

National and Civil Security in Kosovo: Premises, Components, Challenges, and Risks

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Abstract

This paper explores the complex landscape of national and civil security in Kosovo, focusing on the premises, main components, challenges, and risks associated with establishing a secure and stable environment in Europe's youngest nation. Kosovo's journey towards statehood and security is hindered by a myriad of factors including political instability, economic underdevelopment, and the lingering effects of ethnic tensions. The research delves into the intricate dynamics between national security measures and human security needs, emphasizing the impact of political instability on the broader security framework. By examining the roles of various security institutions such as the Kosovo Security Force and the Kosovo Police and assessing their effectiveness in the face of external threats, particularly from Serbia and its allies, this study highlights the ongoing struggles and the necessary reforms in Kosovo's security sector. Additionally, the paper discusses the influence of international actors and frameworks, including NATO and the EU, in shaping Kosovo's security policies and practices. Through a comprehensive analysis, this study calls for a concerted effort from both local leadership and international partners to enhance Kosovo's security architecture, ensuring a stable, secure, and prosperous future for its citizens. The recommendations provided aim to fortify Kosovo's institutional capabilities and address the socio-political challenges that impede its path to a secure statehood.

Key words: *Kosovo, National Security, Civil Security, Political Instability, Security Institutions, Human Security, NATO, EU*

Introduction

This paper aims to analyze the premises, main components, challenges, and risks of National Security in Kosovo. Much has been researched and written about the challenges and potential for Kosovo's further development as a state, economy, and society. It is acknowledged that the country's economic policies have primarily focused on the sustainability of the public sector, a sector that is substantial and consequently costly. National and Human Security in the Republic of Kosovo is far from what it should be. Despite numerous contributing factors to Kosovo's slow progress and the human security of its citizens in the last decade, a fundamental (and often overlooked) issue has been political instability, including recurrent premature elections resulting in a series of unresolved government mandates. As a result, implications for human security have been low, as the negligence in addressing political instability, which is solely responsible for Kosovo's progress, has led to increased challenges in food security, employment security, and, among others, healthcare security.

Kosovo, Europe's youngest nation, still encounters obstacles in solidifying its state sovereignty. As it progresses from a critical phase of establishing statehood and strengthening democratic institutions, Kosovo continues to be an unfinished item on the agendas of global powers. Serbia's territorial assertions, the inability to secure UN membership, and non-recognition by five EU countries impede Kosovo's overall political, economic, and social progress (Perera, 2018, p.8). In the crucial undertaking of state-building, it is vital to strengthen both national security and the institutions that safeguard it. Effective security frameworks are foundational to a stable and autonomous state. Additionally, Kosovo's efforts to establish a robust national security system are complicated by the presence of Serbian parallel structures. These entities, which operate within Kosovo's borders, are endorsed and supported by officials from Belgrade, posing significant challenges to Kosovo's sovereignty and internal security. This external interference undermines Kosovo's quest for stability and recognition as an independent state.

This paper serves as a call for awareness. It is a warning for policymakers and civic actors in directly affected countries, as well as leaders in Western Europe and the United States, who are parties interested in Kosovo's secular, pro-Western democracy.

Factors of Slow Development and the National Security System in Kosovo

Kosovo has traversed a long journey since the 1999 war. The extended transition phase from peacekeeping to state-building has yielded relative stability in Kosovo. The political progress in Kosovo has been significant. The Republic of Kosovo is recognized by 113 UN member states (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo, 2017). Moreover, Kosovo has made considerable strides in consolidating its state institutions. Notably, progress has been achieved in Kosovo's economic development (Coleman, 2016).

Research by Alesina, Ozler, Rubini, and Swagel (1996) identifies political instability as “the tendency of a government collapse... a pattern in which such political instability and economic growth are determined together.” Furthermore, their findings indicate that while low economic growth increases the likelihood of government changes, political instability and subsequent government collapse enhance the chances of future government collapses (Alesina et al., 1996).

Since Kosovo's independence, the political sphere has been marred by division, even when critical national interests, questioned in this perspective, seemed uncertain for a population that desperately needs a united front to address its numerous fundamental needs. In these conditions, Kosovo still grapples with the inability to meet the basic needs of its citizens, as mentioned above. Moreover, Kosovo has not overcome the major obstacles to progress, including corruption, organized crime, and finding realistic solutions to ethnic disputes. Nevertheless, unstable governments and the now-established tradition of premature elections remain significant obstacles to progress (Global Security, 2017).

Immediately after independence, governments resulting from the national elections of November 17, 2007, were all short-lived. This government's mandate was interrupted when, after independence, Kosovo held its national elections on November 15, 2009. Subsequently, due to the Constitution of Kosovo, the court ruled on President Sejdiu that he had violated the constitution by mentioning the violation of not holding the positions of president and party political leader simultaneously (Democratic League of Kosovo) and President Sejdiu's resignation on September 27 created a deterioration in the coalition relations between the LDK (Democratic League of Kosovo) and PDK (Democratic Party of Kosovo).¹ With the vote of no confidence in the Assembly of Kosovo against the Thaçi Government, early elections occurred again on December 12, 2010. While international observers deemed the elections successful, local elections were scandalized by irregularities

¹ The Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, Article 88.

and electoral manipulations, irregularities in counting, intimidation, and pressure on local observers, violations of election procedures, forgery of signatures on the voter list, and family voting, leading to reruns in some municipalities in early 2011 (Global Security, 2017).

Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy called the NATO presence in Kosovo a new security vocation seeing the defense of human security as a global concern and the humanitarian imperative that galvanized NATO into action (Lloyd, 1999).

The People of Kosovo and Their Human Security

Despite the aforementioned political instability being a common denominator in a series of challenges for the country regarding human security, institutions and people, in general, still do not comprehend security beyond the traditional perspective. Hence, they are not directly recognizing the negative correlation that political instability has with their human security. In this sense, Kosovo's institutions and society predominantly focus on security issues traditionally understood, such as the military, police, and intelligence, while paying less or no attention to issues related to human security and social security (DCAF, 2015, f. 2). These aspects are equally crucial for national security, especially for a state like Kosovo.

