developing an inclusive urban environment. His commitments include:

- Implementing policies and initiatives that actively foster cultural diversity and inter-ethnic engagement, such as multicultural festivals and inclusive public celebrations.
- Promoting the active involvement of non-majority communities in municipal planning processes to ensure inclusive decision-making and representation in the city's development.

Collaborative Actions for Sustainable Change: A shared commitment to reshaping Kosovo's inter-ethnic relations was evident throughout all discussions. The primary strategies identified include:

- Establishing a "Council for Coexistence": This body will oversee and integrate inter-ethnic initiatives into community activities and government policies, fostering long-term inclusivity.
- Creating an Interfaith Council: Working in partnership with the government and international organizations, this council will focus on protecting and honoring religious sites, promoting shared cultural heritage, and enhancing mutual respect.
- Regularizing Dialogues: Scheduling consistent meetings between religious and civic leaders to maintain open communication, implement joint initiatives, and ensure governance responsive to the diverse needs and aspirations of all community members.

**Meetings in Prishtina/Priština:
Mayor and Religious Leaders**



Meeting with Mayor Mr. Përparim Rama, Municipality of Prishtina/Priština 14th of August, 2024



Meeting with Mr. Vedat ef. Sahiti, Grand Imam of the Islamic Community of Kosovo 30th of July, 2024



Meeting with Bishop Dodë Gjergji, Diocese Prizren - Prishtina 30th of July, 2024



Meeting with Archpriest Arsić, Serbian Orthodox Church of St. Nicholas in Priština, 18th of October, 2024



Meeting with Mr. Artur Krasniqi, Pastor Kosovo Protestant Evangelical Church 30th of July, 2024



Letters of Desires and Expectations

Leonora Kryeziu, Jovana Radosavljević, Robert Muharremi, Dušan Radaković, Ilir Deda, Senad Šabović, Ramadan Ilazi, Dimitrije Obrenović, Mentor Agani dhe Zoran Savić

Mr. Përparim Rama, Mayor
Municipality of Prishtina/Priština

July 2024

**Leonora Kryeziu, Executive Director
Prishtina Institute for Political Studies
Prishtina, Kosovë**

Honorable Mayor Rama,

I am Leonora Kryeziu, a resident of Prishtina, born in 1971. Given that I belong to a generation that spent its childhood and youth in the former Yugoslavia, I remember very well how the multi-ethnic coexistence in Prishtina looked like, with its colorations of a somewhat peaceful coexistence which were as beautiful, as they were dark.

Grown in the heart of Prishtina, my house was located in a neighborhood populated by Serbian neighbors, with whom, in despite of not being close friends, we had a common cohabitation in schools, workplaces, and in the sphere of culture. The latter was perhaps the common meeting point that generated the most cooperation, given that music, sport and culture fostered a sense of belonging at that time.

With this letter, I want to share with you my personal expectations and desires regarding the promotion of social cohesion between the Albanian and Serbian communities in the capital, not only by citing examples from the past but also by the opportunities provided by the present. Politics is the most powerful tool in the hands of a leader to influence people's lives, by building or by destroying the communication bridges, and therefore I believe that today you have the opportunity to pave the way for greater social cohesion, both in our municipality and at the national level.

What is our capital today, and is there anything more that we can do to give it back its inclusive nature, where every citizen, Albanian and Serbian alike, can feel it as the city of its own? Today, Prishtina is not inhabited by the former Kosovo Serb citizens. Prishtina's schools are monoethnic, hospitals are visited and used by everyone except Serbian population. We all know the reasons, but today I want to challenge ourselves and think on whether we can do more, on whether we can return Prishtina to those citizens of the Serbian community who want to experience and feel it as the place of their own, a place where they have passed their childhood and have been educated, where they can feel safe and wanted, where their children can share common school spaces, and our hospitals will be their first address, in order to don't have the repetition of painful cases like the one of the 15-year old girl who lost her life because the Prishtina hospital was not supposed to be visited. I believe that the capital has opportunities, and that it should work for the future that will be richer in every aspect.

What can the city do for the citizens of its own while the politics is dealing with great decisions?

Firstly, I believe that the organization and provision of joint community events can play a crucial role in bringing people together; the breakdown of the barriers can be carried out even in silence. Events such as the common market (where residents of Prishtina's surroundings would be invited to exhibit and sell their products), and up to cultural festivals, sport tournaments and public celebrations, can create opportunities for residents to connect, to celebrate each other's traditions, and to create friendships. I wish for a future where these events will become a tradition in Prishtina and even in other municipalities, thus symbolizing our common identity and promoting mutual respect among all the citizens.

At the beginning I mentioned the role that music and culture had in the past. I believe that Prishtina has something to offer in this direction. For several years now, our municipality has been the host of the largest festival in the region, the Sunny Hill Festival – which surpasses the size of

the country and of the region, but which remains remote and inaccessible to a part of the population, the young people from the Serbian community in Kosovo. Being in a way a shareholder in this festival, The Municipality of Prishtina could promote the festival in municipalities with Serbian majority and invite and offer free opportunities to the Serbian community to participate in this event so important for young people. Nothing brings people together better than music.

Secondly, other cultural organizations with a charitable character, which are organized by the civil society, are a good opportunity to be used and supported by the municipality. To mention just a single example, the charity initiative like 'Cycling for Kosovo Children', which is organized every year by the association 'Mother and Child', could be supported by the municipality and the dedicated funds could go to support the children of the Serbian community.

Thirdly, municipalities can initiate visits or exchanges between Albanian and Serbian students, organize online game tournaments, English language competitions, sports tournaments which will give young people the opportunity to break ethnic barriers and to get and know each-other – the other through cultural and sports events.

Shared infrastructure projects, such as parks, bridges, recreational facilities, and community centers, can also serve as powerful symbols of unity. These shared spaces can provide tangible benefits for all residents and demonstrate the positive results of joint work. I want to see a future where the bridge over the river Iber serves as a common space between communities and that such projects become the benchmark of our collaborative efforts.

Joint humanitarian projects, such as food drives, charity events and support for vulnerable parts of populations, can also bring our communities closer together. By working side by side on these projects, Albanian and Serbian volunteers can build relationships and develop a sense of solidarity.

In conclusion, I hope that with your leadership and commitment, we can build a more inclusive and peaceful future. I believe that through joint efforts and commitment to common values, we can create a city where all residents, regardless of their ethnicity, will feel valued and respected. In this way, we can build a society where everyone lives in harmony and peace, with the common goal of developing a better future for future generations.

With respect,

Leonora Kryeziu

Jovana Radosavljević, Executive Director
New Social Initiative
North Mitrovica, Kosovo

Dear Mr. Rama,

I hope this letter finds you well. My name is Jovana Radosavljević, a Kosovo Serb civil society activist from North Mitrovica, working on reconciliation efforts between Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Albanians. I am writing to you as part of the Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation to share my expectations and desires for multi-ethnic cohabitation in Kosovo.

As Mayor, your role is pivotal in promoting inclusive policies and events that celebrate our diverse cultures. I urge you to engage with non-majority communities, address their concerns, ensure their representation in local governance, and enable the return of the Kosovo Serbs.

Looking ahead, my vision is a Kosovo where multi-ethnic cohabitation is a reality. In Pristina, I hope to see intercultural centers and initiatives that promote dialogue and joint community projects. Establishing a "Cohabitation Council" with representatives from various ethnic groups could be a significant step toward this goal.

In conclusion, I encourage you to continue building a peaceful and inclusive community. Your leadership can inspire others to follow suit, creating a future where everyone feels at home in Kosovo.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jovana Radosavljević

Dr. Robert Muharremi
Fred C. Cuny Center for Peace and Conflict Studies
Rochester Institute of Technology in Kosovo
Prishtina, Kosovo

Dear Mayor Mr.Përparim Rama

I am writing to you today to commend your dedication to leading Prishtina as a vibrant, modern, and inclusive city. The Fred C. Cuny Center for Peace and Conflict Studies at the Rochester Institute of Technology in Kosovo provides an academic platform for studying and teaching the causes, practices, and consequences of war and political violence, as well as methods of conflict management and resolution. Our research helps academics, governments, practitioners, and civil society understand the nature of conflict and formulate effective resolution policies. Our Center is at the fore front of bringing together think tanks and civil society organizations representing different Kosovo communities and fostering a climate of mutual understanding and tolerance.

I am writing to express my and our Centre's full support for the Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation initiative. Kosovo is a multiethnic, democratic and pluralistic society, and I believe that upholding Kosovo's Constitution, which enshrines these values and Kosovo's Euro-Atlantic orientation, is not only critical but it is also the essence of what Kosovo stands for.

At the local government level, initiatives promoting multi-ethnic cooperation and religious tolerance can have a profound impact. Organizing events that emphasize Prishtina's diverse heritage, encouraging programs that promote understanding and cooperation among students from different backgrounds, and actively ensuring that all ethnic groups feel represented within Prishtina's administration could be meaningful. By taking such steps, you can send a powerful message of unity, inclusion, and leadership in accordance with Kosovo's constitutional values.

I hope to see us strive together for a society where Albanians and Serbs and all other communities live together harmoniously with understanding and mutual respect.

I am confident that we can create a peaceful and inclusive society where diversity is celebrated in our multiethnic state, and every individual feels valued and respected.

Thank you for your commitment to this noble cause.

Sincerely,

Dr. Robert Muharremi

**Dušan Radaković, Executive Director
Advocacy Center for Democratic Culture (ACDC)
North Mitrovica, Kosovo**

Dear Mayor Përparim Rama,

My name is Dušan Radaković, and I am the Executive Director of the Advocacy Center for Democratic Culture (ACDC). Born in 1984 in Mitrovica, I have been deeply committed to fostering inter-ethnic dialogue and cooperation since the end of the conflict in Kosovo. Over the years, I have participated in numerous multiethnic initiatives, working alongside various international organizations to promote peace and understanding among different communities.

With a Master's Degree in Law and extensive experience in civil society, including roles in media and project management, I have dedicated my career to advocating for democratic values and human rights. The purpose of this letter is to share my personal expectations and desires regarding the enhancement of multi-ethnic cohabitation in Kosovo, as part of the Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation.

I expect your leadership to pave the way for inclusive urban development policies that accommodate and celebrate all ethnic communities in Pristina. Encouraging public events that promote cultural diversity and supporting inter-ethnic dialogue forums would be crucial.

My desire is to see a future where multi-ethnic cohabitation is the norm in Kosovo, particularly in municipalities like Pristina. I envision communities where ethnic differences are celebrated as strengths rather than sources of division. In this regard, long-term goals include establishing sustainable programs that promote education on cultural diversity, supporting joint economic ventures between different ethnic groups, and ensuring equal representation in local governance.

I am availing myself of this opportunity to urge you to actively engage in building a peaceful and inclusive community by supporting inter-ethnic initiatives, promoting policies that ensure equal opportunities for all, and encouraging open and respectful dialogue between different ethnic groups.

I end this letter with a positive note, expressing my hope for a brighter future where our collective efforts will lead to a truly harmonious and multi-ethnic society in Kosovo. I am confident that, with our shared commitment, we can make significant strides towards this noble cause.

Warm regards,

Dušan Radaković

**Ilir Deda,
Civil Society Activist
Prishtina, Kosovo**

Dear Mayor Rama,

I have been engaged and involved in key issues for Kosovo and the Western Balkans for over two decades in various roles, including preservation and advancement of diversity in our country. The purpose of this letter is to explore opportunities to begin the creation of culture of peace in our country, and to expand your involvement in promoting Prishtina as an open city for all people, which includes the multiethnic cohabitation in our capital. This is especially important now when populist and exclusive attitudes are gaining ground.

I believe there are a few short-term and long-term steps that can be taken from you and establish them into practices.

Short-term, a visit to the village of Bërnica, where majority of local Serbs reside, would be the first step. The purpose of this visit should be to hear from the local population on the current state of affairs and explore further opportunities for the municipality to address their needs. If feasible, a permanent dialogue with the community can be established, and advance local development projects, including introduction of specific measures to preserve the community and their wellbeing.

