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Chapter 1

Country Overview

Country Overview

KOSOVO

A former autonomous province of Serbia, Kosovo - inhabited by a predominantly ethnic Albanian population -- had been governed by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) since 1999, and declared its independence in February 2008. Ethnic Serbs migrated to the territories of modern Kosovo in the 7th century but did not fully incorporate them into the Serbian realm until the early 13th century. The defeat of the Serbian empire at the Battle of Kosovo in 1389 led to five centuries of Ottoman rule during which large numbers of Turks and Albanians moved to Kosovo.

By the end of the 19th century, Albanians replaced the Serbs as the dominant ethnic group in Kosovo. Serbia re-acquired control over Kosovo from the Ottoman Empire during the First Balkan War of 1912. Kosovo was incorporated into the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (later named Yugoslavia) after World War I. Kosovo became an autonomous province of Serbia in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia after World War II, and the 1974 Yugoslav Constitution gave Kosovo the status of a Socialist Autonomous Province within Serbia.

Albanian nationalism increased in the 1980s, which led to riots and calls for Kosovo's independence. Under Milosevic's leadership, Serbia instituted a new constitution in 1989 that revoked Kosovo's status as an autonomous province of Serbia. In response, Kosovo Albanian leaders began a peaceful resistance movement in the early 1990s and they established a parallel government funded mainly by the Albanian diaspora. When this movement failed to yield results, an armed resistance emerged in 1997 in the form of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) with its main goal as securing the independence of Kosovo.

In late 1998, Milosevic unleashed a brutal police and military campaign against the KLA that resulted in massacres and massive expulsions of ethnic Albanians. International attempts to mediate the conflict failed, and Milosevic's rejection of a proposed settlement led to a three-month NATO bombing campaign against Serbia beginning in March 1999 that forced Serbia to agree to withdraw its military and police forces from Kosovo, and Kosovo was placed under a transitional administration by the UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999). Kosovo declared independence in February 2008 after the failure of UN-brokered talks on the status of the province.

To date, Kosovo has been recognized by a majority of European states, all of its neighbors (except Serbia), and other states from the Americas, Africa, and Asia. Kosovo's citizens are the poorest in Europe, with an average annual per capita income of approximately US\$2,450. Most of Kosovo's population lives in rural towns outside of the capital, Pristina. Inefficient, near-subsistence farming is common, the result of small plots, limited mechanization, and lack of technical expertise. Kosovo is still significantly dependent on the international community and the diaspora for financial and technical assistance.

Key Data

Key Data	
Region:	Southeastern Europe
Population:	1870981
Climate:	Continental, with warm summers and cold and snowy winters
Languages:	Albanian, Serbian, although Turkish, Bosnian and Romani also spoken
Currency:	dinar and euro used
Holiday:	Independence declared on Feb. 17, 2008
Area Total:	10887
Area Land:	10887
Coast Line:	0

Kosovo

Country Map



Southeastern Europe

Regional Map

□

Chapter 2

Political Overview

History

Editor's Summary:

Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia on February 17, 2008. Officially, the Serbian province of Kosovo, inhabited by a predominantly ethnic Albanian population, has been governed by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) since 1999, under the authority of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244. That scenario has been in tact until the 2008 declaration of independence, followed in 2010 with the ruling by the International Court of Justice's ruling in favor of Kosovo's unilateral independence from Serbia and affirming the legality of the declaration of sovereignty. The following history looks at Serbia -- the successor state to the former Yugoslavia -- as well as the eventual secession of Montenegro and the emerging independent state of Kosovo.

Serbia

Byzantine sources report that some Serbs migrated southward in the 7th century of the common era (C.E.) and eventually settled in the lands that now make up southern Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Rival chiefs, or "zupani," vied to control the Serbs for 5 centuries after the migration. Zupan Vlastimir formed a Serbian principality under the Byzantines around 850, and the Serbs soon converted to Eastern Christianity. The Serbs had two political centers in the 11th century: Zeta, in the mountains of present-day Montenegro, and Raska, located in modern southwestern Serbia.

The zupan of Raska, Stefan I Nemanja (1159-96), threw off Byzantine domination and laid the foundation for medieval Serbia by conquering Zeta and part of southern Dalmatia. In this way, the first Serbian autonomous state was formed. The zupan's son and successor, Stefan II Nemanja (1196-1228), transformed Serbia into a stable state, friendly with Rome but with religious loyalty to Constantinople. In 1218, Pope Honorius III recognized Serbian political independence and crowned Stefan II king. The writings of Stefan II and his brother (canonized as St. Sava) were the first works of Serbian literature.

Later kings in the Nemanja line overcame internal rivalries and pressure from Bulgaria and Constantinople. They also rejected papal invitations to link the Serbian Orthodox Church with

Rome, and they ruled their country through a golden age. Serbia expanded its economy, and Dalmatian merchants sold Serbian goods throughout Europe and the Levant. The Nemanje dynasty left to Serbia masterpieces of religious art combining Western, Byzantine and local styles.

Serbia dominated the Balkans under Stefan Dusan (1331-55), who conquered lands extending from Belgrade to present-day southern Greece. He proclaimed himself emperor, elevated the archbishop of Pec to the level of patriarch, and wrote a new legal code combining Byzantine law with Serbian customs. Dusan had ambitions toward a weakened Byzantine Empire, but the Byzantine emperor suspected his intentions and summoned the Turks to restrain him. Dusan repelled assaults in 1345 and 1349, but was defeated in 1352. He then offered to lead an alliance against the Turks and recognize the pope, but those gambits also were rejected.

Rival nobles divided Serbia after the death of Dusan in 1355, and many switched loyalty to the sultan after the last Nemanja died in 1371. The most powerful Serbian prince, Lazar Hrebeljanovic, raised a multinational force to engage the Turks in the Battle of Kosovo Polje on St. Vitus Day in 1389. The Turks barely defeated Lazar, and both he and the sultan were killed. The defeat did not bring immediate Turkish occupation of Serbia, but during the centuries of Turkish domination that followed, the Serbs endowed the battle with myths of honor and heroism that helped them preserve their dignity and sense of nationhood. Serbs still recite epic poems and sing songs about the nobles who fell at Kosovo Polje. The anniversary of the battle is the Serbian national holiday, Vidovdan (St. Vitus's Day), June 28.

Civil war in the Turkish Empire saved Serbia in the early 15th century, but the Turks soon reunited their forces to conquer the last Serbian stronghold at Smederjevo in 1459 and subjugate the whole country. Serbs fled to Hungary, Montenegro, Croatia, Dalmatia and Bosnia, and some formed outlaw bands. In response to the activities of the latter, the Turks disinterred and burned the remains of St. Sava.

By the 16th century, southern Hungary had a sizable Serbian population that remained after the Turks conquered the region in 1526. Montenegro, which emerged as an independent principality after the death of Dusan, waged continual guerrilla war on the Turks, and was never conquered. The Turkish threat, however, did force Prince Ivan of Montenegro to move his capital high into the mountains. There, he founded a monastery and set up a printing press. In 1516 Montenegro became a theocratic state.

Social and economic life in Serbia changed radically under the absolute rule of the Turkish sultan. The Turks split Serbia among several provinces, conscripted Serbian boys into their elite forces, exterminated Serbian nobles, and deprived the Serbs of contact with the West as the Renaissance was beginning. The Turks used the Orthodox Church to intermediate between the state and the peasantry, but they expropriated most church lands. Poorly trained Serbian priests strove to

maintain the decaying national identity.

In 1459, the sultan subordinated the Serbian Church to the Greek patriarch, but the Serbs hated Greek dominance of their church, and in 1557, Grand Vizier Mehmed Pasha Sokolovic, a Serb who had been inducted into the Turkish army as a boy, persuaded the sultan to restore autonomy to the Serbian Church. Turkish maltreatment and exploitation grew in Serbia after the 16th century, and more Serbs fled to become "hajduci" (mountain outlaws).

From 1684 to 1689, Christian forces attempted to push the Turks from the Balkans, inciting the Serbs to rebel against their Turkish overlords. The offensive rebellion ultimately failed, exposing the Serbs south of the Sava River to the revenge of the Turks. Fearing Turkish reprisals, the Serbian patriarch, Arsenije III Carnojevic, immigrated in 1690 to Austrian-ruled southern Hungary with as many as 36,000 families.

The Austrian emperor promised these people religious freedom as well as the right to elect their own "vojvoda" (military governor), and incorporated much of the region where they settled, later known as Vojvodina, into the military border. The refugees founded new monasteries that became cultural centers. In Montenegro, Danilo I Petrovic of Njegos (1696-1737) became bishop-prince and instituted the succession of the Petrovic-Njegos family. His efforts to unify Montenegro triggered a massacre of Muslims in 1702 and subsequent reprisals.

Austrian forces took Serbian regions south of the Sava from Turkey in 1718, but Jesuits following the army proselytized so heavily that the Serbs came to hate the Austrians as well as the Turks. In the 18th century, the Turkish economy and social fabric began deteriorating, and the Serbs who remained under the Ottoman Empire suffered attacks from bands of soldiers. Corrupt Greek priests, who had replaced Serbian clergy at the sultan's direction, also took advantage of the Serbs. The Serbs in southern Hungary fared much better. They farmed prosperously in the fertile Danubian plain. A Serbian middle class arose, and the monasteries trained scholars and writers who inspired national pride, even among illiterate Serbs.

The 18th century brought Russian involvement in European events, particularly in competition with Austria for the spoils of the Turkish collapse. The Orthodox Serbs looked to the tsar for support, and Russia forged ties with Montenegro and the Serbian Church in southern Hungary. In 1774, Russia won the diplomatic right to protect Christian subjects of the Turks; later it used this right as a pretext to intervene in Turkish affairs.

When Russia and Austria fought another war with Turkey in 1787 and 1788, Serbs fought guerrilla battles against the Turks. Austria abandoned the campaign, and the Serbs, in 1791. To secure their frontier, the Turks granted their Serbian subjects a measure of autonomy and formed a Serbian militia. Montenegro expanded in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Bishop-Prince Petar I

Njegos (1782-1830) convinced the sultan to declare that the Montenegrins had never been Turkish subjects, and Montenegro remained independent through the 19th century.

In 1804, renegade Turkish soldiers in Belgrade murdered Serbian leaders, triggering a popular uprising under Karadjordje ("Black George") Petrovic, founder of the Karadjordjevic dynasty. Russia supported the Serbs, and in 1806, the sultan granted them limited autonomy. Internal discord, however, weakened the government of Karadjordje, and the French invasion of Russia in 1812 prevented the tsar from protecting the Serbs.

In 1813, the Turks attacked rebel areas. Karadjordje fled to Hungary, then Turkish, Bosnian and Albanian troops plundered Serbian villages. The atrocities sparked a second Serbian uprising in 1815 that won autonomy under Turkish control for some regions. The corrupt rebel leader Milos Obrenovic (1817-39) had Karadjordje murdered and his head sent to the sultan to signal Serbian loyalty.

In 1830, Turkey recognized Serbia as a principality under Turkish control, with Milos Obrenovic as hereditary prince. The sultan also granted the Serbian Church autonomy and reaffirmed the Russian right to protect Serbia. Poor administration, corruption and a bloody rivalry between the Karadjordjevic and Obrenovic clans marred Serbian political life from its beginning.

After the sultan began allowing foreign governments to send diplomats to Serbia in the 1830s, foreign intervention further complicated the situation. Despite these obstacles and his autocratic manner, however, Milos Obrenovic stimulated trade, opened schools and guided development of peasant lands. He abdicated in 1838 when Turkey imposed a constitution to limit his powers.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, Serbian culture made significant strides. Dositej Obradovic, Vuk Karadzic and other scholars accelerated a national renaissance. Through his translations and autobiography, Obradovic spread the Enlightenment to the Serbs. Collections of Serbian folk songs and poems edited by Karadzic awoke pride in national history and traditions. Karadzic also overcame clerical opposition to reform the Cyrillic alphabet and the Serbian literary language, and he translated the New Testament. His work widened the concept of Serbian nationhood to include language as well as religious and regional identifications.

The European revolution of 1848 eroded relations between the Serbs and their neighbors. As part of their revolutionary program, the Hungarians threatened to Magyarize the Serbs in Vojvodina. Some Serbs there declared their independence from Hungary and proclaimed an autonomous Vojvodina; others rallied behind the Austrian-Croatian invasion of Hungary. The Serbs nearly declared war, but Russians and Turkish diplomacy restrained them. The Serbs in Hungary gained nothing from helping Austria to crush the revolution. Vienna ruled Vojvodina harshly after 1850 and silenced Serbian irredentists there.

When Austria joined Hungary to form the Dual Monarchy in 1867, Vienna returned Vojvodina and its Serbs to Hungary. Meanwhile, Peter II Njegos of Montenegro (1830-51), who was also a first-rate poet, reformed his administration, battled the Turks and struggled to obtain a seaport from the Austrians. His successor, Danilo II (1851-60), abolished the Montenegrin theocracy.

Prince Mihajlo Obrenovic (1860-68), son of Milos, was an effective ruler who further loosened the Turkish grip on Serbia. Western-educated and autocratic, Mihajlo liberalized the constitution and, in 1867, secured the withdrawal of Turkish garrisons from Serbian cities. Industrial development began at this time, although 80 percent of Serbia's 1.25 million people remained illiterate peasants. Mihajlo sought to create a South Slav confederation, and he organized a regular army to prepare for liberation of Turkish-held Serbian territory. Scandal undermined Mihajlo's popularity, however, and he was eventually assassinated.

Political parties emerged in Serbia after 1868, and aspects of Western culture began to appear. A widespread uprising in the Ottoman Empire prompted an unsuccessful attack by Serbia and Montenegro in 1876, and a year later those countries allied with Russian, Romanian and Bulgarian rebels to defeat the Turks. The subsequent treaties of San Stefano and Berlin (1878) made Serbia an independent state and added to its territory, while Montenegro gained a seacoast.

Alarmed at Russian gains, the growing stature of Serbia, and irredentism among Vojvodina's Serbs, Austria-Hungary pressed for and won the right to occupy Bosnia, Herzegovina and the Novi Pazar in 1878. Serbia's Prince Milan Obrenovic (1868-89), a cousin of Mihajlo, became disillusioned with Russia and fearful of the newly created Bulgaria. He, therefore, signed a commercial agreement in 1880 that made Serbia a virtual client state of Austria-Hungary. Milan became the first king of modern Serbia in 1882, but his pro-Austro-Hungarian policies undermined his popularity, and he abdicated in 1889.

A regency ruled Serbia until 1893, when Milan's teenage son, Aleksandar (1889-1903), pronounced himself of age and nullified the constitution. Aleksandar was widely unpopular in Serbia because of scandals, arbitrary rule and his position favoring Austria-Hungary. In 1903 military officers, including Dragutin "Apis" Dimitrijevic, brutally murdered Aleksandar and his wife. Europe condemned the killings, which were celebrated in Belgrade.

Petar Karadjordjevic (1903-14), who knew of the conspiracy, returned from exile to take the throne, restored and liberalized the constitution, put Serbian finances in order, and improved trade and education. Petar turned Serbia away from Austria-Hungary and toward Russia, and in 1905 Serbia negotiated a tariff agreement with Bulgaria hoping to break the Austro-Hungarian monopoly of its exports. In response to a diplomatic disagreement, Vienna placed a punitive tariff on livestock, Serbia's most important export. Serbia, however, refused to bend, found new trade routes and began seeking an outlet to the sea.

In 1908, Austria-Hungary formally annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina, frustrating Serbian designs on those regions and precipitating an international crisis. The Serbs mobilized, but under German pressure Russia persuaded Belgrade to cease its protests. Thereafter, Belgrade maintained strict official propriety in its relations with Vienna; but government and military factions prepared for a war to liberate the Serbs still living under the Turkish yoke in Kosovo, Macedonia and other regions.

The Balkan Wars and World War I had dramatic consequences for the South Slavs. In the Balkan Wars, Serbia helped expel the Turks from Europe and regained lands lost in medieval times. By 1914, the alliances of Europe and the ethnic friction among the South Slavs had combined to make Bosnia the ignition point, and Serbia one of the main battlegrounds, of World War I. When Austria-Hungary collapsed after the war, fear of an expansionist Italy inspired Serbian, Croatian and Slovenian leaders to form the new federation known as Yugoslavia.

Ethnic hatred, religious rivalry, language barriers and cultural conflicts plagued the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (later renamed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia) from its inception. The question of centralization versus federalism bitterly divided the Serbs and Croats; democratic solutions were blocked and dictatorship was made inevitable because political leaders had little vision, no experience in parliamentary government, and no tradition of compromise. Hostile neighboring states resorted to regicide to disrupt the kingdom, and only when European war threatened in 1939 did the Serbs and Croats attempt a settlement. That solution, however, came too late to matter.

The Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes encompassed most of the Austrian Slovenian lands, Croatia, Slavonia, most of Dalmatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Vojvodina, Kosovo, the Serbian controlled parts of Macedonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Territorial disputes disrupted relations with Italy, Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria and Albania. Italy posed the most serious threat to Yugoslavia. Although it received Zadar, Istria, Trieste and several Adriatic islands in the postwar treaties and took Rijeka by force, Italy resented not receiving all the territory promised under the 1915 Treaty of London. Rome subsequently supported Croatian, Macedonian and Albanian extremists, hoping to stir unrest and hasten the end of Yugoslavia. Revisionist Hungary and Bulgaria also backed anti-Yugoslav groups.

The creation of Yugoslavia fulfilled the dreams of many South Slavic intellectuals who disregarded fundamental differences among 12 million people of the new country. The Serbs, Croats and Slovenes had conflicting political and cultural traditions, and the South Slav kingdom also faced sizable non-Slav minorities, including Germans, Albanians, Hungarians, Romanians, and Turks, with scatterings of Italians, Greeks, Czechoslovaks, Slovaks, Ruthenians, Russians, Poles, Bulgars, Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jews and Romanies.

The Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Islamic, Uniate, Jewish and Protestant faiths all were well established and cut across ethnic and territorial lines. In addition to the divisiveness of a large number of minority languages, linguistic differences also split the Serbs, Croats, Slovenes and Macedonian Slavs. Many people regarded the new government and its laws as alien, exploitative and secondary to kinship loyalties and traditions.

The Serbs' memories of their medieval kingdom, their 1389 defeat by the Ottoman Turks, their 19th century uprisings, and their heavy sacrifices during 20th century wars contributed significantly to their feeling that they had sacrificed much for Yugoslavia and received relatively little in return.

After World War II and German Nazi occupation, a socialist federation of Yugoslavia, including Serbia, Montenegro and the other former Yugoslav territories, was formed. Josip Broz Tito became the leader and remained in power until his death in 1980.

In the late 1980s, a passionate Serbian nationalist revival arose from this sense of unfulfilled expectation, from the postwar distribution of the Serbs among various Yugoslav political entities, and from perceived discrimination against the Serbs in Kosovo in the 1970s and 1980s. In this process, the Serbian Orthodox Church re-emerged as a strong cultural influence, and the government of Serbia renewed celebrations of the memories of Serbian heroes and deeds. These events caused leaders in Slovenia and Croatia to fear a resurgence of the Serbian hegemony that had disrupted interwar Yugoslavia.

The Serbian-Albanian struggle for Kosovo, the heartland of Serbia's medieval kingdom, dominated Serbia's political life in the 1980s. Between 1948 and 1990, the Serbian share of Kosovo's population dropped from 23.6 percent to less than 10 percent, while the ethnic Albanian share increased in proportion because of a high birth rate and immigration from Albania.

The demographic change was also the result of political and economic conditions; the post-war Serbian exodus from Kosovo accelerated in 1966 after ethnic Albanian communist leaders gained control of the province, and Kosovo remained the most poverty-stricken region of Yugoslavia in spite of huge government investments. After reasserting political control over Kosovo in 1989, the Serbian government announced an ambitious program to resettle Serbs in Kosovo, but the plan attracted scant interest among Serbian émigrés from the region.

In the republics of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Serbs' situation was more complex and potentially more explosive than in Kosovo. Despite denials from the governments of both republics, Serbs in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina complained bitterly in the late 1980s about ethnically based discrimination and threats. The Serbian government reacted with published exposés of World War II atrocities against Serbs and the Croatian chauvinism that had inspired them.

