

UNMIK

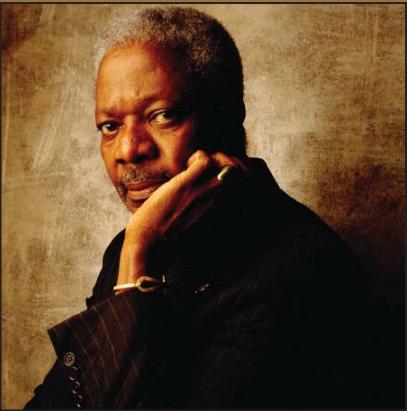
2006 - 2008

Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General

Joachim Rücker



United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo



"The task before the international community is to help the people in Kosovo to rebuild their lives and heal the wounds of conflict."

Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan





In Kosovo, the United Nations took on a sweeping undertaking that was unprecedented in both its scope and structural complexity. No other mission had ever been designed in a way that other multilateral organizations were full partners under United Nations leadership.

Mandate:

UNMIK was born on 10 June 1999 when the Security Council in resolution 1244 authorized the Secretary-General to establish in the war-ravaged province of Kosovo an interim civilian administration led by the United Nations under which its people could progressively enjoy substantial autonomy.

In particular, resolution 1244 has called upon UNMIK to:

- perform basic civilian administrative functions;
- promote the establishment of substantial autonomy and self-government in Kosovo;
- facilitate a political process to determine Kosovo's future status;
- coordinate humanitarian and disaster relief of all international agencies;
- support the reconstruction of key infrastructure;
- maintain civil law and order;
- promote human rights; and
- assure the safe and unimpeded return of all refugees and displaced persons to their homes in Kosovo.

Working closely with Kosovo's leaders and people, the mission performs the whole spectrum of essential administrative functions and services covering such areas as health and education, banking and finance, post and telecommunications, and law and order. In January 2000, Joint Interim Administrative Departments were created; in October 2000, local elections took place in Kosovo's 30 Municipalities; in May 2001, the new Constitutional Framework of Kosovo was adopted. Province-wide elections took place in November 2001.

The head of UNMIK is the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Kosovo. As the most senior international civilian official in Kosovo, he presides over the work of the Pillars and facilitates the political process designed to determine Kosovo's future status.

UNMIK SRSG History:

*Dr. Bernard Kouchner (France)
July 1999 to January 2001.*

*Mr. Hans Haekkerup (Denmark)
February 2001 to December 2001.*

*Mr. Michael Steiner (Germany)
January 2002 to July 2003.*

*Mr. Harri Holkeri (Finland)
August 2003 to June 2004.*

*Mr. Søren Jessen-Petersen (Denmark)
August 2004 to June 2006.*

*Mr. Joachim Rücker (Germany)
September 2006 to June 2008*

*The current SRSG is Mr. Lamberto Zannier (Italy)
June 2008 -*

OCTOBER 2006

Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in Kosovo (SRSG) Joachim Rücker on 4 October 2006 visited Mitrovica, where he met Mayor Mursel Ibrahim and attended the closing ceremony of a multi-ethnic project to clean up the banks of the Ibar River. Speaking to the media after the meeting with the mayor, Rücker welcomed the municipality's attitude towards decentralization and reform of local government. "Increased responsibilities for local government is key for the future of Kosovo and it is in the interest of the municipalities and citizens to have more competencies," Rücker said. Rücker, together with the UNDP Resident Representative in Kosovo, Frode Mauring, congratulated the two local NGOs from north and south Mitrovica who completed the Ibar riverbank clean-up project. The project started in July with

€70,000 funding from UNDP, along with bulldozers provided by UNMIK and trucks for removing rubbish from the riverbank provided by KFOR.

On the political side, in October 2006, the status talks between Belgrade and Pristina were ongoing. On 2 October 2006, UN Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari briefed EU Defence Ministers on the course of negotiations on Kosovo's status and his next steps. Later on, around mid-October, the delegations of Pristina and Belgrade met again in Vienna to discuss decentralisation, minority rights and cultural heritage. For UNOZEK, October was a very busy month as it approached the final phase of the process. In Mitrovica, Rücker was asked by the media about recent statements suggesting a possible delay in taking a decision on Kosovo's status. Rücker said: "We should not lose perspective of how far we have come in a relatively short time. Kai Eide's report is not much older than a year, and if you look at what has happened since, I think we have come very far in a very short time. This, to a large extent, is also due to the efforts of the Unity Team who I would like to commend for their constructive engagement in the negotiations, for doing their part so that the process is taken forward. As far as the timeline is concerned, we are still guided by the commitment of the Contact Group to do everything possible for an early solution of the status and I'm very sure that the Contact Group, and of course, Ahtisaari and all the key players are very conscious of the critical importance of having an early solution." "I am confident that the Team of Unity and the PISG understand this too and will take advantage of this historic moment to ensure that Kosovo achieves its goal by keeping the momentum and keeping the focus on standards implementation and constructive engagement within the status process," he added.



SRSG Joachim Rücker at the Ibar river bank at the closing ceremony of the clean-up project in Mitrovica.



"Increased responsibilities for local government is the key for the future of Kosovo"

SRSG's statement on the status process

On 10 November, SRSG Joachim Rücker made the following statement on the status process in Pristina:

"I have taken note of Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari's statement today that he will present his proposal on Kosovo's status without delay after the parliamentary elections in Serbia.

"There are many compelling reasons to come to clarity on Kosovo's status as soon as possible. Therefore, I look forward to the presentation of the status proposal.

"I will continue to work closely with the Contact Group, the Special Envoy and the parties on preparing Kosovo for final status and on ensuring a smooth transition to the future authorities as well as to the future international presence.

