



# KOSOVO

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## **Kosovo Serbs form Assembly of municipal communities**

KosovoCompromise Staff

The Serb Assembly of Kosovo municipal communities, elected on the basis of the May 11 vote, was constituted on Saturday in the northern part of Kosovska Mitrovica and in the founding declaration it rejected the illegal, unilaterally-declared independence of Kosovo.

Radovan Nacic, a deputy of the the Serbian Radical Party, was elected parliamentary speaker, while Marko Jaksic (Democratic Party of Serbia) and Srdjan Nikolic (SRS) were elected vice presidents.

Thirty of the total of 45 deputies were present at the constitutive session of the assembly.

Deputies from 26 municipalities in Kosovo rejected the unilaterally declared independence of Kosovo in the declaration.

A number of representatives of OSCE, KFOR, as well as of the Republic of Serbia also attended the session.

Serbian Minister for Kosovo Slobodan Samardzic sent out a message to the international and domestic public that the Assembly will serve as a mediator between the Kosovo municipalities and Belgrade institutions.

“The (Kosovo) Albanians have chosen their path, and we have chosen ours and we will defend it in our institutions,” Samardzic said.

The EU backed Unmik’s position, which dubbed the May 11 elections and the Serb institutions, as without legal effect.

“The holding of elections is a matter for UNMIK”, said a spokeswoman for EU Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn.

“UNMIK has stated that ‘those’ local elections, their outcomes and the Serbian municipal institutions for which they purported to elect representatives are all without legal standing or effect in Kosovo. The commission supports UNMIK’s position,” she said.

But Samardzic dismissed worries that the new institution will not have full international recognition.



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“I assure you that they will accept what we do, they might not say that clearly right away, but they will accept and cooperate with the Serb municipalities and with the Assembly we constituted today,” the minister said.

Kosovo President Fatmir Sejdiu called the formation of the Assembly as a “destabilizing factor”.

“Preserve peace and do not react to the provocations”, Sejdiu said.

The Serb Assembly was formed on Vidovdan (St. Vitus Day), the date of the historic 1389 Battle for Kosovo, when the medieval Serb kingdom was against the invading Ottoman Empire.

Thousands of Serbs marked the 619th anniversary of the battle in the Gračanica monastery outside Pristina as well as on the premises of the battle – Gazimestan.

Meanwhile, in New York, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has voiced belief that with the arrival of new UNMIK chief a dialogue will be opened between Belgrade and Pristina on all outstanding issues.

He underlined that he was encouraged by the statement Serbian President Boris Tadic had made at the last-week session of the UN Security Council - that he would continue to take part in the dialogue on six items of Ban's proposal.

“I know that the positions of Kosovo and Serb authorities differ, but I hope that with the arrival of (Unmik chief) Lamberto Zannier to Pristina all sides will engage themselves in a dialogue so that all issues be resolved in a peaceful manner”, Ban said.