The second priority visit would be at the Saint Nicolas Church and meeting with the Deacon of the Church. The Church plays a significant role for the Serb population, and the visit could result in greater understanding from your Office on the needs of the Church and also enhanced assistance for Serbs living in municipality of Prishtina. The Church has a great overview on the number of the Serbs living in our municipality and their specific needs which your Office may address.

You have a central role for transforming our capital by exploring ways to establish value based structures that will enable Prishtina being an Open Capital for All. In this regard, I kindly suggest you consider the following long-term initiatives to foster inter-ethnic and inter-religious harmony in Prishtina:

1. A permanent forum with the representatives of the population in Bërnica, which would meet no more than 4 times a year, where open issues in the governance domain would be discussed and addressed;
2. Establishing a council for inter-faith dialogue with the representatives of the Islamic Community, the Catholic Church, the Protestant Church and the Serbian Orthodox Church. This council could also serve as a basis for regular dialogue between the municipality and the local religious institutions, including greater understanding among the local religious leaders.
3. Prishtina Open City for All initiative – this action would include a vision for a peaceful and inclusive capital city.

I strongly believe that your leadership is critical at this point of development of our country, and express hope that you will consider the proposed actions.

With sincere regards,

Ilir Deda

**Senad Šabović, Senior Adviser
European Institute for Peace
Brussels - Prishtina**

Honorable Mayor Rama,

My name is Senad Šabović and I am writing to You as a supporter of the project called *Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation*. I work as a senior advisor with the European Institute of Peace, with the primary focus on supporting the EU-facilitated Dialogue and the normalization process in general. My organization is part of a civil society coalition, called the Kosovo Civic Alternative (KCA), which strives to provide a tangible contribution in this field. Other than brief tenures abroad, I have been a proud citizen of Prishtina and want to use this opportunity to also thank you for Your leadership and visionary management of our bellowed city.

This letter is meant to state my expectations from You in terms of multi-ethnicity and cohabitation. As we know, the Republic of Kosovo is defined as a multi-ethnic state of all of its citizens and communities. These principles are firmly embedded in Kosovo's constitutional and legal system. They also continue to be a key expectation of our Western partners and the organizational system of the Euro-Atlantic community, to which we aspire. As such, the principles of multi-ethnicity, understanding and peaceful cohabitation should be fully reflected in our Capitol City. A lot of work has been done by the city and the state in this regard, but it needs to further solidify and expand, especially at this time of increased tension and stalled normalization. I have noticed with great appreciation some of Your contributions in this regard. In particular, Your support for the Bosniak community center in Prishtina and Your engagement with the Mayor of Sarajevo are very commendable. Your non-populist and management-oriented leadership approach is also highly appreciated as conducive to practical inter-community engagements.

The colleagues from the project and I would like to encourage You to expand on these initiatives and offer a few suggestions in this regard. In general terms, using the opportunities provided to stress multi-ethnicity as a value is extremely useful. This may include press releases or social media content by You and the municipality in community languages, for example on the occasion of their national days or religious holidays. It may also include Your publicized visits to community centers in the municipality, such as the Serb community center near the Orthodox Church of Prishtina, the Bosniak center in Prishtina, or a similar venue for the Roma community. Joint statements associated with these visits, encouraging peaceful cohabitation and multi-ethnicity, would be most welcome.

In more particular terms, You could take the initiative towards joint inter-municipal projects led by Prishtina and conducted with select multi-ethnic municipalities, such as Gracanica, Kamenica, or Shtërpce. This would be a great way to engage on development-oriented trust-building. It could develop into a standing inter-municipal cooperation structure that could then engage with the Association of Municipalities of Kosovo on projects reflecting this same concept.

Rest assured, Honorable Mayor, that my colleagues from the European Institute of Peace, from this project, as well as from the mentioned KCA coalition, would be more than willing to provide tangible support to You and Your team in the execution of the suggestions provided hereby.

With great respect and appreciation,

Senad Šabović

**Ramadan Ilazi, Head of Research
Kosovar Center for Security Studies
Prishtina, Kosovo**

Dear Mayor Rama,

My name is Ramadan Ilazi, and I am currently the head of research at the Kosovar Centre for Security Studies (KCSS). With a background in peace and conflict studies, holding a master's degree from the University of St. Andrews and a PhD from Dublin City University (DCU), I have dedicated my career to promoting Kosovo as a democratic and diverse society. My roles have included being an activist, leading organizations, and serving as Deputy Minister for European Integration.

Kosovo's Constitution begins with the vision of building a future as a free, democratic, and peace-loving country for all its citizens. This vision is pivotal, and it is our collective responsibility to bring it to fruition. Central to this vision is the idea that Kosovo is home to all its citizens, who should feel a sense of belonging and pride.

Diversity is a core strength of Kosovo, and it should be celebrated and nurtured. Civil society and public institutions must work together to foster tolerance, cohabitation, and education against discrimination.

As the Mayor of Prishtina, your role in promoting diversity is vital. Your leadership can inspire inclusive political discourse and policies. I encourage you to implement initiatives that celebrate Kosovo's cultural and ethnic diversity in our schools. For instance, organizing events in Prishtina's primary and secondary schools that highlight different cultures, foods, and traditions can foster a sense of unity. Teachers can be empowered to explore themes of equality, tolerance, and acceptance through art and classroom activities. Establishing active debate clubs across schools can teach critical thinking and help students understand diverse perspectives.

Moreover, organizing cultural visits for students to experience the richness of Kosovo's diversity firsthand can be transformative. These initiatives can create a model of cohabitation that inspires other regions and builds a more cohesive society.

I am hopeful and confident in your commitment to this cause.

Thank you,

Ramadan Ilazi

**Dimitrije Obrenović,
Project Coordinator
NGO Aktiv
North Mitrovica, Kosovo**

Dear Mr. Rama,

I hope this letter finds you well. My name is Dimitrije Obrenovic, a Kosovo Serb civil society activist from North Mitrovica. I am deeply committed to reconciliation efforts between Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Albanians. I am writing as part of the Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation to share my expectations and desires for multi-ethnic cohabitation in Kosovo.

As Mayor, your role is pivotal in promoting inclusive policies and events that celebrate our diverse cultures. I urge you to engage with non-majority communities, address their concerns, ensure their representation in local governance, and enable the return of the Kosovo Serbs.

Looking ahead, my vision is a Kosovo where multi-ethnic cohabitation is a reality. In Pristina, I hope to see intercultural centers and initiatives that promote dialogue and joint community projects. Establishing a "Cohabitation Council" with representatives from various ethnic groups could be a significant step toward this goal.

In conclusion, I encourage you to continue building a peaceful and inclusive community. Your leadership can inspire others to follow suit, creating a future where everyone feels at home in Kosovo.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dimitrije Obrenović

Mentor Agani, Senior Researcher
Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development
Prishtina, Kosovo

Dear Mayor Rama,

I am Mentor Agani, and I am a Senior Researcher at KIPRED, The Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development, as well as a Lecturer at the Dardania College in Prishtina. During the period 2003-2016, I was also a Lecturer at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Prishtina. I am writing this letter with the intention of expressing some of my expectations and desires regarding the inter-ethnic cohabitation in Kosovo.

I am convinced that you, and the Municipality of Prishtina under your leadership, can provide a precious contribution for this. The municipality of Prishtina is not only the capital of Kosovo and of all of its citizens, but it also is the capital of all the ethnic communities of Kosovo – something that is often neglected due to the fact that this municipality is not characterized with high level of ethnic mixture of its population. But this aspect should not be neglected: Prishtina must necessarily reflect itself as the capital of all the ethnic communities of Kosovo, and particularly of the Serbian community – if Prishtina does not consider itself as the capital of Kosovo Serbs, then, the problem is not that Kosovo Serbs will not consider Prishtina as the capital of their own, and that they will, consequently, look somewhere else for their capital, but that they will have legitimate right to do so.

The Municipality of Prishtina, with all of its directorates, should establish contacts with Kosovo Serbs (from Prishtina, from surrounding municipalities, and from all the Kosovo), in order to ascertain what it can do to make Kosovo Serbs feel Prishtina as the capital of their own. As an idea, the Municipality of Prishtina can establish an annual Day of Multiethnicity at some given date during the year, in which a meeting of citizens of all the ethnic communities, and particularly of Albanians and Serbs, will be organized at some square in Prishtina, and that will be followed with an Multiethnic March through the city, and with their joint visiting of Prishtina's coffee-bars and restaurants.

Through municipal cooperation, it can be arranged to organize this (Prishtina's) Day of Multiethnicity in surrounding municipalities with Serbian majority (or with considerable portions of Serbian population), which will also organize marches of multi-ethnicity, now with Serbs hosting Albanians. This can create possibilities for Albanians and Serbs to compete in hospitality.

Indeed, this can be associated with numerous other joint Albanian/Serbian professional activities, like meetings and conferences on issues related to municipal activities, and particularly those related to inter-ethnic cohabitation.

This is just one idea, and we can find plenty of similar ones. Each and every municipal directorate can give some ideas on inter-ethnic cooperation. The goal should be to make the Kosovo Serbs know that Prishtina is considering them as citizens of its own. And if this makes Kosovo Serbs to consider Prishtina as a capital of their own, Kosovo will certainly be a better place to live.

Thank you, and my best regards,

Mentor Agani

Zoran Savič, Project Coordinator
NGO AKTIV
North Mitrovica, Kosovo

Dear Mayor Përparim Rama,

My name is Zoran Savič and I am a project coordinator in the non-governmental organization Aktiv from North Mitrovica. Although I was born in Pula, Croatia, I have actually lived in Mitrovica for 30 years and I am actively involved in social life in Kosovo, both through work and cultural life, considering that I am also a musician, and I have participated in various inter-ethnic projects with musicians of Albanian nationality.

At the same time, for many years I worked as a journalist in the Kosovo Sever portal - KoSSev, and through this job I became even more familiar with the political and security situation in Kosovo. Even today, I collaborate with many Albanian journalists and editors, both project-wise and through jobs that are not related to the same.

Your position as mayor of Pristina, the capital of Kosovo, can help a lot in promoting messages of peace and unity. Therefore, I am looking forward for your support in organizing inter-ethnic dialogues and community service projects that involve different ethnic groups working together.

In this spirit, I hope for a future where multi-ethnic cohabitation becomes the norm in Kosovo. I envision communities where ethnic differences are embraced as strengths rather than sources of division. To this end, you might focus on creating sustainable programs that educate on cultural diversity and tolerance, support joint community projects, and ensure equal representation of all ethnic groups in local governance.

Therefore, I encourage you to actively participate in creating a peaceful and inclusive community by supporting inter-ethnic initiatives, advocating for policies that guarantee equal opportunities for everyone, and fostering open and respectful dialogue between various ethnic groups.

I conclude this letter on a hopeful note, envisioning a future where our united efforts cultivate a genuinely harmonious and multi-ethnic society in Kosovo. I am certain that with our shared dedication, we can achieve remarkable progress toward this worthy goal.

Zoran Savič



Letters of Desires and Expectations

Leonora Kryeziu, Jovana Radosavljević, Robert Muharremi, Dušan Radaković, Ilir Deda, Senad Šabović, Ramadan Ilazi, Dimitrije Obrenović, Mentor Agani dhe Zoran Savić

Mr. Naim ef. Tërnavë
Mufti of Kosovo

July 2024

**Leonora Kryeziu, Executive Director
Prishtina Institute for Political Studies
Prishtina, Kosovë**

Honourable Mr. Tërnavë,

I am Leonora Kryeziu, a resident of Prishtina born in 1971. Given that I belong to a generation that spent its childhood and youth in the former Yugoslavia, I remember very well what the multi-ethnic coexistence in Prishtina looked like, with the colorations that were beautiful as much as they were dark, of a somewhat peaceful coexistence.

With this letter, I want to share with you my personal expectations and desires regarding the promotion of social cohesion between the Albanian and Serbian communities in the capital, and not only by citing examples from the past, but also the opportunities that the present provides us.

Regarding the religious community, I profoundly appreciate the role that religious leaders play in promoting unity and mutual understanding among different ethnic and religious groups. I believe that in a society often divided along ethnic lines, the religion has the power to unite people and inspire them towards peace and harmony.