"While we await the Special Envoy's proposal, UNMIK and the Kosovo Government continue to have a full agenda, firstly maintaining a safe and secure environment together with KFOR and pushing forward on the Standards for Kosovo and European Integration. I also ex-

pect Kosovo's leaders to continue to speak with one voice.

"I am confident that all stakeholders will remain committed to the process and to the guiding principles set out by the Contact Group and will continue to avoid even the perception of unilateral action that might undermine support for Kosovo at this crucial time."



Trilateral meeting on status process

SRSG Joachim Rücker on 13 November 2006 had a trilateral meeting with Prime Minister Agim Çeku and COMKFOR Lt.-Gen. Roland Kather. Discussions focused on the latest developments in the status process and the priorities that confront the Kosovo leadership, UNMIK and KFOR in the run up to a determination of Kosovo's status. Rücker stressed that there are many compelling reasons to come to

clarity on Kosovo's status as soon as possible. "It is, therefore, important not to lose the momentum and to keep the status process on track. To this end, UNMIK welcomes the continued commitment of UN Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari and members of the Contact Group to seeing an early conclusion of the status process," he said. Rücker briefed his interlocutors on his meetings with several Kosovo political leaders over the weekend where he underlined that it is imperative that all stakeholders in Kosovo remain committed to the process and continue to support the work of the Special Envoy through to its conclusion. "The Special Envoy has brought the status process a long way forward this year, and the constructive engagement and the unity of the Kosovo Negotiating Team have substantially contributed to this end. Kosovo's engagement in the process must continue in the same spirit," said Rücker. He added, "It is paramount that all Kosovo leaders continue to fully subscribe to the Guiding Principles set out by the Contact Group in November 2005. Any statements that allude to Kosovo taking unilateral actions are in contradiction to the Contact Group's Guiding Principles. Such statements can undermine support for Kosovo at this crucial time." "It is important that Kosovo leaders continue to reach out to the minority communities and work to promote reconciliation and dialogue. All communities should exercise restraint and show understanding at this sensitive stage of the status process," Rücker said.

NOVEMBER 2006



Mr. Rücker at the opening ceremony of the "M & Silosi" factory in Xerxe/Zrre on 14 November 2006.



SRSG Joachim Rücker, COMKFOR Lt.-Gen. Roland Kather, and Prime Minister Agim Çeku.

DECEMBER 2006

“The future of



Public meeting in Novobërdë/Novo Brdo on 6 December 2006.

multi-ethnic”



Public meeting in Novobërdë/Novo Brdo

“The future of Kosovo can only be democratic and multi-ethnic,” said SRSG Joachim Rücker, addressing a public meeting in Novobërdë/Novo Brdo on 6 December 2006. Rücker, accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister Lutfi Haziri, participated in a panel discussion chaired by Municipal Assembly President Petar Vasić.

Participants addressed various issues of vital interest for the community such as education, unemployment, municipal budget cuts, returns and the energy situation. Decentralisation and the possible expansion of Novobërdë/Novo Brdo municipality were also discussed.

Rücker praised Novobërdë/Novo Brdo’s multi-ethnic community and said: “I wish the example of Novobërdë/Novo Brdo could be communicated more widely. We care a lot about how things develop here.”

In answer to a question related to returns, Rücker said: “There are serious and sincere efforts on returns and reconstruction and I commend you for that, but it is true that there is still a lot of work to do.”

Rücker also outlined the economic prospects for the area including with respect to the Kishnica mines, which are part of the Trepca complex, and the potential for investments in the agricultural sector.

On 19 January 2007, SRSG Joachim Rücker visited Obiliq/Obilić municipality and praised efforts by the local authorities to improve relations between all communities. After meeting Municipal Assembly President Ismet Hashani and other municipal leaders, the SRSG addressed the media, and stressed the importance of working to make improvements in people's daily lives, particularly in Standards implementation. The SRSG noted that Obiliq/Obilić municipality is "an excellent example of a multicultural Kosovo, an example of how you can live and work together and achieve results." "We discussed standards implementation, in particular the returns here in Obiliq/Obilić," the SRSG said. "We also discussed the environment and the relationship between the municipality and KEK."



JANUARY 2007



Mr. Rücker outside the Orthodox Monastery in Decani on the Occasion of Orthodox Christmas Day on 7 January 2007.



SRSG Joachim Rücker at the Plementinë/Plementina Camp communicating with official representatives.

On 19 January 2007, Mr. Rücker visited Plementinë/Plementina Camp, and listened to the concerns of the camp residents and promised UNMIK's continued support for the camp's closure in spring.

FEBRUARY 2007

On 2 February 2007, Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari travelled to Belgrade and Pristina to present his proposal for the future status of Kosovo. At the press conference at UNMIK headquarters, the Special Envoy said that the aim of the Settlement is to lay the foundations for a future Kosovo that is viable and stable, a future Kosovo where members of all communities – Albanians, Serbs and other communities – can live a dignified, safe and economically sustainable life, and

a future Kosovo which contributes actively and effectively to the security and stability of the region. The Special Envoy recalled that his proposal is the result of one year of intensive negotiations with the parties. “In the course of 2006, UNOSEK held 15 rounds of direct talks between Belgrade and Pristina negotiating teams, and our experts visited Belgrade and Pristina 26 times to talk separately to the parties on various issues,” he said.



Kosovo's President Fatmir Sejdiu shaking hands with Special Envoy for Kosovo's future status process Martti Ahtisaari.



2 February 2007. Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Kosovo's future status process Martti Ahtisaari officially presents his proposal on Kosovo future status to the Team of Unity, at the Assembly Building in Pristina.



