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Kosovo Albanians adopt the new constitution

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Kosovo Albanian lawmakers on Wednesday unanimously adopted the new constitution amid a tide of protests from Belgrade and Moscow, which described Pristina's latest move as illegal and potentially inflammable.

Kosovo's new constitution, which has been drafted in accordance with the plan readied by former Finish President Martti Ahtisaari, contains 40 chapters and 160 articles and stipulates the newly proclaimed "state" as a "parliamentary republic, and that the highest power lies with the president".

Protection of minority rights has been a key issue during the several-months-long process which ended up with European Union's approval of the document, with the chief of EULEX Peter Feith accepting the constitution, saying it provides "protection for minorities and is in line with an international settlement that had been proposed for Kosovo."

"The guarantees for the minorities express ... the commitment of majority citizens and the institutions to building an independent and sovereign Kosovo, home to all citizens, regardless of their ethnicity," Kosovo President Fatmir Sejdiu told lawmakers.

However, Kosovo Serbs are resolutely opposed to the document and Serbia immediately cried foul, as Belgrade's Minister for Kosovo Slobodan Samardzic said that developments around Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence could be hardly described as Kosovo institutions' flawless plan.

"It seems to me that the hands that are playing with that Rubik's cube aren't too skillful, as many things are not going according to their plan. The UN Security Council is keeping quiet about this, but it does not accept the policy of certain countries that have recognized Kosovo independence, while Serbia is conducting a policy against independence that is bearing results," Samardzic said.

According to the Western plans, Wednesday's vote opens the way for Kosovo leaders to formally take over authorities held by the United Nations by mid-June, but the lack of support in Security Council could alter those plans.

"Attempts are being made to draw a pseudo-legal basis for Kosovo's self-proclaimed independence. This reflects a continuation of Pristina's drive for separatism supported by its sponsors which runs counter to international law and is a violation of the UN charter, OSCE principles and Resolution 1244 of the UN Security Council," Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement.