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Pristina hands in proposal on relations with Serbia, Belgrade rejects it

KosovoCompromise Staff

The Pristina delegation, headed by Kosovo President Fatmir Sejdiu, handed to the Contact Group troika in London on Wednesday a draft "deal on good neighborly relations between Serbia and Kosovo as independent states."

Veton Surroi, a member of Pristina team, said talks about Kosovo's future were "irrelevant" because Kosovo would be independent "soon", regardless of international efforts to resolve questions about its political status. He added Kosovo Albanians were already preparing their institutions for independence, regardless of what the talks produced. "We will participate (in the talks), but there needs to be a point at which a decision is made, and this point is sooner rather than later.", Surroi concluded.

The Kosovo negotiators reiterated that only U.N. envoy Martti Ahtisaari's supervised independence plan was acceptable for them, adding that the talks should focus on arranging the post-independence relations between Belgrade and Pristina, not on defining Kosovo's status.

"Our determination to gain independence is the beginning and the end of these negotiations for us, and we believe that independence will bring stability to both Kosovo and the region," Kosovo president Fatmir Sejdiu said. He declined to make any detailed comments on Belgrade's proposal to discuss five issues at the New York meeting on September 28, which are to be resolved in line with the Serbian essential autonomy proposal.

Opposition Democratic Party of Kosovo leader Hashim Thaqi said the Kosovo side "will not accept anything contrary to independence."

According to Pristina's document, relations between Belgrade and Pristina should be based on cooperation on issues of mutual interest, complete protection of Kosovo's ethnic minorities, progress in resolving the fates of missing persons, and the return of the displaced. Pristina also says that it wants to cooperate with Belgrade in "implementing the common vision of integration into Europe." The document states that the deal would come into effect after its ratification by Kosovo and Serbia, and would then be handed to the U.N.

Serbian Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremic said that Serbia found Pristina's document unacceptable. "We do not see Serbia and Kosovo's future relations as the relations of



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two independent states," Jeremic said. He added that everyone should focus on the ongoing talks, in order to find a compromise solution.

Serbia's Minister for Kosovo Slobodan Samardzic urged the troika to reject Pristina's proposal.

"The path of the talks will depend on how the troika and the international community relates to this proposal", Samardzic said, adding that Serbia does not want to spend October and November in a "simulation of talks".