SRSG encourages Kosovo Serbs to articulate their interests

On 15 March 2007, SRSG Joachim Rücker said that Kosovo Serbs and other communities will have a good future under the arrangements envisaged in UN Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari's proposal. Rücker was speaking to representatives of Kosovo Serb and Croat communities in an outreach meeting organised in Vrboc/Vrbovac by Head of the Municipal Community Office Zoran Krčmarević. Rücker explained to participants the important elements of the status package that is "being delivered today to the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon". He called on Kosovo Serbs to participate in the political process in Kosovo and noted that Vrboc/Vrbovac presented a good example of cooperation between communities. "A very extensive part of the status proposal is about making sure that the Kosovo Serbs and other com-

"A very extensive part of the status proposal is about making sure that the Kosovo Serbs and other communities feel secure and have a prosperous future in Kosovo"

munities feel secure and have a prosperous future in Kosovo," Rücker said. "The municipalities are meant to add to the cohesion of post-status Kosovo and not to divide it," Rücker said. He added that the proposed decentralisation plan will create new municipalities with clear lines of responsibilities between local and central institutions. "It is a best practice, for citizens everywhere not only in Kosovo, to have a very high degree of local self-governance," he said, "Only those things that are done well at the central level should be done at that level. Everything else should be done at the municipal level. That would include major

elements of schooling, healthcare, public services and utilities, community involvement in policing, as well as a high degree of local self-governance on cultural activities, markets and urban or rural planning. "Articulate your interests," Rücker advised the Kosovo Serbs, urging them also to participate in the privatisation process through the Kosovo Trust Agency.



On 12 March 2007, SRSG Joachim Rücker met with President of Kosovo Assembly Kolë Berisha at the Government Building.



On 15 March 2007, Mr. Rücker met with minority community leaders and residents of Verboc/Vrbovac, Viti/Vitina Municipality.

MARCH 2007

30 March 2007. Mr. Rücker and Prime Minister Agim Çeku inaugurate the reconstructed Roma Mahala in South Mitrovica.



APRIL 2007

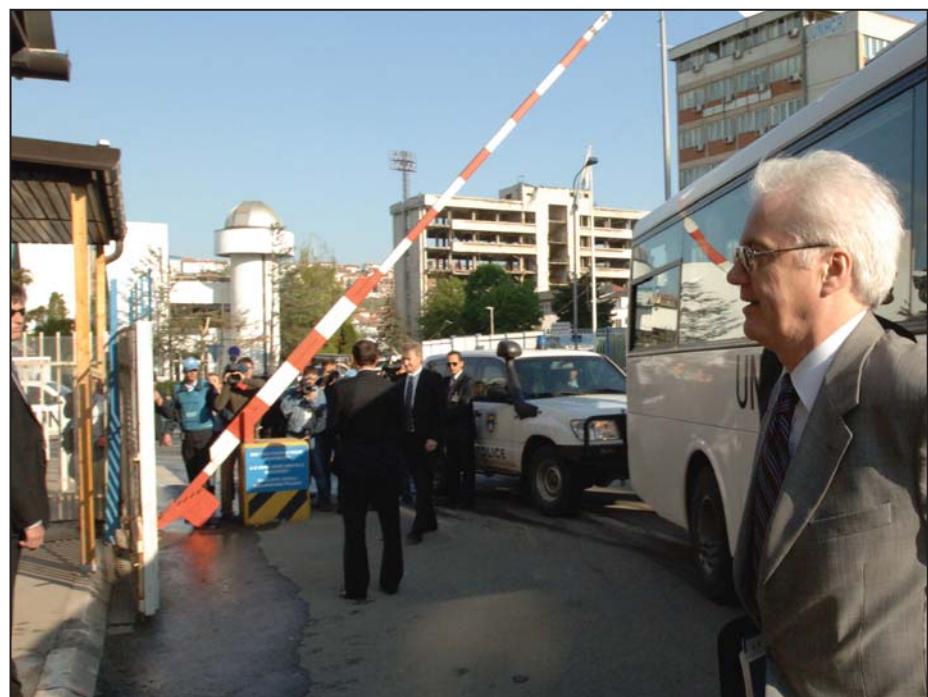
United Nations Security Council visit to Kosovo

On 26 April, 15 UN Security Council members arrived in Kosovo. The purpose of the visit was to get information on the situation on the ground and give the Security Council members a first-hand understanding of progress made since the Security Council approved resolution 1244 in 1999. The delegation, which was lead by Johan C. Verbeke, Permanent Representative of Belgium to the UN, had visited Brussels and Belgrade before their arrival in Kosovo. The delegation was met by SRSG Joachim Rücker, KFOR Commander Roland Kather, President Fatmir Sejdiu and PM Agim Çeku. During their visit, the delegation met with Mr. Rücker, Kosovo President Fatmir Sejdiu, ComKFOR, Team

of Unity, PM Agim Çeku and with the PISG. The delegation also met with Bishop Artemije from the Serb Orthodox Church in Gracanica Monastery, followed by a trip to Mitrovica. On 28 April, the Security Council members met with representatives of Kosovo's minority communities in Orahovac/Rahovec, with residents in Krusha e Vogel/Mala Krusa and in Brestovik. This was the fourth trip to Kosovo by the Security Council since April 2000. After Kosovo, the delegation visited Vienna.



UN Security Council delegation members in a morning briefing, 8 AM, on 27 April at the UNMIK headquarters in Pristina.



MAY 2007

Rücker meets with local residents in Osojan/e

SRSG Joachim Rücker met on 24 May 2007 with local residents in Osojan/e village, despite some village leaders' boycott of a town hall meeting there which Rücker was scheduled to attend. Rücker was accompanied by the Head of the Russian Federation Office Andrei Dronov, Minister of Communities and Returns Branislav Grbic and KFOR Multinational Task Force West Commander Brig.-Gen. Antonio Venci.

After being given a tour of Osojan/e by the Istog/k Municipal Assembly President Fadil Ferati, Rücker and the other officials met with local residents in a café.

