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Majority of Kosovo Serbs will not leave Kosovo

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The majority of Kosovo Serbs would not leave the province in case it declared independence, showed a public opinion poll conducted by the Mediana Adria agency, unveiled in Belgrade on Thursday.

According to the poll, if Kosovo proclaimed independence, 60.8 percent of the polled would not leave Kosovo, with 50.1 percent of the polled claiming they would stay in the province at any cost.

When it comes to departing from Kosovo, 30.5 percent chose that option in the December poll that was conducted on a sample of 926 Kosovo Serbs. Meanwhile, 82.4 percent think that the most just outcome of the negotiations would be Kosovo remaining within Serbia, but with the broadest possible autonomy.

For a vast majority of the polled – 80.3 percent, the idea of Kosovo declaring independence is completely unacceptable, whereas 1.4 percent would support the independence.

According to 82.3 percent of the polled, the cause of the crisis and conflicts in Kosovo are the interests of international factors and the West, primarily the US and the EU. Poor social and economic living conditions are blamed for the crisis by 41.6 percent of the polled, while 36.1 percent believe that the problems lay in history.

As far as the quality of life in Kosovo is concerned, 62.6 percent of the Serbs are unhappy with it, and only 20 percent said they were satisfied. According to 38.6 percent, the most important prerequisite for the return and stay of the displaced in the province is the preservation of Kosovo as a part of Serbia. When it comes to the Serbs' dissatisfaction with international institutions' work, UNMIK got 63.8 percent and KFOR got 58.9 percent.

Ministry for Kosovo and Metohija state secretary Dusan Prorokovic said that the resolve of most Serbs to remain in the province was an encouraging fact, and proof that the Serbian institutions were functioning in Kosovo and supporting the local population.

He said that Serbia had on several occasions so far expressed readiness to discuss the disbanding of UNMIK, adding that no EU mission could replace the UN Mission.

Prorokovic went on to say that Serbia's state system would continue to work in the province despite the existing challenges.