Research Report

Leiden Model United Nations 2017
~ fresh ideas, new solutions ~

Forum: *Special Conference*
Issue: *The question of ethnic Albanians in minority positions throughout the Balkans*

Position: *President*

Introduction

Although the situation of Albanian people has changed a lot over the last couple of decades, it is still a huge issue concerning the inhuman treatment they receive day by day.

Albanians are an ethnic group and nation, living in Albania, Kosovo and other countries who share a culture, history and the Albanian language is their mother tongue. More than half of the Albanian population lives in Albania and Kosovo but a large population lives in Greece, Italy, the Republic of Macedonia, and with smaller numbers in Serbia and Montenegro as well.
This region is the Balkans, characterised by its extremely various cultural division.

The history of Albanians started in the 8th century BC with their powerful ancestors, the Illyrians. They ruled the territory of the whole former Yugoslavia. After being conquered by the Roman Empire and becoming the part of the Byzantine Empire, around the 9th century AD Albanians had to face with a tribe called „Slavic". They soon became the part of the Bulgarian, later the Serbian Empire. In the 19th century as a result of the Russian-Turkish war which made 400,000 Serbs leave Kosovo, left the province with a totally Albanian region, however later on Kosovo became an internationally recognised part of Serbia. Throughout the centuries, populations of ethnic Serbs and Albanians moved from one territory to the other. This provoked mixed responses from the locals, with the Albanians not being satisfied with the Serbian rule, and Serbians considering it as liberation. In 1918, a Yugoslavian State was established with the name of „The Kingdom of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs" Albanians in Kosovo asked the League of Nations in 1921 to unite Kosovo with Albania. They claimed that 12,000 Albanians were killed since The Kingdom of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs was established. The Karcha movement started with the purpose of the union which made the Kosovo Albanians a threat in the eyes of

the Yugoslavian integrity.
As a response to the armed movement, the previously renamed Yugoslavian Kingdom started a colonisation process in Kosovo. During this time, forced migration of Albanians from Kosovo took place. Yugoslavian governments only provided education in Serbian, trying to assimilate Albanians but as the idea clearly did not work the authorities forbade Albanians to attend public schools.
When Yugoslavia was conquered, Kosovo was under Italian administration. In 1943 it was decided the Kosovo would remain as the part of Albania. After the surrender of Italy the Germans took over the territories.
The liberation of Kosovo happened in 1944 by Yugoslavian partisans with Albanian help and soon became a part of Serbia, in the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia. In the 70' Kosovo was given higher powers, even governmental titles. At a provincial level Albanian and Serbian were official languages. Albanians were given the permission to open schools and universities in Albanian. Television, press and even political leadership were granted to them.
Between 1961 and 1981 the population of Kosovo Albanians arose from 75% to over 90% resulting in several protests claiming for Kosovo to become a republic in Yugoslavia. These protests soon escalated into riots. By the 1980' the ethnic tension increased to its peak.

The use of Albanian language was banned, more than a 100,000 ethnic Albanians were pushed out of their jobs. Kosovo Albanians organized a non-violent movement with the goal of achieving independence.
In 1991 Kosovo was declared as an independent state but only with the recognition of Albania.
The tension remained but did not cause trouble until 1996 when an Albanian terrorist group attack the Serbians military and civils.
The NATO's war started against Serbia which ended only in 1999. The Yugoslavian government gave the governance of the province to the United Nations.

In 2004 Albanian pogroms started against Serbia causing the migration of thousands of Serbs.
International negotiations began in 2006 to determine the final status of Kosovo, as foreseen by UN Security Council Resolution 1244 which ended the Kosovo conflict of 1999. Whilst Serbia's continued sovereignty over Kosovo was recognized by the international community, a clear majority of the province's population pursued the independence. The UN Security Council's Resolution proposed 'supervised independence'. Later on several attempts were made in 2007 to rewrite a draft resolution that accommodates Russian concerns too, who were afraid that the principal of state sovereignty was being undermined. In 2008 Kosovo's Parliament declared independence, in 2011 the International Court of Justice found no violation of the international law in the case.

As seen in the history of Albanians, Balkan perspective is very different from the Western

views. Even though over the years there was majority in the population of Albanians the land belonged the Serbians so the independence was not given. Taking sides is a very hard situation in this case. Kosovo was not the only country where a high numbers of Albanians still were, this was the case of Macedonia also. However the details are a bit different.

The question we must ask is what the most effective way to eradicate this suppression would be. First we must examine the different approaches of the countries with Albanian population as it differs state by state. By no means can a single solution work in every country.

Solving this issue is highly urgent and requires a great amount of work and cooperation from the UN member states!