In July 1990, a referendum was passed essentially removing the autonomous designations from Kosovo and Vojvodina. Then, in November and December 1990, Slobodan Milosevic was elected to the presidency. During 1991 and 1992, thousands were killed during the civil war between the republics of former Yugoslavia. In early 1992, United Nations peacekeeping troops were deployed to the area to help quell the fighting in the region.

In the course of 1991-92, Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina seceded from Yugoslavia through violence, while Macedonia separated peacefully. The secessionist republics quickly won international recognition. Serbia and Montenegro chose to stay within the strictures of Yugoslavia. At the joint session of the assemblies of Yugoslavia, Serbia and Montenegro in Belgrade on April 27, 1992, the Serbs and Montenegrins adopted the constitution of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Since Serbia-Montenegro was under de facto rule of President Milosevic, the army was under the control of Milosevic's ally, General Momcilo Perisic. No particular opposition movement, including the Serbian Renewal movement or the semi-fascist Serbian Radical Party, managed to offer a serious challenge to Milosevic's control. Indeed, when opposition leaders called for a non-confidence vote in the government, Milosevic dissolved parliament and called for new elections.

Milosevic's regime was faced with trying to maintain political control of the volatile and predominantly Albanian region of Kosovo, as well as the unstable Sandzak Muslim enclave next to Bosnia. Interestingly, the Milosevic administration had some degree of a challenge from then-Montenegrin president, Momir Bulatovic, who, in the early 1990s, demonstrated an increasingly independent pattern of policy making. At that time, several Montenegrin members of Milosevic's coalition in parliament resigned in protest of Montenegro's subordinate relations with Serbia.

Montenegro:

Montenegro's history is almost inextricably tied to Serbia's. Similarly to Serbia, Montenegro was under the rule of the Ottoman Turks for the duration of their reign in the Balkans. When the Turks were removed from the area, Montenegro became an independent principality within the Austro-Hungarian Empire but did not become an independent sovereign state until 1878.

During World War I, Montenegro fought on the side of the Allies but was defeated and occupied by Austria. Upon Austrian occupation, the Montenegrin king, King Nikola I, and his family fled to Italy. Consequently, the Serbian king, Petar Karadjordjevic, was able to exploit the chaotic conditions in Montenegro at the war's end, paving the way for the violent and unwanted Serbian annexation of Montenegro. Montenegro was the only Allied country in World War I to be annexed to another country at the end of the war. The majority of the Montenegrin population opposed the

annexation and on January 7, 1919, staged a national uprising -- known to history as the Christmas Uprising -- against the Serbian annexation. The uprising became a war between Serbia and the Montenegrins that lasted until 1926. Many Montenegrins lost their lives, and though many hoped for an intervention by the Great Powers to protect their sovereignty, none came and Montenegro was effectively absorbed into the new kingdom of Yugoslavia.

When Yugoslavia was invaded and partitioned by the Axis powers in April 1941, Montenegro was appropriated by the Italians under a nominally autonomous administration. This caused a great divide within the Montenegrin population. Many nationalists who had been frustrated with the experience of Yugoslav unification supported the Italian administration. Also, there were advocates of the union with Serbia who began armed resistance movements as well as many communists who, by nature of their political beliefs, were opposed to the Italian presence. As war progressed, the local strength of the communists grew and Montenegro served as an effective base for communism in the region; it was an important refuge for Tito's Partisan forces during the most difficult points in the struggle. After the war, the communist strategy of attempting to unify Yugoslavia through a federal structure elevated Montenegro to the status of a republic, thus securing Montenegrin loyalty to the federation.

The breakup of the Yugoslav federation after 1989 left Montenegro in a precarious position. The first multiparty elections in 1990 showed much public support for the League of Communists, confirming Montenegrin support for the federation. Montenegro joined Serbian efforts to preserve the federation in the form of a "Third Yugoslavia" in 1992. Though Montenegro reaffirmed its political attachment to Serbia, a sense of a distinct Montenegrin identity continued to thrive. Outspoken criticism of Serbian conduct of war in Bosnia and Herzegovina added to the continuing strength of Montenegrin distinctiveness. Recently, both the people and the government of Montenegro have been critical of Slobodon Milosevic's campaign in Kosovo.

In March 2002, an agreement on governance between Serbia and Montenegro was signed, officially changing the name of the country from the Republic of Yugoslavia to Serbia and Montenegro and changing the federation into a new "Union of States" (also referred to as a "community of states"). The move essentially ended the country once known as the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY). A new structure for constitutional government was also promulgated and ratified at that time. In May 2006, Montenegro voted in favor of independence from Serbia. Thus ended the country known only for a few years as Serbia and Montenegro. Serbia became the successor state of what had once been the Yugoslav Federation. Montenegro became the world's newest independent state.

Kosovo:

Historians suggest that the earliest known inhabitants of Kosovo were the Illyrians. While

ethnic Albanians of contemporary Kosovo identify themselves as direct descendants of the Illyrians, Serbian scholars have suggested that claim that Albanians emerged in Kosovo in the Middle Ages as a result of unions between Illyrians and Dardanians from Thrace.

The area was conquered by Alexander the Great in 300 B.C.E. (before the common era) and was subsumed as part of the Roman interests in the 4th century C.E. Slavs moved into the region in the 6th century after crossing the Danube. This movement shifted the Illyrian-speaking population landscape as inhabitants (regarded by some as Albanians) traversed eastward from the Adriatic into present-day Kosovo. Meanwhile, the Slavs migrating across the Danube sub-divided into Serbs, Slovenes, and Croats.

In the 12th century, Kosovo became the governmental and cultural nexus of a medieval Serbian state, which was headed by the Nemanjic Dynasty. This situation lasted two centuries and, as such, among Serbs, Kosovo came to be known as "Old Serbia." Kosovo, however, was soon to become part of the Ottoman Empire.

As discussed above under "Serbia," the battle of Kosovo Polje, in which the Serbs put forth a valiant effort against the Ottoman Turks, has been emblazoned in Serbian national consciousness. But at the same time, Kosovo has also been the center of society and culture for Albanians of the area. Indeed, ethnic Albanians began returning to the area in the 15th century. Over time, they converted to Islam and the Islamization of the Kosovo Albanians commenced. Serbian conversion to Islam was far more limited by comparison, as a result of the strength of the Orthodox Church. Losses in battles against the Turks resulted in Serbs moving out of the area of Kosovo and northward to Belgrade. This movement has come to be known as "the great migration." Consequently, Kosovo became underpopulated and was eventually re-inhabited by ethnic Albanians from the eastern hills of Albania.

It was not until 1912 that Kosovo was ceded to Serbia by the Turks in the Balkan Wars, becoming part of what would be known as Yugoslavia. Then, in 1974, then-Yugoslav President Tito established a new constitution in which the autonomous nature of Kosovo was recognized, conveying similar rights as had been bestowed on the six republics of Yugoslavia -- Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia and Macedonia.

In the late 1980s, Slobodan Milosevic began his campaign to take control of the former Yugoslavia and eventually take away the autonomy that Kosovars (most of whom were ethnic Albanians) had enjoyed under the long-time ruler of Yugoslavia, Tito. This action, in tandem with rising Serbian nationalism, eventually led to the Bosnian War and the break-up of Yugoslavia. While Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia gained independence, the Kosovo issue was not explicitly addressed in the 1995 Dayton Accords that ended the Bosnian War and provided for the transition to peaceful governance. Instead, the Kosovo province was treated as part of Serbia in the new successor state -- Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY).

Instability in Kosovo threatened the entire region. This threat seemed more apparent when the Albanian government in Tirana announced that it would act as a unitary Albanian nation if Serbia were to take offensive action in Kosovo. A number of raids, protests, gun battles, and terrorist acts, including the shooting down of a Yugoslav Airlines training aircraft, occurred from 1996 to 1998. While ethnic Albanians had historically sought greater autonomy from Serbia by peaceful actions, attacks from the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) led to severe reprisals from the Serbian-led Yugoslav army and police forces. The severity and indiscriminate nature of the Yugoslav counterattacks led to a mass refugee crisis of tens of thousands of Kosovo Albanians in the summer of 1998. Then, a massacre of Kosovo's civilians by Serbian forces in January 1999 led to the threat of air strikes by NATO. Negotiations aimed at preventing military attacks were not ultimately successful and on March 24, 1999, NATO began a bombing campaign (Operation Allied Force) against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia due to its actions in Kosovo.

NATO suspended air strikes on June 10, 1999, after the Yugoslav leaders accepted the terms of the Military Technical Agreement and Serbian troops began withdrawing from Kosovo. The demilitarization of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and other armed Kosovo Albanian group followed as well. A formal peace settlement was soon reached under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and an international civil and security presence was deployed under United Nations' auspices.

Within Serbia, Kosovo has been regarded as an intrinsic aspect of Serbian identity, legacy and territorial integrity. But among Kosovars, the thrust for sovereign independent status has been at the forefront of the national consciousness throughout the years since the establishment of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244. Despite this disconnection, in 2008, Kosovo declared its unilateral independence and sovereignty. Then, in 2010, the International Court of Justice ruled in favor of Kosovo's unilateral independence from Serbia and affirmed the legality of the declaration of sovereignty.

Political Conditions

Background

A major issue of contention within Serbia had been the matter of the ethnic Albanian province of Kosovo. Historically, the Serbians viewed the province as part of the Serbian nation's identity and

legacy because it was the scene of an important 14th century battle between the Serbs and the Ottoman aggressors. After World War II, ethnic Albanians heavily inhabited Kosovo. With a largely Albanian majority today, and an incremental increase in self-governance under former Yugoslav leader Tito, ethnic Albanian agitation began when Serbian President Milosevic revoked the province's political and cultural autonomy in 1989; during the 1990s, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), a nationalist militia, speculated to be supported by Albanian exiles in Europe, emerged.

Instability in Kosovo threatened the entire region. This threat seemed more apparent when the Albanian government in Tirana announced that it would act as a unitary Albanian nation if Serbia were to take offensive action in Kosovo. A number of raids, protests, gun battles, and terrorist acts, including the shooting down of a Yugoslav Airlines training aircraft, occurred from 1996 to 1998.

On March 24, 1999, NATO began a bombing campaign (Operation Allied Force) against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) due to the FRY's actions in the province of Kosovo. Below, the events leading up NATO's deployment are discussed below. The situation in Kosovo and the FRY in general (as of early August 1999) is described as well.

As early as 1987, Slobodan Milosevic had begun his campaign to take control of the former Yugoslavia by giving a speech that appealed to the Serbian nationalism of the ethnic minority Serbs living in the Kosovo province. A majority of the province's population were ethnic Albanians who were mostly Muslim, non-Slavic, and did not speak a Slavic language. The province, however, was considered vitally important to the Slavic, Orthodox Christian, Serbian minority due to the presence of ancient Orthodox monasteries and churches and to the role of a 14th century battle in Serbian national mythology.

After gaining control over the former Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milosevic took away the autonomy that Kosovars had enjoyed under the long-time ruler of Yugoslavia, Tito. This action, in tandem with rising Serbian nationalism, eventually led to the Bosnian War and the break-up of Yugoslavia. While Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia gained independence, the Kosovo issue was not explicitly addressed in the 1995 Dayton Accords that ended the Bosnian War and provided for the transition to peaceful governance. Instead, the Kosovo province was treated as part of Serbia in the new Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY).

On Nov. 12, 1995, in Dayton, Ohio, the former Yugoslavia's three warring parties signed a peace agreement that brought to a halt over three years of inter-ethnic civil strife in Bosnia and Herzegovina (the final agreement was signed in Paris on Dec. 14, 1995). The Dayton Agreement, signed by Bosnian President Izetbegovic, Croatian President Tudjman, and Serbian President Milosevic, divides Bosnia and Herzegovina roughly equally between the Muslim/Croat Federation and the Bosnian Serbs while maintaining Bosnia's currently recognized borders.

The Matter of Kosovo

While ethnic Albanians had historically sought greater autonomy from Serbia by peaceful actions, attacks from the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) led to severe reprisals from the Serbian-led Yugoslav army and police forces. The severity and indiscriminate nature of the Yugoslav counterattacks led to a mass refugee crisis of tens of thousands of Kosovo Albanians in the summer of 1998.

International negotiators obtained agreement from Slobodan Milosevic to withdraw a portion of the Yugoslav troops in Kosovo and to allow a "verification force" from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to oversee the truce between the KLA and Yugoslav forces.

A massacre of Kosovo civilians by Serbian forces in January 1999 led to the withdrawal of the OSCE observers and the threat of air strikes by NATO. Negotiators from the FRY and the KLA met in February 1999, in Rambouillet, a chateau near Paris, under pressure from the six-nation Contact Group consisting of the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, and Russia, to try to reach agreement on easing tensions in Kosovo. The main elements of the agreement sought by the Contact Group were: Kosovo would remain part of Serbia, but be given greater autonomy; the constitutional status of Kosovo would be discussed after a three-year period; and a NATO-led force of 30,000 soldiers would implement the agreement. The agreement also included safeguards for the Serbian minority. While the KLA at first did not accept the agreement because they sought full independence for Kosovo, they did accept the provisions at a second round of talks at Rambouillet in March 1999. Serbia, however, refused to accept the presence of NATO troops on its territory even after NATO threatened air attacks.

The 11-week bombing campaign led to a mass exodus of the majority of Kosovo's ethnic Albanian population to neighboring countries. Reports of war crimes by Serb forces in Kosovo were widespread. While NATO suffered no combat casualties, early indications are that the Serbian military machine was largely intact at war's end. NATO suspended air strikes against the FRY on June 10, 1999, after the FRY's leaders accepted the terms of the Military Technical Agreement and Serbian troops began withdrawing from Kosovo.

The main elements of this agreement included the withdrawal of all FRY forces, military and paramilitary, from Kosovo, according to a detailed timetable and the deployment of "effective international civil and security presences." The security force, "K-For," was comprised primarily of NATO forces with the addition of a contingent of Russian soldiers (Operation Joint Guardian). A separate agreement was reached with the KLA in which they were to hand over all heavy weapons within 30 days. Additionally, the KLA members were to cease wearing their uniforms and to dismantle all roadblocks and checkpoints.

A formal peace settlement was reached under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244. The resolution called for the withdrawal of Serbian and FRY troops; the demilitarization of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and other armed Kosovo Albanian groups; and the deployment in Kosovo, under United Nations' auspices, of an international civil and security presence.

Due to the difficulties of establishing an effective United Nations civil administration in Kosovo and continued security concerns, many Kosovo Serbs fled the province in anticipation of ethnic Albanian retaliation. The mid-July massacre of fourteen Serbs further undermined Kosovo Serbs' confidence in K-For's ability to maintain their safety.

Recent Political Developments

In November 2005, the government unanimously adopted a draft of the resolution rejecting independence for Kosovo in United Nations-mediated talks on the future of the breakaway province that were set to commence in December. The text of the platform, drafted as a 10-point resolution, calls for unequivocal support for a compromise on Kosovo's future status, however, it warns that the province's "territory is an inalienable part" of Serbia and that "any imposed solution will be considered illegitimate and unacceptable" by Belgrade.

In late January 2006, ethnic Albanians in Kosovo mourned the death of President Ibrahim Rugova who was viewed as the central element in the Kosovar political sphere. A special session was convened in Kosovo's parliament to pay tribute to the late leader who died at a sensitive time as negotiations were about to begin about the future of ethnic Albanians.

They were hoping for full independence from Serbia-Montenegro, however, authorities in Belgrade have opposed such a possibility. Parliamentary head Nexhat Daci was to be named acting president, however, parliament was to be given three months to choose an official successor. Whereas Rugova was regarded as a moderate of sorts, Serbian authorities worried that a new leader of Kosovo would belong to one of the more hard-line factions, making negotiations far more difficult, and auguring the possibility of conflict.

In February 2006, talks between Serbs and ethnic Albanians from Kosovo were expected to begin in Austria, with the hopes of ultimately resolving the status of Kosovo by the close of 2006. While the province has been predominantly inhabited by ethnic Albanians, it has remained legally part of the country of Serbia and Montenegro, albeit under United Nations protection since 1999 when NATO strikes resulted in the expulsion of Serb troops from the region.

The meetings were intended to focus on pushing greater autonomy for the ethnic Albanians who make up the majority of Kosovo's population and who have advocated independence. Such a path

would present a dire conundrum for the minority Serbian population, who make up only 5 percent of the population in Kosovo and who seek continued integration with Serbia and Montenegro. While the Serbian plan would provide control over local municipalities in Kosovo within a wider complex of Serb rule, ethnic Albanians prefer to see Kosovo divided along ethnic lines. Regardless of the competing desires, mediators appointed by the United Nations have said any resolution must reflect the will of the majority.

Also in 2006, Montenegro moved towards independence from Serbia. But pro-independence Montenegrins were not the only people seeking to move outside the sphere of Serbian influence. Indeed, Serbia continued to grapple with the matter of Kosovo. Reconciliation between pro-independence ethnic Albanians and the Serbian minority in Kosovo has not been realized. Irrespective of the several rounds of negotiations between the government of Serbia-Montenegro and the ethnic Albanian leadership in Kosovo, there has been no sign of resolution.

The United Nations has maintained its position as the key mediator in the matter. The international body has said it will continue to try to forge concordance on Kosovo's disputed status by the close of 2006. Still, with Montenegro's referendum independence standing as a reality, it was possible that the desire for independence by Albanians in Kosovo would intensify. Undoubtedly, the question of Kosovo would be a challenging one to resolve.

On June 28, 2006, Serbian Prime Minister Vukoslav Kostunica said that Kosovo would always remain part of Serbia. He said, "No one is on firmer, truer ground in the talks on Kosovo's final status than Serbia." He went on to note that Belgrade would guarantee the interests of Serbs at talks with the United Nations on the future of Kosovo. His comments were issued to Serbians in a crowd during a visit to Kosovo intended to mark the anniversary of a 14th century battle in which the army of Serbia's Christian Prince Lazar was defeated by Ottoman invaders. Serbs hold the defeat to be a key moment in their history and an inextricable part of their collective identity.

Referendum on Kosovo

Serbian voters went to the polls in late October 2006 and narrowly voted to approve a new constitution, which asserts Kosovo's status as an integral part of the country. The new constitution also contains 200 articles expressing guarantees for minority and human rights, and provides a form of autonomy in Vojvodina. The result of referendum showed that it received the support of 51.5 percent of voters.

In the aftermath of the referendum, Prime Minister Vukoslav Kostunica said: "This is a great moment for Serbia." He went on to state the following: "By defending Kosovo, we are defending something more than our interests, more than the issue of stability in the region... We are defending international law."

Meanwhile, ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, which has been under the aegis of United Nations jurisdiction since the late 1990s, dismissed the referendum. Most Albanians of Kosovo could not vote in the referendum as a consequence of the fact that they have boycotted Serbian elections in the past and have been excluded from voters lists.

Editor's Note: The new constitution essentially circumvents the role of the United Nations in resolving the status of the Albanian enclave. To date, however, international talks on Kosovo's contested status have continued, with no clear resolution in sight. In June 2007, United States President George W. Bush expressed support for the notion of an independent Kosovo. It was a view strongly supported by Albanians and vociferously rejected by Serbians.

Dec. 10, 2007, saw the United Nation's (U.N.) deadline pass without reaching an agreement on the final status of Kosovo. A province of Serbia with a mainly Albanian ethnic population, Kosovo has been advocating for independence while Serbian authorities have eschewed the notion of further changes to the country's territorial integrity, especially following Montenegro's independence. But without agreement on the future status of Kosovo, the ethnic Albanian leaders there threatened to declare unilateral independence. Indeed, reports suggested that such a declaration could occur earlier than the spring of 2008.

Foreign ministers of the European Union (EU) countries were set to meet in Brussels (Belgium) and discuss the situation and the future path for Kosovo. Wolfgang Ischinger, the EU mediator on Kosovo, was scheduled to brief the foreign ministers ahead of the meeting in Belgium.

At issue was the question of whether or not the EU would recognize an independent Kosovo. There was no overwhelming consensus on that question. Some EU countries, which were dealing with their own internal separatist movements, were hesitant to recognize an independent Kosovo out of fear that such a move would set a problematic precedent for them. On the other hand, the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Italy, while stopping short of an outright endorsement for independence, urged other EU countries to honor their obligations to Kosovo. Outside of the EU, Russia warned that recognition of a unilateral independence declaration in the Balkans could trigger instability both in the region and across the broader world.