You have a very important role in conveying messages of tolerance and peace, by encouraging your believers to accept these values as important for our coexistence. Joint humanitarian initiatives and community service programs can help bridge divisions and cultivate solidarity between the Albanian and Serbian communities. By engaging in such joint activities, we can build relationships based on empathy and mutual appreciation.

Let's try together to create a society in which every resident, regardless of its ethnicity or origin, will feel appreciated and respected. I believe in our joint ability to build a harmonious community for future generations.

With respect,

Leonora Kryeziu

Jovana Radosavljevič, Executive Director
New Social Initiative
North Mitrovica, Kosovo

Dear Mufti Tërnavë,

I hope this letter finds you well. My name is Jovana Radosavljević, a Kosovo Serb civil society activist from North Mitrovica, working on reconciliation efforts between Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Albanians. I am writing to you as part of the Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation to share my expectations and desires for multi-ethnic cohabitation in Kosovo.

Your leadership within the Islamic Community of Kosovo can greatly promote inter-ethnic cohabitation. Encouraging dialogue and cooperation between different religious and ethnic groups can build bridges of understanding. I urge you to support community programs that bring together people from diverse backgrounds and promote joint community service projects.

Looking forward, I envision a Kosovo where multi-ethnic cohabitation is embraced. Regular interfaith meetings and intercultural initiatives can foster dialogue and cooperation. Your sermons and public addresses can emphasize unity, tolerance, and respect for all.

In conclusion, I encourage you to continue your efforts in building a peaceful and inclusive community. Your leadership can inspire others to create a future where everyone feels at home in Kosovo.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jovana Radosavljević

Dr. Robert Muharremi
Fred C. Cuny Center for Peace and Conflict Studies
Rochester Institute of Technology in Kosovo
Prishtina, Kosovo

Dear Mufti of Kosovo, Mr. Naim ef. Tërnav

I am writing to express my deepest respect for your leadership and the important role you play in fostering peace and understanding within Kosovo. The Fred C. Cuny Center for Peace and Conflict Studies at the Rochester Institute of Technology in Kosovo provides an academic platform for studying and teaching the causes, practices, and consequences of war and political violence, as well as methods of conflict management and resolution. Our research helps academics, governments, practitioners, and civil society understand the nature of conflict and formulate effective resolution policies. Our Center is at the forefront of bringing together think tanks and civil society organizations representing different Kosovo communities and fostering a climate of mutual understanding and tolerance.

I am writing to express my and our Centre's full support for the Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation initiative. Kosovo is a multiethnic, democratic and pluralistic society, and I believe that upholding Kosovo's Constitution, which enshrines these values and Kosovo's Euro-Atlantic orientation, is not only critical but it is also the essence of what Kosovo stands for.

As a leader respected by all communities, your voice carries significant weight. I hope that you will actively engage in promoting ethnic, cultural and religious tolerance between all communities in Kosovo. I urge you to continue your invaluable work in promoting a multi-ethnic Kosovo where all citizens, regardless of their background, feel respected and safe. Your guidance can inspire religious tolerance and understanding, encouraging genuine dialogue and cooperation between all communities. This will be essential for a peaceful Kosovo that belongs to all its communities.

I hope to see us strive together for a society where Albanians and Serbs and all other communities live together harmoniously with understanding and mutual respect.

I am confident that we can create a peaceful and inclusive society where diversity is celebrated in our multiethnic state, and every individual feels valued and respected.

Thank you for your commitment to this noble cause.

Sincerely,

Dr. Robert Muharremi

Dušan Radaković, Executive Director
Advocacy Center for Democratic Culture (ACDC)
North Mitrovica, Kosovo

Dear Mufti Naim ef. Ternava,

My name is Dušan Radaković, and I am the Executive Director of the Advocacy Center for Democratic Culture (ACDC). Born in 1984 in Mitrovica, I have been deeply committed to fostering inter-ethnic dialogue and cooperation since the end of the conflict in Kosovo. Over the years, I have participated in numerous multiethnic initiatives, working alongside various international organizations to promote peace and understanding among different communities.

With a Master's Degree in Law and extensive experience in civil society, including roles in media and project management, I have dedicated my career to advocating for democratic values and human rights. The purpose of this letter is to share my personal expectations and desires regarding the enhancement of multi-ethnic cohabitation in Kosovo, as part of the Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation.

Your influential position in the Muslim community can help in promoting messages of peace and unity. I look forward to your support in organizing interfaith dialogues and community service projects that involve different religious groups working together.

In this spirit, I hope for a future where multi-ethnic cohabitation becomes the norm in Kosovo. I envision communities where ethnic and religious differences are embraced as strengths rather than sources of division. To this end, you might focus on creating sustainable programs that educate on cultural diversity and tolerance, support joint community projects, and ensure equal representation of all ethnic and religious groups in local governance.

Therefore, I encourage you to actively participate in creating a peaceful and inclusive community by supporting inter-ethnic initiatives, advocating for policies that guarantee equal opportunities for everyone, and fostering open and respectful dialogue between various ethnic and religious groups..

I conclude this letter on a hopeful note, envisioning a future where our united efforts cultivate a genuinely harmonious and multi-ethnic society in Kosovo. I am certain that with our shared dedication, we can achieve remarkable progress toward this worthy goal.

Dušan Radaković

**Ilir Deda,
Civil Society Activist
Prishtina, Kosovo**

Dear Mufti Ternava,

I have been engaged and involved in key issues for Kosovo and the Western Balkans for over two decades in various roles, including preservation and advancement of diversity in our country.

The purpose of this letter is to explore opportunities to expand your involvement in promoting Prishtina as an open city for all people, which includes the multiethnic and multi-religious cohabitation in our capital. This is especially important now when populist and exclusive attitudes are gaining ground.

Inter-religious harmony has been at the core values of our nation, and the Islamic Community of Kosovo has a central role in preserving and promoting this value. I believe there are a few short-term and long-term gestures that can be taken from you and establish them into practices. A few stem from the past practices.

In the past, there was a practice where religious leaders would publicly congratulate the most important religious holidays to each other. The reintroduction of this practice, although symbolic, would be the initial step towards advancing inter-religious respect in our country. This would mean respect for the most important religious holidays for members of Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox communities.

Inter-faith dialogue and greater understanding is a modern form aiming to advance cohabitation and inter-religious harmony. Although we live in times when harmony is not valued, I believe Kosovo given its unique history, can establish inter-faith dialogue at the local municipal level, to begin creating the culture of peace. This forum would advance the mutual understanding between local religious leaders, including the understanding with local municipal authorities. It would also serve as a forum to discuss and address respective needs of each of the religious communities.

Last, visit to the local Orthodox religious leaders would have a significant impact on advancing inter-ethnic peaceful cohabitation in our country. Kosovo will be successful only if it preserves its multi-ethnic character, and the Islamic Community of Kosovo has a key role in preserving and advancing this character of our state.

I strongly believe that your leadership is critical at this point of development of our country, and express hope that you will consider the proposed actions.

With sincere regards,

Ilir Deda

**Senad Šabović, Senior Adviser
European Institute for Peace
Brussels - Prishtina**

Honorable Grand Mufti Tërnavë,

My name is Senad Šabović and I am writing to You as a supporter of the project called *Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation*. I work as a senior advisor with the European Institute of Peace, with the primary focus on supporting the EU-facilitated Dialogue and the normalization process in general. My organization is part of a civil society coalition, called the Kosovo Civic Alternative (KCA), which strives to provide a tangible contribution in this field.

This letter is meant to state my expectations from You in terms of multi-ethnicity and cohabitation. As we know, the Republic of Kosovo is defined as a multi-ethnic state of all of its citizens and communities. These principles are firmly embedded in Kosovo's constitutional and legal system. They also continue to be a key expectation of our international partners and the organizational system of the Euro-Atlantic community, to which we aspire. As such, the principles of multi-ethnicity, understanding and peaceful cohabitation should be fully reflected in the religious life of our country. A lot of work has been done in this regard, but it needs to further solidify and expand, especially at this time of increased tension and stalled normalization. Over the years, and especially as a political director of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo (2015-2020), I have noticed with great appreciation some of Your contributions in this regard. Your engagements with the leaders and representatives of other Faiths represented in Kosovo and Your leadership in the context of different Inter-Faith dialogue frameworks and various Inter-Faith practical cooperation initiatives have been particularly impressive.

The colleagues from the project and I would like to encourage You to expand on these initiatives and offer a few suggestions in this regard. In general terms, using the opportunities provided to stress multi-ethnicity as a value is extremely useful. This may include joint press releases, social media content, or joint visits with different religious or institutional leaders to community centers and sites. Facilitating the inclusion of respect for religious and ethnic diversity into the Jumu'ah sermons, as I am sure is taking place already, would also be an effective way of contributing.

In more particular terms, You could take the initiative towards creating an Inter-Faith council jointly with the leaders of Kosovo's other Faiths that would coordinate and advise the state and international donors in terms of the protection and rehabilitation of vulnerable religious sites throughout Kosovo. This would not only enhance the physical wellbeing of these sites but also continuously reaffirm the message of Peace, so firmly embedded in the Muslim Faith both in Kosovo and worldwide.

Rest assured, Honorable Grand Mufti, that my colleagues from the European Institute of Peace, from this project, as well as from the mentioned KCA coalition, would be more than willing to provide tangible support to You and Your fellow religious leaders in the execution of the suggestions provided hereby.

With great respect and appreciation.

Senad Šabović

**Ramadan Ilazi, Head of Research
Kosovar Center for Security Studies
Prishtina, Kosovo**

Dear ef. Tërnavë,

My name is Ramadan Ilazi, and I am currently the head of research at the Kosovar Centre for Security Studies (KCSS). With a background in peace and conflict studies, holding a master's degree from the University of St. Andrews and a PhD from Dublin City University (DCU), I have dedicated my career to promoting Kosovo as a democratic and diverse society. My roles have included being an activist, leading organizations, and serving as Deputy Minister for European Integration.

Kosovo's Constitution begins with the vision of building a future as a free, democratic, and peace-loving country for all its citizens. This vision is pivotal, and it is our collective responsibility to bring it to fruition. Central to this vision is the idea that Kosovo is home to all its citizens, who should feel a sense of belonging and pride.

Diversity is a core strength of Kosovo, and it should be celebrated and nurtured. Civil society and public institutions must work together to foster tolerance, cohabitation, and education against discrimination.

As the Grand Mufti of Kosovo, your role in promoting peace and tolerance is of utmost importance. Islam, as a peace-loving religion, should be at the forefront of these efforts. I encourage you to implement teachings within mosques that emphasize tolerance, acceptance, and the value of our diverse society. These teachings can play a significant role in shaping a more inclusive and understanding community. For instance, during the regular Friday lectures, khutbah, or have guest Khatib deliver a lecture on the subject of tolerance.

Moreover, I propose organizing regular joint meetings between all religious leaders in Kosovo. These meetings can serve as a platform for dialogue and collaboration, leading to joint statements and initiatives that promote mutual respect among different faith communities. Such collaboration can set a powerful example for all citizens and reinforce the message of coexistence and harmony. Concrete initiatives, such as interfaith dialogues, community service projects, and cultural exchange events, can further enhance our efforts.

I am hopeful and confident in your commitment to this cause.

Your leadership and the principles of Islam can inspire a future where Kosovo's diversity is seen as a source of strength and pride.

Thank you,

Ramadan Ilazi

**Dimitrije Obrenović,
Project Coordinator
NGO Aktiv
North Mitrovica, Kosovo**

Dear Mufti Naim ef. Ternava,

My name is Dimitrije Obrenović, and I am a human rights activist living in North Mitrovica. I strive for equal human rights and the better fostering of inter-religious cooperation, strongly believing that further cooperation is required for a better future.

Your influential position in the Muslim community can help in promoting messages of peace and unity. I look forward to your support in organizing interfaith dialogues and community service projects that involve different religious groups working together.

In this spirit, I hope for a future where multi-ethnic cohabitation becomes the norm in Kosovo. I envision communities where ethnic and religious differences are embraced as strengths rather than sources of division. To this end, you might focus on creating sustainable programs that educate on cultural diversity and tolerance, support joint community projects, and ensure equal representation of all ethnic and religious groups in local governance..