The concept of human security encompasses various factors, including economic, health, food, political, communal, environmental, and personal security. According to Kofi Annan (2001), human security, in its broader sense, involves much more than the absence of violent conflict. It includes human rights, good governance, access to education and healthcare, and ensuring that every individual has the opportunity and choice to fulfill their potential. Each step in this direction is also an improper step toward poverty reduction, economic growth, and conflict prevention. Freedom from want, freedom from fear, and the freedom of future generations to inherit a healthy natural environment, where these can be called the connecting blocks that build human security and consequently national security (Center for Global Development Research, p. 1). Although the focus on human security in Kosovo differs from that of national security, both are closely linked. Human security is crucial not only for the well-being of the country but also for national security, stability, and overall development.

The majority of the focus in Kosovo, on security issues, has been on establishing the Armed Forces of Kosovo and preventing radicalization and violent extremism (OSCE, 2022). Focusing solely on these two aspects of security has allowed the neglect of serious fundamental issues related to human and social security in the country. If not addressed, these issues pose a serious threat to national security as a whole. The lack of economic growth and opportunities for the citizens of

Kosovo has become a serious challenge in consolidating Kosovo as a stable state. Its national security and approach to countering violent extremism have so far failed to address one of Kosovo's key issues—the crisis of identity in a mostly young population burdened with information and change in an environment that has provided no adequate support (Coleman, *Human Security in Kosovo: Another Facet of National Security*, 2016). While the goal of a new country like Kosovo should be to create a capable state ready to fulfill its duties and obligations to its citizens, significant shortcomings in various areas related to human security of the citizens of Kosovo remain (UNODC, 2008). These shortcomings make Kosovo's citizens even more vulnerable, especially in an environment where political stability is at its worst, and snap elections seem to challenge almost every term of the central government, making Kosovo's progress even more unattainable.

National Security as a Vital Component of Power: A Synthesized Analysis

National security is a fundamental aspect of power, essential for protecting a society's core values. To ensure comprehensive national security, states develop policies and establish institutions. This requires implementing protective measures at both national and international levels. States must engage in a series of strategic actions to secure their interests and safety. An analysis of the current security situation, its trends, and the nature of external threats, challenges, and risks to critical assets is imperative. It is also crucial to assess the legality of the emergence of negative security situations and to identify the causes behind these adverse security events (Stankovski, 2013, p. 137).

Security is a variable value that nations may possess in varying degrees and to which they may aspire in different extents. When juxtaposing it with wealth and power—where wealth quantifies a nation's material riches, and power gauges its capability to influence or control the behavior of others—security takes on a distinct dimension. In an objective sense, security can be measured by the absence of threats to a nation's established values, indicating a state where these values are not actively endangered. Conversely, in a subjective sense, security reflects the absence of fear among the populace that these valued assets or principles are at risk of being compromised or attacked. This dual perspective on security underscores its role as both a tangible and psychological state within the context of national stability and wellbeing (Wolfers, 1952, pp. 485-486).

The national security system, which includes two principal components—national security policy and national security structures—ensures the safety of society's members (Grizold, 1999). Given the complex global landscape marked by frequent political disagreements and conflicts both worldwide and within regions, it has become crucial for states to prioritize enhancing their national security

framework. Consequently, national security must be regarded as a top priority by both the government and public security bodies. This necessitates substantial investments in financial resources, infrastructure, and human capital to equip the state to face global and regional security challenges effectively.

Over the past 15 years, the Western Balkans has undergone a dramatic transformation in geopolitical, security, and defense circumstances. This transformation commenced with NATO interventions against former Yugoslavia (1995, 1999) and continued with the Ohrid Framework Agreement (2001), the independence of Montenegro (2006) and Kosovo (2008), the NATO membership of Albania and Croatia (2009), and Croatia's accession to the EU (NATO, 12 May 2022). The relations between Kosovo and Serbia, still in the early stages of normalization, deviate from this general trend (Peci, 2014, p. 9). Among all Western Balkan countries, only Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, and Kosovo are not NATO members. Serbia, due to the events of the 1999 war, is not interested in joining this organization.

Intervention and Russian Influence in the Western Balkans

The security sector encompasses all structures, institutions, and personnel responsible for offering, managing, and overseeing security at the national and local levels. Effective Security Sector Governance (SSG) denotes the provision of responsible state and human security within a framework of democratic civil control, rule of law, and respect for human rights. The primary goal of Security Sector Reform (SSR) is to establish a strong and efficient security sector governance (SSG). SSR is both a political and technical endeavor that seeks to boost state and human security by improving the effectiveness and accountability of security provision, management, and oversight. This is achieved within a framework that emphasizes democratic civilian control, adherence to the rule of law, and a commitment to human rights (DCAF – Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance, 2022). While SSR can be targeted at specific components of the security sector, it may also encompass the entire system, provided the overarching aim is to enhance both the efficiency and the accountability of the security operations.

A critical aspect of national security is the development of a security policy. This policy is grounded in national interests, which serve as both the basis for formulating the security policy and the benchmarks for managing security threats and evaluating strategic alternatives (Bartholomees, 2010, p.5). Furthermore, national security objectives play a pivotal role in safeguarding and promoting these national interests, guiding the strategic direction and operational priorities of the security policy (Peci, 2014, p.18).

An examination of the security and military landscape reveals that Kosovo is not confronted with direct and significant threats from any of the Western Balkan nations, with the notable exception of Serbia. Serbia continues to make territorial claims and sporadically threatens the use of force. The primary security concern for Kosovo arises from Serbia's aggressive defense and security strategies, which involve using its military forces for political ends. As such, it is difficult to dismiss the possibility that Belgrade maintains military strategies for potential unforeseen conflicts with Kosovo. Clearly, Kosovo itself does not represent a military threat to Serbia, neither now nor in any future scenario. This is despite the so-called "security" issues² that Belgrade raises, which fundamentally stem from its refusal to recognize Kosovo. Moreover, the ongoing dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade, though supported by Brussels, has yet to address initiatives that would foster trust and cooperation on security and defense matters between the two states. Consequently, achieving a substantial normalization of relations, which could pave the way for mutual recognition, seems implausible without first resolving the doctrinal disputes that currently hinder defense cooperation between Kosovo and Serbia (Peci, 2014, p. 64).