Meanwhile, with prevailing fears about a violent backlash by Serbians, should Kosovo declare its independence, NATO had said it would keep 16,000 troops in the province to deal with potential problems.

Special Entry: Kosovo Declares Independence:

In January 2008, Kosovo's head of government, Prime Minister Hashim Thaci, announced that a declaration of independence was forthcoming. The notion of Kosovo's independence had been

somewhat supported by the western countries of the European Union (EU), while Russia had expressed the view that Kosovo should ideally be granted independence with the support of Serbia. But the very idea of independence for Kosovo was soundly rejected by Serbia, which did not want to see its territorial integrity disintegrate further after Montenegro's secession.

The controversial nature of Kosovo's independence led the EU to call on Kosovo's leaders to exercise patience in their independence drive. The EU wanted the leadership of Kosovo to wait until the presidential election in Serbia was finished (the second round would take place in February 2008), and until a civilian force could assume the mission in Kosovo from the U.N.

A month later on Feb. 17, 2008, with all 10 Serbian parliamentarians boycotting the historic session, Kosovo's parliament unanimously endorsed a declaration of independence from Serbia. The declaration, which was read by Prime Minister Hashim Thaci, asserted Kosovo to be a democratic country, and that the country would be founded in accordance with the United Nations plan. That plan would not allow Kosovo to join another country, would ensure an international monitoring presence, limit armed forces, and protect Serb minority rights. To that latter point, the prime minister noted there would be full respect and rights of all ethnic communities. In heralding the independence of Kosovo, Prime Minister Hashim Thaci also said, "We have waited for this day for a very long time... from today, we are proud, independent and free."

Tens of thousands of jubilant Kosovars celebrated the declaration of independence in the streets of Kosovo's capital of Pristina. Fireworks and gunfire were heard across the city. Ethnic Albanians across the world were also reported to be celebrating the developments in Kosovo.

However, in Belgrade, Serbians took to the streets to protest Kosovo's independence move. Gangs were blamed for attacks on the United States embassy, the office of the European Union presidency (located inside the Slovenian embassy), other diplomatic interests (i.e. embassies of United Kingdom, Turkey, Croatia and Belgium) and symbolic multinational interests, such as a McDonald's restaurant. There were also reports of attacks on United Nations police. As well, in the mainly Serbian town on Mitrovica, located within Kosovo, there were reports of hand grenades being thrown into two buildings with international interests -- a United Nations court house and the European Union mission office.

The developments occurred after Serbian Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica delivered an emotional speech condemning Kosovo's secession and blamed the West for forcing Serbs to relinquish their identity. For his part, recently re-elected Serbian President Tadic also reacted negatively to the news. The Serbian government suggested it would try to block Kosovo from receiving international recognition, as well as membership in international institutions such as the United Nations.

Meanwhile, the United Nations Security Council was set to convene an emergency session on Kosovo. The meeting was called by Russia, which has been an ally of Serbia, in some measure as

a result of the two countries' shared Slavic roots. It was not known if Russia intended to recognize an independent Kosovo. It had generally maintained the view that to do so would result in unwanted consequences in the Georgian breakaway provinces of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, not to mention Chechnya within its own domain. Meanwhile, Europe remained divided on the issue. European countries such as Cyprus, Romania and Slovakia had said that they would not recognize Kosovo, while Spain, which has contended with its own Basque separatist movement, also indicated reluctance. Nevertheless, recognition of Kosovo's independent status by the United States and a number of European countries, including the United Kingdom, Italy, France and Germany, commenced on Feb. 18, 2008.

By the last week of February 2008, Serbian government ministers were expected to visit Serbian areas of Kosovo, presumably to emphasize their position that Kosovo remained under its control. Leading that delegation would be Serbia's Minister for Kosovo, Slobodan Samardzic, who raised the ire of many Kosovars by referring to the destruction of two border posts by Serbian protestors as "legitimate." There were reports that Samardzic would not be allowed to enter Kosovo unless he issued an apology for his incendiary comments.

Meanwhile, Kosovo was reported to be free of violence a week after declaring independence. The state of calm was attributable to the deployment of local police, United Nations forces and NATO troops on the ground in Kosovo.

Post Independence Developments and Impact:

In April 2008, the International War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague acquitted a former commander of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), Ramush Haradinaj, of war crimes. Former Prime Minister Haradinaj was found not guilty on 37 counts, which included murder, persecution, rape and torture. The judge ruled that the evidence had been inconclusive, and in some cases, unconvincing. Haradinaj was a KLA commander during the fight against Serbian forces in the late 1990s; when the war ended, he founded a political party -- Alliance for the Future of Kosovo. That party joined the ruling coalition in government following the 2004 elections with Haradinaj at the helm, however, he resigned as prime minister following his war crimes indictment. To date, he has retained strong support among the ethnic Albanian population of Albania.

In June 2008, several months after Kosovo declared its independence, the world's newest sovereign state affirmed its status with a new constitution. The legal framework called for power to be handed over to the government following nine years of rule by the United Nations. The move formalized the authority of the majority ethnic Albanian government.

In Kosovo's capital of Pristina, President Fatmir Sejdiu presided over a simple ceremony in which the constitution was promulgated. The ceremony's high point was the president's signature

ratifying legislation, which instituted the country's first ministry of defense, military services, and ministry of foreign affairs. In this way, the new constitution essentially conveyed powers, such as the creation of governing instruments, that had been held by the United Nations until this time.

President Sejdiu characterized the event as a "historic moment," and noted that it effectively ended "Kosovo's cycle of statehood." In an interview with the media, Kosovo's Deputy Prime Minister Hajredin Kuci referenced the plan crafted by former United Nations envoy Martti Ahtisaari, which envisioned both the decentralization of Kosovo, as well as provisions for the internal autonomy of Kosovo's Serbian population. To this end, Kuci said, "The will of the people of Kosovo and [the] Ahtisaari plan are included in the constitution."

While the countries of the West have expressed their support for the plan, it has not yet been officially approved. The delay has been largely a result of Russia's decision to block the handover from the United Nations. For its part, Russia has shared Serbia's antagonism to the notion of Kosovo's sovereignty, which decreased the territorial integrity of Serbia as the last successor state to the former Yugoslavia. Russian-Serbian solidarity on the matter has been presumably as a result of both country's shared Slavic roots.

Notwithstanding these objections on the part of Russia, United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon moved to begin the process of ceding United Nations functions in Kosovo to the European Union, which was to take responsibility for several missions there. To that end, the United Nations chief said, "It is my intention to reconfigure the structure and profile of the international civil presence to one that... enables the European Union to assume an enhanced operational role in Kosovo."

Meanwhile, Serbia's President Boris Tadic directly registered his country's objections to these developments by asserting, "Serbia does not accept the proclamation of Kosovo's constitution as a legal fact." Moreover, Serbia flexed its geopolitical muscle by declaring that the new constitution would not apply in the northern part of Kosovo, which has been dominated by ethnic Serbs.

These assertions coincided with the establishment of a parallel Serbia assembly in the ethnically divided city of Mitrovica. Indeed, Slobodan Samardzic, the minister for Kosovo in the outgoing Serbian government, announced a new Serbian parliament within Kosovo, composed of Serbian members who had been recently elected. The move presented an immediate challenge to the new constitution of Kosovo, and signaled a looming power struggle between ethnic Albanians and ethnic Serbs in Kosovo.

By the close of the month [June 2008], the Serbs of Kosovo had inaugurated their assembly in Mitrovica. Slobodan Samardzic said that the assembly would help Serbia fight to keep Kosovo but Kosovo's President Sejdiu described the move as "an attempt to destabilize Kosovo." Nevertheless, the opening session was convened on St. Vitus Day (June 28), which commemorates the 1389 invasion of Serbian territory by Ottoman forces. The invasion did not bring immediate

Turkish occupation of Serbia, but during the centuries of Turkish domination that followed, the Serbs endowed the battle with myths of honor and heroism that helped them preserve their dignity and sense of nationhood. Serbs still recite epic poems and sing songs about the nobles who fell at Kosovo Polje. Therein resided the symbolic meaning of Kosovo to Serbians.

At the start of July 2008, the fledgling ruling coalition in Kosovo fell into crisis when one of its junior partners, Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), came into conflict with Prime Minister Hashim Thaci. The situation was sparked when Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade Naser Osmani quarreled with the Transport and Telecommunications Minister Fatmir Limaj during a parliamentary session. At issue was Prime Minister Hashim Thaci's decision to dismiss Osmani along with the LDK's refusal to sanction that move. The LDK held its own internal meeting at which it was decided that Thaci's decision against Osmani was a violation of the coalition agreement. The LDK then called on Thaci, the leader of the senior coalition partner Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK), to revoke the decision and convene an emergency meeting of the coalition partners' leadership. For his part, Prime Minister Thaci explained his decision saying, "This issue has nothing to do with names or parties, it has to do with regulations and principles I work with as a prime minister and the government."

Recent Developments:

In the period of late 2008 to early 2009, several developments occurred, which effectively reified Kosovo's status as a sovereign state, en route to being recognized by the international community. In October 2008, the United Nations General Assembly voted to refer Kosovo's declaration of independence to the International Court of Justice. In December 2008, security, judicial and customs functions transitioned from United Nations administration to that of the European Union. In January 2009, a multi-ethnic security force was established under the aegis of NATO control. The Kosovo Security Force replaced the previous security force that had been composed of veterans of independence campaign against Serbia.

Regional relations dominated the landscape in June 2009 when the former prime minister of Kosovo, Agim Ceku, was arrested in Bulgaria on the basis of war crimes charges. While Ceku has not been indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in the Hague, there have been indictments made against him by Serbian courts. In this case, the Bulgarian Interior Ministry said that Ceku was detained under the aegis of a prevailing Interpol arrest warrant, which was initiated by Serbia, as he crossed the border from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Serbia has accused Agim Ceku -- a former rebel commander with the Kosovo Liberation Army -- of committing war crimes during the 1998-99 war in Kosovo before it declared its independence from the Yugoslav successor nation state of Serbia. At issue were Serbia's claims that Ceku had

"command responsibility" in regard to the killing of close to 700 Serbs and 18 others. Yet to be determined was the matter of whether or not Ceku's detention in Bulgaria would be extended, or, it he would be extradited to Serbia. There was also the possibility that he might be released.

For his part, Ceku, who has been regarded as a key player in the independence struggle at home in Kosovo, has vigorously denied the allegations against him. Should he be extradited to Serbia, already-strained relations between Kosovo and Serbia were likely to devolve.

On Nov. 11, 2009, the Serbian parliament committee for Kosovo and Metohija urged citizens in Kosovo to refrain from voting in the local elections there. The committee released a statement that read: "The committee for Kosovo and Metohija calls for all citizens in the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija not to vote in the coming local elections there, organized by secessionists and separatists." The Serbian authorities argued that the elections in Kosovo, which declared its independence from Serbia in 2008, were in violation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and the Serbian Constitution. Despite Serbia's refusal to recognize Kosovo's independence,

On Nov. 15, 2009, the people of Kosovo went to the polls to vote in local elections. It was the first electoral test in Kosovo since the declaration of independence from Serbia. Prime Minister Hashim Thaci's ruling coalition, led by the Democratic Party of Kosovo, claimed victory following a calm election in which turnout among the minority Serb population was higher than expected, given the call for a voting boycott from Serbia. The election was seen as a vital threshold in Kosovo's hopes for broad international recognition of its self-proclaimed sovereign status.

On March 31, 2010, Kosovo's Prime Minister Hashim Thaqi dismissed six ministers, in apparent response to rising criticism about corruption in the governing ranks. The cabinet members affected were Minister of Justice Nekibe Kelmendi, Minister of Internal Affairs Zenun Pajaziti, Minister of Public Administration Arsim Bajrami, Minister of Agriculture Idriz Vehapi, Minister of Health Alush Gashi, and Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports Valton Beqiri. At issue was a report that the European Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) was investigating some government ministers on charges of corruption. Indeed, EULEX called for the dismissal of the cabinet ministers in conjunction with the investigation. In another development, Prime Minister Thaqi announced the establishment of the Ministry of European Integrations. Explaining its purpose, the head of government said: "The ministry opens a new chapter of the country on the process of Kosovo's integration in the EU and NATO."

Special Entry (some portions replicated from above):

International Court of Justice's rules in favor of the world's newest independent nation state

Summary:

The former Serbian province of Kosovo, which unilaterally declared its independence in 2008, has since been seeking international recognition of its sovereign status. While such recognition has come from the likes of the United States, the United Kingdom and France, its independent status has been strongly resisted by Serbia -- the remaining successor state of the former Yugoslavia. In July 2010, however, Kosovo's thrust for sovereignty was strengthened within the international community by the International Court of Justice's ruling in favor of the world's newest independent nation state.

Background --

Officially, the Serbian province of Kosovo -- inhabited by a predominantly ethnic Albanian population -- had been governed by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) since 1999, under the authority of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244. That scenario had been intact until the 2008 declaration of independence.

Kosovo's Declaration of Independence --

At the start of that year [2008], Kosovo's head of government, Prime Minister Hashim Thaci, announced that a declaration of independence was forthcoming. The notion of Kosovo's independence had been somewhat supported by the western countries of the European Union (EU), while Russia had expressed the view that Kosovo should ideally be granted independence with the support of Serbia. But the very idea of independence for Kosovo was soundly rejected by Serbia, which did not want to see its territorial integrity disintegrate further after Montenegro's secession.

The controversial nature of Kosovo's independence led the EU to call on Kosovo's leaders to exercise patience in their independence drive. The EU wanted the leadership of Kosovo to wait until the presidential election in Serbia was finished (the second round would take place in February 2008), and until a civilian force could assume the mission in Kosovo from the United Nations.

Nevertheless, one month later on Feb. 17, 2008, with all 10 Serbian parliamentarians boycotting the historic session, Kosovo's parliament unanimously endorsed a declaration of independence from Serbia. The declaration, which was read by Prime Minister Hashim Thaci, asserted Kosovo to be a democratic country, and that the country would be founded in accordance with the United Nations plan. That plan would not allow Kosovo to join another country, would ensure an international monitoring presence, limit armed forces, and protect Serb minority rights. To that latter point, the prime minister noted there would be full respect and rights of all ethnic communities. In heralding the independence of Kosovo, Prime Minister Hashim Thaci also said, "We have waited for this day for a very long time... from today, we are proud, independent and

free."

Tens of thousands of jubilant Kosovars celebrated the declaration of independence in the streets of Kosovo's capital of Pristina. Fireworks and gunfire were heard across the city. Ethnic Albanians across the world were also reported to be celebrating the developments in Kosovo.

However, in Belgrade, Serbians took to the streets to protest Kosovo's independence move. Gangs were blamed for attacks on the United States embassy, the office of the European Union presidency (located inside the Slovenian embassy), other diplomatic interests (i.e. embassies of United Kingdom, Turkey, Croatia and Belgium) and symbolic multinational interests, such as a McDonald's restaurant. There were also reports of attacks on United Nations police. As well, in the mainly Serbian town on Mitrovica, located within Kosovo, there were reports of hand grenades being thrown into two buildings with international interests -- a United Nations court house and the European Union mission office.

That being said, Kosovo was reported to be free of violence a week after declaring independence. The state of calm was attributable to the deployment of local police, United Nations forces and NATO troops on the ground in Kosovo.

International Recognition --

The developments occurred after Serbian Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica delivered an emotional speech condemning Kosovo's secession and blamed the West for forcing Serbs to relinquish their identity. For his part, recently re-elected Serbian President Tadic also reacted negatively to the news. The Serbian government suggested it would try to block Kosovo from receiving international recognition, as well as membership in international institutions such as the United Nations.

Meanwhile, the United Nations Security Council was set to convene an emergency session on Kosovo. The meeting was called by Russia, which has been an ally of Serbia, in some measure as a result of the two countries' shared Slavic roots. It was not known if Russia intended to recognize an independent Kosovo. It had generally maintained the view that to do so would result in unwanted consequences in the Georgian breakaway provinces of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, not to mention Chechnya within its own domain. Meanwhile, Europe remained divided on the issue. European countries such as Cyprus, Romania and Slovakia had said that they would not recognize Kosovo, while Spain, which has contended with its own Basque separatist movement, also indicated reluctance. Nevertheless, recognition of Kosovo's independent status by the United States and a number of European countries, including the United Kingdom, Italy, France and Germany, commenced on Feb. 18, 2008.

As Kosovo gained international recognition of its independent status from world powers including the United States, the United Kingdom and France, Serbia contemplated how to deal with this fracture to its identity, legacy and territorial integrity.

In the period of late 2008 to early 2009, several developments occurred, which effectively reified Kosovo's status as a sovereign state, en route to being recognized by the broader international community. In October 2008, the United Nations General Assembly voted to refer Kosovo's declaration of independence to the International Court of Justice. In December 2008, security, judicial and customs functions transitioned from United Nations administration to that of the European Union. In January 2009, a multi-ethnic security force was established under the aegis of NATO control. The Kosovo Security Force replaced the previous security force that had been composed of veterans of independence campaign against Serbia.

Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia --

Kosovo was at the center of a regional imbroglio in early 2010. On Jan. 15, 2010, it was reported that Serbia had recalled its ambassador to Montenegro. At issue was Montenegro's decision to establish diplomatic ties with Kosovo. To that end, official diplomatic relations commenced with an exchange of letters between the foreign ministers of Montenegro and Kosovo. The move exacerbated strained relations between the two countries - both successor states of the former Yugoslavia. Indeed, when Montenegro recognized Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence in October 2008, Serbia expelled its ambassador and a new envoy did not return to Belgrade until 2009. Now, Serbia's wounds of territorial and cultural identity have been re-opened with the news of burgeoning diplomatic relations between the two countries - Montenegro and Kosovo - that Belgrade never wished to see leave the fold. For its part, Serbia was hoping that Montenegro would hold off on the establishment of diplomatic ties with Kosovo until the International Court of Justice at The Hague could rule on the unilateral declaration of sovereignty.

International Court approves Kosovo's independence --

On July 22, 2010, the International Court of Justice at The Hague ruled in favor of Kosovo's unilateral independence from Serbia in February 2008, affirming the legality of the declaration of sovereignty. The non-binding opinion noted that Kosovo's independence declaration in 2008 did not violate general international law. The decision was broadcast live on national television stations of Kosovo. The country's President Fatmir Sejdiu held a news conference in Kosovo's capital city of Pristina after the ruling and effusively asserted: "This is a blessed day for Kosovo and its citizens." Jubilation aside, local and international security forces were increased in the Serb-dominated areas of northern Kosovo as a security precaution.

The ruling was the result of a case brought before the International Court of Justice in the aftermath of Serbia launching a complaint with the United Nations on Kosovo's independence declaration. As indicated above, Serbia has steadfastly maintained the view that such a declaration should be treated as invalid and illegal, and has demanded that Kosovo return to the Serbian fold. In response to the ruling issued from The Hague, Serbian Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremic said that his country would "never, under any circumstances" recognize a self-proclaimed, independent

Kosovo. Jeremic also lamented the fact that the difficult days were ahead for his country. He also reiterated the belief that it was of vital importance to keep the entire territory of the "province" of Kosovo peaceful and stable. Jeremic's use of the word "province" to describe Kosovo was the latest manifestation of Serbia's intransigent refusal to acknowledge Kosovo's desire for self-determination.

Further developments related to international recognition --

For its part, amidst these developments, the United States reaffirmed its recognition of Kosovo's independent status. Ahead of the decision, Kosovo Prime Minister Hasim Thaci met with United States Vice President Joe Biden and members of the Obama administration to discuss the impending ruling. The White House issued a statement regarding that meeting, which read as follows: "The vice president reaffirmed the United States' full support for an independent, democratic, whole and multi-ethnic Kosovo whose future lies firmly within European and Euro-Atlantic institutions." The White House statement continued, "The vice president also reiterated the United States' firm support for Kosovo's sovereignty and territorial integrity."

Taking a very different approach, Russia was quick to reiterate its existing stance on Kosovo. The Russia Foreign Ministry issued a statement that read, "Our position of not recognizing Kosovo's independence remains invariable. We believe that the Kosovo problem can only be solved through continued talks between the involved parties based on the United Nations Security Council resolution." It went on to read, "We are ready to further actively facilitate this."

Nonetheless, the ruling by the United Nations' highest court would only bolster Kosovo's thrust for international recognition, despite objections from Serbia. With more than 65 countries already recognizing Kosovo's sovereignty as of mid-2010, more were likely to follow in the aftermath of the decision made at The Hague. Indeed, Pristina was now in position for membership within the United Nations.