"We wanted to make sure that we were present here to talk to people," Rücker said after the meeting. "We discussed the status issue, but we also discussed more concrete issues which are important to people here." Key topics discussed at the informal meeting were housing for people returning to the community and ongoing efforts to improve Osojan/e's water supply.

Rücker stressed that representatives of UNMIK, the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government and the Contact Group have been conducting outreach trips all across Kosovo to listen to the concerns of all communities.

"We all agreed at the meeting that Osojan/e is not an island," Rücker said. "This is an important part of Kosovo and we have an important segment of the society here. Residents should feel not only safe and secure, but at home in the new Kosovo."



On 17 May 2007, SRSG Joachim Rücker met with Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). Topics that dominated the meeting were the resolution of Kosovo's status and demarcation of the border between Kosovo and FYROM.

On the same day Rücker also met with Albanian Foreign Minister, Lulzim Basha. After the meeting Basha said that Albania strongly supports a UN Security Council resolution for Kosovo.



JUNE 2007

Peace signs, flowers in different colours, green trees – children's imagination was beyond belief when UNMIK organised a "Wall Painting Party" on 27 June 2007. All children, 12 years and under, were invited to join the fun. Accompanied by pop music, the creative children colourfully painted the wall. UNMIK and KFOR provided the young artists with soft drinks, snacks, and music. SRSG Joachim Rücker met the children and painted the wall outside the UNMIK headquarters in Pristina.



SRSG Joachim Rücker met the children at "United Nations Ambassadors Summer Party 2007" and painted the wall outside the UNMIK headquarters in Pristina.

SRSG Joachim Rücker visited KPC (Kosovo Protection Corps) headquarters in Pristina and met with KPC Commander, Lt.- Gen. Sylejman Selimi. Mr. Rücker also visited a field training exercise in Batlava Lake. 28 June 2008.



JULY 2007

SRSG Joachim Rücker on 9 July 2007 urged the UN Security Council to quickly draw up a roadmap for determining Kosovo's status. The SRSG told the 15-member Council in a closed session that the time had come to provide "a roadmap, a timetable, to assure Kosovo's two million inhabitants of where they are headed." He said, "UNMIK's achievements as interim administration have been considerable. Out of a humanitarian crisis, an institutional breakdown, and a complete security vacuum in 1999, UNMIK has put in place very firmly, together with its international and local partners, the foundations for a functioning democracy, a functioning rule of law sector and a functioning market economy. The Standards for Kosovo policy has been a driving force in achieving concrete progress in these areas." Now, he said, "We have reached a critical point where further

progress on the ground depends on ensuring clarity on Kosovo's status." Rücker said "throughout the process, the people of Kosovo have been remarkably patient. But today – in mid 2007 – there is an undercurrent of anxiety throughout the population and among Kosovo's political leaders. They fear that the status process is losing momentum and what had appeared to have been an imminent resolution of Kosovo status will unravel." The SRSG briefed the Council and answered Council members' questions for about an hour. "The people deserve clarity on status," he told the members, "The people need clarity on status."



9 July 2007. SRSG Joachim Rücker and COMKFOR, Lt.-Gen. Roland Kather arrive at UN headquarters in New York.



"The people need clarity on status."

JULY 2007

On 13 July 2007, SRSG Joachim Rücker met with French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner at UNMIK headquarters. After the meeting media reported that Kouchner denied that France supported or asked for the partition of Kosovo. "I never spoke of partition.



SRSG Joachim Rücker meeting with French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner at UNMIK headquarters, 13 July 2007.

On the contrary, I said no to the partition of Kosovo. This is not the stance of France, and if the others are speaking of this issue, we can talk, but we do not support the division," Kouchner said. Kouchner said that if Moscow did not accept such a resolution, there was

broad agreement in the Contact Group to bring Ahtisaari's plan into action, which proposed supervised independence. Media quoted SRSG Joachim Rücker to have said, after the meeting with Kouchner, that it cannot be said "the international community has not kept its promises, but we can say expectations were not realized." "The Contact Group said that every effort will be made to find a solution, and that's why expectations were different," Rücker said.



The opening ceremony of Pristina International Summer University 2007 at the Faculty of Philology in Pristina. 16 July 2007.

“We all agree that more needs to be done to resettle IDPs in Kosovo”



AUGUST 2007

SRSG Joachim Rücker visited Cernice/Cernica, Donji Budriga/Budriga I Ultë and Zhegër/Zegra communities (Gjilan/Gnjilane municipality) on 23 August 2007. Mr. Rücker was accompanied by Brig.-Gen. Douglas B. Earhart, (representing COMKFOR, Lt.-Gen. Roland Kather) Deputy Prime Minister Lutfi Haziri and Gjilan/Gnjilane Municipal Assembly President Xhemajil Hyseni. Mr. Rücker met community leaders and later on members of the Albanian speaking commu-

nity and visited the local mosque. In Donji Budriga/Budriga I Ultë Mr. Rücker met with Serb internally displaced persons (IDPs). In Zhegër/Zegra Mr. Rücker held an outdoor meeting. At all stops he listened to residents' concerns about the reconciliation process and its progress, including the return of IDPs. He said "We all agree that more needs to be done to resettle IDPs in Kosovo," adding that, "This is an important step and we must all work together to build a better future."



SEPTEMBER 2007



SRSG Joachim Rücker attending the inauguration of the NewCo Ferronikeli, the smelter complex in Gllogoc/Glogovac in Mitrovica region, which is the largest company successfully privatized in Kosovo. Ferronikel had suffered from years of underinvestment and the factory also became part of the NATO bombing campaign in 1998/99. After privatization in March 2006, the new owners of Ferronikel invested double the sum they had projected at the time of purchase, and they started to make the mine work almost at full capacity. In the near future Ferronikel will soon reach its old extraction level record and probably exceed it in the near future.