The withdrawal or cessation of NATO's mission in Kosovo would be detrimental to the security of the youngest state in Europe—Kosovo. This risk is further compounded by Kosovo's non-membership in the United Nations (NATO-Nato's role in Kosovo, 2021). The most plausible option in the Serbia-Kosovo relationship is that Serbia seeks the partition of Kosovo, with its northern, predominantly Serbian-populated part being annexed by Serbia. This scenario is speculated to be executed by Serbian leaders and poses the greatest risk to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Kosovo. Kosovo has established armed forces and should become a NATO member as soon as possible.

Institutions of the Security of Kosovo

Key institutions and mechanisms play pivotal roles in Kosovo's security architecture. These include the Parliament, the President, the Government (comprising the Prime Minister and various ministers), the Kosovo Security Council, the Kosovo Police, the Kosovo Security Force, as well as the Kosovo Intelligence Agency and the Civil Aviation Authority. Among these, the Kosovo Police holds a unique and critical position as it is currently the sole local security entity authorized to exercise any form of physical force. This exclusive authority positions the Kosovo Police as the most significant local security institution in the region (Qehaja and Vrajolli, 2012, p. 111).

² The EU-facilitated Belgrade-Pristina dialogue chaired by High Representative Josep Borrell, 27 February 2022

The Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, which became effective following Kosovo's declaration of independence, includes a detailed revision of the security apparatus under Chapter XI. This chapter is critical as it outlines the framework and responsibilities of the security organs within Kosovo. Specifically, Article 125, titled "General Principles," delineates several key aspects: (a) It affirms the Republic of Kosovo's sovereignty over law enforcement, security, justice, public order, intelligence, civil emergencies, and border control within its borders; (b) It mandates that security institutions in Kosovo are tasked with safeguarding public security and the rights of all citizens. These institutions are required to operate transparently and adhere to internationally recognized standards of democracy and human rights. Furthermore, these institutions are expected to reflect the ethnic diversity of Kosovo's population in their composition; (c) It asserts Kosovo's commitment to honor all binding international agreements and rights and highlights its collaboration with international and regional security organizations; (d) It ensures that security institutions are subject to civil and democratic oversight, guaranteeing accountability and governance in line with democratic principles. Additionally, the Constitution stipulates that the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo is responsible for supervising the budget and policies of the security institutions, which are to be regulated by national laws. This constitutional framework was established on June 15, 2008, in alignment with the Comprehensive Plan for the Resolution of the Final Status of Kosovo, commonly referred to as the Ahtisaari Plan (Brosig, 2011, p.2). This plan played a crucial role in shaping the constitutional and security architecture of the Republic of Kosovo, aiming to provide a robust legal and operational foundation for the country's governance and security mechanisms (Perrit, 2009).

Kosovo's political framework is shaped by the Ahtisaari Package, which has led to the establishment of security and defense institutions, including defense forces. To facilitate the formation of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kosovo, constitutional amendments were necessary. These changes represented significant challenges for Kosovo's institutions as they navigated the complex process of establishing a national armed force (Hallenberg, 2006, p.337). With the establishment of these armed forces, it is evident that Kosovo's security architecture has been comprehensively enhanced, reflecting a more robust defense capability.

Under the current provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, the Kosovo Security Force is designated as the national security force of the Republic of Kosovo. It has the authority to deploy its members internationally, in line with the country's international obligations. This force is primarily responsible for the protection of Kosovo's citizens and communities, operating within the legal competencies outlined by national legislation. The President of the Republic of Kosovo holds the role of Commander-in-Chief of the Kosovo Security Force,

ensuring that the force remains under the supervision of democratically elected civilian authorities (O'Neill, 2002). The Kosovo Security Force is notable for its representation of the ethnic diversity within Kosovo, recruiting members from all segments of the country's population. This inclusivity is a fundamental aspect of its operational ethos. The appointment of the Commander of the Kosovo Security Force is made by the President, based on a recommendation from the Government, which underscores the integration of democratic oversight in its command structure. The internal organization and operational parameters of the Kosovo Security Force are governed by national laws, as stipulated in Article 126 of the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo. This legal framework ensures that the force's activities are conducted within a structured and regulated environment, reinforcing its role in national and international security contexts.

The functioning and competencies of the Kosovo Security Force (KSF) are governed by Law No. 03/L-46, which was enacted by the Assembly of Kosovo on March 13, 2008. This law outlines the structure and duties of the KSF, defining it as an entirely voluntary organization, recruited from all segments of society, thereby reflecting the diverse makeup of the country (Sur, 2010, p.178). Furthermore, the official languages for the KSF are Albanian and Serbian, ensuring accessibility and inclusivity within the force. English is also used for communications with international organizations, facilitating international cooperation and engagement. The Kosovo Security Force is tasked with specific security functions that are distinct from those of the police or other law enforcement agencies. These functions are carefully monitored and must adhere to international standards. The deployment of these functions is coordinated with the International Military and the International Civilian Representative, as specified in Article 9 of Law No. 03/L-46. This framework ensures that the KSF operates within a structured and regulated environment, contributing effectively to the national and international security landscape.

Following Kosovo's declaration of independence, the Kosovo Security Council (KSC) was formed in line with the legal frameworks set out in the Ahtisaari Package, marking a significant component of Kosovo's new security sector architecture. Central to the council are key national figures who play a pivotal role in the council's operations. The KSC is primarily advisory and evaluative, tasked with shaping policy and reviewing legislation pertinent to the national security sector (Security Forum, 2010, p. 9). This body is constitutionally established, following the stipulations laid out in the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo. Unlike in many developed countries where the president often heads the national security council, in Kosovo, the Prime Minister leads the Kosovo Security Council. This arrangement underscores the distinct governance structure of the country (Murphy, 2009). As per the Constitution, the Kosovo Security Council works collaboratively with both

the President and the Government of Kosovo to devise the security strategy for the Republic, ensuring a cohesive and comprehensive approach to national security planning and implementation. This strategic collaboration is essential for aligning the security objectives and initiatives across the different branches of government.