The ruling could, potentially, have ramifications across the globe. Of significance was the statement by Court President Hisashi Owada, who noted that international law contains no "prohibition on declarations of independence." Clearly, any number of independence movements and breakaway republics would now seize upon that reference point to defend their independence aspirations.

Concluding note --

Meanwhile, United Nations Chief Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called on the central parties to avoid taking any provocative steps in the aftermath of the ruling from the International Court of Justice at The Hague. A statement from his office read as follows: "The Secretary-General urges all sides to avoid any steps that could be seen as provocative and derail the dialogue." The statement also noted that the secretary-general "strongly encourages the parties to engage in a constructive dialogue." Finally, the statement included a notification that Secretary-General Ban would forward

the advisory opinion to the General Assembly, which had requested the Court's advice, and which would play a key role in determining next steps in dealing with the matter of Kosovo's status.

Update:

A no-confidence vote in parliament brought down the government of Kosovo at the start of November 2010. Sixty-six members of parliament in the 120-seat parliament voted in favor of the motion. The confidence motion was brought by an opposition party after a junior partner withdrew from the governing coalition, leading to the collapse of Prime Minister Hashim Thaci's government. To that end, two months earlier in September 2010, President Fatmir Sejdiu resigned after a court ruled he could not function as party leader and the head of the Democratic League of Kosovo or LDK, which had governed in coalition with the PDK since independence. President Sejdu's resignation from government cost the PDK its parliamentary majority, effectively setting the stage for these events discussed here.

Citizens of Kosovo were expected to go to the polls on Dec. 12, 2010, to vote in snap elections for a new parliament, with a new government to be formed after the composition of the new parliament was determined. Prime Minister Hashim Thaci characterized the no-confidence vote and the collapse of his government as Kosovo's "first political and institutional crisis." He then clarified that statement by saying, "This vote is an exit strategy for Kosovo institutions from this crisis. Your vote is a new beginning for the state of Kosovo." It was expected that his party, the Democratic Party of Kosovo or PDK, would garner the most seats in the new parliament, potentially positioning him to return to the helm of government.

On election day -- Dec. 12, 2010 -- after the polls closed, exit poll data indicated that Prime Minister Hashim Thaci's PDK party was on track for victory in Kosovo's first general elections since independence. According to the Gani Bobi polling agency, Thaci's PDK would likely garner about 31 percent of the vote share with the LDK carrying about 25 percent. Speaking of the election outcome, the prime minister said, "Victory is ours!" However, Thaci would yet have to form a coalition government with smaller parties in order to control the majority of seats in parliament.

A day later, the exit polls proved reliable with the Central Election Committee confirming that the PDK garnered 33.6 percent of the vote, while the junior partner in the coalition government, the LDK won 23.6 percent. In third place was Self-determination (Vetvendosje) movement with 12.2 percent. Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK) -- the party of former guerrilla leader Ramush Haradinaj -- won 10.8 percent. It should be noted that Haradinaj has been in The Hague since mid-2009 to face the retrial on charges of war crimes.

It was hoped that the election would end the dissonance in government, which have stalled talks

with Serbia over Kosovo's self-declared sovereign status. Those talks, brokered by the United Nations, had been delayed until after the elections. In this way, the domestic political problems have translated into the realm of international relations, with Kosovo anxiously awaiting international recognition from many of the countries of the world. While the United States is among the more than 70 countries recognizing Kosovo's sovereign and independent status, further recognition would have to occur before Kosovo could join international bodies like the United Nations.

By February 23, 2011, the instability in Kosovo's governing sphere was on full display with the possible dissolution of the Kosovo Assembly and a government yet to adopt the 2011 budget. A vote in the 120-seat parliamentary body led to the decision to form a new government under Hashim Thaci of the Democratic Party of Kosovo. As well, Behgjet Pacolli, the leader of New Kosovo Alliance leader, was elected in an internal election to become the country's next president after three rounds of voting.

On March 30, 2011, the the Constitutional Court of Kosovo ruled that the election of Behgjet Pacolli as president, only one month prior, was unconstitutional. At issue was the finding that the Assembly's ratification of Behgjet Pacolli's power-sharing agreement with Prime Minister Hashim Thaci was invalid due to insufficient participation from among the legislative body. At the time of the ruling, the Office of the President released the following statement: "President Pacolli is ready to fully respect the verdict, and in respect to the institution of Constitutional Court, doesn't have any comment related to that decision." Pacolli did note that he was leaving office but not actually rendering his resignation since it was the country's Assembly that had violated the constitution and not him, as an individual. He said in an interview with the media, "Resignation isn't needed. I'm leaving the presidential office and the procedure will start from zero." Pacolli also said that he was not sure whether or not he would contest a forthcoming presidential election, even if his Kosovo New Alliance (AKR) party nominated him again for the office.

For its part, the AKR noted that their party leader was the only candidate for the presidency. Ultimately, though, it was not Pacolli but Atifete Jahjaga who was elected in parliament as the new president. Winning 80 affirmative votes and no negative votes in an indirect election held on April 7, 2011, 35-year old Jahjaga gained the distinction of becoming the first woman to head the newly-independent state. Absent from the vote was an opposition party holding sway over 14 seats that decided to walk out in protest. Jahjaga's strong vote performance was due to the fact that she was a compromise candidate, gaining support from Prime Minister Thaci, aforementioned Pacolli, and Isa Mustafa -- the head of the opposition Democratic League of Kosovo. The compromise deal was predicated on two provisions -- that Jahjaga remain in the post for only six months, and that at time time, electoral reforms be instituted facilitating a direct presidential election to be held in 2013.

Meanwhile, in other developments, a report by the Council of Europe report -- the work of a two

year investigation -- alleged that Kosovo's leaders participated in an unsavory organ trafficking scheme. The original allegations against the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) to this end were first published by the former prosecutor of the Hague International War Crimes Tribunal, Carla del Ponte, in 2008. This new draft report by the Council of Europe named Kosovo's Prime Minister Hashim Thaci -- a political leader of the KLA -- in its findings. Perhaps not surprisingly, the government of Kosovo, led by Prime Minister Thaci, angrily rejected the claims of organ-trafficking, saying the report's findings were "baseless and defamatory."

At issue were charges that during the war, the Drenica group within the KLA was involved in organized crime, drug-trafficking, and the trafficking of human organs. The KLA was also accused of running an "ad-hoc network of detention facilities" in Albania in which it arbitrarily determined the fates of the prisoners being held there. Perhaps most disturbing was the report's description of a facility known as the "Yellow House" where prisoners were processed according to their medical conditions, and then transported to a "state-of-the-art" reception center that was used for the removal of prisoners' kidneys. Known for its ties to the Albanian mafia, this enclave was described as difficult to penetrate and highly violent. The report also suggested that the United Nations largely ignored war crimes by the KLA, in contrast to the European Union's more even-handed approach in which the ills of both the Serbians and the KLA have been pursued. Indeed, the report even goes so far as to accuse the United Nations War Crimes Tribunal in the Hague of concealing evidence regarding the aforementioned "Yellow House." The chief prosecutor at The Hague, Frederick Swinnen, defended his institution's lack of action in regard to this issue saying that the evidence it unearthed was "limited and inconclusive." He also insisted that all the records of investigation had been maintained.

On July 27, 2011, violence flared on the Kosovo's northern border with Serbia when ethnic Serbs attacked a Kosovo border crossing at Jarinje. The violence appeared aimed at registering opposition to Kosovo's independence from Serbia, and was sparked when Kosovo police of ethnic Albanian ancestry tried to control the border, which was previously administered under the aegis of the European Union but was now under Pristina's (Kosovo's) jurisdiction. The initial attempt in this regard ended in bloodshed as ethnic Serbs, who dominate the Serbia-Kosovo border, fired gunshots at the police, killing one Kosovar officer. Subsequently, an apparent agreement for control was instituted at Jarinje; however, in the aftermath of the police withdrawal from the area, ethnic Serbs relaunched attacks there. When the Serbs set fire to their border crossing, Kosovar customs and police officers fled the area, taking refuge at outpost for NATO peacekeeping mission in Kosovo (KFOR). NATO peacekeepers thusly took up positions at that border crossing and others in the region, in an apparent attempt to avert further violence. But there were reports that armed ethnic Serbs fired at the NATO peacekeeping forces.

The European Union noted that the move by the powers in Pristina to enforce jurisdiction over the crossing at Jarinje could be regarded as provocative, and may have sparked the outbreak of violence. Indeed, the Jarinje border crossing had been previously administered by ethnic Serbs

who turned a blind eye on cross-border affairs, including smuggling. The introduction of ethnic Albanian Kosovars to the crossing may have spurred nationalist feelings among ethnic Serbs who opposed Kosovo's declaration of independence from Serbia. Nevertheless, Pristina insisted that it was well within its rights to assert control over the area. For his part, Serbian President, Boris Tadic demanded an end to the violence and did not mince words in characterizing the Serbian activists as "hooligans."

By the start of August 2011, NATO had deployed more troops to Kosovo, with an eye on managing tensions in the northern part of the country along the border with Serbia. For its part, Kosovo's government said that it would be willing to enter negotiations with all countries, including Serbia, regarding its national interests. In an interview with Radio Free Europe, Kosovar President Atifete Jahjaga said, "Kosovo is ready to talk to any country -- including Serbia -- about issues that are in the interests of our country and our citizens." On Aug. 10, 2011, an agreement had been reached that would allow NATO to take control over the border crossings. The deal appeared to quiet tensions and it was soon reported that Kosovo Serbs were dismantling road blockades that had been erected at the height of the imbroglio.

In October 2011, tensions were ignited once again as hundreds of ethnic Serbs in the northern part of Kosovo prevented NATO peacekeepers from removing several barricades, which have blocked off the area for the previous months. The ethnic Serbs argued that their actions were aimed at preventing the government of Kosovo (dominated by ethnic Albanians) from traversing Serb-dominated northern territory. At issue was the deployment of ethnic Albanian customs and police officials on the border. Indeed, as stated an ethnic Serb official Slavisa Ristic, in an interview with the Associated Press: "As long as KFOR [NATO] tries to deploy Kosovo authorities in the north of Kosovo by force, freedom of movement is impossible." Of course, on the other side of the equation, NATO has made it clear that it was empowered to have complete access to the area. Moreover, the commander of NATO peacekeepers in the region, Major General Erhard Drews, made it clear that if the ethnic Serbs tried to maintain their roadblocks, NATO would have no choice but to use force against them.

Meanwhile, in mid-August 2011, Ramush Haradinaj, a former Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) commander and the former prime minister, was facing a new trial of war crimes at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. Haradinaj was actually acquitted of war crimes including torture, murder, rape, and deportation, in 2008; however, that acquittal was subsequently overturned to provide for further testimony from witnesses to be considered. In 2011, he was again appearing before the Yugoslavia tribunal in a partial retrial for war crimes. See below for details related to the court ruling in November 2012.

In March 2012, Shemsi Nuhui -- a former member of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) Gnjilane Group -- was extradited from Switzerland to Serbia. The Swiss Federal Court made the decision to extradite Nuhui weeks earlier on March 7, 2012 -- about one year after his original

arrest on the basis of an Interpol warrant. Nuhiu was among a group of 17 individuals who was tried in absentia on war crimes charges due to his involvement with the Gnjilane group, a subgroup of the believed to be responsible for abuses against Serbian civilians in Kosovo in 1999. Now in Serbia custody, Nuhiu and the other 16 defendants would face a repeat trial before the War Crimes Chamber. Serbia's Interior Minister Ivica Dacic said Nuhiu's extradition was a warning to other war criminals, noting they would be brought to justice.

In November 2012, Ramush Haradinaj, the former Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) commander and the former prime minister discussed just above, was cleared of war crimes at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. The case in 2012 against him stemmed from accusations launched in a 2011 case that Haradinaj directed a campaign of torture and murder against Serbs and suspected collaborators.

At issue for Haradinaj were six counts of war crimes for conspiring in a deliberate military campaign to seize control of Kosovo and eject ethnic Serbs from the territory. As stated by prosecutor Paul Rogers on Aug. 18, 2011, during court proceedings, "Collaborators, spies, and those suspected of treachery or opposition to the KLA were targeted, the victims were beaten, tortured and in some cases murdered regardless of their ethnicity or religion."

Haradinaj was actually acquitted of war crimes including torture, murder, rape, and deportation in 2008; however, that acquittal was subsequently overturned to provide for the consideration of further testimony from witnesses. That decision led to the renewal of the case in which he faced partial retrial for war crimes.

Now, a year later in 2012, he was once again acquitted of alleged crimes as the prosecution failed to prove its case. Judge Bakone Moloto said the evidence did, indeed, suggest that Serbs and their suspected supporters were abused at a KLA compound in Kosovo, and at least one of them had died as a result. That being said, Moloto argued there was no evidence Haradinaj was involved in the attacks or in a conspiracy to abuse people.

Serbian officials reacted with furor and condemned the United Nations tribunal. Meanwhile, Serbian President Tomislav Nikolic said the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia was convened for the sole purpose of prosecuting the Serbian people. Nikolic was referencing the generally held belief among Serbs that while the international community has sought to bring Serbs to justice for alleged war crimes committed during the Balkan wars of the 1990s, there has been limited accountability for crimes committed against Serbs during that period. The Serbian head of state warned that this verdict for Haradinaj would only increase the breach between Serbia and the rest of Europe. It should be noted that irrespective of this acquittal at The Hague, Haradinaj remained classified as a war criminal in Serbia.

As the year 2013 began, attention was on the presidential election. The background of the political

conditions leading up to this election was as follows --

In February 2011, Behgjet Pacolli, the leader of New Kosovo Alliance leader, was elected in an internal election to become the country's next president after three rounds of voting.

On March 30, 2011, the Constitutional Court of Kosovo ruled that the election of Behgjet Pacolli as president, only one month prior, was unconstitutional. At issue was the finding that the Assembly's ratification of Behgjet Pacolli's power-sharing agreement with Prime Minister Hashim Thaci was invalid due to insufficient participation from among the legislative body. At the time of the ruling, the Office of the President released the following statement: "President Pacolli is ready to fully respect the verdict, and in respect to the institution of Constitutional Court, doesn't have any comment related to that decision." Pacolli did note that he was leaving office but not actually rendering his resignation since it was the country's Assembly that had violated the constitution and not him, as an individual. He said in an interview with the media, "Resignation isn't needed. I'm leaving the presidential office and the procedure will start from zero." Pacolli also said that he was not sure whether or not he would contest a forthcoming presidential election, even if his Kosovo New Alliance (AKR) party nominated him again for the office.

For its part, the AKR noted that their party leader was the only candidate for the presidency. Ultimately, though, it was not Pacolli but Atifete Jahjaga who was elected in parliament as the new president. Winning 80 affirmative votes and no negative votes in an indirect election held on April 7, 2011, 35-year old Jahjaga gained the distinction of becoming the first woman to head the newly-independent state. Absent from the vote was an opposition party holding sway over 14 seats that decided to walk out in protest. Jahjaga's strong vote performance was due to the fact that she was a compromise candidate, gaining support from Prime Minister Thaci, aforementioned Pacolli, and Isa Mustafa -- the head of the opposition Democratic League of Kosovo. The compromise deal was predicated on two provisions -- that Jahjaga remain in the post for only six months, and that at that time, electoral reforms be instituted facilitating a direct presidential election to be held by 2013. (It should be noted that 2013 ended without that direct presidential election actually being held; all eyes were on 2014 as a likely timeline.)

On Dec. 11, 2012, the European Union said that Serbia was on track to commence membership negotiations as early as 2013. Officials from the European Union said that the membership talks could start sometime in 2013, presuming that Serbia would continue to meet conditions mandated for joining the European bloc. Among the conditions required by the European Union was the demand that Serbia withdraw its troops from northern Kosovo where a majority of the population there was ethnically Serb, although the country itself had declared its independence from Serbia.

On April 19, 2013, negotiators reached an agreement intended to normalize relations between Serbia and Kosovo and also pave the way towards European Union accession for both countries.

Since Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence from Serbia in 2008, and the ensuing recognition from the international community as a sovereign state, relations between Kosovo and Serbia have been dismal. Ethnic Serbs living in northern Kosovo have been intransigent in their refusal to recognize the authority of the ethnic Albanian government in Pristina. Meanwhile, ethnic Serbs created their own parallel institutions in Kosovo. Conflicts over a border crossing in 2011, as well as ongoing dissonance over war crimes tribunals involving defendants from both countries, only served to intensify the acrimony between Serbia and Kosovo.

But as noted here, in April 2013, a shift in the diplomatic winds was in the works. European Union Foreign Minister Catherine Ashton, who mediated negotiations between the two countries, announced that an agreement to normalize bilateral relations was reached. Ashton noted that the prime ministers of both countries -- Serbian Prime Minister Ivica Dacic and Kosovo Prime Minister Hashim Thaci -- had signed onto the deal. Central to the agreement were 15 elements, which were aimed at greater autonomy for ethnic Serbs in Kosovo. These elements included the granting of "powers" to Serb communities in Kosovo, such as the formation of their own police force and appeals court, although Kosovo laws would yet apply to the northern part of the country.

The proverbial "fly in the ointment" was the fact that ethnic Serbs in Kosovo rejected the deal, thus ensuring that its implementation would be difficult, and that the easing of tensions remained an exercise in theory. Still, the government of Serbia made it clear that it was serious about the implementation of the plan intended to normalize relations with Kosovo. Meanwhile, Kosovo's Prime Minister Hashim Thaci called the agreement "a plan of peace, understanding, tolerance and joint life in the future."

Mid-February 2014 in Kosovo was marked by student protests over allegations of fraud at the state university. The scene in the capital of Pristina turned violent and about 30 police officers were injured when student protesters started throwing rocks and red paint at the police who responded with tear gas. At least one policeman was said to be suffering from a serious head injury as a result of the fracas and more than two dozen students were arrested. At issue were revelations in the Kosovo media that professors at the university published works in fabricated online journals in order to get bolster their academic credentials.

The university responded to the brewing scandal by asking for time to deal with the situation, while the parliament refused to pass legislation calling for the resignation of the head of the university. The lack of response appeared to have outraged the student body in a country plagued by widespread unemployment of between 35 and 45 percent. With job prospects for anyone in Kosovo -- particularly those pursuing higher education -- being so grim, the university scandal appeared to be a proxy issue for young people to express their outrage over the dismal socio-economic landscape in Kosovo.

Parliamentary elections of 2014

Parliamentary elections were set to take place in Kosovo on June 8, 2014. At stake was control over the unicameral National Assembly, composed of 120 seats (100 seats directly elected, 10 seats guaranteed for ethnic Serbs, 10 seats guaranteed for other ethnic minorities) where members serve four-year terms.

The last elections were held in 2010. They were precipitated by a no-confidence vote in parliament that brought down the government of Kosovo at the start of November 2010. Sixty-six members of parliament voted in favor of the motion. The confidence motion was brought by an opposition party after a junior partner withdrew from the governing coalition, leading to the collapse of Prime Minister Hashim Thaci's government. Citizens of Kosovo thus went to the polls in December 2010 to vote in snap elections for a new parliament, with a new government to be formed after the composition of the new parliament was determined.

On election day -- Dec. 12, 2010 -- after the polls closed, Prime Minister Hashim Thaci's Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) was on track for victory in Kosovo's first general elections since independence. Thaci still had to form a coalition government with smaller parties in order to control the majority of seats in parliament.

By Feb. 23, 2011, the instability in Kosovo's governing sphere was on full display with the possible dissolution of the Kosovo Assembly and a government yet to adopt the 2011 budget. A vote in the 120-seat parliamentary body led to the decision to form a new government -- again under Hashim Thaci of the PDK. As well, Behgjet Pacolli, the leader of New Kosovo Alliance leader, was elected in an internal election to become the country's next president after three rounds of voting.

Now in June 2014, the people of Kosovo were again returning to the polls to elect a new government. With its cachet as one of the world's newest countries now fading, and an electorate disillusioned by widespread poverty, high unemployment, and rampant corruption, it was not surprising that the 2014 polls were marked by low voter turnout. That being said, at the end of the voting exercise, Thaci's PDK again claimed victory with 30 percent of the vote share and 37 seats while its main rival, the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), was close behind with 26 percent and 30 seats. Meanwhile, Vetevendosje (Self-Determination) party took 16 seats, the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo had 11 seats, a fifth party secured six seats, while ethnic minorities would control 20 seats.