Therefore, I encourage you to actively participate in creating a peaceful and inclusive community by supporting inter-ethnic initiatives, advocating for policies that guarantee equal opportunities for everyone, and fostering open and respectful dialogue between various ethnic and religious groups..

I conclude this letter on a hopeful note, envisioning a future where our united efforts cultivate a genuinely harmonious and multi-ethnic society in Kosovo. I am certain that with our shared dedication, we can achieve remarkable progress toward this worthy goal.

Dimitrije Obrenović

**Mentor Agani, Senior Researcher
Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development
Prishtina, Kosovo**

Honorable Mufti Naim Tërnavë,

I am Mentor Agani, and I am a Senior Researcher at KIPRED, The Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development, as well as a Lecturer at the Dardania College in Prishtina. I have also taught (2003-2016) at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Prishtina. I am writing this letter to express some of my expectations and desires regarding the inter-ethnic cohabitation in Kosovo, and to mention some activities that can be undertaken in this regard.

I think that You and the Islamic Community of Kosovo can provide an important and precious contribution toward the normalization of ethnic relations in Kosovo. I am convinced that the presentation of human being, regardless of its ethnic belonging, as the highest creation of God, and, thus, as the highest value in society, is in full accordance with the teachings of Islam. Therefore, I think that the Islamic Community of Kosovo should organize itself and create a strategy to promote in the preaching of its imams this idea, the one of the human being, regardless of its ethnicity, as the supreme social value. I am convinced that numerous Islamic believers in Kosovo, who might be inclined toward nationalist passions, would change their attitude if they had the opportunity to hear the preachings of imams of the Islamic Community of Kosovo to respect and appreciate members of other ethnicities as human beings and God's creatures.

I also believe that the normalization of relations between the Albanian and Serbian community of Kosovo might be a goal that can be stressed and supported in preachings of Kosovar imams. The articulation of peace, tolerance, respect, and cooperation between different social groupings is certainly a goal praised by Islam. Therefore, the ways should be found to include in the preachings of imams the values and benefits of the improvement of interethnic relations in Kosovo, and particularly of those between Albanians and Serbs.

Yet another issue is that of the condition of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Kosovo. Due to the political and nationalist passions, this Church is isolated and neglected by institutions of other Kosovo religions. Therefore, I think that the religious institutions of all the religions that have Albanian memberships (Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, etc.), should organize themselves jointly for visiting together the religious institutions of the Serbian Orthodox Church on occasion of their religious celebrations, in order to congratulate them for those celebrations. This will certainly relax the relations between religions, as well as between ethnic communities, in Kosovo. The acceptance of Serbs by Kosovo is a necessary condition for acceptance of Kosovo by the Serbs, and religious acceptance of the Serbian Orthodox Church by other religions in Kosovo is an important and necessary step toward this goal.

By assisting the mitigation of inter-ethnic tensions and problems, the institutions of the Islamic Community of Kosovo will certainly provide an immense contribution to making Kosovo a better place in the future.

Thank you, and my best regards,

Mentor Agani

Zoran Savić, Project Coordinator
NGO AKTIV
North Mitrovica, Kosovo

Dear Mufti Naim ef. Ternava,

My name is Zoran Savić and I am a project coordinator in the non-governmental organization Aktiv from North Mitrovica. Although I was born in Pula, Croatia, I have actually lived in Mitrovica for 30 years and I am actively involved in social life in Kosovo, both through work and cultural life, considering that I am also a musician, and I have participated in various inter-ethnic projects with musicians of Albanian nationality.

At the same time, for many years I worked as a journalist in the Kosovo Sever portal - KoSSev, and through this job I became even more familiar with the political, security and religious situation in Kosovo. Even today, I collaborate with many Albanian journalists and editors, both project-wise and through jobs that are not related to the same.

Your leadership as the president of Islamic Community of Kosovo can greatly promote inter-ethnic harmony. Encouraging dialogue and cooperation between different religious and ethnic groups can help bridge divides. I urge you to support community programs and joint service projects that bring people from diverse backgrounds together. Your sermons and public addresses can emphasize unity, tolerance, and respect for all. Therefore, I am looking forward for your support in organizing inter-ethnic dialogues and community service projects that involve different religious groups working together.

In this spirit, I hope for a future where multi-ethnic religious cohabitation becomes the norm in Kosovo. I envision communities where religious differences are embraced as strengths rather than sources of division. To this end, you might focus on creating sustainable programs that educate on religious diversity and tolerance, support joint community projects, and ensure equal representation of all religious groups in local governance.

I conclude this letter on a hopeful note, envisioning a future where our united efforts cultivate a genuinely harmonious and multi-ethnic society in Kosovo. I am certain that with our shared dedication, we can achieve remarkable progress toward this worthy goal.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Zoran Savić



Letters of Desires and Expectations

Leonora Kryeziu, Jovana Radosavljević, Robert Muharremi, Dušan Radaković, Ilir Deda, Senad Šabović, Ramadan Ilazi, Dimitrije Obrenović, Mentor Agani dhe Zoran Savić

H.E. Monsignor Dodë Gjergji, Bishop
Diocese Prizren – Prishtina

July 2024

**Leonora Kryeziu, Executive Director
Prishtina Institute for Political Studies
Prishtina, Kosovë**

Honourable Monsignor Gjergji,

I am Leonora Kryeziu, a resident of Prishtina born in 1971. Given that I belong to a generation that spent its childhood and youth in former Yugoslavia, I remember very well what multi-ethnic coexistence in Prishtina looked like, with the colorations that were beautiful, as much as they were dark, of a somewhat peaceful coexistence.

With this letter I want to share with you my personal expectations and desires regarding the promotion of social cohesion between the Albanian and Serbian communities in the capital, and not only by citing examples from the past, but also the opportunities provided by the present.

Regarding the Catholic community, I appreciate profoundly the role that you play in promoting unity and mutual understanding between different ethnic and religious groups. I believe that in a society often divided along ethnic lines, the religious leaders have the power to unite people and inspire them towards peace and harmony.

You have a very important role in conveying the messages of tolerance and peace, by encouraging your believers to accept these values as important for our coexistence. Joint humanitarian initiatives and community service programs can help bridge divisions and cultivate solidarity between the Albanian and Serbian communities. By engaging in such joint activities, we can build relationships based on empathy and mutual appreciation.

While thanking you for your consideration, I express the hope that together we can create a society in which every resident, regardless of its ethnicity or origin, will feel appreciated and respected. I believe in our common will to build a harmonious society for future generations.

With respect,

Leonora Kryeziu

Jovana Radosavljević, Executive Director
New Social Initiative
North Mitrovica, Kosovo

Dear Bishop Gjergji,

I hope this letter finds you well. My name is Jovana Radosavljević, a Kosovo Serb civil society activist from North Mitrovica, working on reconciliation efforts between Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Albanians. I am writing as part of the Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation to share my expectations and desires for multi-ethnic cohabitation in Kosovo.

Your leadership in the Diocese of Prizren-Pristina can greatly promote inter-ethnic harmony. Encouraging dialogue and cooperation between different religious and ethnic groups can help bridge divides. I urge you to support community programs and joint service projects that bring people from diverse backgrounds together. Your sermons and public addresses can emphasize unity, tolerance, and respect for all.

Looking forward, I envision a Kosovo where multi-ethnic cohabitation and religious tolerance is embraced. Regular interfaith meetings and intercultural initiatives can foster dialogue and cooperation.

In conclusion, I encourage you to continue your efforts in building a peaceful and inclusive community. Your leadership can inspire others to create a future where everyone feels at home in Kosovo.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jovana Radosavljević

Dr. Robert Muharremi
Fred C. Cuny Center for Peace and Conflict Studies
Rochester Institute of Technology in Kosovo
Prishtina, Kosovo

Dear Bishop Dodë Gjergji

Kosovo's strength lies in its ethnic and religious diversity, and your voice carries significant weight in fostering understanding and cooperation between all communities. I urge you to continue your invaluable work and explore further initiatives that can make a real difference for the benefit of all communities in Kosovo. The Fred C. Cuny Center for Peace and Conflict Studies at the Rochester Institute of Technology in Kosovo provides an academic platform for studying and teaching the causes, practices, and consequences of war and political violence, as well as methods of conflict management and resolution. Our research helps academics, governments, practitioners, and civil society understand the nature of conflict and formulate effective resolution policies. Our Center is at the forefront of bringing together think tanks and civil society organizations representing different Kosovo communities and fostering a climate of mutual understanding and tolerance.

I am writing to express my and our Centre's full support for the Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation initiative. Kosovo is a multiethnic, democratic and pluralistic society, and I believe that upholding Kosovo's Constitution, which enshrines these values and Kosovo's Euro-Atlantic orientation, is not only critical but it is also the essence of what Kosovo stands for.

I hope that you will promote ethnic and religious tolerance through interfaith programs that encourage dialogue and collaboration, especially between young people from different backgrounds. This would plant the seeds of tolerance and understanding for future generations. As your voice holds great power, issuing public statements condemning acts of intolerance and promoting interfaith cooperation would send a strong message of unity and inspire others to follow suit. By implementing such activities, you can further solidify the Catholic community's role as a champion of religious and ethnic tolerance in Kosovo. Your continued leadership will be instrumental in building a stronger, more inclusive Kosovo for all.

I hope to see us strive together for a society where Albanians and Serbs and all other communities live together harmoniously with understanding and mutual respect.

I am confident that we can create a peaceful and inclusive society where diversity is celebrated in our multiethnic state, and every individual feels valued and respected.

Thank you for your commitment to this noble cause.

Sincerely,

Dr. Robert Muharremi

Dušan Radaković, Executive Director
Advocacy Center for Democratic Culture (ACDC)
North Mitrovica, Kosovo

Dear Bishop Dode Gjergji,

My name is Dušan Radaković, and I am the Executive Director of the Advocacy Center for Democratic Culture (ACDC). Born in 1984 in Mitrovica, I have been deeply committed to fostering inter-ethnic dialogue and cooperation since the end of the conflict in Kosovo. Over the years, I have participated in numerous multiethnic initiatives, working alongside various international organizations to promote peace and understanding among different communities.

With a Master's Degree in Law and extensive experience in civil society, including roles in media and project management, I have dedicated my career to advocating for democratic values and human rights. The purpose of this letter is to share my personal expectations and desires regarding the enhancement of multi-ethnic cohabitation in Kosovo, as part of the Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation.

As a key religious leader, your role in fostering mutual respect and understanding between religious communities is vital. I hope you will advocate for educational programs that teach tolerance and acceptance.

My desire is to see a future where multi-ethnic cohabitation is the norm in Kosovo. I envision communities where ethnic and religious differences are celebrated as strengths rather than sources of division. In this regard, long-term goals may include establishing sustainable programs that promote education on cultural diversity, supporting joint community projects, and ensuring equal representation of all ethnic and religious groups in local governance.

Therefore, I urge you to actively engage in building a peaceful and inclusive community by supporting inter-ethnic initiatives, promoting policies that ensure equal opportunities for all, and encouraging open and respectful dialogue between different ethnic and religious groups.

I end this letter with a positive note, expressing my hope for a brighter future where our collective efforts will lead to a truly harmonious and multi-ethnic society in Kosovo. I am confident that, with our shared commitment, we can make significant strides towards this noble cause.

Warm regards,

Dušan Radaković

**Ilir Deda,
Civil Society Activist
Prishtina, Kosovo**

Dear Bishop Gjergji,

I have been engaged and involved in key issues for Kosovo and the Western Balkans for over two decades in various roles, including preservation and advancement of diversity in our country.

The purpose of this letter is to explore opportunities to expand your involvement in promoting Prishtina as an open city for all people, which includes the multiethnic and multi-religious cohabitation in our capital. This is especially important now when populist and exclusive attitudes are gaining ground.

Inter-religious harmony has been at the core values of our nation, and the Diocese Prizren-Prishtina has a central role in preserving and promoting this value. I believe there are a few short-term and long-term gestures that can be taken from you and establish them into practices. A few stem from the past practices.

In the past, there was a practice where religious leaders would publicly congratulate the most important religious holidays to each other. The reintroduction of this practice, although symbolic, would be the initial step towards advancing inter-religious respect in our country. This would mean respect for the most important religious holidays for members of Islamic, Protestant and Orthodox communities.