The Kosovo Intelligence Agency is a key constitutional security institution in Kosovo, established under the guidance of the Constitution in Chapter XXI, titled “Security Sector,” more precisely in Article 129. This agency plays a crucial role in maintaining national security by detecting, investigating, and monitoring security threats within the Republic of Kosovo. The Constitution outlines several fundamental characteristics of the agency: (a) Its primary function is the surveillance and analysis of security threats. (b) It is designed to operate as a professional body that is politically independent and ethnically diverse, ensuring broad representation and impartiality. Additionally, it is subject to legislative oversight as prescribed by law. (c) The leadership of the Kosovo Intelligence Agency, including the director, deputy director, and general inspector, is appointed jointly by the President of the Republic of Kosovo and the Prime Minister following consultations with the Government (Kastrti & Shala, 2017). The qualifications and tenure of these positions are strictly regulated by law. (d) Both the President and the Prime Minister are privy to the same intelligence reports, facilitating a unified approach to national security issues (Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, Article 129). This structure ensures that the agency operates transparently and is accountable to the country’s top elected officials, reinforcing its role in safeguarding Kosovo’s security.

In June 2008, the Assembly of Kosovo passed the Law on the Kosovo Intelligence Agency (KIA), Law No. 03/L-063, which delineates the specific mandate and operational framework for the KIA (Knoll, 2009, p.184). This legislation provides a detailed outline of how the KIA is to be structured and function within the legal confines established. Notably, the law sets clear boundaries on the executive powers of this agency by explicitly prohibiting the use of force, either directly or indirectly, the arrest of citizens, and even the initiation of investigations. Further, the Law on the Kosovo Intelligence Agency governs various aspects of the institution, including its establishment, operational scope, methods for verification, as well as the organizational and management structures. It also dictates the KIA’s protocols for cooperation with other domestic institutions. Importantly, the legislation clearly identifies functions that are outside the permissible scope of the KIA, reinforcing the agency’s role as one that must operate within strict legal and ethical guidelines to ensure transparency and accountability in its operations. This framework aims to create a well-regulated environment for the intelligence agency, ensuring that its activities align with democratic norms and the protection of civil liberties.

The Kosovo Police stands as the pivotal institution for ensuring the security of citizens in the Republic of Kosovo. Initially established by the international community as the Kosovo Police Service, this organization has undergone significant transformation to become the robust and credible entity known today as the Kosovo Police. This evolution aligns with the mandates outlined in the Constitution and the Law on the Kosovo Police (Eckhard, 2016, p. 53). The operations, organizational structure, and responsibilities of the Kosovo Police are meticulously governed by specific legislation, particularly the Law on the Kosovo Police, adopted on March 2, 2012, under Law No. 04/L-076. This statute details the powers and duties of the police, their organizational framework, and various aspects pertinent to their functions and activities within the Republic of Kosovo (Law No. 04/L-076, Article 1).

The Kosovo Police operates as a public service within the Ministry of Internal Affairs framework, functioning under the authority of the Minister of Internal Affairs. While operational management does not fall under the Minister's direct control, oversight and supervision are provided by the General Director of the Police. The General Director maintains a direct reporting line to the Minister responsible for Administration and Management of the Police, ensuring regular communication through reports and updates as stipulated by law.

The police force executes its duties through a unified command chain that extends across the entire territory of the Republic of Kosovo. It is also distinguished by a uniform, emblem, and flag that have received official approval from the government of Kosovo. In its operational capacity, the Kosovo Police collaborates extensively with both central and local government institutions, the state prosecutor, and judicial courts. Additionally, it holds the mandate to engage with international counterparts through cooperation outlined in existing laws or international agreements (Gojani & Curri, 2021, p. 63). This comprehensive framework supports the Kosovo Police in effectively maintaining law and order and safeguarding public security across the nation.

Since June 1999, Kosovo has been under the administration of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), with the security sector falling within the mission's jurisdiction. According to UN Security Council Resolution 1244, this arrangement encompasses not only the civilian presence and police but also the NATO forces, which are recognized alongside the Kosovo Security Force. Following Kosovo's declaration of independence, the NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) has maintained its presence in the region. Additionally, the scope of international involvement has broadened with the integration of the European Union Rule of Law Mission (EULEX). This expanded mission reflects a continued

commitment to Kosovo's stability and governance, providing both military and civil law enforcement support to ensure a secure and lawful environment in the post-independence era.

Challenges of National Security of Kosovo

Kosovo, despite its status as a new and small nation, faces a complex array of geopolitical and security challenges. The dynamic nature of international relations has necessitated that small states like Kosovo adapt their foreign policy strategies to address security concerns effectively. Kosovo has strategically navigated these challenges to mitigate the impacts of power vacuums in the global political landscape. Different state strategies have emerged, ranging from adopting neutrality and maintaining a passive stance to taking a more proactive role as key players in international relations. These strategies are tailored to align with national interests and are intrinsically linked to the sovereignty of these small states (Vladychenko, 2017, p. 44). Often, this necessitates a delicate balance between integration, security, self-defense, and the partial relinquishment of sovereignty to achieve broader goals (Elezi, 2015, p. 140).

Strategic documents approved by the institutions of the Republic of Kosovo outline a significant spectrum of challenges. These challenges are categorized into 'Common Responsibilities' and 'Opportunities for Progress.' Under the first category, challenges are broadly defined, underscoring the essential role of institutional cooperation within Kosovo to tackle these issues effectively (Hensel, 2006, p. 17). It also highlights the importance of international cooperation and the benefits of membership in regional and global organizations, which not only enhances Kosovo's security but also contributes to regional stability.