For his part, Thaci enjoyed his time in the victory spotlight, declaring, "Tonight, Kosovo has won. From tomorrow we will start work on our new mission... We will tell the world that Kosovo's independence was just the beginning, not the end."

As before, Thaci would have to form a coalition government with smaller parties and ethnic Serbs. However, an opposition party, Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK), struck a deal with the country's main opposition party, the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), as well as a splinter group of PDK defectors, to form a coalition. Their intent was to deny Thaci the right to again return to the helm as head of government. It was to be determined if the new coalition, led by AAK leader, Ramush Haradinaj, would actually have the right to form a government. Indeed, constitutional provisions indicated that even if Thaci had trouble forming a ruling coalition, as the leader of the party that won the most seats, he would have the mandate to attempt to form a government.

In mid-July 2014, parliament in Kosovo convened for the first time since inconclusive June 2014 elections, taking a step towards the formation of a new government. The opposition parties were united in their desire to ensure that new government would not be headed by Thaci or his party. That being said, coalition negotiations were not producing any meaningful results and the political impasse prevailed in the third week of July 2014.

Meanwhile, in the aftermath of the election, Kosovo was struck by shocking violence when a parliamentary candidate from the party of Prime Minister Hashim Thaci was assassinated. Elvis Pista was shot repeatedly as he departed a restaurant in the town of Rahovec. It was not known if the assassination of Pista, who was on track to win a parliamentary seat, was politically-motivated.

New government for Kosovo months after parliamentary elections

At the start of December 2014, members of parliament in Kosovo approved a new government, led by Isa Mustafa of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), but also including outgoing Prime Minister Hashim Thaci of the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK). The development came several months after parliamentary elections were held in that country. The ratification of Mustafa's coalition government effectively ended an extended period of political stalemate in one of the world's newest countries.

Going back to June 2014, parliamentary elections took place in Kosovo, as discussed just above. Now, finally in December 2014, an agreement had been reached between Kosovo's two biggest parties -- Mustafa's LDK and Thaci's PDK -- with a grand coalition government in the offing. The agreement called for Mustafa to be the new prime minister with Thaci becoming the new foreign minister. As noted above, members of parliament in Kosovo approved a new government composed of the LDK and the PDK, but with Mustafa at the helm. Mustafa would be the first prime minister to lead Kosovo who did not have ties to the country's insurgency in which separatists sought independence from Serbia. The ratification of Mustafa's coalition government effectively ended an extended period of political stalemate in one of the world's newest countries.

The next government in Kosovo would be faced with adhering to the findings of an lengthy European task-force investigation into allegations that Kosovo's guerrilla army, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), harvested organs from Serb prisoners of war and sold them on the black market during the war of the late 1990s with Serbia, then under the leadership of the autocratic Slobadan Milosovic. That investigation could well implicate Thaci -- a rebel leader during the conflict -- and his colleagues. The leader of an opposition cabal party, Ramush Haradinaj, was himself associated with war crimes. He was forced to step down as prime minister in the mid-2000s when he stood for trial at The Hague, although he was acquitted repeatedly by United Nations tribunal for the former Yugoslavia on war crimes.

Unrest rocks Kosovo capital of Pristina following elections

Late January 2015 was marked by unprecedented unrest in Kosovo's capital of Pristina. Riot police were embroiled in violent clashes with protesters who were throwing petrol bombs and rocks, and setting garbage bins ablaze. The protests, which were organized by the political opposition, appeared to have attracted about 2,000 people and resulted in injuries to scores of people, including police officers. The riot police responded with water cannons and tear gas and arrested as many as 120 people before using rubber bullets to disperse the crowd.

The entire episode was sparked by a dispute over the Trepca zinc and silver mines, which have been held in trust by a United Nations-created privatization body since the war in the late 1990s, but which have been claimed by Serbia. Prime Minister Isa Mustafa of Kosovo pledged to take control of the mines but soon reversed his position when Western powers expressed displeasure over the move. Nationalists at home, however, were outraged at what they perceived as the prime minister backing down.

The turmoil was exacerbated by controversial comments made by an ethnic Serb cabinet minister. At issue was an incident earlier in the month when ethnic Albanians, whose relatives were victims in the late 1990s war, protested a pilgrimage of ethnic Serbs celebrating Orthodox Christmas. The minister at the heart of the controversy referred to the ethnic Albanian protesters as "savages."

In a country largely populated by ethnic Albanians and that was once controlled by Serbia, such developments served only to enrage the predominantly ethnic Albanian people of Kosovo.

Kosovo Prime Minister Isa Mustafa, in power for less than two months, said the chaos had been orchestrated by his political opponents, and were aimed at trying to seize power by force. He said, "All these political parties have accepted the election results. They must respect the vote of the citizens and not attempt to take power through violence."

Chaos in parliament of Kosovo as nationalists rail against rapprochement with Serbia

The autumn of 2015 was marked by dissension on Kosovo -- one of the world's newest countries. At issue was a European Union-brokered agreement aimed at improving bilateral ties between Serbia and its former province of Kosovo. To this end, a plan was afoot to create an association of municipalities in areas of Kosovo inhabited by the minority Serb population, which would effectively give Serbs in those areas more power.

Since 2008 when Kosovo, with its predominantly ethnic Albanian population declared its independence from Serbia, with its mainly Slavic ethnic population, the two countries have had an acrimonious relationship. Serbia, as the remaining successor state of the former Yugoslavia, has been reluctant to accept the sovereignty of Kosovo, viewing the loss of the territory as illegal irrespective of the fact that it was deemed legitimate by the International Court of Justice at The Hague in 2010. Meanwhile, Kosovo has been adamant about removing itself from the orbit of Serbia. As such, the European Union-brokered deal, which was intended to steer the two countries on the path of more positive ties, has been opposed by nationalists on both sides of the border.

The situation in Kosovo reached a new nadir in October 2015 when Alin Kurti, the leader of the opposition Vetevendosje (Self-Determination) party, set off a smoke bomb in parliament. Kurti, who was a student protest leader during the campaign to liberate Kosovo from Serbian rule in the 1990s, has been eager to prevent any kind of significant rapprochement with Serbia. Moreover, he has cast the municipal association plan for minority Serbs to be a surrender of sorts to Serbia. The political bloc led by Kurti released a statement vowing to oppose the plan that read as follows: "No one has the mandate nor the right to bring Serbia back into Kosovo. We will not let this happen."

By the start of November 2015, the European Union commissioner overseeing enlargement of the regional bloc urged opposition lawmakers to cease disrupting the work of the parliament using smoke bombs and tear gas. Commissioner Johannes Hahn addressed the parliament of Kosovo and warned that such action could prevent the country from forging positive links with the European Union. But nationalists in parliament were undeterred and instead used Hahn's address to showcase banners emblazoned with the following messages: "Unjust agreements shall not pass" and "Is ethnic segregation an EU value?".

The controversy moved to the judicial arena in the second week of November 2015 when Kosovo's Constitutional Court ruled to temporarily suspend the municipal association plan for Serb-dominated areas. The court said that the move would stand until the start of 2016 when it would issue a final verdict. There were hopes in Kosovo that the legal ruling might tamp down heightened tensions that had been sparked, and which had led to protests and smoke bombs in parliament. However, across the border in Serbia, Foreign Minister Ivica Dacic criticized the

ruling, warning that it was a violation of the European Union brokered accord and would thus threaten regional stability.

The enduring antipathy between Kosovo and Serbia was highlighted in November 2015 when Serbia claimed "victory" over Kosovo when that country failed to win membership in the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The vote, which took place in France, ended with 92 nation states voting in favor of Kosovo's accession to UNESCO and 50 countries voting against the move. With a two-thirds majority needed, excluding abstentions, Kosovo was denied membership by a narrow margin of three votes. Foreign Minister Hashim Thaci promised a better result in the future, saying via the social media outlet Facebook, "Kosovo's road is unstoppable and we will apply and join other organizations, including UNESCO once again." But in Serbia, there was a sense of triumph that the breakaway nation state was not easily gaining the international recognition it sought. As stated by Serbian President Tomislav Nikolic, "This is a just and moral victory in almost impossible conditions."

In mid-November 2015, Donika Kadaj-Bujupi -- an opposition politician -- was arrested and arrest warrants were issued for three other members of parliament due to their respective roles in continuing disruptions during parliamentary sessions. By the end of November 2015, Albin Kurti -- the leader of the Vetevendosje (Self-Determination) party -- along with several other party members were arrested and taken into police custody on charges of releasing tear gas and setting off smoke bombs in parliament. These arrests were respectively being made due to the opposition politicians' radical actions in parliament aimed at disrupting procedures and registering strong objections to the controversial municipal association agreement along with broader plans aimed at settling ties between Kosovo and Serbia.

The new year saw no lessening of tensions with opposition protesters against setting off smoke bombs in parliament to protest with Serbia, and to further call for an end to a border deal with Montenegro. It was apparent that nationalist sentiment was on the rise. Indeed, by the last week of February 2016, hundreds of protesters erected a "tent city" of sorts in the main square of the capital city of Pristina, presumably in anticipation of a process on ongoing mass demonstrations. Vetevendosje, Visar Ymeri, the leader of the country's largest opposition party, said, "We will stay here until the government goes home." He added, "Kosovo cannot be governed by politicians who have endangered the country's sovereignty." Meanwhile, the government of Kosovo said that the opposition and its supporters was intent on dragging the country into "crime and anarchy."

Presidential election of 2016

In February 2016, a presidential election was held in Kosovo amidst the mass political unrest. In Kosovo, the president is indirectly elected for a five-year term by the Kosovo Assembly. In 2016, that exercise was complicated by ongoing protests in and outside the parliament, which included

the hurling of smoke bombs within the legislative building, as protesters railed against a European Union-brokered agreement aimed at improving bilateral ties between Kosovo and Serbia -- the country within which Kosovo once existed as a province. The very idea of ameliorated ties with Serbia, including increased rights for ethnic Serbs, was viewed by nationalists as a betrayal of Kosovo's sovereignty. In the period ahead of the presidential vote, protests grew more violent, with petrol bombs and smoke bombs being deployed, and with police having to use tear gas and water cannons to disperse the angry crowds. Ultimately, though, Hashim Thaci -- a politician from the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) who championed the aforementioned European Union-brokered agreement secured the presidency with 71 votes in the 120-seat parliament.

-- March 2016

Written by Dr. Denise Youngblood Coleman, Editor in Chief, www.countrywatch.com; see Bibliography for research sources.

Political Risk Index

Political Risk Index

The **Political Risk Index** is a proprietary index measuring the level of risk posed to governments, corporations, and investors, based on a myriad of political and economic factors. The [Political Risk Index](#) is calculated using an established methodology by CountryWatch's Editor-in-Chief and is based on varied criteria* including the following consideration: political stability, political representation, democratic accountability, freedom of expression, security and crime, risk of conflict, human development, jurisprudence and regulatory transparency, economic risk, foreign investment considerations, possibility of sovereign default, and corruption. Scores are assigned from 0-10 using the aforementioned criteria. A score of 0 marks the highest political risk, while a score of 10 marks the lowest political risk. Stated differently, countries with the lowest scores pose the greatest political risk. A score of 0 marks the most dire level of political risk and an ultimate nadir, while a score of 10 marks the lowest possible level of political risk, according to this

proprietary index. Rarely will there be scores of 0 or 10 due to the reality that countries contain complex landscapes; as such, the index offers a range of possibilities ranging from lesser to greater risk.

Country	Assessment
Afghanistan	2
Albania	4
Algeria	6
Andorra	9
Angola	4
Antigua	8
Argentina	4
Armenia	4-5
Australia	9.5
Austria	9.5
Azerbaijan	4
Bahamas	8.5
Bahrain	6

Bangladesh	3.5
Barbados	8.5-9
Belarus	3
Belgium	9
Belize	8
Benin	5
Bhutan	5
Bolivia	5
Bosnia-Herzegovina	4
Botswana	7
Brazil	7
Brunei	7
Bulgaria	6
Burkina Faso	4
Burma (Myanmar)	4.5
Burundi	3
Cambodia	4
Cameroon	5

Canada	9.5
Cape Verde	6
Central African Republic	3
Chad	4
Chile	9
China	7
China: Hong Kong	8
China: Taiwan	8
Colombia	7
Comoros	5
Congo DRC	3
Congo RC	4
Costa Rica	8
Cote d'Ivoire	4.5
Croatia	7
Cuba	4-4.5
Cyprus	5
Czech Republic	8

Denmark	9.5
Djibouti	4.5
Dominica	7
Dominican Republic	6
East Timor	5
Ecuador	6
Egypt	5
El Salvador	7
Equatorial Guinea	4
Eritrea	3
Estonia	8
Ethiopia	4
Fiji	5
Finland	9
Fr.YugoslavRep.Macedonia	5
France	9
Gabon	5
Gambia	4

Georgia	5
Germany	9.5
Ghana	6
Greece	4.5-5
Grenada	8
Guatemala	6
Guinea	3.5
Guinea-Bissau	3.5
Guyana	4.5
Haiti	3.5
Holy See (Vatican)	9
Honduras	4.5-5
Hungary	7
Iceland	8.5-9
India	7.5-8
Indonesia	6
Iran	3.5-4
Iraq	2.5-3

Ireland	8-8.5
Israel	8
Italy	7.5
Jamaica	6.5-7
Japan	9
Jordan	6.5
Kazakhstan	6
Kenya	5
Kiribati	7
Korea, North	1
Korea, South	8
Kosovo	4
Kuwait	7
Kyrgyzstan	4.5
Laos	4.5
Latvia	7
Lebanon	5.5
Lesotho	6

Liberia	3.5
Libya	2
Liechtenstein	9
Lithuania	7.5
Luxembourg	9
Madagascar	4
Malawi	4
Malaysia	8
Maldives	4.5
Mali	4
Malta	8
Marshall Islands	6
Mauritania	4.5-5
Mauritius	7
Mexico	6.5
Micronesia	7
Moldova	5
Monaco	9

Mongolia	5
Montenegro	6
Morocco	6.5
Mozambique	4.5-5
Namibia	6.5-7
Nauru	6
Nepal	4
Netherlands	9.5
New Zealand	9.5
Nicaragua	5
Niger	4
Nigeria	4.5
Norway	9.5
Oman	7
Pakistan	3.5
Palau	7
Panama	7.5
Papua New Guinea	5

Paraguay	6.5-7
Peru	7
Philippines	6
Poland	8
Portugal	7.5
Qatar	7.5
Romania	5.5
Russia	5.5
Rwanda	5
Saint Kitts and Nevis	8
Saint Lucia	8
Saint Vincent and Grenadines	8
Samoa	7
San Marino	9
Sao Tome and Principe	5.5
Saudi Arabia	6
Senegal	6
Serbia	5

Seychelles	7
Sierra Leone	4.5
Singapore	9
Slovak Republic (Slovakia)	8
Slovenia	8
Solomon Islands	6
Somalia	2
South Africa	7
Spain	7.5
Sri Lanka	5
Sudan	3.5
Suriname	5
Swaziland	5
Sweden	9.5
Switzerland	9.5
Syria	2
Tajikistan	4.5
Tanzania	6

Thailand	6.5
Togo	4.5
Tonga	7
Trinidad and Tobago	8
Tunisia	6
Turkey	7
Turkmenistan	4.5
Tuvalu	7
Uganda	6
Ukraine	3.5-4
United Arab Emirates	7
United Kingdom	9
United States	9.5
Uruguay	8
Uzbekistan	4
Vanuatu	7
Venezuela	4
Vietnam	5

Yemen	3
Zambia	4.5
Zimbabwe	3

*Methodology

The [Political Risk Index](#) is calculated by CountryWatch's Editor-in-Chief and is based on the combined scoring of varied criteria as follows --

1. political stability (record of peaceful transitions of power, ability of government to stay in office and carry out policies as a result of productive executive-legislative relationship, perhaps with popular support vis a vis risk of government collapse)
2. political representation (right of suffrage, free and fair elections, multi-party participation, and influence of foreign powers)
3. democratic accountability (record of respect for political rights, human rights, and civil liberties, backed by constitutional protections)
4. freedom of expression (media freedom and freedom of expression, right to dissent or express political opposition, backed by constitutional protections)
5. security and crime (the degree to which a country has security mechanisms that ensures safety of citizens and ensures law and order, without resorting to extra-judicial measures)
6. risk of conflict (the presence of conflict; record of coups or civil disturbances; threat of war; threats posed by internal or external tensions; threat or record of terrorism or insurgencies)
7. human development (quality of life; access to education; socio-economic conditions; systemic concern for the status of women and children)
8. jurisprudence and regulatory transparency (the impartiality of the legal system, the degree of transparency within the regulatory system of a country and the durability of that structure)
9. economic conditions (economic stability, investment climate, degree of nationalization of industries, property rights, labor force development)
10. corruption (the degree of corruption in a country and/or efforts by the government to address

graft and other irregularities)

Editor's Note:

As of 2015, the current climate of upheaval internationally -- both politically and economically -- has affected the ratings for several countries across the world.

North Korea, [Afghanistan](#), [Somalia](#), and [Zimbabwe](#) -- retain their low rankings.

Several Middle Eastern and North African countries, such as [Tunisia](#), [Egypt](#), [Libya](#), [Syria](#), [Iraq](#) and [Yemen](#) were downgraded in recent years due to political instability occurring in the "season of unrest" sweeping the region since 2011 and continuing today. The worst downgrades affected [Syria](#) where civil war is at play, along with the rampage of terror being carried out by Islamist terrorists who have also seized control over part of Syrian territory. [Iraq](#) has been further downgraded due to the rampage of Islamist terrorists and their takeover of wide swaths of Iraqi territory. [Libya](#) has also been downgraded further due to its slippage into failed state status; at issue in [Libya](#) have been an ongoing power struggle between rival militias. [Yemen](#) continues to hold steady with a poor ranking due to continued unrest at the hands of Houthi rebels, secessionists, al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, and Islamic State. Its landscape has been further complicated by the fact that it is now the site of a proxy war between [Iran](#) and [Saudi Arabia](#). Conversely, [Tunisia](#) and [Egypt](#) have seen slight upgrades as these countries stabilize.

In Africa, [Zimbabwe](#) continues to be one of the bleak spots of the world with the Mugabe regime effectively destroying the country's once vibrant economy, and miring [Zimbabwe](#) with an exceedingly high rate of inflation, debilitating unemployment, devolving public services, and critical food shortages; rampant crime and political oppression round out the landscape. [Somalia](#) also sports a poor ranking due to the continuing influence of the terror group, al-Shabab, which was not operating across the border in [Kenya](#). On the upside, [Nigeria](#), which was ineffectively dealing with the threat posed by the terror group, Boko Haram, was making some strides on the national security front with its new president at the helm. [Mali](#) was slightly upgraded due to its efforts to return to constitutional order following the 2012 coup and to neutralize the threat of separatists and Islamists. But the [Central African Republic](#) was downgraded due to the takeover of the government by Muslim Seleka rebels and a continued state of lawlessness in that country. South [Sudan](#) -- the world's newest nation state -- has not been officially included in this assessment; however, it can be unofficially assessed to be in the vicinity of "3" due to its manifold political and economic challenges. [Burkina Faso](#), [Burundi](#) and [Guinea](#) have been downgraded due to political unrest, with [Guinea](#) also having to deal with the burgeoning Ebola crisis.

In Europe, [Ukraine](#) was downgraded due to the unrest facing that country following its Maidan revolution that triggered a pro-Russian uprising in the eastern part of the country. [Russia](#) was also implicated in the Ukrainian crisis due to its intervention on behalf of pro-Russian separatists, as well as its annexation of the Ukrainian territory of Crimea. Strains on the infrastructure of southern and eastern European countries, such as [Serbia](#), [Croatia](#), and [Hungary](#), due to an influx of refugees was expected to pose social and economic challenges, and slight downgrades were made accordingly. So too, a corruption crisis for the Romanian prime minister has affected the ranking of that country. Meanwhile, the rankings for [Spain](#), [Portugal](#), [Ireland](#), and [Italy](#) were maintained due to debt woes and the concomitant effect on the euro zone. [Greece](#), another euro zone nation, was earlier downgraded due to its sovereign debt crisis; however, no further downgrade was added since the country was able to successfully forge a bailout rescue deal with creditor institutions. Cyprus' exposure to Greek banks yielded a downgrade in its case.