SRSG Joachim Rücker visits the Memorial Complex "Adem Jashari", in Prekaz/e, accompanied by D/COMKFOR. 12 September 2007.



SRSG Joachim Rücker attending the inauguration of the NewCo Ferronikeli, the smelter complex in Gllogoc/Glogovac.

SRSG Joachim Rücker briefs media following Security Council consultations at UN headquarters in New York.



OCTOBER 2007

On 9 October 2007, after the UN Security-Council meeting in New York, in which he delivered the quarterly update on UN activities in Kosovo, SRSG Joachim Rücker briefed media and said that he urged the Security Council to act quickly to decide Kosovo's status. Rücker said that he told the 15-nation body deliberating the future of Kosovo that more delays could put at risk the achievements of the past eight years in which the UN has administered the province. Rücker also said that he briefed the Council on the preparations for elections, on Standards implementation and on the general security situation in Kosovo. Rücker said that he was reassured by the emphasis

the Council put on the importance of Kosovo Serb participation in the 17 November elections. Council members made it very clear that Serbia must encourage Kosovo Serb participation rather than call for a boycott, he said. At the meeting, Rücker informed the Council that he had asked Belgrade to comply with UN Security Council resolution 1244 and to encourage the Kosovo Serbs to participate, including Internally Displaced Persons who are living in Serbia. Rücker stressed that he "would like to reiterate that UNMIK, as the interim administration in Kosovo, has largely achieved what is achievable under UN Security Council resolution 1244 and under the Standards Programme."

NOVEMBER 2007

19 November 2007. SRSG Joachim Rücker met with the Štrpcë/Shterpçë representatives including MAP Jakovlević, D/MAP Staletović. Mr. Rücker made it clear that there is time to find a solution to concerns that minority communities would not be adequately represented following a partial boycott by Kosovo Serbs of the 17 November elections. "It is unfortunate that Kosovo Serbs did not vote in large



numbers. However, the focus now is on the way forward," Mr. Rücker said, adding that Štrpcë/Shterpçë will remain an undivided, multiethnic municipality.



14 November 2007.
SRSG Joachim Rücker meeting with Kosovo Serbs youth representatives at UNMIK headquarters.

On 17 November, three elections were held simultaneously in Kosovo: the Kosovo Assembly Election, the Municipal Assembly Elections and, for the first time in Kosovo, the Municipal Mayoral Elections with the direct election of Mayors. Prior to the elections in his address on 15 November to the OSCE Permanent Council in

Vienna, SRSG Joachim Rücker said that preparations for the elections were fully on track, and that UNMIK, through the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, was ready to deploy mobile polling stations

in case voters in certain areas were refused access to public buildings to cast their votes. "I have concerns that undue pressure has been exercised on the voters within

documented and strongly deplored," Rücker said before the elections. The 17 November 2007 elections were monitored by international observers from the

Council of Europe who assessed that the elections had been run smoothly and in accordance with international standards. However, the voter turnout was low. Results from Central Election Committee (CEC) showed that the turnout

was 43 percent. Kosovo Serbs participation was low but higher than in 2004. Actions by certain Kosovo Serb leaders and statements by officials in Belgrade amounting to such pressure have been

ELECTION RESULTS:

Of the total 120 seats in the Kosovo Assembly, Hashim Thaci's Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) won 37 seats. The Kosovo Democratic Alliance (LDK) got 25 seats and Behxet Pacolli's New Kosovo Alliance (AKR) 13 seats. The Democratic Alliance of Dardania (DD/PSHDK) got 11 seats. Former Kosovo PM Ramush Haradinaj's party, Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK), got 10 seats. ORA Reformist Party headed by Veton Surroi, did not win enough votes to enter the parliament. The parties representing national minorities have 20 seats reserved and they won an additional four seats. Three seats respectively went to KDTP, SLS, VAKAT, SDSKIM, and PDAK. SDA wins two seats and one seat each went to SNSDKim, IRDK, SNS, SKMS, GIG, ND and PREBK.

SRSG Joachim Rücker . Interview with
UNMIK TV / Radio

DECEMBER 2007

SRSG certifies election results for Assembly of Kosovo

Following the recommendation of the Central Election Commission (CEC) Secretariat, SRSG Joachim Rücker certified election results for the Assembly of Kosovo on 5 December 2007. "I am pleased that the electoral process is moving forward in a peaceful atmosphere which shows the maturity of the Kosovo people and the political parties," the

"I am pleased that the electoral process is moving forward in a peaceful atmosphere which shows the maturity of the Kosovo people and the political parties"

after an certification accordance Regulation amended Regulations 2007/28 tion for the Kosovo. The the Assem-

Assembly of Kosovo was held on 17 November, when the electorate also chose Municipal Assembly Members and, for the first time, directly voted for a mayor for each of Kosovo's 30 municipalities. Following another recommendation of the CEC Secretariat and pursuant to Section 7.5 of UNMIK Regulation 2007/27, the SRSG also set the date for the mayoral run-off elections for 8 December. At a press briefing at UNMIK headquarters on 5 December 2007, SRSG Joachim Rücker talked about the certification of the Assembly of 17 November 2007 Kosovo election results. Rücker also talked about the issue of the very low participation of the Kosovo Serb community in the elections, and how he had decided to deal with these results on the local level, in the municipalities where the Kosovo Serb community constitutes a majority or an equal part of the population. This refers to five municipalities: Leposavic/Leposaviq, Zubin Potok, Zvecan/Zvecan, Strepce/Shterpcë, Novo Brdo/Novoberdë.



JANUARY 2008



Joint New Year Reception at Hotel Victory in Pristina on 21 January 2008.

The SRSG's message on the occasion of Orthodox Christmas

On behalf of all of us in UNMIK, I wish a joyous holiday to everyone celebrating Orthodox Christmas. I trust that the spirit of Christmas will promote harmony and mutual respect among people of all faiths in Kosovo.

