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Serbian parliament declares Kosovo secession null and void

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Serbian Parliament on Monday backed the government's decision to reject the unilateral declaration of Kosovo's secession, saying that the breakaway province remains the integral part of Serbia, in accordance with the country's constitution and United Nations Charter.

A total of 225 out of 243 deputies backed the rejection of Kosovo's independence, with 18 lawmakers refusing to take a vote - a clear sign of Serbian unity over the latest developments in the volatile southern province.

"Today, we begin the long struggle to return the entire province into Serbia's constitutional and legal order. This is our goal and Serbia will achieve it. If we cannot achieve all of it today, we will do so tomorrow, because Serbia must be free," Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica told lawmakers.

"This has to be the permanent and the most important goal of the country's future state policy," Kostunica said. "Let us leave the force and violence to those who have shamed themselves with it in front of the entire world."

The Serbian Prime Minister described the unilateral declaration of Kosovo's independence as a "direct threat to Serbia's sovereignty, territorial integrity and the constitution," adding that the European Union's decision to deploy its 2,000-strong mission to the province has absolutely no legal basis.

Kostunica blamed the U.S. and NATO of deliberately avoiding the international law and United Nations to enforce their "raw force" and open the way for Kosovo Albanians to proclaim secession.

"From now on, the goal of Serbia's policy must be free, safe and normal life for all its citizens in its southern province. All Serbia's potentials - economic, cultural, political, institutional and others - will be used to protect the Serb people and citizens, foster development in the areas where they live, secure to them jobs, education, health and social care, protect spiritual and cultural heritage, secure freedom and reinstate the entire province within Serbia's constitutional and legal order", Kostunica said

The leader of the Serbian Radical Party Tomislav Nikolic told the parliament this was one of the worst days in the history of Serbia that could last a long time and would end when Kosovo returned into Serbia's constitutional framework.