In Asia, [Nepal](#) was downgraded in response to continuous political instability and a constitutional crisis that prevails well after landmark elections were held. Both [India](#) and [China](#) retain their rankings; [India](#) holds a slightly higher ranking than [China](#) due to its record of democratic representation and accountability. Increasing violence and political instability in [Pakistan](#) resulted in a downgrade for this country's already low rating. Meanwhile, [Singapore](#) retained its strong rankings due to its continued effective stewardship of the economy and political stability.

In the Americas, ongoing political and economic woes, as well as crime and corruption have affected the rankings for [Mexico](#), [Guatemala](#), and [Brazil](#). [Argentina](#) was downgraded due to its default on debt following the failure of talks with bond holders. [Venezuela](#) was downgraded due to its mix of market unfriendly policies and political oppression. For the moment, the [United States](#) maintains a strong ranking along with [Canada](#), and most of the English-speaking countries of the Caribbean; however, a renewed debt ceiling crisis could cause the [United States](#) to be downgraded in a future edition. Finally, a small but significant upgrade was attributed to [Cuba](#) due to its recent pro-business reforms and its normalization of ties with the United States.

Source:

Dr. Denise Youngblood Coleman, Editor in Chief, CountryWatch Inc. www.countrywatch.com

Updated:

2015

Political Stability

Political Stability

The **Political Stability Index** is a proprietary index measuring a country's level of stability, standard of good governance, record of constitutional order, respect for human rights, and overall strength of democracy. The [Political Stability](#) Index is calculated using an established methodology* by CountryWatch's Editor-in-Chief and is based on a given country's record of peaceful transitions of power, ability of a government to stay in office and carry out its policies vis a vis risk credible risks of government collapse. Threats include coups, domestic violence and instability, terrorism, etc. This index measures the dynamic between the quality of a country's government and the threats that can compromise and undermine stability. Scores are assigned from 0-10 using the aforementioned criteria. A score of 0 marks the lowest level of political stability and an ultimate nadir, while a score of 10 marks the highest level of political stability possible, according to this proprietary index. Rarely will there be scores of 0 or 10 due to the reality that countries contain complex landscapes; as such, the index offers a range of possibilities ranging from lesser to greater stability.

Country	Assessment
Afghanistan	2
Albania	4.5-5
Algeria	5
Andorra	9.5
Angola	4.5-5
Antigua	8.5-9
Argentina	7

Armenia	5.5
Australia	9.5
Austria	9.5
Azerbaijan	5
Bahamas	9
Bahrain	6
Bangladesh	4.5
Barbados	9
Belarus	4
Belgium	9
Belize	8
Benin	5
Bhutan	5
Bolivia	6
Bosnia-Herzegovina	5
Botswana	8.5
Brazil	7
Brunei	8

Bulgaria	7.5
Burkina Faso	4
Burma (Myanmar)	4.5
Burundi	4
Cambodia	4.5-5
Cameroon	6
Canada	9.5
Cape Verde	6
Central African Republic	3
Chad	4.5
Chile	9
China	7
China: Hong Kong	8
China: Taiwan	8
Colombia	7.5
Comoros	5
Congo DRC	3
Congo RC	5

Costa Rica	9.5
Cote d'Ivoire	3.5
Croatia	7.5
Cuba	4.5
Cyprus	8
Czech Republic	8.5
Denmark	9.5
Djibouti	5
Dominica	8.5
Dominican Republic	7
East Timor	5
Ecuador	7
Egypt	4.5-5
El Salvador	7.5-8
Equatorial Guinea	4.5
Eritrea	4
Estonia	9
Ethiopia	4.5

Fiji	5
Finland	9
Fr.YugoslavRep.Macedonia	6.5
France	9
Gabon	5
Gambia	4.5
Georgia	5
Germany	9.5
Ghana	7
Greece	6
Grenada	8.5
Guatemala	7
Guinea	3.5-4
Guinea-Bissau	4
Guyana	6
Haiti	3.5-4
Holy See (Vatican)	9.5
Honduras	6

Hungary	7.5
Iceland	9
India	8
Indonesia	7
Iran	3.5
Iraq	2.5
Ireland	9.5
Israel	8
Italy	8.5-9
Jamaica	8
Japan	9
Jordan	6
Kazakhstan	6
Kenya	5
Kiribati	8
Korea, North	2
Korea, South	8.5
Kosovo	5.5

Kuwait	7
Kyrgyzstan	5
Laos	5
Latvia	8.5
Lebanon	5.5
Lesotho	5
Liberia	3.5-4
Libya	2
Liechtenstein	9
Lithuania	9
Luxembourg	9.5
Madagascar	4
Malawi	5
Malaysia	8
Maldives	4.5-5
Mali	4.5-5
Malta	9
Marshall Islands	8

Mauritania	6
Mauritius	8
Mexico	6.5-7
Micronesia	8
Moldova	5.5
Monaco	9.5
Mongolia	6.5-7
Montenegro	8
Morocco	7
Mozambique	5
Namibia	8.5
Nauru	8
Nepal	4.5
Netherlands	9.5
New Zealand	9.5
Nicaragua	6
Niger	4.5
Nigeria	4.5

Norway	9.5
Oman	7
Pakistan	3
Palau	8
Panama	8.5
Papua New Guinea	6
Paraguay	8
Peru	7.5
Philippines	6
Poland	9
Portugal	9
Qatar	7
Romania	7
Russia	6
Rwanda	5
Saint Kitts and Nevis	9
Saint Lucia	9
Saint Vincent and Grenadines	9

Samoa	8
San Marino	9.5
Sao Tome and Principe	7
Saudi Arabia	6
Senegal	7.5
Serbia	6.5
Seychelles	8
Sierra Leone	4.5
Singapore	9.5
Slovak Republic (Slovakia)	8.5
Slovenia	9
Solomon Islands	6.5-7
Somalia	2
South Africa	7.5
Spain	9
Sri Lanka	5
Sudan	3
Suriname	5

Swaziland	5
Sweden	9.5
Switzerland	9.5
Syria	2
Tajikistan	4.5
Tanzania	6
Thailand	6
Togo	5
Tonga	7
Trinidad and Tobago	8
Tunisia	5
Turkey	7.5
Turkmenistan	5
Tuvalu	8.5
Uganda	6
Ukraine	3.5-4
United Arab Emirates	7
United Kingdom	9

United States	9
Uruguay	8.5
Uzbekistan	4
Vanuatu	8.5
Venezuela	4.5-5
Vietnam	4.5
Yemen	2.5
Zambia	5
Zimbabwe	3

*Methodology

The Political Stability Index is calculated by CountryWatch's Editor-in-Chief and is based on the combined scoring of varied criteria as follows --

1. record of peaceful transitions of power (free and fair elections; adherence to political accords)
2. record of democratic representation, presence of instruments of democracy; systemic accountability
3. respect for human rights; respect for civil rights
4. strength of the system of jurisprudence, adherence to constitutional order, and good governance
5. ability of a government to stay in office and carry out its policies vis a vis risk credible risks of government collapse (i.e. government stability versus a country being deemed "ungovernable")
6. threat of coups, insurgencies, and insurrection

7. level of unchecked crime and corruption
8. risk of terrorism and other threats to national security
9. relationship with regional powers and international community; record of bilateral or multilateral cooperation
10. degree of economic strife (i.e. economic and financial challenges)

Editor's Note:

As of 2015, the current climate of upheaval internationally -- both politically and economically -- has affected the ratings for several countries across the world. The usual suspects -- North Korea, [Afghanistan](#), and [Somalia](#) -- retain their low rankings. The reclusive and ultra-dictatorial North Korean regime, which has terrified the world with its nuclear threats, has exhibited internal instability. Of note was a cut-throat purge of hundreds of high ranking officials deemed to be a threat to Kim Jung-un. Despite their attempts to recover from years of lawlessness, war, and warlordism, both [Afghanistan](#) and [Somalia](#) continue to be beset by terrorism and turmoil. In [Afghanistan](#), while international forces have seen success in the effort against the terror group, al-Qaida, the other Islamist extremist group, the Taliban, continues to carry out a vicious insurgency using terrorism. In [Somalia](#), while the government attempts to do the nation's business, the terror group, al-Shabab continues to make its presence known not only in [Somalia](#), but across the border into [Kenya](#) with devastating results/ Also in this category is [Iraq](#), which continues to be rocked by horrific violence and terrorism at the hands of Islamic State, which has taken over wide swaths of Iraqi territory.

Syria, [Libya](#), and [Yemen](#) have been added to this unfortunate echelon of the world's most politically unstable countries. [Syria](#) has been mired by the twin hazards of 1. a civil war as rebels oppose the Assad regime; and 2. the rampage of terror being carried out by Islamic State, which also seized control over vast portions of Syrian territory. Meanwhile, the post-Qaddhafi landscape of [Libya](#) has devolved into chaos as rival militias battle for control -- the elected government of the country notwithstanding. Rounding out this grim triad is [Yemen](#), which was dealing with a Houthi rebellion, secessionists in the south, as well as the threat of terrorism from al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula as well as Islamic State, while also being the site of a proxy war between Shi'a [Iran](#) and Sunni [Saudi Arabia](#).

Meanwhile, several Middle Eastern and North African countries, such as [Tunisia](#), [Egypt](#), and [Bahrain](#) were downgraded in recent years due to political instability occurring in the "season of unrest" sweeping the region since 2011 and continuing today. All three of these countries have stabilized in recent years and have been upgraded accordingly. In [Bahrain](#), the landscape had

calmed. In [Egypt](#), the secular military-backed government has generated criticism for its crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood; however, the country had ratified the presidency via democratic elections and were on track to hold parliamentary elections as the country moved along the path of democratization. Perhaps the most impressive story was coming out of [Tunisia](#) -- the country whose Jasmine Revolution sparked the entire Arab Spring -- and where after a few years of strife, a new progressive constitution was passed into law and a secular government had been elected to power. [Tunisia](#), [Egypt](#), and [Bahrain](#) have seen slight upgrades as these countries stabilize.

In Africa, the [Central African Republic](#) was downgraded the previous year due to the takeover of the government by Muslim Seleka rebels. Although the country has been trying to emerge from this crisis, the fact of the matter was that it was difficult to halt the precipitous decline into lawlessness in that country. [Zimbabwe](#) has maintained its consistently poor ranking due to the dictatorial regime of Mugabe, who continues to hold a tight grip on power, intimidates the opposition, squashes dissent, and oppresses the white farmer population of the country. Moving in a slightly improved direction is [Nigeria](#), which has sported abysmal ratings due to the government's fecklessness in dealing with the threat posed by the Islamist terror group, Boko Haram. Under its newly-elected government, there appears to be more of a concerted effort to make national security a priority action item. [Mali](#) was also slightly upgraded due to its efforts to return to constitutional order following the 2012 coup and to neutralize the threat of separatists and Islamists. Political instability has visited [Burkina Faso](#) and [Burundi](#) as the leaders of those countries attempted to side-step constitutional limits to hold onto power. In [Burundi](#), an attempted coup ensued but quelled, and the president won a (questionable) new term in office; unrest has since punctuated the landscape. In [Burkina Faso](#), the political climate has turned stormy as a result of a successful coup that ended the rule of the president, and then a putsch against the transitional government. These two African countries have been downgraded as a result.

It should be noted that the African country of South [Sudan](#) -- the world's newest nation state -- has not been officially included in this assessment; however, it can be unofficially assessed to be in the vicinity of "3" due to its manifold political and economic challenges. [Guinea](#) has endured poor rankings throughout, but was slightly downgraded further over fears of social unrest and the Ebola health crisis.

In Europe, [Ukraine](#) was downgraded due to the unrest facing that country following its Maidan revolution that triggered a pro-Russian uprising in the eastern part of the country. [Russia](#) was also implicated in the Ukrainian crisis due to its intervention on behalf of pro-Russian separatists, as well as its annexation of the Ukrainian territory of Crimea. [Serbia](#) and [Albania](#) were slightly downgraded due to eruptions of unrest, while [Romania](#) was slightly downgraded on the basis of corruption charges against the prime minister. [Spain](#), [Portugal](#), [Ireland](#), and [Italy](#) were downgraded due to debt woes and the concomitant effect on the euro zone. [Greece](#), another euro zone nation, was downgraded the previous year due to its sovereign debt crisis; however, the country

successfully forged a rescue deal with international creditors and stayed within the Euro zone. Greek voters rewarded the hitherto unknown upstart party at the polls for these efforts. As a result, [Greece](#) was actually upgraded slightly as it proved to the world that it could endure the political and economic storms. Meanwhile, [Germany](#), [France](#), [Switzerland](#), the [United Kingdom](#), the [Netherlands](#), and the Scandinavian countries continue to post impressive ranking consistent with these countries' strong records of democracy, freedom, and peaceful transfers of power.

In Asia, [Nepal](#) was downgraded in response to continuous political instability well after landmark elections that prevails today. [Cambodia](#) was very slightly downgraded due to post-election instability that has resulted in occasional flares of violence. Despite the "trifecta of tragedy" in [Japan](#) in 2011 -- the earthquake, the ensuing tsunami, and the resulting nuclear crisis -- and the appreciable destabilization of the economic and political terrain therein, this country has only slightly been downgraded. Japan's challenges have been assessed to be transient, the government remains accountable, and there is little risk of default. Both [India](#) and China retain their rankings; [India](#) holds a slightly higher ranking than [China](#) due to its record of democratic representation and accountability. Increasing violence and political instability in [Pakistan](#) resulted in a downgrade for this country's already low rating.

In the Americas, [Haiti](#) retained its downgraded status due to ongoing political and economic woes. [Mexico](#) was downgraded due to its alarming rate of crime. [Guatemala](#) was downgraded due to charges of corruption, the arrest of the president, and uncertainty over the outcome of elections. [Brazil](#) was downgraded due to the corruption charges erupting on the political landscape, the stalling of the economy, and the increasingly loud calls for the impeachment of President Rousseff. [Argentina](#) was downgraded due to its default on debt following the failure of talks with bond holders. [Venezuela](#) was downgraded due to the fact that the country's post-Chavez government is every bit as autocratic and nationalistic, but even more inclined to oppress its political opponents. [Colombia](#) was upgraded slightly due to efforts aimed at securing a peace deal with the FARC insurgents. A small but significant upgrade was attributed to [Cuba](#) due to its recent pro-business reforms and its normalization of ties with the United States. Meanwhile, the [United States](#), [Canada](#), [Costa Rica](#), [Panama](#), and most of the English-speaking countries of the Caribbean retain their strong rankings due to their records of stability and peaceful transfers of power.

In the Pacific, [Fiji](#) was upgraded due to its return to constitutional order and democracy with the holding of the first elections in eight years.

In Oceania, [Maldives](#) has been slightly downgraded due to the government's continued and rather relentless persecution of the country's former pro-democracy leader - former President Nasheed.

Source:

Dr. Denise Youngblood Coleman, Editor in Chief, CountryWatch Inc. www.countrywatch.com

Updated:

2015

Freedom Rankings

Freedom Rankings

Freedom in the World

Editor's Note: This ranking by Freedom House quantifies political freedom and civil liberties into a single combined index on each sovereign country's level of freedom and liberty. The initials "PR" and "CL" stand for Political Rights and Civil Liberties, respectively. The number 1 represents the most free countries and the number 7 represents the least free. Several countries fall in the continuum in between. The freedom ratings reflect an overall judgment based on survey results.

Country	PR	CL	Freedom Status	Trend Arrow
Afghanistan	6 ?	6	Not Free	
Albania*	3	3	Partly Free	
Algeria	6	5	Not Free	
Andorra*	1	1	Free	

Angola	6	5	Not Free	
Antigua and Barbuda*	3 ?	2	Free	
Argentina*	2	2	Free	
Armenia	6	4	Partly Free	
Australia*	1	1	Free	
Austria*	1	1	Free	
Azerbaijan	6	5	Not Free	
Bahamas*	1	1	Free	
Bahrain	6 ?	5	Not Free ?	
Bangladesh*	3 ?	4	Partly Free	
Barbados*	1	1	Free	
Belarus	7	6	Not Free	
Belgium*	1	1	Free	
Belize*	1	2	Free	
Benin*	2	2	Free	
Bhutan	4	5	Partly Free	
Bolivia*	3	3	Partly Free	
Bosnia-Herzegovina*	4	3	Partly Free	

Botswana*	3 ?	2	Free	
Brazil*	2	2	Free	
Brunei	6	5	Not Free	
Bulgaria*	2	2	Free	
Burkina Faso	5	3	Partly Free	
Burma	7	7	Not Free	
Burundi*	4	5	Partly Free	↑
Cambodia	6	5	Not Free	↓
Cameroon	6	6	Not Free	
Canada*	1	1	Free	
Cape Verde*	1	1	Free	
Central African Republic	5	5	Partly Free	
Chad	7	6	Not Free	
Chile*	1	1	Free	
China	7	6	Not Free	
Colombia*	3	4	Partly Free	
Comoros*	3	4	Partly Free	
Congo (Brazzaville)	6	5	Not Free	↓

Congo (Kinshasa)	6	6	Not Free	↓
Costa Rica*	1	1	Free	
Cote d'Ivoire	6	5	Not Free	
Croatia*	1 ?	2	Free	
Cuba	7	6	Not Free	
Cyprus*	1	1	Free	
Czech Republic*	1	1	Free	
Denmark*	1	1	Free	
Djibouti	5	5	Partly Free	
Dominica*	1	1	Free	
Dominican Republic*	2	2	Free	↓
East Timor*	3	4	Partly Free	
Ecuador*	3	3	Partly Free	
Egypt	6	5	Not Free	
El Salvador*	2	3	Free	
Equatorial Guinea	7	7	Not Free	
Eritrea	7	7 ?	Not Free	
Estonia*	1	1	Free	

Ethiopia	5	5	Partly Free	↓
Fiji	6	4	Partly Free	
Finland*	1	1	Free	
France*	1	1	Free	
Gabon	6	5 ?	Not Free ?	
The Gambia	5	5 ?	Partly Free	
Georgia	4	4	Partly Free	
Germany*	1	1	Free	
Ghana*	1	2	Free	
Greece*	1	2	Free	
Grenada*	1	2	Free	
Guatemala*	4 ?	4	Partly Free	
Guinea	7	6 ?	Not Free	
Guinea-Bissau*	4	4	Partly Free	
Guyana*	2	3	Free	
Haiti*	4	5	Partly Free	
Honduras	4 ?	4 ?	Partly Free	
Hungary*	1	1	Free	

Iceland*	1	1	Free	
India*	2	3	Free	
Indonesia*	2	3	Free	
Iran	6	6	Not Free	↓
Iraq	5 ?	6	Not Free	
Ireland*	1	1	Free	
Israel*	1	2	Free	
Italy*	1	2	Free	
Jamaica*	2	3	Free	
Japan*	1	2	Free	
Jordan	6 ?	5	Not Free ?	
Kazakhstan	6	5	Not Free	↓
Kenya	4	4 ?	Partly Free	
Kiribati*	1	1	Free	
Kosovo	5 ?	4 ?	Partly Free ?	
Kuwait	4	4	Partly Free	
Kyrgyzstan	6 ?	5 ?	Not Free ?	
Laos	7	6	Not Free	

Latvia*	2	1	Free	
Lebanon	5	3 ?	Partly Free	
Lesotho*	3 ?	3	Partly Free ?	
Liberia*	3	4	Partly Free	
Libya	7	7	Not Free	
Liechtenstein*	1	1	Free	
Lithuania*	1	1	Free	
Luxembourg*	1	1	Free	
Macedonia*	3	3	Partly Free	↑
Madagascar	6 ?	4 ?	Partly Free	
Malawi*	3 ?	4	Partly Free	
Malaysia	4	4	Partly Free	
Maldives*	3 ?	4	Partly Free	
Mali*	2	3	Free	
Malta*	1	1	Free	↓
Marshall Islands*	1	1	Free	
Mauritania	6	5	Not Free	
Mauritius*	1	2	Free	

