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PROGRAMATIC DOCUMENT

**MOVEMENT FOR UNIFICATION
GENERAL COUNCIL**

**POLITICAL PLATFORM FOR FINAL
RESOLUTION OF ALBANIAN-SERBIAN ISSUE**

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SUMMARY

- The independence of Kosovo has not ended the long Albanian-Serb conflict. The Declaration of Independence in the Kosovo borders of 1974 burdened this relationship with new risks. The un-solved Albanian issue in the Eastern Kosovo, which actually remains under Serbia, the issue of the north of Kosovo and the issue of divided Mitrovica remained as un-solved matters in Albanian-Serbian relations and they represent a frozen conflict, with a fearful potential for its transformation, under certain circumstances, to a new armed conflict.
- The Kosovo Government and Serbian Government have not yet started to tackle the Albanian-Serbian un-solved issue with a due seriousness. Their unilateral and partial solutions that they offer (Serbia – partition of Kosovo, Kosovo – preservation of territorial integrity) only tension the situation and render necessary the presence of international factors and protectorate in Kosovo.
- Without resolution of the issue of north Kosovo and the issue of Eastern Kosovo, Kosovo not only will remain with a fragile political stability and under continuous threat, but it will remain also with significant economic and social problems, consequences of which will be suffered by its own citizens.
- The final resolution of these issues is the application of the right of nations to self-determination.
- Due to circumstances in which is Kosovo situated, the principle of the right of nations to self-determination is still far from being applied. In this situation, the application of the rights based in a principle of the reciprocity for Leposaviq, Zveçan and Zubin Potok, as well as for Presheva, Bujanoc and Medvegja would be an important step towards resolution of this problem.
- A part of the town of Mitrovica which currently remains under administration of Serbs is a typical case of ethnic cleansing. The first step to be undertaken for resolution of this issue is return of Albanians into their properties.
- The application of the principle of reciprocity and return of Albanians and of all displaced persons to their properties would open doors for full realization of self-determination for both sides. This would lead to a final solution of long Albanian-Serb conflict.

INTRODUCTION

Almost always to escape from a problem causes a problem in itself, which needlessly consumes a lot of energy. The ignorance of the problem cannot bring its resolution but it only delays the un-avoidable – facing with it. In this case, the delay can not be necessarily considered as a victory. At least not in our case. Thus, this theoretical conclusion matches perfectly with a practical situation which Kosovo is facing today: with avoidance its government is trying to do to an un-avoidable problem that needs to be encountered – Albanian-Serb problem.

The Movement for Unification, observing this dramatic shortcoming of the Kosovo leadership and the consequences deriving from it is strongly engaged in order to insure most effective interference in to processes regarding this matter. In the frames of this engagement to date we have used various forms initially for rising, as an existing issue to deal with, and afterwards have presented also ideas for its resolution. But, considering this engagement as insufficient and at the same time action as a necessary step, all conclusions and ideas for resolution of this matter we have treated and sublimated in a political document entitled “Political platform for final resolution of Albanian-Serbian issue”.

This platform is built in such a way as to ensure a fluent line of descriptions, conclusions and solutions for the situation. It starts with a *Summary*, which comprises in itself the core concept of the Platform. Then it continues with the first chapter: “*The History and the problem*”. Here is provided a short historical description of the problem in the function of creation of the complete picture of it. Under the same chapter is made a conclusion and analysis of the Albanian-Serbian problem. The following chapter, “*Non-solution of the problem*” deals with the consequences of not resolving this issue and “obstacles” through which the responsible persons for not resolving this issue try to amnesty them selves. The lack of real efforts to approach to this problem, from various factors, tries to be camouflaged through different “solutions” that they offer. This issue is treated in the chapter “*Solutions that does not represent solutions*”. After sufficient elaboration of these issues about the nature of the document, in chapter “*Resolution of the issue*” are expressed standpoints of the Movement for Unification regarding the solution of this issue, in which are treated separately all three parts of the problem. At the end of the document, under the title “*Conclusion*” the emphasis is placed in importance of resolution of this issue and on benefits this solution brings. In compliance with this, an invitation is made to the institutions of the Republic of Kosovo, Republic of Albania and all Albanian political subjects, to deal more seriously with this situation.