Inter-faith dialogue and greater understanding is a modern form aiming to advance cohabitation and inter-religious harmony. Although we live in times when harmony is not valued, I believe Kosovo given its unique history, can establish inter-faith dialogue at the local municipal level, to begin creating the culture of peace. This forum would advance the mutual understanding between local religious leaders, including the understanding with local municipal authorities. It would also serve as a forum to discuss and address respective needs of each of the religious communities.

Last, visit to the local Orthodox religious leaders would have a significant impact on advancing inter-ethnic peaceful cohabitation in our country. Kosovo will be successful only if it preserves its multi-ethnic character, and the Diocese Prizren-Prishtina has a significant role in preserving and advancing this character of our state.

I strongly believe that your leadership is critical at this point of development of our country, and express hope that you will consider the proposed actions.

With sincere regards,

Ilir Deda

**Senad Šabović, Senior Adviser
European Institute for Peace
Brussels - Prishtina**

Honorable Bishop Gjergji,

My name is Senad Šabović and I am writing to You as a supporter of the project called *Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation*. I work as a senior advisor with the European Institute of Peace, with the primary focus on supporting the EU-facilitated Dialogue and the normalization process in general. My organization is part of a civil society coalition, called the Kosovo Civic Alternative (KCA), which strives to provide a tangible contribution in this field.

This letter is meant to state my expectations from You in terms of multi-ethnicity and cohabitation. As we know, the Republic of Kosovo is defined as a multi-ethnic state of all of its citizens and communities. These principles are firmly embedded in Kosovo's constitutional and legal system. They also continue to be a key expectation of our international partners and the organizational system of the Euro-Atlantic community, to which we aspire. As such, the principles of multi-ethnicity, understanding and peaceful cohabitation should be fully reflected in the religious life of our country. A lot of work has been done in this regard, but it needs to further solidify and expand, especially at this time of increased tension and stalled normalization. Over the years, I have noticed with great appreciation some of Your contributions in this regard. Your engagements with the leaders and representatives of other Faiths represented in Kosovo and Your leadership in the context of different Inter-Faith dialogue frameworks and various Inter-Faith practical cooperation initiatives have been particularly impressive.

The colleagues from the project and I would like to encourage You to expand on these initiatives and offer a few suggestions in this regard. In general terms, using the opportunities provided to stress multi-ethnicity as a value is extremely useful. This may include joint press releases, social media content, or joint visits with different religious or institutional leaders to community centers and sites. Emphasizing the Holy Bible's messages of tolerance and respect as appropriate in Your Diocese's engagements with the believers would also be an effective way of contributing.

In more particular terms, You could take the initiative towards creating an Inter-Faith council jointly with the leaders of Kosovo's other Faiths that would coordinate and advise the state and international donors in terms of the protection and rehabilitation of vulnerable religious sites throughout Kosovo. This would not only enhance the physical wellbeing of these sites but also continuously reaffirm the message of tolerance and respect, so integral to the Catholic Faith both in Kosovo and worldwide.

Rest assured, Honorable Bishop, that my colleagues from the European Institute of Peace, from this project, as well as from the mentioned KCA coalition, would be more than willing to provide tangible support to You and Your fellow religious leaders the execution of the suggestions provided hereby.

With great respect and appreciation,

Senad

**Ramadan Ilazi, Head of Research
Kosovar Center for Security Studies
Prishtina, Kosovo**

Dear Bishop Dode Gjergji,

My name is Ramadan Ilazi, and I am currently the head of research at the Kosovar Centre for Security Studies (KCSS). With a background in peace and conflict studies, holding a master's degree from the University of St. Andrews and a PhD from Dublin City University (DCU), I have dedicated my career to promoting Kosovo as a democratic and diverse society. My roles have included being an activist, leading organizations, and serving as Deputy Minister for European Integration.

Kosovo's Constitution begins with the vision of building a future as a free, democratic, and peace-loving country for all its citizens. This vision is pivotal, and it is our collective responsibility to bring it to fruition. Central to this vision is the idea that Kosovo is home to all its citizens, who should feel a sense of belonging and pride.

The Catholic community in Kosovo has a long and proud tradition of promoting peace and serving the community, especially during times of great need. The messages of Mother Teresa, emphasizing love, compassion, and service to others, resonate deeply with the values we strive to uphold. These messages should continue to inspire our efforts in fostering a harmonious and inclusive society.

As the Administrator of the Diocese Prizren - Prishtina, your leadership is crucial in promoting inter-ethnic and interfaith harmony. I encourage you to continue to advocate for peace and mutual respect through church initiatives and community engagement. Organizing interfaith dialogues, joint community service projects, and cultural exchange events can significantly contribute to building bridges between different ethnic and religious groups.

Moreover, I propose regular meetings between all religious leaders in Kosovo to foster dialogue and collaboration. These meetings can result in joint statements and initiatives that promote unity and understanding. Such efforts can serve as a powerful example for all citizens and reinforce the vision of a peaceful and cohesive society.

More concretely, I suggest that the Catholic Church of Kosovo organizes a festival to celebrate Kosovo's diversity in the Church of the Black Madonna in Letnica. This festival could bring together representatives from all ethnic and religious communities in Kosovo, showcasing their traditions, food, music, and more. Such an event would not only highlight our rich cultural mosaic but also foster mutual respect and understanding among different groups.

By organizing events that celebrate the cultural and ethnic diversity of Kosovo, we can create a model of cohabitation that inspires other regions.

I am hopeful and confident in your commitment to this cause. Your leadership, guided by the principles of peace and service, can inspire a future where Kosovo's diversity is celebrated as a source of strength and unity.

Thank you,

Ramadan Ilazi

**Dimitrije Obrenović,
Project Coordinator
NGO Aktiv
North Mitrovica, Kosovo**

Dear Bishop Gjergji,

My name is Dimitrije Obrenović, and I am a human rights activist and project coordinator at NGO Aktiv living in North Mitrovica. I strive for equal human rights and the better fostering of inter-religious cooperation, strongly believing that further cooperation is required for a better future.

Your leadership in the Diocese of Prizren-Pristina can greatly promote inter-ethnic harmony. Encouraging dialogue and cooperation between different religious and ethnic groups can help bridge divides. I urge you to support community programs and joint service projects that bring people from diverse backgrounds together. Your sermons and public addresses can emphasize unity, tolerance, and respect for all.

Looking forward, I envision a Kosovo where multi-ethnic cohabitation and religious tolerance is embraced. Regular interfaith meetings and intercultural initiatives can foster dialogue and cooperation.

In conclusion, I encourage you to continue your efforts in building a peaceful and inclusive community. Your leadership can inspire others to create a future where everyone feels at home in Kosovo.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dimitrije Obrenović

**Mentor Agani, Senior Researcher
Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development
Prishtina, Kosovo**

Honorable Bishop Dodë Gjergji,

I am Mentor Agani, and I am a Senior Researcher at KIPRED, The Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development, as well as a Lecturer at the Dardania College in Prishtina. I have also taught (2003-2016) at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Prishtina. I am writing this letter to express some of my expectations and desires regarding the inter-ethnic cohabitation in Kosovo, and to mention some activities that can be undertaken in this regard.

I am convinced that You and the institutions of the Catholic Church in Kosovo can provide an important contribution toward the normalization of ethnic relations in Kosovo. There certainly are numerous aspects of religious preaching that are in complete accordance with the political goal to improve ethnic relations in Kosovo, and particularly those between Albanian and Serbian communities. And I expect that there will be an effort among the institutions of Catholic Church of Kosovo to put a particular focus on exactly those aspects in the preaching of its priests.

For instance, the presentation and treatment of human being, regardless of its ethnic background, as the highest creation of God, and, thus, as the highest social value, is certainly such an aspect that might be stressed in preaching of Catholic priests. The promotion of this idea among believers, not as a political goal, but rather as a religious value and virtue, will certainly be an important contribution toward improvement of ethnic relations in Kosovo. I believe that many believers inclined toward nationalism will change their attitude if their priests will focus in their preaching on the fact that hate against members of other ethnicities is hate against God's creatures.

Another focus of preaching can be the promotion of peace, tolerance, respect, and cooperation between different ethnic communities, and particularly between Albanians and Serbs of Kosovo. Peace, tolerance, respect, and cooperation between different human groupings are certainly goals praised by Catholicism, and they should be involved in preaching of its priests.

An important issue here is that of the relations between different Kosovar religious communities and the religious institutions of the Serbian Orthodox Church. I think that the religious institutions of all the religions that have Albanian memberships (Catholicism, Islam, Protestantism, etc.), should organize themselves jointly and visit together the religious authorities and institutions of the Serbian Orthodox Church on occasion of their religious celebrations, in order to congratulate them those celebrations. The acceptance of Serbs by Kosovo is a necessary condition for acceptance of Kosovo by the Serbs, and religious acceptance of the Serbian Orthodox Church by other religions in Kosovo is an important step toward this goal.

By assisting the mitigation of inter-ethnic tensions and problems, the institutions of the Catholic Church of Kosovo will certainly provide an immense contribution to making Kosovo a better place in the future.

Thank you, and my best regards,

Mentor Agani

Zoran Savić, Project Coordinator
NGO AKTIV
North Mitrovica, Kosovo

Dear Bishop Dode Gjergji,

My name is Zoran Savić and I am a project coordinator in the non-governmental organization Aktiv from North Mitrovica. Although I was born in Pula, Croatia, I have actually lived in Mitrovica for 30 years and I am actively involved in social life in Kosovo, both through work and cultural life, considering that I am also a musician, and I have participated in various inter-ethnic projects with musicians of Albanian nationality.

At the same time, for many years I worked as a journalist in the Kosovo Sever portal - KoSSev, and through this job I became even more familiar with the political, security and religious situation in Kosovo. Even today, I collaborate with many Albanian journalists and editors, both project-wise and through jobs that are not related to the same.

Your leadership in the Diocese of Prizren-Pristina can greatly promote inter-ethnic harmony. Encouraging dialogue and cooperation between different religious and ethnic groups can help bridge divides. I urge you to support community programs and joint service projects that bring people from diverse backgrounds together. Your sermons and public addresses can emphasize unity, tolerance, and respect for all. Therefore, I am looking forward for your support in organizing inter-ethnic dialogues and community service projects that involve different religious groups working together.

In this spirit, I hope for a future where multi-ethnic religious cohabitation becomes the norm in Kosovo. I envision communities where religious differences are embraced as strengths rather than sources of division. To this end, you might focus on creating sustainable programs that educate on religious diversity and tolerance, support joint community projects, and ensure equal representation of all religious groups in local governance.

Looking forward, I envision a Kosovo where multi-ethnic cohabitation and religious tolerance is embraced. Regular interfaith meetings and intercultural initiatives can foster dialogue and cooperation.

I conclude this letter on a hopeful note, envisioning a future where our united efforts cultivate a genuinely harmonious and multi-ethnic society in Kosovo. I am certain that with our shared dedication, we can achieve remarkable progress toward this worthy goal.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Zoran Savić



Letters of Desires and Expectations

Leonora Kryeziu, Jovana Radosavljević, Robert Muharremi, Dušan Radaković, Ilir Deda, Senad Šabović, Ramadan Ilazi, Dimitrije Obrenović, Mentor Agani dhe Zoran Savić

Reverend Archpriest Staniša Arsić
Serbian Orthodox Church Saint Nicholas in Priština

July 2024

Leonora Kryeziu, Executive Director
Prishtina Institute for Political Studies
Prishtina, Kosovë

Dear Archbishop Arsić,

I am Leonora Kryeziu, a resident of Prishtina, born in 1971. Growing up in the midst of former Yugoslavia's multi-ethnic coexistence, I fondly recall the diverse and colorful community of Prishtina, where Serbian neighbors were an integral part of our daily lives. Despite not being close friends, we shared schools, workplaces, and cultural activities that fostered a sense of community and belonging. Through this letter, I wish to convey my expectations and aspirations for promoting social cohesion between the Albanian and Serbian communities across Kosovo. Reflecting on the cooperative spirit of the past and the opportunities of the present, I believe that nurturing unity and mutual respect is essential for our shared future.