Mexico*	2	3	Free	
Micronesia*	1	1	Free	
Moldova*	3 ?	4	Partly Free	
Monaco*	2	1	Free	
Mongolia*	2	2	Free	↑
Montenegro*	3	2 ?	Free ?	
Morocco	5	4	Partly Free	↓
Mozambique	4 ?	3	Partly Free	
Namibia*	2	2	Free	
Nauru*	1	1	Free	
Nepal	4	4	Partly Free	
Netherlands*	1	1	Free	
New Zealand*	1	1	Free	
Nicaragua*	4	4 ?	Partly Free	
Niger	5 ?	4	Partly Free	
Nigeria	5	4	Partly Free	↓
North Korea	7	7	Not Free	↓
Norway*	1	1	Free	

Oman	6	5	Not Free	
Pakistan	4	5	Partly Free	
Palau*	1	1	Free	
Panama*	1	2	Free	
Papua New Guinea*	4	3	Partly Free	
Paraguay*	3	3	Partly Free	
Peru*	2	3	Free	
Philippines	4	3	Partly Free	↓
Poland*	1	1	Free	
Portugal*	1	1	Free	
Qatar	6	5	Not Free	
Romania*	2	2	Free	
Russia	6	5	Not Free	↓
Rwanda	6	5	Not Free	
Saint Kitts and Nevis*	1	1	Free	
Saint Lucia*	1	1	Free	
Saint Vincent and Grenadines*	2	1	Free	
Samoa*	2	2	Free	

San Marino*	1	1	Free	
Sao Tome and Principe*	2	2	Free	
Saudi Arabia	7	6	Not Free	
Senegal*	3	3	Partly Free	
Serbia*	2 ?	2	Free	
Seychelles*	3	3	Partly Free	
Sierra Leone*	3	3	Partly Free	
Singapore	5	4	Partly Free	
Slovakia*	1	1	Free	↓
Slovenia*	1	1	Free	
Solomon Islands	4	3	Partly Free	
Somalia	7	7	Not Free	
South Africa*	2	2	Free	
South Korea*	1	2	Free	
Spain*	1	1	Free	
Sri Lanka*	4	4	Partly Free	
Sudan	7	7	Not Free	
Suriname*	2	2	Free	

Swaziland	7	5	Not Free	
Sweden*	1	1	Free	
Switzerland*	1	1	Free	↓
Syria	7	6	Not Free	
Taiwan*	1 ?	2 ?	Free	
Tajikistan	6	5	Not Free	
Tanzania	4	3	Partly Free	
Thailand	5	4	Partly Free	
Togo	5	4 ?	Partly Free	
Tonga	5	3	Partly Free	
Trinidad and Tobago*	2	2	Free	
Tunisia	7	5	Not Free	
Turkey*	3	3	Partly Free	↓
Turkmenistan	7	7	Not Free	
Tuvalu*	1	1	Free	
Uganda	5	4	Partly Free	
Ukraine*	3	2	Free	
United Arab Emirates	6	5	Not Free	

United Kingdom*	1	1	Free	
United States*	1	1	Free	
Uruguay*	1	1	Free	
Uzbekistan	7	7	Not Free	
Vanuatu*	2	2	Free	
Venezuela	5 ?	4	Partly Free	
Vietnam	7	5	Not Free	↓
Yemen	6 ?	5	Not Free ?	
Zambia*	3	4 ?	Partly Free	
Zimbabwe	6 ?	6	Not Free	

Methodology:

PR and CL stand for political rights and civil liberties, respectively; 1 represents the most free and 7 the least free rating. The ratings reflect an overall judgment based on survey results.

? ? up or down indicates a change in political rights, civil liberties, or status since the last survey.

↑ ↓ up or down indicates a trend of positive or negative changes that took place but that were not sufficient to result in a change in political rights or civil liberties ratings of 1-7.

* indicates a country's status as an electoral democracy.

Source:

This data is derived from the latest edition of Freedom House's Freedom in the World 2010 edition.

Available at URL: <http://www.freedomhouse.org>

Updated:

Reviewed in 2015

Human Rights

Human Rights in Kosovo

At the time of writing, there were limited statistics available on human rights in Kosovo. That said, in the late 1990s during the time of Serbia's crackdown on Kosovo, when ethnic cleansing was the norm, rape of Kosovar women was widespread. Since that conflict, the United Nations and NATO have worked to stabilize Kosovo. Nevertheless, violence, repression, threats of unrest and a lack of civil liberties have been the norm until the time of independence.

Human Rights Watch has issued a seven-point agenda for a sovereign Kosovo, emphasizing the main human rights problems as follows: --

- The inadequate criminal justice system;
- Domestic violence and other abuse of women;
- Violence against ethnic minorities;
- The inability of refugees and displaced persons to return safely to their homes;
- The plight of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities;
- Inadequate oversight over international institutions; and
- Lack of inter-ethnic reconciliation.

Source: Human Rights Watch memorandum -- "A Human Rights Agenda for a New Kosovo"

Government Functions

Summary:

Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia on February 17, 2008. Officially, the Serbian province of Kosovo, inhabited by a predominantly ethnic Albanian population, has been governed by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) since 1999, under the authority of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244. That scenario has been in tact until the 2008 declaration of independence. Then, in 2010, the International Court of Justice ruled in favor of Kosovo's unilateral independence from Serbia and affirmed the legality of the declaration of sovereignty.

Government of Kosovo:

On June 15, 2008, Kosovo's constitution came into force. Under the Constitutional Framework, the President of Kosovo is the head of state and serves a term of 5 years with the right to one re-election. The Prime Minister is the head of government and is elected by the Kosovo Assembly.

The unicameral Kosovo Assembly consists of 120 seats, 10 seats of which are reserved for ethnic Serbs, and 10 seats for other minorities (4 seats for the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities (RAE), 3 seats for the Bosniak community, 2 seats for the Turkish community, and 1 seat for the Gorani community). Three of the remaining 100 seats are also held by minority members (for a total of 13). All members serve 4-year terms. Jakup Krasniqi (PDK party) is President of the Assembly.

The main political parties in Kosovo include the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), formerly led by Ibrahim Rugova and now led by Kosovo President Fatmir Sejdiu; Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK), led by Kosovo Prime Minister Hashim Thaci; and the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK), led by former KLA commander Ramush Haradinaj. Kosovo held its first parliamentary elections in November 2001. After significant political wrangling, politicians agreed to establish a coalition government in March 2002, with Bajram Rexhepi (PDK) as Prime Minister and Ibrahim Rugova (LDK) as President. In the same year, the Kosovo Assembly began to function and pass its first laws. Beginning in 2003, UNMIK began transferring governing competencies to these ministries.

On November 17, 2007, Kosovo held parliamentary and municipal elections. These elections were deemed free and fair by international observers. The PDK gained 34.3% of the vote, the LDK gained 22.6%, the New Kosovo Alliance (AKR) won 12.3%, the Democratic League of Dardania

(LDD) won 10%, and the AAK won 9.6%. Smaller minority parties also made some small gains. These elections led to a coalition between the LDK and the PDK and to the elevation of Hashim Thaci as Prime Minister of Kosovo. Under pressure from Belgrade, most Kosovo Serbs again boycotted the vote.

In June 2008, UN Secretary General Ban decided to "reconfigure" UNMIK and reduce the size of the UN presence in Kosovo, effectively ending the UN's role as administrator of Kosovo and welcoming EU deployment of its Rule of Law Mission (EULEX). As Ban stated in his report to the Security Council, "UNMIK will no longer be able to perform effectively the vast majority of its tasks as an international administration." The EU will gradually assume increasing responsibility in the areas of policing, justice, and customs throughout Kosovo.

The Kosovo judicial system started adapting to the new legal charter on June 15, 2008. Supreme Court judges and prosecutors, district court judges, and municipal courts judges already appointed by the SRSG will continue to serve in their posts until the expiry of their appointment. After the transfer of rule of law functions to the Government of Kosovo, the Kosovo Judicial Council (KJC) will propose to the President of Kosovo candidates for appointment or reappointment as judges and prosecutors.

Lt. General Sylejman Selimi was named Commander of the Kosovo Security Force (KSF) on December 19, 2008. NATO has now begun the process of accepting certain members of the KPC, as well as new recruits, to voluntarily join the KSF. Initial KSF training began in February 2009.

As noted above, in 2010, the International Court of Justice ruled in favor of Kosovo's unilateral independence from Serbia and affirmed the legality of the declaration of sovereignty.

Government Structure

Summary:

Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia on February 17, 2008. Officially, the Serbian province of Kosovo, inhabited by a predominantly ethnic Albanian population, has been governed by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) since 1999, under the authority of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244. That scenario has been in tact until the 2008 declaration of independence. Then, in 2010, the International Court of Justice ruled in favor of Kosovo's unilateral independence from Serbia and affirmed the legality of the declaration of sovereignty.

Government of Kosovo:

Country name:

conventional long form: Republic of Kosovo

conventional short form: Kosovo

local long form: Republika e Kosoves (Republika Kosova)

local short form: Kosova (Kosovo)

Government type:

republic

Administrative divisions:

38 municipalities (komunat, singular - komuna (Albanian); opstine, singular - opstina (Serbian)); Decan (Decani), Dragash (Dragas), Ferizaj (Urosevac), Fushe Kosove (Kosovo Polje), Gjakove (Dakovica), Gjilan (Gnjilane), Glogovac (Glogovac), Gracanice (Gracanica), Hani i Elezit (Deneral Jankovic), Istog (Istok), Junik, Kacanik, Kamenice (Kamenica), Kline (Klina), Klllokot (Klokot), Leposaviq (Leposavic), Lipjan (Lipljan), Malisheve (Malisevo), Mamushe (Mamusa), Mitrovice e Jug (Juzna Mitrovica) [South Mitrovica], Mitrovice e Veriut (Severna Mitrovica) [North Mitrovica], Novoberde (Novo Brdo), Obiliq (Obilic), Partesh (Partes), Peje (Pec), Podujeve (Podujevo), Prishtine (Pristina), Prizren, Rahovec (Orahovac), Ranillug (Ranilug), Shterpce (Strpce), Shtime (Stimlje), Skenderaj (Srbica), Suhareke (Suva Reka), Viti (Vitina), Vushtrri (Vucitrn), Zubin Potok, Zvecan

Constitution:

adopted by the Kosovo Assembly on 9 April 2008; effective 15 June 2008

Legal system:

evolving legal system based on terms of UN Special Envoy Martti AHTISAARI's Plan for Kosovo's supervised independence

Suffrage:

18 years of age; universal

Executive branch:

chief of state: President Hashim Thaci (since 2016); see Note below

Presidential election of 2016: In February 2016, a presidential election was held in Kosovo amidst the mass political unrest. In Kosovo, the president is indirectly elected for a five-year term by the Kosovo Assembly. In 2016, that exercise was complicated by ongoing protests in and outside the parliament, which included the hurling of smoke bombs within the legislative building, as protesters railed against a European Union-brokered agreement aimed at improving bilateral ties between Kosovo and Serbia -- the country within which Kosovo once existed as a province. The very idea of ameliorated ties with Serbia, including increased rights for ethnic Serbs, was viewed by nationalists as a betrayal of Kosovo's sovereignty. In the period ahead of the presidential vote, protests grew more violent, with petrol bombs and smoke bombs being deployed, and with police having to use tear gas and water cannons to disperse the angry crowds. Ultimately, though, Hashim Thaci -- a politician from the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) who championed the aforementioned European Union-brokered agreement secured the presidency with 71 votes in the 120-seat parliament.

head of government: Prime Minister Isa MUSTAFA (since December 2014 following parliamentary elections); see Legislative branch notes below and primer on 2014 legislative elections

cabinet: ministers; elected by the Kosovo Assembly

elections: the president is elected for a five-year term by the Kosovo Assembly; see Note below as regards provisions for a future directly-elected president; the prime minister is elected by the Kosovo Assembly and is typically the leader of the majority party or coalition in parliament

Legislative branch:

unicameral national Assembly (120 seats; 100 seats directly elected, 10 seats guaranteed for ethnic Serbs, 10 seats guaranteed for other ethnic minorities; to serve four-year terms)

elections: last held June 2014

election results: See Primer below

Primer on parliamentary elections in Kosovo:
(June 8, 2014)

Parliamentary elections were set to take place in Kosovo on June 8, 2014. At stake was control over the unicameral National Assembly, composed of 120 seats (100 seats directly elected, 10 seats guaranteed for ethnic Serbs, 10 seats guaranteed for other ethnic minorities) where members

serve four-year terms.

The last elections were held in 2010. They were precipitated by a no-confidence vote in parliament that brought down the government of Kosovo at the start of November 2010. Sixty-six members of parliament voted in favor of the motion. The confidence motion was brought by an opposition party after a junior partner withdrew from the governing coalition, leading to the collapse of Prime Minister Hashim Thaci's government. Citizens of Kosovo thus went to the polls in December 2010 to vote in snap elections for a new parliament, with a new government to be formed after the composition of the new parliament was determined.

On election day -- Dec. 12, 2010 -- after the polls closed, Prime Minister Hashim Thaci's Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) was on track for victory in Kosovo's first general elections since independence. Thaci still had to form a coalition government with smaller parties in order to control the majority of seats in parliament.

By Feb. 23, 2011, the instability in Kosovo's governing sphere was on full display with the possible dissolution of the Kosovo Assembly and a government yet to adopt the 2011 budget. A vote in the 120-seat parliamentary body led to the decision to form a new government -- again under Hashim Thaci of the PDK. As well, Behgjet Pacolli, the leader of New Kosovo Alliance leader, was elected in an internal election to become the country's next president after three rounds of voting.

Now in June 2014, the people of Kosovo were again returning to the polls to elect a new government. With its cachet as one of the world's newest countries now fading, and an electorate disillusioned by widespread poverty, high unemployment, and rampant corruption, it was not surprising that the 2014 polls were marked by low voter turnout. That being said, at the end of the voting exercise, Thaci's PDK again claimed victory with 30 percent of the vote share and 37 seats while its main rival, the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), was close behind with 26 percent and 30 seats. Meanwhile, Vetevendosje (Self-Determination) party took 16 seats, the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo had 11 seats, a fifth party secured six seats, while ethnic minorities would control 20 seats.

For his part, Thaci enjoyed his time in the victory spotlight, declaring, "Tonight, Kosovo has won. From tomorrow we will start work on our new mission... We will tell the world that Kosovo's independence was just the beginning, not the end."

As before, Thaci would have to form a coalition government with smaller parties and ethnic Serbs. However, an opposition party, Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK), struck a deal with the country's main opposition party, the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), as well as a splinter group of PDK defectors, to form a coalition. Their intent was to deny Thaci the right to again return to the helm as head of government. It was to be determined if the new coalition, led

by AAK leader, Ramush Haradinaj, would actually have the right to form a government. Indeed, constitutional provisions indicated that even if Thaci had trouble forming a ruling coalition, as the leader of the party that won the most seats, he would have the mandate to attempt to form a government.

In mid-July 2014, parliament in Kosovo convened for the first time since inconclusive June 2014 elections, taking a step towards the formation of a new government. The opposition parties were united in their desire to ensure that new government would not be headed by Thaci or his party. That being said, coalition negotiations were not producing any meaningful results and the political impasse prevailed in the third week of July 2014.

At the start of December 2014, members of parliament in Kosovo approved a new government, led by Isa Mustafa of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), but also including outgoing Prime Minister Hashim Thaci of the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK). The development came several months after parliamentary elections were held in that country. The ratification of Mustafa's coalition government effectively ended an extended period of political stalemate in one of the world's newest countries.

Going back to June 2014, parliamentary elections took place in Kosovo, as discussed just above. Now, finally in December 2014, an agreement had been reached between Kosovo's two biggest parties -- Mustafa's LDK and Thaci's PDK -- with a grand coalition government in the offing. The agreement called for Mustafa to be the new prime minister with Thaci becoming the new foreign minister. As noted above, members of parliament in Kosovo approved a new government composed of the LDK and the PDK, but with Mustafa at the helm. Mustafa would be the first prime minister to lead Kosovo who did not have ties to the country's insurgency in which separatists sought independence from Serbia. The ratification of Mustafa's coalition government effectively ended an extended period of political stalemate in one of the world's newest countries.

The next government in Kosovo would be faced with adhering to the findings of an lengthy European task-force investigation into allegations that Kosovo's guerrilla army, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), harvested organs from Serb prisoners of war and sold them on the black market during the war of the late 1990s with Serbia, then under the leadership of the autocratic Slobadan Milosovic. That investigation could well implicate Thaci -- a rebel leader during the conflict -- and his colleagues. The leader of an opposition cabal party, Ramush Haradinaj, was himself associated with war crimes. He was forced to step down as prime minister in the mid-2000s when he stood for trial at The Hague, although he was acquitted repeatedly by United Nations tribunal for the former Yugoslavia on war crimes.

Judicial branch:

Supreme Court; district courts; municipal courts

note: the Kosovo Constitution dictates that the Supreme Court of Kosovo is the highest judicial authority, and provides for a Kosovo Judicial Council (KJC) that proposes to the president candidates for appointment or reappointment as judges and prosecutors; the KJC is also responsible for decisions on the promotion and transfer of judges and disciplinary proceedings against judges; at least 15 percent of Supreme Court and district court judges shall be from non-majority communities

Political parties and leaders:

Note that this list includes available research data at the time of writing and is subject to constant change --

Albanian Christian Democratic Party of Kosovo or PSHDK [Uke BERISHA]

Alliance for the Future of Kosovo or AAK [Ramush HARADINAJ]

Civic Initiative for Kosovo or NISMA [Fatmir LIMAJ]

Conservative Party of Kosovo or PK [Munir BASHA]

Democratic League of Kosovo or LDK [Isa MUSTAFA]

Democratic Party of Kosovo or PDK [Hashim THACI]

Justice Party of Kosovo or PD [Ferid AGANI]

Movement for Self-Determination (Vetevendosje) or VV [Visar YMERI]

Movement for Unification or LB [Avni KLINAKU]

Serb List [Slavko SIMIC]

Turkish Democratic Party of Kosovo or KDTP [Mahir YAGCILAR]

Vakat Coalition or VAKAT [Rasim DEMIRI]

Principal Government Officials

Principal Government Officials

Note:

Officially, the Serbian province of Kosovo, inhabited by a predominantly ethnic Albanian population, has been governed by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) since 1999, under the authority of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244. That scenario has been in tact until the 2008 declaration of independence. As Kosovo gained international recognition of its status from world leaders, Serbia contemplated how to deal with this fracture to its identity, legacy and territorial integrity.

Summary:

Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia on February 17, 2008. Officially, the Serbian province of Kosovo, inhabited by a predominantly ethnic Albanian population, has been governed by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) since 1999, under the authority of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244. That scenario has been in tact until the 2008 declaration of independence.

Government of Kosovo:

Chief of state: President Hashim Thaci (since 2016); see Note below

Presidential election of 2016: In February 2016, a presidential election was held in Kosovo amidst the mass political unrest. In Kosovo, the president is indirectly elected for a five-year term by the Kosovo Assembly. In 2016, that exercise was complicated by ongoing protests in and outside the parliament, which included the hurling of smoke bombs within the legislative building, as protesters railed against a European Union-brokered agreement aimed at improving bilateral ties between Kosovo and Serbia -- the country within which Kosovo once existed as a province. The very idea of ameliorated ties with Serbia, including increased rights for ethnic Serbs, was viewed by nationalists as a betrayal of Kosovo's sovereignty. In the period ahead of the presidential vote, protests grew more violent, with petrol bombs and smoke bombs being deployed, and with police having to use tear gas and water cannons to disperse the angry crowds. Ultimately, though, Hashim Thaci -- a politician from the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) who championed the

aforementioned European Union-brokered agreement secured the presidency with 71 votes in the 120-seat parliament.

Head of government: Prime Minister Isa MUSTAFA (since December 2014 following parliamentary elections); see Legislative branch notes below and primer on 2014 legislative elections

Cabinet: ministers; elected by the Kosovo Assembly ; see below --

Prime Min.

Isa MUSTAFA

First Dep. Prime Min.

Hashim THACI

Dep. Prime Min.

Kujtim SHALA

Dep. Prime Min.