The second category offers a detailed analysis of Kosovo's specific security challenges. It addresses issues such as governance, corruption, organized crime, terrorism, the proliferation of weapons, explosive devices, and civil emergencies. Additionally, it encompasses economic development, education, research, the integration of diverse communities into public institutions, agriculture, public health, the environment, and cultural heritage preservation (Kosovo Security Council, 2010, pp. 11-16).

However, while this strategy outlines a broad range of issues, it lacks depth in addressing potential threats to Kosovo's security and state integrity, which are considered in a separate strategic document, the "Strategic Sector Security Review Analysis of the Republic of Kosovo." This comprehensive approach ensures that from planning through to execution, every aspect of the strategy is subject to rigorous control and evaluation. This process tests the strategy's rationality and effectiveness in achieving its intended outcomes (Chappella, Mawdsley & Petrov,

2016). In this universal context, even for a small state like Kosovo, the national security strategy acts as a crucial document. It not only outlines the country's fundamental national interests but also guides the formulation and execution of policies aimed at leveraging opportunities and countering threats to national security.

National Security as an Essential Component of Central Power

National security is the foundation through which a society protects its most vital values. States develop policies and establish institutions dedicated to maintaining this security across both national and international arenas (Kononenko, Novikova, & Kharchenko, 2022). Ensuring national security involves a comprehensive approach, necessitating a variety of strategic actions aimed at safeguarding a nation's stability.

Critical to this process is the thorough analysis of the current security environment. This includes assessing trends, identifying external security risks, challenges, and threats, and examining the legality and causes of negative security events. Such analysis results in a synthesized evaluation that not only describes the incidents in detail but also forecasts their potential impacts on future security scenarios (Stankovski, 2013, p. 137).

Security is a multifaceted value within a nation, comparable in importance to wealth and power, which are prominent in international relations. Whereas wealth quantifies a nation's material assets and power reflects its influence over others, security is uniquely characterized by the absence of threats to a nation's cherished values and, subjectively, by the absence of fear among its populace regarding potential attacks on these values (Wolfers, 1952, pp. 485-486).

At its core, the national security system includes two primary components: national security policy and structures. Together, these provide comprehensive protection for all members of society (Grizold, 1999). The evolving global landscape, marked by frequent political divergences and conflicts, necessitates that nations prioritize the enhancement of their security frameworks. This involves significant investments in financial, infrastructural, and human resources to fortify national preparedness against both global and regional security challenges.

Over the past 15 years, the Western Balkans have experienced significant geopolitical, security, and defense transformations. This period has seen pivotal events such as NATO's interventions in Yugoslavia (1995, 1999), the Ohrid Agreement (2001), the independence declarations of Montenegro (2006) and Kosovo (2008), and the NATO admissions of Albania and Croatia (2009), along with Croatia's entry into the EU (Peterson, 2021). These developments reflect a transition from conflict to peace, from peace to fragmentation, and from fragmentation to an

era of cooperation. However, the early dialogues between Kosovo and Serbia show deviations from this broader trend of cooperation, indicating unique challenges at various discussion levels (Peci, 2014, p.9).

Within the region, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, and Kosovo remain outside NATO, partly due to Serbia's reluctance to join the alliance following the 1999 conflict. The absence of NATO membership for these nations opens avenues for Russian intervention and influence, posing significant geopolitical and security concerns in the Western Balkans (Oxford Analytica, 2021).

New National Security of Kosovo

The security sector encompasses all the structures, institutions, and personnel tasked with providing, managing, and overseeing security at both national and local levels. A robust security system is characterized by its capacity to deliver effective and responsible state and human security, all within a framework governed by democratic civilian oversight, adherence to the rule of law, and a steadfast commitment to human rights (Monshipiuri, 2012, p.17). The enhancement of such a system is the primary objective of security sector reform, which involves a comprehensive political and technical process aimed at optimizing the efficacy and accountability of security provision, management, and oversight. This process adheres strictly to principles of democratic control, legal conformity, and human rights respect (Center for International Policy, 2014). The focus of these reforms can vary, targeting specific parts of the security sector or enhancing the functioning of the entire system to ensure improved effectiveness and accountability.

Formulating a national security policy is a critical component of national security. This policy is fundamentally based on national interests, which guide the assessment and response to security threats and the exploration of strategic options (Bartholomees, 2010, p. 5). Furthermore, national security objectives are instrumental in directing efforts to protect and promote these interests, thus serving as a vital framework for the operational goals and strategic directions of the security sector (Peci, 2014, p. 18). These elements combine to form a cohesive strategy that ensures national security is maintained in alignment with the country's overarching goals and values.

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Kosovo has established its Armed Forces, a development deemed essential for maintaining peace and security within the state. The potential withdrawal or end of NATO's mission in Kosovo was viewed as a critical threat to the security of Europe's youngest state (NATO, 2008). This concern was exacerbated by Kosovo's lack of membership in the United Nations, highlighting its vulnerability on the international stage. In the context of relations between Serbia and Kosovo, the most concerning possibility is Serbia's aspiration to partition Kosovo (Mehmeti & Radeljic, 2016). Specifically, Serbian leaders are thought to favor the annexation of northern Kosovo, which has a Serbian majority. Such a move would pose a significant threat to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Kosovo. Consequently, the creation of Kosovo's Armed Forces and the pursuit of NATO membership have been prioritized by Kosovo's government. Unlike some states that may choose a path of military neutrality, Kosovo has explicitly expressed its intention to join NATO, underscoring its strategic decision to align more closely with Western security frameworks as a means of bolstering its national defense and sovereignty.

The national security system of Kosovo is structured around three fundamental components, each crucial to its comprehensive security strategy. These include: (a) the Constitution, relevant legislation, and various strategic documents that outline the security framework; (b) the security institutions tasked with implementing these policies; and (c) the overarching national security policy that guides the country's defense and security priorities (Bartholomees, 2010, p. 5; Peci, 2014, p. 18). Legal frameworks are essential not only for defining the scope and function of these security institutions but also for shaping the national security policy that drives their operations. These documents provide the legal basis required for

the effective realization and maintenance of national security, ensuring that all measures are grounded in law.

