

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 1, 2023

Prime Minister Albin Kurti
Government Building
Mother Teresa Square
10000 Pristina
Republic of Kosovo

Dear Prime Minister Kurti,

I write with grave concern over the escalation of tensions in Northern Kosovo and the lack of progress in implementing the 2013 Brussels Agreement. I am concerned about the infringement on the rights of Kosovo Serbs that continues to destabilize security and safety in the region. I highly encourage you and your administration to hold new elections for mayoral posts in Serb-majority communities, fully withdraw the special forces in Serb-majority municipalities, and finally create the Association of Serb-majority Municipalities, as required by the 2013 Brussels Agreement.

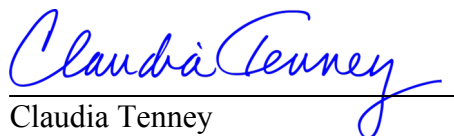
As you know, Kosovo Serbs boycotted the April 23rd mayoral elections in the North of Kosovo, as a result of discriminatory anti-Serb policies and a lack of progress in implementing the 2013 Brussels Agreement. This led to a dismal turnout of only 1,567 people out of approximately 45,000 eligible voters – a 3.5 percent turnout rate. Despite the clear lack of a mandate from these results, these mayors were forcibly installed in North Mitrovica, Leposavić, Zvečan, and Zubin Potok – all Kosovo Serb-majority communities.

In order to forcibly install these mayors, Kosovo special police were called in to repress Kosovo Serb democratic protests against the forced installation of these mayors. As the Joint Statement on Kosovo put out by the United States, France, Italy, Germany, and the United Kingdom pointed out, “there is no requirement that mayors be sworn in at municipal offices.” The influx of special police only serves to inflame tensions and conflict, rather than deliver a long-term viable political solution for these communities.

While new elections and removing the special police will help address the current spike in tensions, this alone is not a solution to the underlying crisis. Over a decade ago, Kosovo committed to creating an Association of Serb-majority Municipalities to help ensure these ethnic minority communities receive adequate representation and protections of their rights. However, Kosovo has yet to make serious, meaningful progress in creating this community. After a decade of waiting, Kosovo Serbs are tired of waiting for the full implementation of the 2013 Brussels Agreement, and I respectfully urge you to fulfil this longstanding obligation.

Like you, I look forward to the day when Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs live side-by-side without conflict. However, the unilateral steps you have taken to further stoke conflict are unacceptable and must be reversed immediately. Additionally, your existing obligations under the 2013 Brussels Agreement must be fulfilled to create a lasting peace within Kosovo. I hope to continue working with you to solve this conflict once and for all, and eagerly await de-escalatory actions by your government and the formation of the Association of Serb-majority Municipalities.

Sincerely,



Claudia Tenney
Member of Congress