The mission of this Platform is that, by being written document, the alternative of the Movement for Unification for the resolution of Albanian-Serbian problem, make more present and clearer for the public. This document, in an elaborated form in an adequate manner with the destination, will be delivered also to different local and international institutions. But, this does not mean that in this way this document will consume itself. The Platform will be a continuous reference and a foundation in which will be based all our activities, as a political subject, regarding this issue in the future.

I. THE HISTORY AND THE PROBLEM

I.1. The history of the problem

Relations between Albanians and Serbs in the last hundred years were never good.

After the birth of the Serbian state (1878), its liberation war for liberty from Turkish occupation and for establishment of its own state has been transformed into conquering war for extension of the borders of newly created state.

In the southern side it touched Albanian land and annexed a big part of it.

This occupation was recognized by Great Powers of time on 1913 and since then Albanian population of Kosovo and other Albanian areas was in war for liberation of their land from Serb occupation.

Afterwards, Serbian regimes have done everything either to assimilate or displace the autochthon Albanian population from the occupied areas. In other side, Albanian population tried to resist with all means these intentions Serbian chauvinists.

Second World War was a good occasion for resolution of national issues in Balkan, so also for the Albanian one, and for the full improvement of the relationships of Balkan people, which stand arm by arm in an anti-fascist war. Albanian people hoped very much, as it has been proclaimed, that after this war their will for self-determination will be respected. They even expressed this will publicly in the Conference of Bujan on 1943-44.

Nevertheless, after the Second World War the situation started to become more complicated. Albanian lands that remained under Yugoslavia, in order to be subordinated (controlled) more easily were partitioned in three republics of former Yugoslavia – Serbia, Macedonia and Montenegro.

The war of the Albanian people under leadership of Kosovo Liberation Army (1998-99) represents another chapter of Albanian people's efforts to be liberated from the Serb occupation. The intervention of international factors under leadership of NATO ended the war, by placing Kosovo under international administration, which resulted with declaration of independence of Kosovo in 2008.

I.2. The Problem

The declaration of independence of Kosovo and final separation from Serbia represents new phase in old conflictual relations between Albanians and Serbs. The expansionist Serbian politics during the entire history of Albanian –Serb relations was the only obstacle in normal neighboring relations between two nations. This politics has not stopped even today and as consequence these relations continue to be deteriorated.

Kosovo's independence indeed should have represented the end of conflict relations between Albanians and Serbs. But this independence left behind many yet unsolved issues in these relations and these issues continue to be obstacles not only of relations between two

nations but also of normal political, economic, social and cultural developments in both countries. And this is happening because the independence of Kosovo did not come either as a result of a war brought to its end that would have clarified these relations, nor as a result of agreement between two nations.

For Albanians, the non-resolution of Albanian-Serbian issue has graver consequences than for Serbia or for regional and international relations. Mitrovica, North of Kosovo and Eastern Kosovo are three issues of a frozen conflict that represent a problem in relations between Albanians and Serbs, respectively between Kosovo and Serbia, and which for Kosovo and Albanians became a big obstacle in political, economic and social developments as well as in the processes of integration both in the national plan and in international one.

As direct consequence of these unsolved issues, Kosovo and Albanians even though with a formal independence, are without full sovereignty in the territory in which they live, without the right to self-determination (see the prohibitions of the Ahtisaari Plan and the Constitution of Kosovo!), without normal economic and social development, and especially under continuous risk for the decrease of their territory because three contested regions are controlled by Serbia, which continues the politics of ethnic cleansing of these areas. Therefore, Albanians should be the ones who insist and make a continuous pressure for resolution of these issues.