As the Christmas season fills our hearts with gratitude for the many blessings that surround us every day of the year, it also reminds us of our obligation to share these blessings with others.

It is upon all of us to ensure that the people of Kosovo never again have to endure the tragedies and sufferings of the past and to seize the opportunity to secure peace and prosperity for all in Kosovo.

Merry Christmas!

MITROVICA BRIDGE

Instructions to cross the bridge

Obligatory possession of legal identity card
Checkouts by law forces are possible at any time
Gatherings are prohibited

Malicious or provocative behaviour
shall be repressed immediately

Упутства за прелазак

Мorate поседовати уредну личну исправу
таком тренутку вас снаге реда могу преконтролисати
бржњена су скупљања

Свако злонамерно или провокативно
помешање би било омезано

Udhëzime për kalimin e urës

Ju duhet të keni dokumente të rregullta identifikimi
Në çdo moment mund të kontrollohen nga forcat e rendit
Grumbullimet janë të ndaluara

Çdo sjellje dashakeqe ose provokuese
menjëherë do të ndeshkohet

Kosovo declaration of independence

On 17 February 2008, the Assembly of Kosovo declared Kosovo independent with 109 votes in favour and none against. Prime Minister Hashim Thaci said it reflects the will of the Kosovo people and was in full accordance with the proposal presented by UN Status Envoy Martti Ahtisaari. "We have waited for this day for a long time. Many people have given so much to make the day of Kosovo's Independence a reality," Prime Minister Hashim Thaci was quoted in the media. President Fatmir Sejdiu said that on this day Kosovo remembers many sacrifices that led to this event. "We remember mothers and fathers who experienced enormous difficulties so that their sons and daughters could live freely," said Sejdiu, adding that on this day Kosovo remembers its late President Ibrahim Rugova. Both Thaci and Sejdiu called on the Serbian community in Kosovo to work together with Kosovo institutions and make Kosovo a democratic and multiethnic country. Thaci and Sejdiu delivered parts of their address in Serbian language. The Kosovo Assembly also approved a proposal for the new flag of

FEBRUARY 2008

Kosovo, a yellow map of Kosovo with six white stars above set on a dark blue background. Media reported that Kosovo Serb members of the Assembly did not take part in the session. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon confirmed he received notification by the Kosovo President Fatmir Sejdiu on the intention of Pristina to abide by the provisions of Martti Ahtisaari's proposal and guarantees that the rights of minority communities in Kosovo will not be breached.

Outbreak of violence

Soon after Kosovo's declaration of independence there were some disturbances and outbreaks of violence in different parts of Kosovo. On 18 February, there was a blast in the courtyard of the District Court in northern part of Mitrovica. No one was injured. On 19 February, the boundary point at Brnjak, near Zubin Potok, was burned and destroyed with explosives by approximately 1000 protesters from Kosovo and Serbia, while the one in Jarinja in Lepopsavic was also set on fire. No injuries were reported after these incidents. UNMIK chief Joachim

Rücker and KFOR Commander Xavier de Marnhac decided to close the border points for 24 hours to enable KFOR to put them under its control. Again, on 21 February, violence flared up on the Kosovo-Serbia border, when about 300 former Serbian army reservists attacked police with stones and burning tires.

In Belgrade

On 21 February, hundreds of thousands of people from all over Serbia gathered at a national rally in Belgrade, entitled "Kosovo is Serbia", to protest against the unilateral proclamation and recognition of Kosovo's independence. Serbian Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica stated that Kosovo will always be part of Serbia and that the Serbian state and people will never accept the violence of "world forces." SRS Vice President Tomislav Nikolic said on behalf of the parliamentary parties that without Kosovo there could not be Serbia, and that Serbia would preserve its every citizen and every inch of its territory. Following the protest rally, a smaller group of angry Serbs hurled rocks and Molotov cocktails at several embassies. Nearly one hundred people were reported injured and one person died during the riots. The UN Security Council condemned the attacks.



MARCH 2008



5 March 2008. SRSG Joachim Rücker press point in Mitrovicë / Mitrovica.



5 March 2008. SRSG Joachim Rücker interview with Radio Television 21 in Pristina.



UNMIK reasserts control over rail line in north of Kosovo

On 4 March 2008, UNMIK reasserted control of the rail line between Zvecan/Zvečan and Leshak/Lešak in the north of Kosovo. “The successful intervention of UNMIK Border Police today reverses the challenge to UNMIK’s authority that occurred yesterday when Serbian Railways illegally sent two of its trains south of Leshak/Lešak,” said Rücker. “Any movement of trains south of Leshak/Lešak by Serbian Railways is a clear challenge to UNMIK’s authority as well as a breach of the 2003 Memorandum of Understanding that Yugoslav Railways [now Serbian Railways] signed with UNMIK Railways [also called Kosovo Railways] and will not be tolerated,” Rücker said. Border Police at the train station in Leshak/Lešak explained to a representative of Serbian Railways that the train would not be permitted to travel south. Serbian Railways complied. “UNMIK and its partners will continue to meet any challenges to law and order throughout Kosovo,” Rücker said.

SRSG condemned attack on UNMIK Court building

During the morning hours, on 14 March 2008, there was an attack on the UNMIK District Court building in North Mitrovica. A large mob used force against UNMIK Police to enter the building at around 8:30am. “Those who turned to violence in North Mitrovica have crossed one of UNMIK’s red lines. This is completely unacceptable. I have instructed UNMIK Police to restore law and order in the North and to ensure that the Court House is again under UN control,” said Rücker. The same morning Rücker informed the Serbian Government of the unfolding events and asked them to prevent such attacks. He once again stressed that any differences of opinion should be dealt with in a civilized manner and that violence would not be tolerated. “I expect that the perpetrators of today’s attack will be brought to justice. Once again, I appeal to all communities to refrain from violence and to help us ensure a safe and secure environment in Kosovo. UNMIK will defend its mandate throughout the whole territory of Kosovo without exception,” said Rücker.

