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ICJ: Belgrade's legal team to be made up of Serbian, foreign experts

KosovoCompromise Staff

Serbia should soon form an expert legal team which would represent it at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the case concerning the legality of the unilaterally declared independence of Kosovo-Metohija, legal expert Tibor Varadi said on Thursday.

Serbian Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremic said that the issue of legality of the unilateral declaration of independence would be sent to the ICJ in the next few days and announced that consultations of the legal team that should be appointed by the government would begin next week.

Varadi said that Serbia should form a team made up of between 10 and 15 domestic and foreign experts, which would present arguments in keeping with international law to the Court.

He said that "Serbia should prepare well and, like before, quote UN Security Council Resolution 1244 and a series of other general principles of international law."

The ICJ will assess whether it will decide on the resolution in the urgent or regular procedure, which means that it could come to the Court's agenda in six months or two years, Varadi explained.

"Since the General Assembly has not asked the Court to state its view on the Serbian resolution in the urgent procedure, this is something on which the Court will decide itself," Varadi said.

In Belgrade, Jeremic said that following the decision by the UN General Assembly to adopt the official Belgrade's initiative, the government had reached a decision on the return of our ambassadors to the countries which had recognized the unilaterally proclaimed independence of Kosovo.

"We hold that the transfer of the issue of Kosovo's future status onto the legal terrain makes it possible for us to do this. We will now concentrate ourselves on our legal battle (at the International Court of Justice) in The Hague," Jeremic said.

"We have succeeded in that that the match be continued on a terrain where we believe our arguments will be the strongest, and this is the terrain of international law. Now we can focus on the improvement of bilateral relations with all those countries and let



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the experts of our legal team deal with the issue of Kosovo's future,” the Serbian foreign minister added.

Jeremic expressed belief that the “fact that the issue (of Kosovo status) is now in the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice will prevent, to a significant extent, further recognitions of the unilateral independence, at least until the Court reaches its decision.”

“In case that someone should, however, try to violate this legal shield, we will be extremely harsh towards them,” Jeremic warned.