Moreover, the protection of Kosovo's territorial integrity and sovereignty is a collaborative effort, involving both national mechanisms and international support. This effort is characterized by close coordination with the international military presence led by NATO and reinforced through partnerships with Kosovo's strategic allies. This cooperative approach is integral to the country's security strategy, as outlined in the Kosovo Security Strategy 2022-2027, page 10, ensuring a robust defense posture aligned with both national interests and international support frameworks.

Russia in the Western Balkans

Russia's Policies in Kosovo

Alongside China, Spain, and other influential states, Russia's resistance to the international sovereignty of Kosovo poses a serious challenge to policymakers in Pristina and supporters of Kosovo in Europe and North America. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, Russia's "original" views on Kosovo, which invoke the authority of international law, present a challenge for Kosovo's policymakers and the international community aiming to secure "international legal sovereignty" for the government of Kosovo (Milano, 2010, p.2). This paper evaluates Russia's policy in Kosovo (and consequently, in the Balkans), analyzes briefly Russian perspectives on the international system, conflicts, and institutions, and highlights some of the soft and hard power tools it practically employs.

There are three broader points related to Russia's policy towards Kosovo since the mid-1990s. Firstly, both Yeltsin's and Putin's governments have pursued highly realistic policies towards Kosovo and the Balkans (Özlem, 2021, p.122). These primarily serve the broader agenda of Russia's foreign policy, the main objective of which is for the Russian government to regain its position as a global power. For this purpose, the Russian government uses a full range of tools of both soft and hard power.

Secondly, Russia's policy towards Kosovo (and the Balkans) remains peripheral, enabling small Russian investments in support of Serbian interests against Kosovo's sovereignty (Capussela, 2015). It serves to hinder Western efforts to strengthen its influence networks in Kosovo and the Balkans. Furthermore, Russia's support for the continuous international legal sovereignty of the Serbian population in Kosovo aligns with its preference for security in its near abroad and support for rising powers against post-Soviet governments that may wish to join NATO and the EU, such as Ukraine, Georgia, or Moldova (Pouliot, 2010, p.194).

Lastly, the projection of soft power in Kosovo and the Balkans is also a reminder of the assumed cultural affinities between Orthodox Slavs through the Russian Orthodox Church and a demonstration of Russia's goodwill by supporting Serbia's capacity to respond to crises. Russia dismisses its actions in the current regional "great game" repetition (Meyendorff, 2017).

Russia as a Global Power

Several authors establish a connection between Russia and the Western Balkans by on their shared historical pasts (Kaplan, 2013) claims that Russia has historically focused its attention on the countries of the Western Balkans.

The Russian partnership with Serbia has been built on Russia's opposition to Kosovo's independence. Belgrade has sought Moscow's help in rebalancing the power balance with Pristina, which has been backed by the US and other key EU/NATO nations in the past. It has been crucial in keeping Kosovo out of international organizations such as the UN and its agencies (Bechev, 2019).

Focused on encouraging independence, Moscow has done all possible to prevent the Bosnian Serb leadership from being censored by the Implementation of Peace Council (Bechev, 2019). The Russian government has consistently pursued a policy aimed at strengthening its position as a global power. This key consensus has remained relatively stable since the end of the Cold War, emphasizing Russia's role as a regional power with global reach. This effort aimed to popularize a favorable image of Russia and raise interest in the language and culture of that nation among the rest of the globe (Loss, 2021).

President Putin, akin to Ivan the Terrible and the Assembly of Russian Lands in the fifteenth century, steadfastly asserts Russia's place at the table as a government with both regional command and global extension (GovInfo, 10 Jan 2018). It was hard for the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to ignore the risk that the Kosovo leadership's policies have increased tension and interethnic strife in the region (Ministry of foreign affairs of the Russian Federation information and press department 216-17-02- 2008). Unofficially, Russian nationals assist in funding and managing nationalist and paramilitary organizations, including contentious military-style boot camps for young Serbs (McBride, 2022).

Furthermore, media and propaganda play a significant role in shaping public opinion about Russia and its influence in the Western Balkans, including Kosovo. Following the arrests of the former president, Hashim Thaçi, and the former speaker of the Assembly of Kosovo, Kadri Veseli, in November 2020, the Specialized Chambers of Kosovo received appreciation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia among others. Additionally, a report from the Kosovo Institute for Policy Research and Development (KIPRED) in March 2021 found that the Russian-

controlled media are very active in disinformation campaigns against Kosovo (SOT.COM.AL. 27 Aug 2022).

Remodeling Relations between Kosovo and Turkey: Between Facts and Emotions

Turkey implements its “outside-in” policy in the Western Balkans, and Kosovo holds a significant place in this context. A brief historical background of Turkey’s policy towards Kosovo since the early 1990s Kosovo Crisis (1998-1999) marked a new era in Turkish foreign policy (Tabak, 2017). At the end of the Cold War, Turkey adopted a more assertive and multidirectional foreign policy. Turgut Ozal’s vision of Turkey as a regional power, extending its influence from the Adriatic to China, implied a new approach to foreign policy (Dogan, 2013). In this geopolitical environment, during the 1990s, Ankara viewed the Western Balkans as a new strategically important gateway to Europe and was inclined to involve NATO in the region (Foteva, 2014). According to then-President Demirel, the crisis in Kosovo gave Turkey the opportunity to demonstrate that it was a “first-class member of NATO” during NATO’s bombing campaign against Serbia in 1999. In addition, the Turkish public and political elite paid special attention to the historical Ottoman legacy in the Balkans, including Kosovo, which is also home to a vibrant Turkish-speaking minority (Aksin, 2011). Complex factors elicited a mixed reaction from Ankara to the Kosovo crisis. In the first half of the 1990s, Ankara maintained a low profile, focusing on the Turkish-speaking minority in Kosovo (Baykusoglu, 2009). Other issues emerged because of the war, particularly the humanitarian emergency and the risk of regional conflict spreading. Religious issues were also a factor for Turkey. The Serb-Orthodox union, foreign policy based on the Serb-Orthodox axis, could be much more dangerous than ideological polarization, warned Turkish Prime Minister Ecevit.