KPC marks United Nations International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action

To mark the UN International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action, on 4 April UNMIK's Office of the KPC Coordinator (OKPCC) and the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) organized a series of presentations, showed a static display of KPC de-mining equipment and mine risk education materials, and gave a practical display of mine clearance activities. Events during the day demonstrated the existence of a local capacity well adapted to clearing mines and explosives in Kosovo. It also showed the KPC capable of deploying specialized de-mining missions. Lieutenant General Sylejman Selimi, the KPC Commander spoke about the current mine situation in Kosovo and of KPC de-mining Units. These consist of seven explosive ordinance disposal (EOD) teams able to perform danger area assessment, mine and unexploded explosives (UXO) clearance, and battle area clearance verification. While the situation of UXOs in Kosovo has improved substantially since 1999, two main problems remain – unmarked mined areas, and the large number of cluster munitions and UXOs still being found in rural areas. Last year over 1 million square metres of land and over 1900 mines or UXOs were cleared. The work was carried out by the KPC with support from KFOR and the international NGO, Mine Awareness Trust, and Mine Detection Dog teams. In support of a humanitarian effort, KPC deployed 10 EOD personnel to Albania following the explosions of munitions. Currently there are 84 countries or territories contaminated by landmines or explosive remnants of war, and between 15,000 – 20,000 people become victims every year. The number of mines world-wide still waiting to be cleared is estimated between 60 – 100 million.

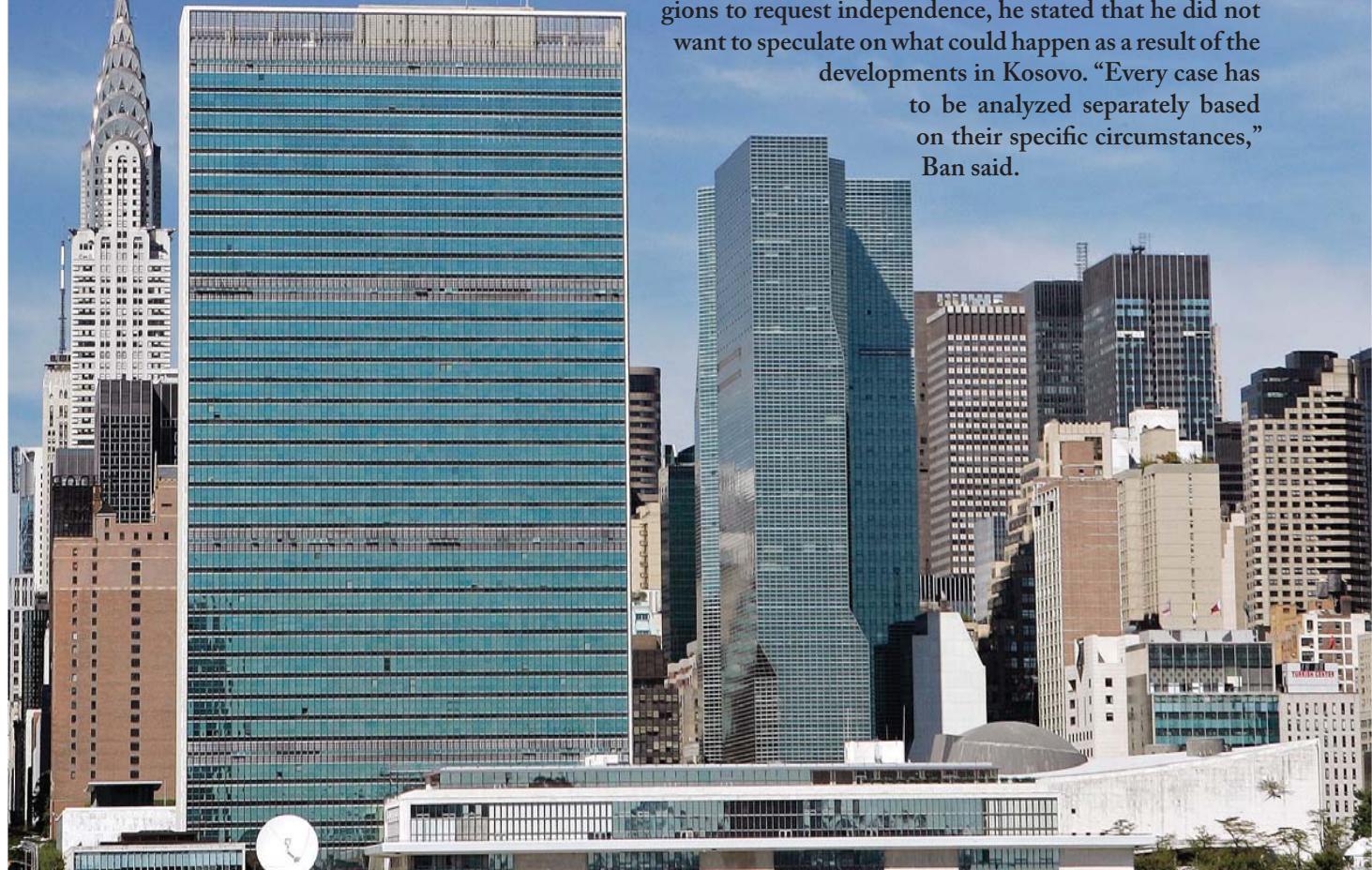
APRIL 2008

SRSG and Thaçi in New York

On 21 April, SRSG Joachim Rücker together with Kosovo Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi addressed the UN Security Council on the latest developments in Kosovo.