1.2.1. First issue: Mitrovica

Northern part of the town of Mitrovica and seven Albanian villages remaining under three north municipalities with Serb majority (three villages in the Lepsaviq municipality, three in Zveçan municipality and one in municipality of Zubin Potok), as consequence of Serb expansionist politics, as consequence of politics followed by internationalists towards Kosovo in general and Mitrovica in particular, and as a direct consequence of eleven years of non-activity of Kosovo institutions and Albanian politics in general, - thus the north of Mitrovica and seven Albanian villages in the north continue to remain under ruling of institutions controlled by Serbia.

At the conclusion of the last war, in 1999, Serb forces were fortified in the Ibar Bridge and they divided the town of Mitrovica in two parts, transforming this bridge in to a symbol of division, even though Albanians in that part of the town are still in majority if the return to their properties is allowed to them.

Since that time, violence and Serbian pressure on Albanians to expel them from this part of the town were un-interrupted. All this was followed by a silent approval of international forces and with indifferent stand of Kosovo institutions. Especially **grave** for Albanians was a year of 2000 when more than 13.000 Albanian were violently expelled from their homes and properties leaving behind their grandparent's homes under Serbian ruling.

1.2.2. Second issue: north of Kosovo

So-called north Kosovo includes three municipalities with Serb majority: Lepsaviq, Zveçan and Zubin Potok.

The problem of north of Kosovo is created by the Serbian colonialism after the Second World War, when this territory is annexed to Kosovo. In this case Serbia pursued two goals: one, through annexing of territories inhabited by Serbs to change the national composition in

Kosovo and two, to come closer to and through Serb element to control huge natural resources of Mitrovica and surrounding region.

According to Serb version, in the issue of north of Kosovo falls also the north of Mitrovica and seven Albanian villages in the north, even though these issues are completely different. In the north of Mitrovica, if Albanians would be allowed to return to their properties, majority population are still Albanians. Whereas seven Albanian villages remaining under governance of institutions controlled by Serbia, even attached without their will to the towns with Serb majority, have territorial continuation with territories populated by Albanians, and with the application of the right to self-determination, they would belong to Kosovo, respectively Albania.

Through this fog, Serb chauvinists try to legitimate committed ethnic cleansing on Albanians, and attempt to represent the north of Mitrovica and seven Albanian villages as territory with Serb majority, by hiding the truth of the violent change of national structure of population there.

Actually, this territory belongs to Kosovo even though it is not controlled by its institutions. Really, it is ruled by local Serbs but it is controlled and led by Serbia.

1.2.3. Third issue: Eastern Kosovo

Eastern Kosovo that includes three municipalities in the south of Republic of Serbia, is territory inhabited historically by Albanians but which is occupied by Serbia.

Presheva, Bujanoc and Medvegja – East Kosovo is a problem also created by a Serb colonialism and as such is created after the Second World War. By annexing to Serbia this territory inhabited with vast Albanian majority, Serb occupator in one side intended to decrease the number of inhabitants and territory with a homogenous national composition and in other side, by partitioning the nation in more administrative units, to weaken its unity.

While from the geo-strategic aspect, the use of convenient geographic position of the Presheva Valley as corridor for exiting to the Mediterranean Sea, would create big favors for Serbia in the regional political scene.

Actually these three Albanian municipalities are under classic occupation and the occupator undertakes all efforts to keep this issue silent and not to raise it as an issue which requires solution and at the same time, by making their lives un-bearable, to displace Albanians from these areas.

II. NON-RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM

Continuation of this situation for Kosovo and Albanian population will have severe consequences. While north of Kosovo continues to remain legally under Kosovo but practically under Serbian control, Kosovo can neither place a new border nor control the older one. Except political and security consequences, the lack of border control have also grave economic consequences for Kosovo. In northern part of town of Mitrovica and surrounding villages continues ethnic cleansing of Albanians by taking(alienating-var) properties from Albanians according to the old Serbian plan for annexation of this part. If it continues like this, in near future these territories will seriously be endangered to get lost by Kosovo. In other side, also in Eastern Kosovo, ethnic cleansing continues and the situation is especially hard in Medvegjë and Bujanoc.