In terms of the religious community, I deeply appreciate the role that religious leaders play in promoting unity and understanding among diverse ethnic and religious groups. In a society often divided along ethnic lines, I see religion as a unifying force that can inspire peace and harmony. Your role is crucial in delivering messages of tolerance and peace, urging your followers to embrace these values as essential to our collective well-being.

I advocate for collaborative humanitarian initiatives and community outreach programs that can bridge gaps and cultivate solidarity between Albanian and Serbian communities. By engaging in such joint efforts, we can cultivate relationships based on compassion and mutual appreciation.

Let us strive together to create a society where every individual, regardless of ethnicity or background, feels valued and respected. I believe in our collective ability to build a harmonious community for generations to come.

With respect,

Leonora Kryeziu

Jovana Radosavljević, Executive Director
New Social Initiative
North Mitrovica, Kosovo

Dear Archpriest Arsić,

I hope this letter finds you well. My name is Jovana Radosavljević, a Kosovo Serb civil society activist from North Mitrovica. I am deeply committed to reconciliation efforts between Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Albanians. I am writing as part of the Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation to share my expectations and desires for multi-ethnic cohabitation in Kosovo.

The Serbian Orthodox Church has always been a cornerstone for the Serb community in Kosovo, providing spiritual guidance and support. Your leadership at Saint Nicholas Church places you in a crucial role in fostering inter-ethnic harmony. Encouraging dialogue and cooperation between different religious and ethnic groups can significantly enhance unity and mutual understanding in our communities. I urge you to support community programs and joint service projects that bring together people from diverse backgrounds. Your sermons and public addresses should continue to emphasize the importance of unity, tolerance, and respect for all.

Looking ahead, I envision a Kosovo where multi-ethnic cohabitation and religious tolerance is not only possible but embraced. Regular interfaith meetings and intercultural initiatives can foster dialogue and cooperation, helping to break down barriers and build lasting relationships.

In conclusion, I encourage you to continue your efforts in building a peaceful and inclusive community. Your leadership can inspire others to create a future where everyone feels at home in Kosovo, regardless of their ethnic or religious background.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jovana Radosavljević

Dr. Robert Muharremi
Fred C. Cuny Center for Peace and Conflict Studies
Rochester Institute of Technology in Kosovo
Prishtina, Kosovo

Dear Archpriest, Mr. Stanisa Arsic,

The Fred C. Cuny Center for Peace and Conflict Studies at the Rochester Institute of Technology in Kosovo provides an academic platform for studying and teaching the causes, practices, and consequences of war and political violence, as well as methods of conflict management and resolution. Our research helps academics, governments, practitioners, and civil society understand the nature of conflict and formulate effective resolution policies. Our Center is at the forefront to bringing together think tanks and civil society organizations representing different Kosovo communities and fostering a climate of mutual understanding and tolerance.

I am writing to express my and our Centre's full support for the Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation initiative. Kosovo is a multiethnic, democratic and pluralistic society, and I believe that upholding Kosovo's Constitution, which enshrines these values and Kosovo's Euro-Atlantic orientation, is not only critical but it is also the essence of what Kosovo stands for.

I hope that you will express your full support for a multi-ethnic Kosovo and for full respect for the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo and its fundamental values to ensure a Kosovo of and for all communities. I also hope that you will promote publicly the need for meaningful integration of all communities, substantive inter-ethnic dialogue and a spirit of tolerance and compromise within the framework of Kosovo's Constitution. I also hope that you will stand up for a political culture that promotes diversity, rule of law and respect for human rights, and that furthers without compromise Kosovo's Euro-Atlantic orientation.

I hope to see us strive together for a society where Albanians and Serbs and all other communities live together harmoniously with understanding and mutual respect.

I am confident that we can create a peaceful and inclusive society where diversity is celebrated in our multiethnic state, and every individual feels valued and respected.

Thank you for your commitment to this noble cause.

Sincerely,

Dr. Robert Muharremi

Dušan Radaković, Executive Director
Advocacy Center for Democratic Culture (ACDC)
North Mitrovica, Kosovo

Dear Archpriest,

My name is Dušan Radaković, and I am the Executive Director of the Advocacy Center for Democratic Culture (ACDC). Born in 1984 in Mitrovica, I have been deeply committed to fostering inter-ethnic dialogue and cooperation since the end of the conflict in Kosovo. Over the years, I have participated in numerous multiethnic initiatives, working alongside various international organizations to promote peace and understanding among different communities.

With a Master's Degree in Law and extensive experience in civil society, including roles in media and project management, I have dedicated my career to advocating for democratic values and human rights. The purpose of this letter is to share my personal expectations and desires regarding the enhancement of multi-ethnic cohabitation in Kosovo, as part of the Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation.

Your leadership in the Serbian Orthodox community is crucial for fostering peace and cohabitation. I hope to see collaborative events that highlight shared values and cultural heritage between the Serbian and Albanian communities. In this regard, I envision a future where multi-ethnic cohabitation is the norm in Kosovo, with communities celebrating ethnic differences as strengths rather than sources of division.

I think that our long-term goals should include creating sustainable programs that promote cultural diversity education, supporting joint community projects, and ensuring equal representation of all ethnic groups in local governance.

I encourage you to actively participate in building a peaceful and inclusive community by supporting inter-ethnic initiatives, advocating for policies that guarantee equal opportunities for all, and fostering open and respectful dialogue between different ethnic groups.

I conclude this letter on a hopeful note, expressing my desire for a brighter future where our collective efforts will lead to a truly harmonious and multi-ethnic society in Kosovo. I am confident that, with our shared commitment, we can achieve significant progress toward this noble cause.

Warm regards,
Dušan Radaković

**Ilir Deda,
Civil Society Activist
Prishtina, Kosovo**

Dear Archpriest Arsic,

I have been engaged and involved in key issues for Kosovo and the Western Balkans for over two decades in various roles, including preservation and advancement of diversity in our country.

The purpose of this letter is to explore opportunities to expand your involvement in promoting Prishtina as an open city for all people, which includes the multiethnic and multi-religious cohabitation in our capital. This is especially important now when populist and exclusive attitudes are gaining ground.

Inter-religious harmony must be preserved and further promoted. The Serbian Orthodox Church has a role in preserving and promoting this value. I believe there are a few short-term and long-term gestures that can be taken from you and establish them into practices. A few stem from the past practices.

In the past, there was a practice where religious leaders would publicly congratulate the most important religious holidays to each other. The reintroduction of this practice, although symbolic, would be the initial step towards advancing inter-religious respect in our country. This would mean respect for the most important religious holidays for members of Islamic, Catholic and Protestant communities.

Inter-faith dialogue and greater understanding is a modern form aiming to advance cohabitation and inter-religious harmony. Although we live in times when harmony is not valued, I believe it is the right time to consider the establishment of the inter-faith dialogue at the local municipal level, and begin creating the culture of peace. This forum would advance the mutual understanding between local religious leaders, including the understanding with local municipal authorities. It would also serve as a forum to discuss and address respective needs of each of the religious communities.

Last, visit to the Mayor of Prishtina would have a significant impact on advancing inter-ethnic peaceful cohabitation in municipality of Prishtina. A permanent dialogue with the Office of the Mayor can be explored as one of the forums to discuss the needs of the Serbian Orthodox Church in municipality of Prishtina, and also of the Serb population living in the municipality. At the local level, we all have a role to begin creating the culture of peace.

I strongly believe that your leadership is critical at this point of development of our municipality, and express hope that you will consider the proposed actions.

With sincere regards,

Ilir Deda

**Senad Šabović, Senior Adviser
European Institute for Peace
Brussels - Prishtina**

Honorable Deacon Arsić,

My name is Senad Šabović and I am writing to You as a supporter of the project called *Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation*. I work as a senior advisor with the European Institute of Peace, with the primary focus on supporting the EU-facilitated Dialogue and the normalization process in general. My organization is part of a civil society coalition, called the Kosovo Civic Alternative (KCA), which strives to provide a tangible contribution in this field.

This letter is meant to state my expectations from You in terms of multi-ethnicity and cohabitation. The principles of multi-ethnic society are firmly embedded in Kosovo's legal and constitutional system. They also continue to be a key expectation of the international community and are the primary mechanism for the well-being of non-majority communities in Kosovo, in particular the Serb community. As such, the principles of multi-ethnicity, understanding and peaceful cohabitation should be fully reflected in the religious life of Kosovo. A lot of work has been done in this regard, but it needs to further solidify and expand, especially at this time of increased tension and stalled normalization. Over the years, I have noticed with great appreciation Your Church's active participation in different Inter-Faith dialogue activities and various other forms of contribution to peaceful cohabitation.

The colleagues from the project and I would like to encourage You to expand on these initiatives and offer a few suggestions in this regard. I very much understand the unique position of the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) in Kosovo and the sensitivities that come with this position. Nevertheless, Your active contribution to enhancing the sense of multi-ethnicity and tolerance – as has often been the case – would create a significant added value. Thus, either in terms of responding to positive external initiatives or initiating Your own, every opportunity should be used to stress multi-ethnicity as a value. This may include joint press releases, social media content, or joint visits with different religious or institutional leaders to community centers and sites. Emphasizing Your Faith's messages of tolerance and respect as appropriate in Your engagements with the believers would also be an effective way of contributing.

In more particular terms, I have also suggested to other religious representatives based in Prishtina the creation of an Inter-Faith council by the leaders of different Faiths in Kosovo that would coordinate and advise Kosovo's institutions and international donors in terms of the protection and rehabilitation of vulnerable religious sites throughout Kosovo. You and Your Church may also wish to consider initiating this endeavor. This would not only enhance the physical wellbeing of these sites but also continuously reaffirm the message of tolerance and respect, so integral to Faith.

Rest assured, Honorable Deacon, that my colleagues from the European Institute of Peace, from this project, as well as from the mentioned KCA coalition, would be more than willing to provide tangible support to You and Your fellow religious leaders the execution of the suggestions provided hereby.

With great respect and appreciation,

Senad Šabović

**Ramadan Ilazi, Head of Research
Kosovar Center for Security Studies
Prishtina, Kosovo**

Dear Archpriest, Staniša Arsić,

My name is Ramadan Ilazi, and I am currently the head of research at the Kosovar Centre for Security Studies (KCSS). With a background in peace and conflict studies, holding a master's degree from the University of St. Andrews and a PhD from Dublin City University (DCU), I have dedicated my career to promoting Kosovo as a democratic and diverse society. My roles have included being an activist, leading organizations, and serving as Deputy Minister for European Integration.

Kosovo's Constitution begins with the vision of building a future as a free, democratic, and peace-loving country for all its citizens. This vision is pivotal, and it is our collective responsibility to bring it to fruition. Central to this vision is the idea that Kosovo is home to all its citizens, who should feel a sense of belonging and pride.

The Serbian Orthodox Church in Kosovo has a profound role in promoting peace, tolerance, and interethnic cooperation. Your leadership can inspire efforts that emphasize mutual respect.

As the Parish Priest of Prishtina, your influence is crucial in promoting inter-ethnic harmony and understanding. I encourage you to advocate for peace and mutual respect through church initiatives and community engagement. I propose regular meetings between all religious leaders in Kosovo to foster dialogue and collaboration. These meetings can result in joint statements and initiatives that promote unity and understanding. I invite you to speak more actively and publicly through statements and opinions that appeal to mutual respect, cooperation and understanding between ethnic communities.

More concretely, I suggest that the Serbian Orthodox Church in Kosovo initiates several community-building activities to promote religious and inter-ethnic tolerance. One idea is to organize an annual "Interfaith Friendship Day," where members of different religious communities can gather, share meals, and participate in discussions and cultural activities. Another impactful initiative could be establishing a series of "Open House" days at the church, where people from all backgrounds are invited to learn about the Serbian Orthodox faith, its traditions, and its contributions to Kosovo's cultural heritage. I invite you to openly and formally invite political leaders, opinion makers, and civil society representatives, for visits to the Deçan/Dečani Monastery, the Patriarchal Monastery of Peja/Peć, and the Gračanica/Gračanica Monastery. But also, invite to tours to celebrate UNESCO cultural heritage, such as the UNESCO cultural; heritage site, Our Lady of Ljeviš in Prizren

I am confident that these initiatives, combined with your dedicated leadership, will greatly contribute to fostering a more inclusive and harmonious society in Kosovo.