Against this background, on October 13, 1998, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs declared that NATO was preparing for possible actions in Kosovo, and Turkey would participate in such an operation (Legvold & Norris, 2005). As NATO intervention began, Turkey provided F-16 fighter jets, which initially conducted monitoring flights and later joined the U.S. and other allies in the attack on Serbian targets. Turkey’s engagement in Kosovo expanded when the war ended, and the international administration of the UN was established in Kosovo in June 1999. Turkey significantly contributed to the implementation of the NATO-led peace and the mission of the UN civilian administration in Kosovo.

Independence of Kosovo and the new era in Kosovo-Turkey relations where February 17, 2008, represents a turning point in relations between Kosovo and Turkey. On that day, Kosovo declared its independence. Turkey, along with the

United States, the United Kingdom, and France, was among the first countries to recognize Kosovo's independence. Kosovar officials were deeply grateful to Turkey for the swift recognition of Kosovo and its role in the coordinated declaration of independence. Kosovo is aware that many countries recognized Kosovo because of Turkey's direct diplomatic influence, stated the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kosovo during a visit to Turkey in February 2015 (Martin, 2015, p.31). In addition to supporting the recognition of its independence, Turkey has supported the overall state-building progress of Kosovo since 2008.

For Turkey, the benefits of quickly recognizing Kosovo outweighed any possible costs. Turkey was motivated by geopolitical considerations and historical paradigms. With Kosovo's independence, Turkey valued the key role of the Albanian factor in the Balkans. The large number of citizens of Albanian origin in Turkey and the presence of the Turkish ethnic minority in Kosovo were also motivating factors (Resnick, Vogel & Luisi, 2006). Erdogan's aides mentioned, as anecdotes, the pressure Erdogan faced to recognize Kosovo from his personal friends in Turkey, many of whom have Albanian ethnic origins. The Turkish Foreign Minister, Ahmet Davutoglu, during a discussion with his Kosovar counterpart in Ankara in 2009, stated that more citizens of Kosovo origin live in Turkey than Kosovars in Kosovo (Tabak,2017).

Conclusions and Recommendations

National security is a cornerstone of sovereign statehood and a fundamental aspect of central governmental power. It involves the deployment of specific measures and actions aimed at safeguarding the country from both internal disturbances and external threats. It is recognized that a robust national security framework encompasses a combination of legal acts, strategic documents, dedicated security institutions, and clearly defined national security policies. In the Republic of Kosovo, the constitution and various laws have been established to regulate this critical sector, along with strategic documents that guide security operations. However, these legal frameworks are periodically subject to reviews and updates to ensure they remain relevant and effective in addressing the evolving needs and challenges facing Kosovo today (Jakupi, 2019).

The security institutions within Kosovo are currently undergoing a significant phase of consolidation, enhancing their capabilities across all dimensions. This development necessitates both mobilization and substantial investment to enable these institutions to operate efficiently and achieve operational excellence. Such advancements are essential to ensure the safety of Kosovo's citizens and to fortify the state against external threats. In line with these efforts, notable progress has

been made through constitutional amendments aimed at establishing the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kosovo. These armed forces have been structured as a modern military entity, crafted to meet NATO standards. This alignment not only enhances the operational capabilities of Kosovo's military but also integrates it more closely with international security frameworks, marking a significant step in Kosovo's engagement with global security operations.

The Republic of Kosovo encounters numerous security challenges and risks. A primary source of risk is Serbia, which maintains organized structures within Kosovo and influences Serbian political parties that are part of Kosovo's institutions, directed by official Belgrade. Additionally, foreign intelligence services, particularly those from Russia and Serbia, pose a significant threat as they aim to destabilize Kosovo. Challenges also arise from the need to strengthen institutions such as border police and customs to effectively combat border-related crimes, tackle terrorism, and address the issue of citizens participating in conflicts in Iraq and Syria, all of which represent substantial risks to national security.

To remain effective and responsive to these evolving threats, it is crucial that strategic documents governing Kosovo's security measures are periodically reviewed and updated. These revisions must reflect the new conditions and circumstances that Kosovo faces, ensuring that security strategies are robust and adaptive (Sterie & Brunhart, 2010). This process of continual assessment and adaptation is vital for maintaining the integrity and effectiveness of Kosovo's security framework.

How can the Government of Kosovo improve? To address the challenges facing Kosovo as a country and a people, state institutions, and consequently, the government must operate sustainably within the mandate obtained. In this way, sufficient time can be ensured to review the handovers from the previous government. This can be considered as an initial phase of understanding where systems are challenged in meeting the needs of the population, followed by sufficient time to provide facts that need to be reviewed and redefined to reflect the country as it is today. This may also imply that the role of the state needs to be reviewed in light of these changes.

What is clear, both theoretically and practically, is that national security is linked to human security. To safeguard national security, states must ensure human security and the social security of their population. This means that ultimately, people living within a state must be provided with the space and means to fulfill their needs for human security and to preserve their ethnic, cultural, religious, and national identity to maintain national security (Lineberger, 1998). In this sense, the responsibility for ensuring such space and means falls on the political leaders in the country, and their ultimate responsibility, as elected representatives, is to represent the people.

Furthermore, their political decisions should be based on a fair determination of priorities, starting with how their political decisions would impact their political agendas. The vicious circle of political instability can be broken only by changing a mentality that shifts the focus more on what Kosovo and its people truly need and what is crucial for the survival and sustainability of this country than the interests of political parties (Gjojani & Curri, 2021). In the short term, only a conscious decision to change the political mentality can break the vicious circle of political instability that has undermined Kosovo.

Even after a decade of international administration and thirteen years of independence from Serbia, Kosovo continues to face ethnic and socio-economic problems that have the potential to undermine the progress made and threaten the country's stability (Kosovo Agency of Statistics, 2011). In 1999, the international community intervened to stop the violence by Serbian authorities against Kosovo Albanians and began its ten-year administration of Kosovo, aiming to coordinate reconstruction, maintain order and the rule of law, protect human rights, and establish democratic institutions. From 1999 to 2008, the international administration (UNMIK and its partners) coordinated the deployment of over 20,000 NATO troops, provided over three billion euros in foreign aid, and undertook significant projects in peacebuilding and institution-building (Tansey, 2009).