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In this situation Kosovo institutions are approaching this problem only partially. They have as a sole purpose keeping of three northern municipalities within Kosovo borders. Meanwhile, they do not rise at all as a problem the issue of three municipalities with Albanians that are remaining under Serbia. These institutions not only should not insist in preservation of current territorial integrity of Kosovo but on the contrary, they should insist in redefining the borders between Kosovo and Serbia. Actual borders are not just ones and they damage severely the national interests of Albanian and Serbian population. Bearing in mind that in one side the intention of Serbia is not the integration of Albanians of East Kosovo and respect of their rights but the ethnic cleansing of territories inhabited by them, and, in other side while Serbs of three northern municipalities does not want to integrate in the state of Kosovo, the approach of government for preservation, under all conditions, of territorial integrity is not the solution of the problem. A contrary, such an attitude damages gravely Albanian national interests.

II.1. “Un-crossable” obstacles

The ones that are not interested to resolve the Albanian-Serbian issue nor Albanian issue in general, the ones that have interests from the current situation and its continuation, always raise “un-crossable” obstacles for resolution of these issues.

In the following, we will see some of these “obstacles”.

II.1.1. Non-changing of borders as international principle

First “obstacle” for final resolution of Albanian-Serbian conflict relations is represented by those who refer to the principle of preservation of territorial integrity as one of

the most important principles in the inter-state relations. They usually refer to the Helsinki Final Act for preservation of existing borders and their non-changeability by violence or in the Principles of the Contact Group for resolution of the Kosovo issue.

Movement for Unification considers that international documents does not represent real obstacle for just resolution of the problem. Here should be taken into consideration the fact that since the time of approval of the Helsinki Final Act many countries have suffered changes in their state borders and almost in all cases the cause were and remain non-resolution in a just manner of the national issues. Most recent and known case for us of the change of borders is separation of Kosovo from Serbia despite continuous calls of Serbia for preservation of its territorial integrity. In other side, when it is spoken about the Principles of the Contact Group, one should not forget that all relevant international factors continuously declare that every acceptable agreement of the parties involved in conflict is acceptable for them too. Non-changeability of borders can not be considered as an uncrossable obstacle to an agreement of Kosovo and Serbia for final resolution of their hundred years old conflict. Albanian-Serbian agreement regarding borders not only will not violate the international law, but a contrary; it is a fulfillment of one of its basic requirements that inter-state disagreements should be resolved in peaceful manner.

Since the basis of the reasoning in the international documents that are against change of borders is avoidance of violence, it is not logical that for the resolution of the problem with agreement, the same ones to be considered as obstacles. Agreements between countries are not the ones that cause the violence, but disagreements and unjust resolutions.

II.1.2. The risk of opening of the issue and “Pandora’s box”

Other “obstacle” for the resolution of the issue in question continuously is presented the risk to domino effect in the region that the agreement between Kosovo and Serbia would have regarding their state borders.

First, no issue in the world should not dare and should not remain hostage of other unsolved issues.

Second, the same words of the risk is repeated even before proclamation of independence of Kosovo, but political developments after its proclamation denied all those who stated that the proclamation of independence “will open Pandora’s box”, “will have domino effect in almost all Balkans and in many countries of the world” etc., etc.

Third, if solution will be reached through an agreement between two nations why should one be afraid of the domino effect?! In that case it should serve as a good example and everybody should be happy for such an influential effect.

Fourth, without regulation and mutual acceptance of borders neither Kosovo, nor Serbia will completely calm down and would not conclude European integrations so much proclaimed by both sides.