Thank you,

Ramadan Ilazi

**Dimitrije Obrenović,
Project Coordinator
NGO Aktiv
North Mitrovica, Kosovo**

Dear Archbishop Arsić,

I hope this letter finds you well. My name is Dimitrije Obrenović, a Kosovo Serb civil society activist from North Mitrovica. I am deeply committed to reconciliation efforts between Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Albanians. I am writing as part of the Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation to share my expectations and desires for multi-ethnic cohabitation in Kosovo.

The Serbian Orthodox Church has always been a pillar for the Serb community in Kosovo, offering spiritual guidance and support. As a leader at Saint Nicholas Church, you have a unique opportunity to promote inter-ethnic harmony. By encouraging dialogue and cooperation between different religious and ethnic groups, you can significantly enhance unity and mutual understanding in our communities. I urge you to support community programs and joint service projects that bring together people from all walks of life. Your sermons and public addresses should continue to emphasize the importance of unity, tolerance, and respect for everyone.

Imagine a Kosovo where multi-ethnic living and religious tolerance are not just possible but celebrated. Regular interfaith meetings and cultural events can spark dialogue and cooperation, breaking down barriers and building lasting relationships.

In conclusion, keep pushing for a peaceful and inclusive community. Your leadership can inspire others to create a future where everyone feels at home in Kosovo, no matter their background.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dimitrije Obrenović

**Mentor Agani, Senior Researcher
Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development
Prishtina, Kosovo**

Honorable Archpriest Arsić

I am Mentor Agani, and I am a Senior Researcher at KIPRED, The Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development, as well as a Lecturer at the Dardania College in Prishtina. I have also taught (2003-2016) at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Prishtina. I am writing this letter to express some of my expectations and desires regarding the inter-ethnic cohabitation in Kosovo, and to mention some activities that can be undertaken in this regard.

While being aware that the Serbian Orthodox Church in Kosovo and You are passing through immense difficulties, I am convinced that both, You, and the institutions of Your Church, can provide an important contribution toward normalization of ethnic relations in Kosovo. There are numerous aspects of religious preaching that are in full accordance with the political and social goal of improving ethnic relations in Kosovo, and particularly of those between Albanian and Serbian communities. Therefore I expect that there will be efforts among the institutions of the Serbian Orthodox Church to put a particular focus on exactly these aspects in the preaching of Serbian Orthodox priests.

For instance, the presentation and treatment of human beings, regardless of their ethnic backgrounds, as the highest creations of God, and, thus, as the highest social values, is certainly such an aspect that might be stressed in preaching of Serbian Orthodox priests. I believe that many believers inclined toward nationalism will change their attitudes if their priests will insist in their preaching that hate against members of other ethnicities is hate against God's creatures.

Yet another such an aspect is demonstrating a commitment to peace, tolerance, and cohabitation between communities that live in Kosovo. Indeed, the promotion of peaceful and tolerant cohabitation of different social communities, not only as a political goal of some democratic politics, but, above all, as a religious value and virtue, will certainly be an important contribution toward improvement of ethnic relations in Kosovo. The Serbian Orthodox priests should be vocal advocates for tolerance and cohabitation, by publicly condemning violence and discrimination while promoting peaceful coexistence. All the priests, of whatever religion, Serbian Orthodox ones, Albanian Catholic, as well as Imams, should lead by their own example, by showing with their own actions and words that they can contribute to multiethnic harmony.

Another desire of mine is to see the Kosovar religious communities are in the best relations possible, and cooperating with one another. The Serbian Orthodox Church can contribute to this by showing willingness to cooperation, and sensitivity toward cultural and religious practices of other communities.

Again, I am aware about the difficulties with which you are confronted, and that these impose tremendous limitations toward fulfillment of these expectations and desires of mine. Nevertheless, I am also aware that with persistence and perseverance we can succeed in improving ethnic relations in Kosovo, and in making Kosovo a better place in the future.

Thank you, and my best regards,

Mentor Agani

Zoran Savič, Project Coordinator
NGO AKTIV
North Mitrovica, Kosovo

Dear Archpriest Staniša Arsić,

My name is Zoran Savić and I am a project coordinator in the non-governmental organization Aktiv from North Mitrovica. Although I was born in Pula, Croatia, I have actually lived in Mitrovica for 30 years and I am actively involved in social life in Kosovo, both through work and cultural life, considering that I am also a musician, and I have participated in various inter-ethnic projects with musicians of Albanian nationality.

At the same time, for many years I worked as a journalist in the Kosovo Sever portal - KoSSev, and through this job I became even more familiar with the political, security and religious situation in Kosovo.

The Serbian Orthodox Church has always been a cornerstone for the Serb community in Kosovo, providing spiritual guidance and support. Your leadership at Saint Nicholas Church places you in a crucial role in fostering inter-ethnic harmony. Encouraging dialogue and cooperation between different religious and ethnic groups can significantly enhance unity and mutual understanding in our communities. I urge you to support community programs and joint service projects that bring together people from diverse backgrounds. Your sermons and public addresses should continue to emphasize the importance of unity, tolerance, and respect for all.

In this spirit, I hope for a future where multi-ethnic religious cohabitation becomes the norm in Kosovo. I envision communities where religious differences are embraced as strengths rather than sources of division. To this end, you might focus on creating sustainable programs that educate on religious diversity and tolerance, support joint community projects, and ensure equal representation of all religious groups in local governance.

Looking forward, I envision a Kosovo where multi-ethnic cohabitation and religious tolerance is embraced. Regular interfaith meetings and intercultural initiatives can foster dialogue and cooperation. I conclude this letter on a hopeful note, envisioning a future where our united efforts cultivate a genuinely harmonious and multi-ethnic society in Kosovo. I am certain that with our shared dedication, we can achieve remarkable progress toward this worthy goal.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Zoran Savić



Letters of Desires and Expectations

Leonora Kryeziu, Jovana Radosavljević, Robert Muharremi, Dušan Radaković, Ilir Deda, Senad Šabović, Ramadan Ilazi, Dimitrije Obrenović, Mentor Agani dhe Zoran Savić

Mr. Artur Krasniqi, Pastor
Kosovo Protestant Evangelical Church

July 2024

**Leonora Kryeziu, Executive Director
Prishtina Institute for Political Studies
Prishtina, Kosovë**

Honourable Pastor Krasniqi,

I am Leonora Kryeziu, a resident of Prishtina, born in 1971. Given that I belong to a generation that spent its childhood and youth in former Yugoslavia, I remember very well what multi-ethnic coexistence in Prishtina looked like. It had the coloration of a somewhat peaceful inter-ethnic coexistence.

With this letter I want to share with you my personal expectations and desires regarding the promotion of social cohesion between the Albanian and Serbian communities of the capital, and not only by focusing on the past, but also on the opportunities provided to us by the present, as well as the future that we must build together.

Regarding the Protestant community, I profoundly appreciate your role and actions in promoting coexistence and mutual understanding between different ethnic and religious groups. I believe that in the ethnically divided societies, the religious leaders have an important role to bring people together and inspire them towards peace and harmony.

Your role is very important in conveying the messages of tolerance and peace, and in encouraging your followers to accept these values as important for our coexistence. Joint humanitarian initiatives and community service programs can help to bridge the divisions and to cultivate solidarity between the Albanian and Serbian communities. By engaging in such joint activities, we can build relationships based on kindness and mutual appreciation.

While thanking you for your consideration, I would like to express my confidence in our common will to build a harmonious society with ethnic and religious coexistence for future generations.

With respect,

Leonora Kryeziu

Jovana Radosavljević, Executive Director
New Social Initiative
North Mitrovica, Kosovo

Dear Pastor Krasniqi,

I hope this letter finds you well. My name is Jovana Radosavljević, a Kosovo Serb civil society activist from North Mitrovica, focused on reconciliation efforts between Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Albanians. I am writing as part of the Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation to share my expectations and desires for multi-ethnic cohabitation in Kosovo.

Your leadership within the Kosovo Protestant Evangelical Church places you in a unique position to promote inter-ethnic harmony. Encouraging dialogue and cooperation between different religious and ethnic groups can significantly enhance unity in our communities. I urge you to support community programs and joint service projects that bring together people from diverse backgrounds. Your sermons and public addresses can emphasize the importance of unity, tolerance, and respect for all.

Looking ahead, I envision a Kosovo where multi-ethnic cohabitation is a reality. Regular interfaith meetings and intercultural initiatives can foster dialogue and cooperation.

In conclusion, I encourage you to continue your efforts in building a peaceful and inclusive community. Your leadership can inspire others to create a future where everyone feels at home in Kosovo.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jovana Radosavljević

Dr. Robert Muharremi
Fred C. Cuny Center for Peace and Conflict Studies
Rochester Institute of Technology in Kosovo
Prishtina, Kosovo

Dear Pastor Artur Krasniqi

I am writing to you today to express my appreciation for your dedication to promoting a multi-ethnic and religiously tolerant Kosovo. The Fred C. Cuny Center for Peace and Conflict Studies at the Rochester Institute of Technology in Kosovo provides an academic platform for studying and teaching the causes, practices, and consequences of war and political violence, as well as methods of conflict management and resolution. Our research helps academics, governments, practitioners, and civil society understand the nature of conflict and formulate effective resolution policies. Our Center is at the forefront of bringing together think tanks and civil society organizations representing different Kosovo communities and fostering a climate of mutual understanding and tolerance.

I am writing to express my and our Centre's full support for the Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation initiative. Kosovo is a multiethnic, democratic and pluralistic society, and I believe that upholding Kosovo's Constitution, which enshrines these values and Kosovo's Euro-Atlantic orientation, is not only critical but it is also the essence of what Kosovo stands for.

The Protestant community plays a crucial role in fostering understanding and cooperation between all groups. Your leadership is instrumental in guiding us towards a more inclusive future. I hope to see more events where Protestants collaborate with other religious communities on projects that benefit all communities in Kosovo. This will foster a sense of shared purpose and break down barriers. I would also like to see the Protestant community hosting regular discussions open to all faiths and ethnic communities, where members can learn about each other's beliefs and traditions. This promotes understanding and respect.

I hope to see us strive together for a society where Albanians and Serbs and all other communities live together harmoniously with understanding and mutual respect. Your continued leadership will be instrumental in building a stronger, more inclusive Kosovo for all.

I am confident that we can create a peaceful and inclusive society where diversity is celebrated in our multiethnic state, and every individual feels valued and respected.

Thank you for your commitment to this noble cause.

Sincerely,

Dr. Robert Muharremi

**Dušan Radaković, Executive Director
Advocacy Center for Democratic Culture (ACDC)
North Mitrovica, Kosovo**

Dear Pastor Artur Krasniqi,

My name is Dušan Radaković, and I am the Executive Director of the Advocacy Center for Democratic Culture (ACDC). Born in 1984 in Mitrovica, I have been deeply committed to fostering inter-ethnic dialogue and cooperation since the end of the conflict in Kosovo. Over the years, I have participated in numerous multiethnic initiatives, working alongside various international organizations to promote peace and understanding among different communities.

With a Master's Degree in Law and extensive experience in civil society, including roles in media and project management, I have dedicated my career to advocating for democratic values and human rights. The purpose of this letter is to share my personal expectations and desires regarding the enhancement of multi-ethnic cohabitation in Kosovo, as part of the Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation.

Your church's outreach programs can play a significant role in bridging ethnic divides. I expect your support in creating initiatives that bring together youth from different ethnic backgrounds for joint activities.

Against this backdrop, my desire is to see a future where multi-ethnic cohabitation is the norm in Kosovo. I envision communities where ethnic differences are celebrated as strengths rather than sources of division. In this regard, long-term goals may include establishing sustainable programs that promote education on cultural diversity, supporting joint community projects, and ensuring equal representation of all ethnic groups in local governance.

Therefore, I urge you to actively engage in building a peaceful and inclusive community by supporting inter-ethnic initiatives, promoting policies that ensure equal opportunities for all, and encouraging open and respectful dialogue between different ethnic groups.