Despite these investments, many criticize the international administration for being ineffective in meeting the real needs of the Kosovo population, building social trust between ethnic communities, and achieving economic recovery and psychosocial reconstruction (Havolli, 2018, p.5). The international administration is also criticized for deepening ethnic fragmentation (thus strengthening parallel Serbian institutions), claiming international primacy, hindering local ownership, and making it impossible for bottom-up approaches to transition and normalization. Instead of supporting the strengthening of social security and increasing the participation of all communities in political decision-making, international actors have prioritized short-term security at the cost of long-term sustainable peace and economic development (McKinnon, 2022).

This work also examines factors that have harmed social progress and improvement of human conditions in Kosovo from the perspective of human security. Although human security was implied in the mandates of the international administration and local institutions, this material explores how human security has been instrumentalized as 'ethnic security' in post-conflict Kosovo. It is argued that the international administration in Kosovo has undertaken activities related to human security primarily as a conflict resolution and short-term stability solution, allowing Kosovo institutions to use it as a tool to justify their self-governing capacities and to act as the main provider of public services and human security

(Huszka, 2014). Parallel Serbian institutions engage in similar activities with human security, aiming to legitimize their 'contested' presence in enclaves around Kosovo. As a result of these numerous agencies and their implied human security, it is argued that human security has not been a goal in itself for these three agencies but has functioned as a means to achieve various political agendas.

Referring to many similar studies, it can be reiterated that there is no consensus definition for the scope and nature of human security. Nevertheless, in a broad sense, it challenges the traditional view of security, which focuses on military capabilities and state security, supporting the expansion of the human development paradigm (Kumra, 2015). In essence, human security involves a shift in focus from a state-centric understanding of security, which is top-down and territorial, to an individual-based model and, consequently, to a bottom-up and non-territorial model (Wilson, 2003). It reorients the conceptualization of security, taking into account specific dimensions of the concept. 'Security for whom' focuses on individuals and people and has a broader meaning for values and goals such as dignity, equality, and solidarity. 'Security from what' identifies the causes of insecurity based on agency and structures, such as economic threats, personal security, environmental threats, and political threats "(Stevens & Williams, 2016)

In conclusion, 'security with what means' empowers individuals to become 'agents' who can actively engage in identifying potential security threats and participate in efforts to mitigate them. The UNDP Human Development Report (HDR) of 1994 synthesized human security threats into seven components: (a) economic security, (b) food security, (c) health security, (d) environmental security, (e) personal security, (f) community security, and (g) political security. The objective of human security is to protect the fundamental essence of all human lives from widespread critical threats without hindering long-term human fulfillment. In parallel, a European concept of human security perceives it as the security of individuals and communities, an interconnection of freedom from fear and freedom from want (Hanlon & Christie, 2016). A research group convened by the EU has formulated several principles of new conflict management informed by human security. These principles include (a) the primacy of human rights that distinguishes the approach to human security from state-based traditional approaches; (b) legitimate political authority, which has enforcement capacity and can gain the trust of the population; (c) multilateralism, as human security is global, it must be implemented through multi-actor actions; (d) a bottom-up approach, considering communication, consultation, and dialogue with local residents as essential means for development and security, with a regional focus, as new wars have unclear boundaries (UNDP, 2022).

However, with the increasing consideration of human security, various criticisms have questioned its conceptual meaning, scope, and political and moral

implications. The main conceptual criticism revolves around its lack of precision as a concept, its broadness in considering responses to threats, the absence of a concise research agenda complicated by its interdisciplinarity and intersectionality. Regarding the political implications of human security, Buzan is skeptical about its effect and sees it as a new tool for existing government agencies to shape and control the civilian population. He argues that human security remains at the core of the state regardless of the international dimensions of the concept, allowing a prominent role for the state as a necessary condition for individual security.

Moving from theory to practice, human security is increasingly used in post-conflict situations. From Bosnia and Herzegovina to Timor-Leste, Kosovo, and Afghanistan, the comprehensive nature of these interventions, including the building of democratic institutions, support for civil society, economic development, promotion of human rights, accountability for war crimes, and so forth, closely aligns with key concerns related to human security³. From these cases, the Report of the Commission on Human Security (CHS) called for a new framework and financing strategy that rebuilds states shattered by conflict and focuses on the protection and empowerment of individuals. Such a human security framework, according to CHS, should emphasize the connections between many issues affecting people, such as ensuring human security through strengthening civilian police and demobilizing combatants, addressing the immediate needs of displaced persons, initiating reconstruction and development, promoting reconciliation and coexistence, and advancing effective governance (Matute,2021). Furthermore, CHS acknowledges that in conflict situations, it is necessary to go beyond the presence of peacekeeping and peacebuilding by creating a unified leadership for all actors near the point of providing human security.

However, the call for human security as a strategy to address various issues in underdeveloped societies, war-torn territories, and weak or fragile states poses some challenges. For example, the involvement of various national and international agencies to provide human security may hinder the development of a single political structure responsible for providing services to its voters and accountable through democratic mechanisms. On the other hand, assistance from weak governments is considered a sustainable approach to providing public security and well-being but risks jeopardizing the long-term goal of improving human rights and investing in people. Thus, a balanced approach of having functional and accountable public institutions that ensure the balance between public domain public security and simultaneous investment in people through prioritizing education, health, and social well-being would be a comprehensive strategy to ensure overall social stability and development (Yevsuykov & Shvedum,2021). As idealistic as it may

³ Human Rights Watch, Bosnia and Herzegovina (2006): Looking for Justice. The war crimes chamber in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Vol.18, No.1D, 44 pp.

sound, effective aid and political conditioning combined with on-the-ground assistance would serve as a mechanism for gradual progress in this direction”.

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