Finally, there is no sense that from a risk of breaking the temporary peace to withdraw from a resolution which ensures permanent peace.

II.1.3. Sub-soil resources and Lake of Ujman

A part of those that oppose an Albanian-Serbian agreement regarding their borders or their redefinition refer to losses that will Kosovo suffer in regard to sub-soil resources, and

particularly to the Ujman Lake as an economic resources of Kosovo would remain under Serbia! This issue should be looked at from many directions.

First, as far as resources are concerned, all experts of this field have concluded the opposite: only about 7.6 % of the mineral resources of the enterprise “Trepça” is concentrated in the contested territory of north.¹

Second, as far as Ujman Lake is concerned, it should be emphasized that while here we speak about an agreement, consequently also the Ujman Lake and Presheva highway would be parts of those discussions and assumed agreement. Also, we should bear in mind the existence of international conventions related to waters which ensures that the use of waters of Ibri can not be prohibited while it flows through the territory inhabited with Albanians.

Third, what is most important, the peace and security that would bring Albanian–Serbian agreement for redefining of the borders, as pre-conditions for economic and social development of two countries and resolution of the issue of Presheva, Bujanoc and Medvegja as indivisible parts of the Albanian national issue, would bring much more benefits than the supposed wealth that we would “loose”.

¹ The Combinate “Trepça” has 58 milion reserve minerals, of them around 4.43 milion in the contested region of north. Stari Tërg has 29.906.200 tones mines.

III. “SOLUTIONS” THAT DOES NOT REPRESENT SOLUTIONS

III.1. Preservation of the current situation

“Solution” of the Albanian-Serbian issue through preservation and continuation of the current situation represent most dis-favorable solution for Kosovo and Albanian population. In the actual Albanian-Serbian relations and international ones, in general, Kosovo will continue to be non-functional country, with supervised, limited and conditioned independence, i.e. without full sovereignty of its citizens in the territory they live. Furthermore Kosovo and Albanians in this situation will continue to suffer violent demographic changes in East Kosovo, and in the northern part of town of Mitrovica and surrounding villages where Serbia is continuing the displacement of Albanians and is conducting ethnic cleansing of these territories.

III.2. The principle of preservation of territorial integrity

The principle of preservation of territorial integrity for the countries that have not fully resolved the national issue becomes obstruction of the normal political, economic and social development and un-avoidably this principle in such circumstances lead (as it continuously led) to conflict situations and ethnic wars.

In our case, Kosovo insisting in preservation of territorial integrity makes simultaneously two mistakes, which will cost it with amputated sovereignty and under-developed economy.

First, the preservation of the territorial integrity means violent keeping of current situation in the north.

Second, the preservation of the territorial integrity means continuous remaining of East Kosovo under Serb occupation.

As a consequence of first situation in regard to the north, Kosovo is facing international obstacles in exercising of its sovereignty as independent state. Consequently it is facing problems in natural process of national unification, and in relations with other countries and in international integrations.

As a consequence of second situation, in regard to Serbian politics of ethnic cleansing and ignorance on the side of official politics of Prishtina and Tirana, Albanian settlements will be emptied without reaction and difficulties.

III.3. Historical principle in resolution of national issues

Not rarely as a final “solution” of the Albanian issue and of relationship with neighbors appears in the surface the historical principle as solution of disagreements between nations and states. According to this principle the resolution of national matters should be

done by returning situations as they were during the previous historical periods and in the demographic basis of that time, to make nowadays political solutions. Thus, if this principle is to be followed, the history instead of being “magistra vitae” becomes obstruction for actual developments. If this principle is applied, conflicts in the world would be permanent due to movement (sometimes violent, sometimes for economic reasons and sometimes even willingly) of the population through history.