I end this letter with a positive note, expressing my hope for a brighter future where our collective efforts will lead to a truly harmonious and multi-ethnic society in Kosovo. I am confident that, with our shared commitment, we can make significant strides towards this noble cause.

Warm regards,

Dušan Radaković

**Ilir Deda,
Civil Society Activist
Prishtina, Kosovo**

Dear Pastor Krasniqi,

I have been engaged and involved in key issues for Kosovo and the Western Balkans for over two decades in various roles, including preservation and advancement of diversity in our country.

The purpose of this letter is to explore opportunities to expand your involvement in promoting Prishtina as an open city for all people, which includes the multiethnic and multi-religious cohabitation in our capital. This is especially important now when populist and exclusive attitudes are gaining ground.

Inter-religious harmony has been at the core values of our nation, and the Kosovo Protestant Evangelical Church has a role in preserving and promoting this value. I believe there are a few short-term and long-term gestures that can be taken from you and establish them into practices. A few stem from the past practices.

In the past, there was a practice where religious leaders would publicly congratulate the most important religious holidays to each other. The reintroduction of this practice, although symbolic, would be the initial step towards advancing inter-religious respect in our country. This would mean respect for the most important religious holidays for members of Islamic, Catholic and Orthodox communities.

Inter-faith dialogue and greater understanding is a modern form aiming to advance cohabitation and inter-religious harmony. Although we live in times when harmony is not valued, I believe Kosovo given its unique history, can establish inter-faith dialogue at the local municipal level, to begin creating the culture of peace. This forum would advance the mutual understanding between local religious leaders, including the understanding with local municipal authorities. It would also serve as a forum to discuss and address respective needs of each of the religious communities.

Last, visit to the local Orthodox religious leaders would have a significant impact on advancing inter-ethnic peaceful cohabitation in our country. Kosovo will be successful only if it preserves its multi-ethnic character, and the Kosovo Protestant Evangelical Church has its rightful place in preserving and advancing this character of our state.

I strongly believe that your leadership is critical at this point of development of our country, and express hope that you will consider the proposed actions.

With sincere regards,

Ilir Deda

Senad Šabović, Senior Adviser
European Institute for Peace
Brussels - Prishtina

Honorable Pastor Krasniqi,

My name is Senad Šabović and I am writing to You as a supporter of the project called *Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation*. I work as a senior advisor with the European Institute of Peace, with the primary focus on supporting the EU-facilitated Dialogue and the normalization process in general. My organization is part of a civil society coalition, called the Kosovo Civic Alternative (KCA), which strives to provide a tangible contribution in this field.

This letter is meant to state my expectations from You in terms of multi-ethnicity and cohabitation. As we know, the Republic of Kosovo is defined as a multi-ethnic state of all of its citizens and communities. These principles are firmly embedded in Kosovo's constitutional and legal system. They also continue to be a key expectation of our international partners and the organizational system of the Euro-Atlantic community, to which we aspire. As such, the principles of multi-ethnicity, understanding and peaceful cohabitation should be fully reflected in the religious life of our country. A lot of work has been done in this regard, but it needs to further solidify and expand, especially at this time of increased tension and stalled normalization. Over the years, I have noticed with great appreciation the forthcoming posture You and Your congregation have taken in this direction.

The colleagues from the project and I would like to encourage You to expand on these initiatives and offer a few suggestions in this regard. In general terms, using the opportunities provided to stress multi-ethnicity as a value is extremely useful. This may include joint press releases, social media content, or joint visits with different religious or institutional leaders to community centers and sites. Emphasizing Your Faith's messages of tolerance and respect as appropriate in Your engagements with the believers would also be an effective way of contributing.

In more particular terms, You could take the initiative towards creating an Inter-Faith council jointly with the leaders of Kosovo's other Faiths that would coordinate and advise the state and international donors in terms of the protection and rehabilitation of vulnerable religious sites throughout Kosovo. This would not only enhance the physical wellbeing of these sites but also continuously reaffirm the message of tolerance and respect, so integral to Faith both in Kosovo and worldwide. In my opinion, albeit uneducated, Your Church and Community are an ideal bridge-builder among Kosovo's diverse religious and ethnic communities and any engagement within any form of Inter-Faith dialogue process in this direction would also likely produce a very notable result.

Rest assured, Honorable Pastor, that my colleagues from the European Institute of Peace, from this project, as well as from the mentioned KCA coalition, would be more than willing to provide tangible support to You and Your fellow religious leaders the execution of the suggestions provided hereby.

With great respect and appreciation,

Senad Šabović

**Ramadan Ilazi, Head of Research
Kosovar Center for Security Studies
Prishtina, Kosovo**

Dear Pastor Artur Krasniqi,

My name is Ramadan Ilazi, and I am currently the head of research at the Kosovar Centre for Security Studies (KCSS). With a background in peace and conflict studies, holding a master's degree from the University of St. Andrews and a PhD from Dublin City University (DCU), I have dedicated my career to promoting Kosovo as a democratic and diverse society. My roles have included being an activist, leading organizations, and serving as Deputy Minister for European Integration.

Kosovo's Constitution begins with the vision of building a future as a free, democratic, and peace-loving country for all its citizens. This vision is pivotal, and it is our collective responsibility to bring it to fruition. Central to this vision is the idea that Kosovo is home to all its citizens, who should feel a sense of belonging and pride.

The Protestant Evangelical Church has a significant role to play in promoting peace, tolerance, and interethnic cooperation and understanding. As the Head of the Kosovo Protestant Evangelical Church, your influence is crucial to advocate for peace and mutual respect through church initiatives and community engagement. Organizing interfaith dialogues, joint community service projects, and cultural exchange events can significantly contribute to building bridges between different ethnic and religious groups.

Moreover, I propose regular meetings between all religious leaders in Kosovo to foster dialogue and collaboration. These meetings can result in joint statements and initiatives that promote unity and understanding. Such efforts can serve as a powerful example for all citizens and reinforce the vision of a peaceful and cohesive society. By organizing events that celebrate the cultural and ethnic diversity of Kosovo, we can create a model of that inspires.

More concretely, I would like to encourage you to be more vocal in public with statements, and opinions that appeal to religious and interethnic tolerance.

More concretely, I suggest that the Kosovo Protestant Evangelical Church initiate a series of community-building activities that promote ethnic diversity. One idea is to organize inter-ethnic family picnics and sports events, where families from different backgrounds can come together, share meals, and participate in games and activities. Additionally, creating a "Cultural Exchange Sunday" where different ethnic groups are invited to share their traditions, music, and stories during church services can foster mutual respect and understanding. I am confident that these initiatives, combined with your dedicated leadership, will greatly contribute to fostering a more inclusive and harmonious society in Kosovo.

Your leadership, guided by the principles of peace and service, can inspire a future where Kosovo's diversity is celebrated as a source of strength and unity.

Thank you,

Ramadan Ilazi

**Dimitrije Obrenović,
Project Coordinator
NGO Aktiv
North Mitrovica, Kosovo**

Dear Pastor Krasniqi,

My name is Dimitrije Obrenović, and I am a human rights activist living in North Mitrovica. I strive for equal human rights and the better fostering of inter-religious cooperation, strongly believing that further cooperation is required for a better future.

Your leadership within the Kosovo Protestant Evangelical Church places you in a unique position to promote inter-ethnic harmony. Encouraging dialogue and cooperation between different religious and ethnic groups can significantly enhance unity in our communities. I urge you to support community programs and joint service projects that bring together people from diverse backgrounds. Your sermons and public addresses can emphasize the importance of unity, tolerance, and respect for all.

Looking ahead, I envision a Kosovo where multi-ethnic cohabitation is a reality. Regular interfaith meetings and intercultural initiatives can foster dialogue and cooperation.

In conclusion, I encourage you to continue your efforts in building a peaceful and inclusive community. Your leadership can inspire others to create a future where everyone feels at home in Kosovo.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dimitrije Obrenović

**Mentor Agani, Senior Researcher
Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development
Prishtina, Kosovo**

Honorable Pastor Artur Krasniqi,

I am Mentor Agani, and I am a Senior Researcher at KIPRED, The Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development, as well as a Lecturer at the Dardania College in Prishtina. I have also taught (2003-2016) at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Prishtina. I am writing this letter to express some of my expectations and desires regarding the inter-ethnic cohabitation in Kosovo, and to mention some activities that can be undertaken in this regard.

I am aware that for the Protestant Community of Kosovo, as a relatively new and small community, it might seem difficult to have any considerable impact on inter-ethnic relations in Kosovo, particularly given significant difficulties with which this community might be confronted in its early phases in Kosovo. However, I am fully convinced that You, as well as the Protestant Community of Kosovo can provide an important contribution to the improvement of inter-ethnic relations between Albanian and Serbs. I think that this should be done by focusing – as much as it is possible – the preaching of Kosovar Protestant Pastors on those aspects that are related to the political goal of Kosovo for improving interethnic relations in Kosovo. For instance, preaching should focus, as often as possible, on presenting human beings, regardless of their ethnic belonging, as highest creation of God, and, thus, as highest value of every society. Or, preaching can also focus on religious praising of good inter-ethnic relations, by articulating peace, tolerance, respect, and cooperation between different social groupings as religious values and moral virtues. Personally, I have lived for more than three years in the US, and I know very well that the American democracy and tolerance among different social groupings are in a large measure Protestant in their origin. Therefore, I think that Kosovar Protestant Community can provide an important contribution in this regard.

Yet another issue is the one of the condition of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Kosovo. Due to political circumstances, this Church is quite isolated and neglected by religious institutions of other Kosovar religions. I think that this situation is not acceptable. Therefore, religious institutions of all the Kosovar religions with Albanian believers should organize themselves jointly for visiting together the religious institutions of the Serbian Orthodox Church on occasion of their religious celebrations, for congratulating them for those celebrations. Such an undertaking can certainly soften ethnic and religious tensions among Kosovar ethnic and religious communities. The acceptance of Serbs by Kosovo is a necessary condition for acceptance of Kosovo by the Serbs, and religious acceptance of the Serbian Orthodox Church by other religions in Kosovo is an important step toward this goal.

I think that activities proposed here, as well as others like these that might emerge in the future, will assist the mitigation of inter-ethnic tensions and problems, and with this the Protestant Community of Kosovo will certainly provide an immense contribution toward making Kosovo a better place in the future.

Thank you, and my best regards,

Mentor Agani

Zoran Savić, Project Coordinator
NGO AKTIV
North Mitrovica, Kosovo

Dear Pastor Artur Krasniqi,

My name is Zoran Savić and I am a project coordinator in the non-governmental organization Aktiv from North Mitrovica. Although I was born in Pula, Croatia, I have actually lived in Mitrovica for 30 years and I am actively involved in social life in Kosovo, both through work and cultural life, considering that I am also a musician, and I have participated in various inter-ethnic projects with musicians of Albanian nationality.

At the same time, for many years I worked as a journalist in the Kosovo Sever portal - KoSSev, and through this job I became even more familiar with the political, security and religious situation in Kosovo. Even today, I collaborate with many Albanian journalists and editors, both project-wise and through jobs that are not related to the same.

Your leadership within the Kosovo Protestant Evangelical Church can greatly promote inter-ethnic harmony. Encouraging dialogue and cooperation between different religious and ethnic groups can help bridge divides. I urge you to support community programs and joint service projects that bring people from diverse backgrounds together. Your sermons and public addresses can emphasize unity, tolerance, and respect for all. Therefore, I am looking forward for your support in organizing inter-ethnic dialogues and community service projects that involve different religious groups working together.

In this spirit, I hope for a future where multi-ethnic religious cohabitation becomes the norm in Kosovo. I envision communities where religious differences are embraced as strengths rather than sources of division. To this end, you might focus on creating sustainable programs that educate on religious diversity and tolerance, support joint community projects, and ensure equal representation of all religious groups in local governance.

Looking forward, I envision a Kosovo where multi-ethnic cohabitation and religious tolerance is embraced. Regular interfaith meetings and intercultural initiatives can foster dialogue and cooperation.

I conclude this letter on a hopeful note, envisioning a future where our united efforts cultivate a genuinely harmonious and multi-ethnic society in Kosovo. I am certain that with our shared dedication, we can achieve remarkable progress toward this worthy goal.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Zoran Savić