While a number of Security Council members, led by Russia, continue to oppose Kosovo's independence, supporters of independence, led by the U.S., emphasize

sized that independence is now a done deal, and that the process has to continue with the transfer of competencies from UNMIK to local authorities. Media reported that despite the division in the Security Council over the UN mission in Kosovo, the most powerful Western countries said that on 15 June UNMIK has to relinquish its political leverage. Media reported that UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said that the UN mission in Kosovo will remain in Kosovo. "The United Nations will for sure still be present in Kosovo," Ban said. Asked whether Kosovo's independence would encourage other provinces and regions to request independence, he stated that he did not want to speculate on what could happen as a result of the developments in Kosovo. "Every case has to be analyzed separately based on their specific circumstances," Ban said.



MAY 2008

All media reported on the visit to Kosovo of UN Peace-keeping Missions chief Jean-Marie Guehenno in the beginning of May. He met with UNMIK and Kosovo Government officials in Pristina and visited Mitrovica where he met with local leaders in both south and north. He then went to Belgrade where he had talks with Serbian Government officials. Guehenno asked for full cooperation from both Albanian and Serb representatives with UNMIK. Guehenno appealed to all Kosovars to respect the rule of law.



4 May 2008. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, visits Mitrovica.



JUNE 2008

20 June 2008
UNMIK Broadcast
Message from the SRSG

Dear colleagues,

UNMIK is about to enter into a new phase which will see changes deeper and greater than ever before in its history. I have always said that I would leave at the appropriate time, when there was a logical break in the work of the mission. Now is that time.

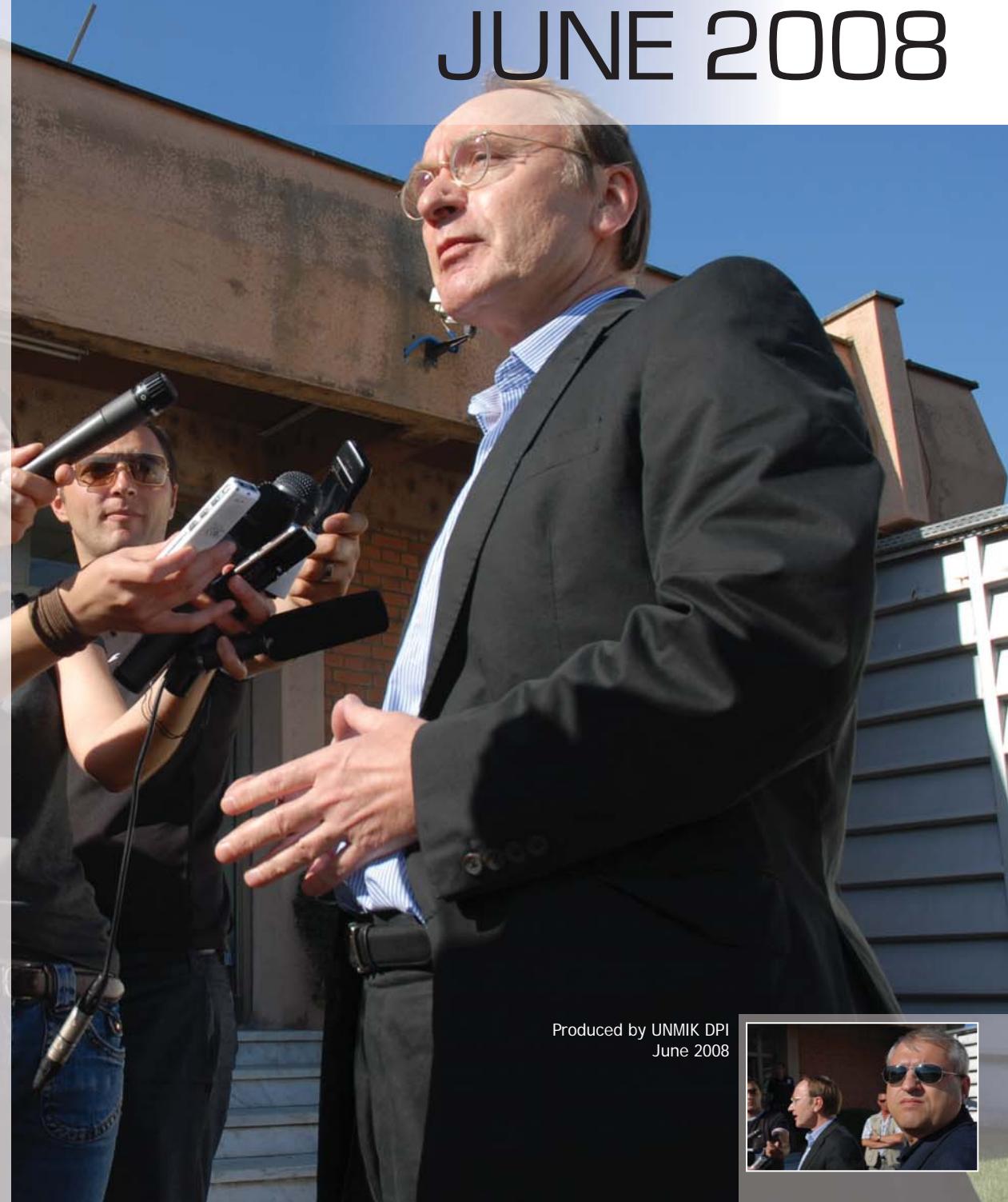
As I depart Kosovo and conclude my mandate, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all of you, to our local and international staff, who have worked so hard to make this mission a success over the past nine years.

UNMIK's most precious asset are its dedicated and very professional staff members.

I wish you all the best for the future and I hope that our paths will cross again.

Warm regards ,

*Joachim Rücker
SRSG*



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June 2008