III.4. Exchange of territories

Other principle, actually most spoken one, which appears as solution and which in fact, is not a solution is also exchange of territories between Kosovo and Serbia. This principle, while in the focus of attention has territories and not the free will of people, can not be represented as solution of the problem; it may even cause its complication. Very often this principle in bargaining with territories means also displacement of people that is anti-human act. In our case, because the similarity of the problem is big in both sides, as in north of Kosovo (Leposaviq, Zveçan and Zubin Potok), also in its east (Preshevë, Bujanoc and Medvegjë), the simultaneous expression of the will and of the right of these population is mixed with the principle of exchange of territories.

IV. SOLUTION OF THE ISSUE

IV.1. Self-determination of nations – the best solution

Since the north of Kosovo, but also the Eastern Kosovo are direct consequences of colonialism, the application of the right to self-determination of nations in both cases would be the most fair and best solution for given situation. Whenever this principle of international law was applied in its entirety, it has always brought sustainable peace in respective regions. Also in our case after application of this principle undoubtedly we will have a redefinition of borders between Kosovo and Serbia because it is known the will and the right of Albanian people in east Kosovo: the will and justice says that it will be attached to Kosovo. Whereas in other side it is also known the will and the right of Serbian population in Leposaviq, Zveçan and Zubin Potok for attachment to Serbia. Only after the full application of the principle of self-determination in both sides we may expect a sustainable peace.

But, actually against this solution are also international factors and Serb state. To Kosovo institutions and Albanian politics in general remains only one intermediary way for resolution of this issue. This is the engagement for application of reciprocity between north of Kosovo and East Kosovo, resolution, which undoubtedly would lead to a final solution: self-determination of both two parties and final redefinition of borders.

IV.2. Principle of reciprocity – a stage to self-determination

Application of reciprocity in the rights for north Kosovo and for Eastern Kosovo, means that the same rights that will enjoy Serb population in Leposaviq, Zveçan and Zubin Potok, will enjoy also Albanian population in Preshevë, Bujanoc and Medvegjë. This would represent a temporary solution for this problem, but very useful one. By applying same rights in both sides, undoubtedly local inhabitants will benefit mostly, but also inter-state relations would be more relaxed. Either side will not intend amputation of the rights because the same will apply also for the other side. The rights may range from local territorial autonomy to full change of borders of Kosovo and Serbia.

IV.3. Mitrovica requires special solution

In the frames of temporary solution through reciprocity this principle without doubts it should not include the northern part of Mitrovica and seven Albanian villages, remaining under three north municipalities with Serb majority territories, that continues to preserve Albanian compact ethnic composition and which have territorial continuation with the other Albanians areas in Kosovo.

In this case Kosovo institutions should insist in return of Albanians to their properties. This may be achieved if all mechanisms of democratic pressure are used, institutional and non-institutional, on the international factors implicated in Kosovo. Return of people to their properties is a basic human right and in case of Mitrovica it should, under all conditions, happen. This would be first step for reunification of the city and final resolution of this issue. The problem of Mitrovica is problem of ethnic cleansing and should not be legitimized and remained as such. Any other effort that would not have direct effect in return of people to their properties would be effort for legitimizing this ethnic cleansing.

CONCLUSION

Final resolution of Mitrovica issue, of issue of north Kosovo and east Kosovo, thus final resolution of Albanian-Serbian issue has big importance for Albanian population and Kosovo. Despite huge economic, social and even integration relevance in the international relations, again, political relevance for Kosovo and Albanian population remains of highest importance. In this case Kosovo would have been released off Ahtisaari Package and current Constitution, and as a result Albanian population will obtain the right to self-determination and sovereignty on the territory it lives. With the resolution of this issue cease also all the reasons for current prohibitions imposed by the side of international community to Albanian people of Kosovo to conclude the process of its national unification. Thus, Kosovo with only a referendum could be joined in to one state with Republic of Albania.

Therefore, Kosovo institutions and the ones of Republic of Albania, but also all political parties should pay an significant attention and treat seriously this problematic. They should undertake quick and brave steps in order to open new perspectives for development of Albanian population.