Branimir STOJANOVIC

Min. of Agriculture, Forestry, & Rural Development

Memil KRASNIQI

Min. of Diaspora

Valon MURATI

Min. of Economic Development

Blerand STAVILECI

Min. of Education, Science, & Technology

Arsim BAJRAMI

Min. of Environment & Spatial Planning

Ferid AGANI

Min. for European Integration

Bekim COLLAKU

Min. of Finance

Avdulla HOTI

Min. of Foreign Affairs

Hashim THACI

Min. of Health

Imet RRAHMANI

Min. of Infrastructure

Lutfi ZHARKU

Min. of Internal Affairs

Skender HYSENI

Min. of Justice

Hajredin KUCI

Min. of the Kosovo Security Force
Haki DEMOLLI
Min. of Labor & Social Welfare
Arban ABRASHI
Min. of Local Govt. Admin.
Ljubomir MARIC
Min. of Public Admin.
Mahir YAGCILAR
Min. of Returns & Communities
Aleksandar JABLANOVIC
Min. of Trade & Industry
Hykmete BAJRAMI
Min. Without Portfolio
Rasim DEMIRI
Min. Without Portfolio
Edita TAHIRI
Managing Dir., Central Banking Authority of Kosovo
Michel SVETCHINE
Ambassador to the US
Akan ISMAILI

-- as of 2016

Leader Biography

Leader Biography

Government of Kosovo:

Note:

Officially, the Serbian province of Kosovo, inhabited by a predominantly ethnic Albanian population, has been governed by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) since 1999, under the authority of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244. That scenario has been in tact until the 2008 declaration of independence. As Kosovo gained international recognition of its status from world leaders, Serbia contemplated how to deal with this fracture to its identity, legacy and territorial integrity.

Summary:

Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia on February 17, 2008. Officially, the Serbian province of Kosovo, inhabited by a predominantly ethnic Albanian population, has been governed by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) since 1999, under the authority of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244. That scenario has been in tact until the 2008 declaration of independence.

Government of Kosovo:

Chief of state: President Hashim Thaci (since 2016)

Presidential election of 2016: In February 2016, a presidential election was held in Kosovo amidst the mass political unrest. In Kosovo, the president is indirectly elected for a five-year term by the Kosovo Assembly. In 2016, that exercise was complicated by ongoing protests in and outside the parliament, which included the hurling of smoke bombs within the legislative building, as protesters railed against a European Union-brokered agreement aimed at improving bilateral ties between Kosovo and Serbia -- the country within which Kosovo once existed as a province. The very idea of ameliorated ties with Serbia, including increased rights for ethnic Serbs, was viewed by

nationalists as a betrayal of Kosovo's sovereignty. In the period ahead of the presidential vote, protests grew more violent, with petrol bombs and smoke bombs being deployed, and with police having to use tear gas and water cannons to disperse the angry crowds. Ultimately, though, Hashim Thaci -- a politician from the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) who championed the aforementioned European Union-brokered agreement secured the presidency with 71 votes in the 120-seat parliament.

Foreign Relations

Summary:

Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia on Feb. 17, 2008. Officially, the Serbian province of Kosovo, inhabited by a predominantly ethnic Albanian population, had been governed by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) since 1999, under the authority of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244. That scenario had been intact until the 2008 declaration of independence. Note that in 2010, the International Court of Justice ruled in favor of Kosovo's unilateral independence from Serbia and affirmed the legality of the declaration of sovereignty.

As Kosovo gained international recognition of its status from world leaders, Serbia contemplated how to deal with this fracture to its identity, legacy and territorial integrity. The following is a synopsis of the background and current landscape that shapes contemporary Kosovo and could influence its foreign policy.

Background:

In the late 1980s, Slobodan Milosevic began his campaign to take control of the former Yugoslavia and eventually take away the autonomy that Kosovars (most of whom were ethnic Albanians) had enjoyed under the long-time ruler of Yugoslavia, Tito. This action, in tandem with rising Serbian nationalism, eventually led to the Bosnian War and the break-up of Yugoslavia. While Slovenia,

Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia gained independence, the Kosovo issue was not explicitly addressed in the 1995 Dayton Accords that ended the Bosnian War and provided for the transition to peaceful governance. Instead, the Kosovo province was treated as part of Serbia in the new successor state -- Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY).

Instability in Kosovo threatened the entire region. This threat seemed more apparent when the Albanian government in Tirana announced that it would act as a unitary Albanian nation if Serbia were to take offensive action in Kosovo. A number of raids, protests, gun battles, and terrorist acts, including the shooting down of a Yugoslav Airlines training aircraft, occurred from 1996 to 1998. While ethnic Albanians had historically sought greater autonomy from Serbia by peaceful actions, attacks from the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) led to severe reprisals from the Serbian-led Yugoslav army and police forces. The severity and indiscriminate nature of the Yugoslav counterattacks led to a mass refugee crisis of tens of thousands of Kosovo Albanians in the summer of 1998. Then, a massacre of Kosovo's civilians by Serbian forces in January 1999 led to the threat of air strikes by NATO. Negotiations aimed at preventing military attacks were not ultimately successful and on March 24, 1999, NATO began a bombing campaign (Operation Allied Force) against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia due to its actions in Kosovo.

NATO suspended air strikes on June 10, 1999, after the Yugoslav leaders accepted the terms of the Military Technical Agreement and Serbian troops began withdrawing from Kosovo. The demilitarization of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and other armed Kosovo Albanian group followed as well. A formal peace settlement was soon reached under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and an international civil and security presence was deployed under United Nations' auspices.

Within Serbia, Kosovo has been regarded as an intrinsic aspect of Serbian identity, legacy and territorial integrity. But among Kosovars, the thrust for sovereign independent status has been at the forefront of the national consciousness throughout the years since the establishment of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244.

Declaration of Independence

In January 2008, Kosovo's head of government, Prime Minister Hashim Thaci, announced that a declaration of independence was forthcoming. The notion of Kosovo's independence had been somewhat supported by the western countries of the European Union (EU), while Russia had expressed the view that Kosovo should ideally be granted independence with the support of Serbia. But the very idea of independence for Kosovo was soundly rejected by Serbia, which did not want to see its territorial integrity disintegrate further after Montenegro's secession.

The controversial nature of Kosovo's independence led the EU to call on Kosovo's leaders to exercise patience in their independence drive. The EU wanted the leadership of Kosovo to wait

until the presidential election in Serbia was finished (the second round would take place in February 2008), and until a civilian force could assume the mission in Kosovo from the U.N.

A month later on Feb. 17, 2008, with all 10 Serbian parliamentarians boycotting the historic session, Kosovo's parliament unanimously endorsed a declaration of independence from Serbia. The declaration, which was read by Prime Minister Hashim Thaci, asserted Kosovo to be a democratic country, and that the country would be founded in accordance with the United Nations plan. That plan would not allow Kosovo to join another country, would ensure an international monitoring presence, limit armed forces, and protect Serb minority rights. To that latter point, the prime minister noted there would be full respect and rights of all ethnic communities. In heralding the independence of Kosovo, Prime Minister Hashim Thaci also said, "We have waited for this day for a very long time... from today, we are proud, independent and free."

Tens of thousands of jubilant Kosovars celebrated the declaration of independence in the streets of Kosovo's capital of Pristina. Fireworks and gunfire were heard across the city. Ethnic Albanians across the world were also reported to be celebrating the developments in Kosovo.

However, in Belgrade, Serbians took to the streets to protest Kosovo's independence move. Gangs were blamed for attacks on the United States embassy, the office of the European Union presidency (located inside the Slovenian embassy), other diplomatic interests (i.e. embassies of United Kingdom, Turkey, Croatia and Belgium) and symbolic multinational interests, such as a McDonald's restaurant. There were also reports of attacks on United Nations police. As well, in the mainly Serbian town on Mitrovica, located within Kosovo, there were reports of hand grenades being thrown into two buildings with international interests -- a United Nations court house and the European Union mission office.

The developments occurred after Serbian Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica delivered an emotional speech condemning Kosovo's secession and blamed the West for forcing Serbs to relinquish their identity. For his part, recently re-elected Serbian President Tadic also reacted negatively to the news. The Serbian government suggested it would try to block Kosovo from receiving international recognition, as well as membership in international institutions such as the United Nations.

Meanwhile, the United Nations Security Council was set to convene an emergency session on Kosovo. The meeting was called by Russia, which has been an ally of Serbia, in some measure as a result of the two countries' shared Slavic roots. It was not known if Russia intended to recognize an independent Kosovo. It had generally maintained the view that to do so would result in unwanted consequences in the Georgian breakaway provinces of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, not to mention Chechnya within its own domain. Meanwhile, Europe remained divided on the issue. European countries such as Cyprus, Romania and Slovakia had said that they would not recognize Kosovo, while Spain, which has contended with its own Basque separatist movement, also indicated reluctance. Nevertheless, recognition of Kosovo's independent status by the United

States and a number of European countries, including the United Kingdom, Italy, France and Germany, commenced on Feb. 18, 2008.

By the last week of February 2008, Serbian government ministers were expected to visit Serbian areas of Kosovo, presumably to emphasize their position that Kosovo remained under its control. Leading that delegation would be Serbia's Minister for Kosovo, Slobodan Samardzic, who raised the ire of many Kosovars by referring to the destruction of two border posts by Serbian protestors as "legitimate." There were reports that Samardzic would not be allowed to enter Kosovo unless he issued an apology for his incendiary comments.

Meanwhile, Kosovo was reported to be free of violence a week after declaring independence. The state of calm was attributable to the deployment of local police, United Nations forces and NATO troops on the ground in Kosovo.

Post Independence Developments and Foreign Relations Impact:

In June 2008, several months after Kosovo declared its independence, the world's newest sovereign state affirmed its status with a new constitution. The legal framework called for power to be handed over to the government following nine years of rule by the United Nations. The move formalized the authority of the majority ethnic Albanian government.

In Kosovo's capital of Pristina, President Fatmir Sejdiu presided over a simple ceremony in which the constitution was promulgated. The ceremony's high point was the president's signature ratifying legislation, which instituted the country's first ministry of defense, military services, and ministry of foreign affairs. In this way, the new constitution essentially conveyed powers, such as the creation of governing instruments, that had been held by the United Nations until this time.

President Sejdiu characterized the event as a "historic moment," and noted that it effectively ended "Kosovo's cycle of statehood." In an interview with the media, Kosovo's Deputy Prime Minister Hajredin Kuci referenced the plan crafted by former United Nations envoy Martti Ahtisaari, which envisioned both the decentralization of Kosovo, as well as provisions for the internal autonomy of Kosovo's Serbian population. To this end, Kuci said, "The will of the people of Kosovo and [the] Ahtisaari plan are included in the constitution."

While the countries of the West have expressed their support for the plan, it has not yet been officially approved. The delay has been largely a result of Russia's decision to block the handover from the United Nations. For its part, Russia has shared Serbia's antagonism to the notion of Kosovo's sovereignty, which decreased the territorial integrity of Serbia as the last successor state to the former Yugoslavia. Russian-Serbian solidarity on the matter has been presumably as a result of both country's shared Slavic roots.

Notwithstanding these objections on the part of Russia, United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon moved to begin the process of ceding United Nations functions in Kosovo to the European Union, which was to take responsibility for several missions there. To that end, the United Nations chief said, "It is my intention to reconfigure the structure and profile of the international civil presence to one that... enables the European Union to assume an enhanced operational role in Kosovo."

Meanwhile, Serbia's President Boris Tadic directly registered his country's objections to these developments by asserting, "Serbia does not accept the proclamation of Kosovo's constitution as a legal fact." Moreover, Serbia flexed its geopolitical muscle by declaring that the new constitution would not apply in the northern part of Kosovo, which has been dominated by ethnic Serbs.

These assertions coincided with the establishment of a parallel Serbia assembly in the ethnically divided city of Mitrovica. Indeed, Slobodan Samardzic, the minister for Kosovo in the outgoing Serbian government, announced a new Serbian parliament within Kosovo, composed of Serbian members who had been recently elected. The move presented an immediate challenge to the new constitution of Kosovo, and signaled a looming power struggle between ethnic Albanians and ethnic Serbians in Kosovo.

Latest Developments

In the period of late 2008 to early 2009, several developments occurred, which effectively reified Kosovo's status as a sovereign state, en route to being recognized by the international community. In October 2008, the United Nations General Assembly voted to refer Kosovo's declaration of independence to the International Court of Justice. In December 2008, security, judicial and customs functions transitioned from United Nations administration to that of the European Union. In January 2009, a multi-ethnic security force was established under the aegis of NATO control. The Kosovo Security Force replaced the previous security force that had been composed of veterans of independence campaign against Serbia.

Regional relations dominated the landscape in June 2009 when the former prime minister of Kosovo, Agim Ceku, was arrested in Bulgaria on the basis of war crimes charges. While Ceku has not been indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in the Hague, there have been indictments made against him by Serbian courts. In this case, the Bulgarian Interior Ministry said that Ceku was detained under the aegis of a prevailing Interpol arrest warrant, which was initiated by Serbia, as he crossed the border from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Serbia has accused Agim Ceku -- a former rebel commander with the Kosovo Liberation Army -- of committing war crimes during the 1998-99 war in Kosovo before it declared its independence

from the Yugoslav successor nation state of Serbia. At issue were Serbia's claims that Ceku had "command responsibility" in regard to the killing of close to 700 Serbs and 18 others. Yet to be determined was the matter of whether or not Ceku's detention in Bulgaria would be extended, or, it he would be extradited to Serbia. There was also the possibility that he might be released.

For his part, Ceku, who has been regarded as a key player in the independence struggle at home in Kosovo, has vigorously denied the allegations against him. Should he be extradited to Serbia, already-strained relations between Kosovo and Serbia were likely to devolve.

On Nov. 11, 2009, the Serbian parliament committee for Kosovo and Metohija urged citizens in Kosovo to refrain from voting in the local elections there. The committee released a statement that read: "The committee for Kosovo and Metohija calls for all citizens in the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija not to vote in the coming local elections there, organized by secessionists and separatists." The Serbian authorities argued that the elections in Kosovo, which declared its independence from Serbia in 2008, were in violation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and the Serbian Constitution. Despite Serbia's refusal to recognize Kosovo's independence,

On Nov. 15, 2009, the people of Kosovo went to the polls to vote in local elections. It was the first electoral test in Kosovo since the declaration of independence from Serbia. Prime Minister Hashim Thaci's ruling coalition, led by the Democratic Party of Kosovo, claimed victory following a calm election in which turnout among the minority Serb population was higher than expected, given the call for a voting boycott from Serbia. The election was seen as a vital threshold in Kosovo's hopes for broad international recognition of its self-proclaimed sovereign status.

Kosovo was at the center of a regional imbroglio in early 2010. On Jan. 15, 2010, it was reported that Serbia had recalled its ambassador to Montenegro. At issue was Montenegro's decision to establish diplomatic ties with Kosovo. To that end, official diplomatic relations commenced with an exchange of letters between the foreign ministers of Montenegro and Kosovo. The move exacerbated strained relations between the two countries - both successor states of the former Yugoslavia. Indeed, when Montenegro recognized Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence in October 2008, Serbia expelled its ambassador and a new envoy did not return to Belgrade until 2009. Now, Serbia's wounds of territorial and cultural identity have been re-opened with the news of burgeoning diplomatic relations between the two countries - Montenegro and Kosovo - that Belgrade never wished to see leave the fold. For its part, Serbia was hoping that Montenegro would hold off on the establishment of diplomatic ties with Kosovo until the International Court of Justice could rule on the unilateral declaration of sovereignty.

Update-

On July 27, 2011, violence flared on the Kosovo's northern border with Serbia when ethnic Serbs attacked a Kosovo border crossing at Jarinje. The violence appeared aimed at registering opposition to Kosovo's independence from Serbia, and was sparked when Kosovo police of ethnic Albanian ancestry tried to control the border, which was previously administered under the aegis of the European Union but was now under Pristina's (Kosovo's) jurisdiction. The initial attempt in this regard ended in bloodshed as ethnic Serbs, who dominate the Serbia-Kosovo border, fired gunshots at the police, killing one Kosovar officer. Subsequently, an apparent agreement for control was instituted at Jarinje; however, in the aftermath of the police withdrawal from the area, ethnic Serbs relaunched attacks there. When the Serbs set fire to their border crossing, Kosovar customs and police officers fled the area, taking refuge at outpost for NATO peacekeeping mission in Kosovo (KFOR). NATO peacekeepers thusly took up positions at that border crossing and others in the region, in an apparent attempt to avert further violence. But there were reports that armed ethnic Serbs fired at the NATO peacekeeping forces.

The European Union noted that the move by the powers in Pristina to enforce jurisdiction over the crossing at Jarinje could be regarded as provocative, and may have sparked the outbreak of violence. Indeed, the Jarinje border crossing had been previously administered by ethnic Serbs who turned a blind eye on cross-border affairs, including smuggling. The introduction of ethnic Albanian Kosovars to the crossing may have spurred nationalist feelings among ethnic Serbs who opposed Kosovo's declaration of independence from Serbia. Nevertheless, Pristina insisted that it was well within its rights to assert control over the area. For his part, Serbian President, Boris Tadic demanded an end to the violence and did not mince words in characterizing the Serbian activists as "hooligans."

By the start of August 2011, NATO had deployed more troops to Kosovo, with an eye on managing tensions in the northern part of the country along the border with Serbia. For its part, Kosovo's government said that it would be willing to enter negotiations with all countries, including Serbia, regarding its national interests. In an interview with Radio Free Europe, Kosovar President Atifete Jahjaga said, "Kosovo is ready to talk to any country -- including Serbia -- about issues that are in the interests of our country and our citizens." On Aug. 10, 2011, an agreement had been reached that would allow NATO to take control over the border crossings. The deal appeared to quiet tensions and it was soon reported that Kosovo Serbs were dismantling road blockades that had been erected at the height of the imbroglio.

In October 2011, tensions were ignited once again as hundreds of ethnic Serbs in the northern part of Kosovo prevented NATO peacekeepers from removing several barricades, which have blocked off the area for the previous months. The ethnic Serbs argued that their actions were aimed at preventing the government of Kosovo (dominated by ethnic Albanians) from traversing Serb-dominated northern territory. At issue was the deployment of ethnic Albanian customs and police officials on the border. Indeed, as stated an ethnic Serb official Slavisa Ristic, in an interview with the Associated Press: "As long as KFOR [NATO] tries to deploy Kosovo authorities in the north

of Kosovo by force, freedom of movement is impossible." Of course, on the other side of the equation, NATO has made it clear that it was empowered to have complete access to the area. Moreover, the commander of NATO peacekeepers in the region, Major General Erhard Drews, made it clear that if the ethnic Serbs tried to maintain their roadblocks, NATO would have no choice but to use force against them.

On March 22, 2012, Shemsi Nuhui -- a former member of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) Gnjilane Group -- was extradited from Switzerland to Serbia. The Swiss Federal Court made the decision to extradite Nuhui weeks earlier on March 7, 2012 -- about one year after his original arrest on the basis of an Interpol warrant. Nuhui was among a group of 17 individuals who was tried in absentia on war crimes charges due to his involvement with the Gnjilane group, a subgroup of the believed to be responsible for abuses against Serbian civilians in Kosovo in 1999. Now in Serbia custody, Nuhui and the other 16 defendants would face a repeat trial before the War Crimes Chamber. Serbia's Interior Minister Ivica Dacic said Nuhui's extradition was a warning to other war criminals, noting they would be brought to justice.

On Dec. 11, 2012, the European Union said that Serbia was on track to commence membership negotiations as early as 2013. Officials from the European Union said that the membership talks could start sometime in 2013, presuming that Serbia would continue to meet conditions mandated for joining the European bloc. Among the conditions required by the European Union was the demand that Serbia withdraw its troops from northern Kosovo where a majority of the population there was ethnically Serb, although the country itself had declared its independence from Serbia.

On April 19, 2013, negotiators reached an agreement intended to normalize relations between Serbia and Kosovo and also pave the way towards European Union accession for both countries.

Since Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence from Serbia in 2008, and the ensuing recognition from the international community as a sovereign state, relations between Kosovo and Serbia have been dismal. Ethnic Serbs living in northern Kosovo have been intransigent in their refusal to recognize the authority of the ethnic Albanian government in Pristina. Meanwhile, ethnic Serbs created their own parallel institutions in Kosovo. Conflicts over a border crossing in 2011, as well as ongoing dissonance over war crimes tribunals involving defendants from both countries, only served to intensify the acrimony between Serbia and Kosovo.

But as noted here, in April 2013, a shift in the diplomatic winds was in the works. European Union Foreign Minister Catherine Ashton, who mediated negotiations between the two countries, announced that an agreement to normalize bilateral relations was reached. Ashton noted that the prime ministers of both countries -- Serbian Prime Minister Ivica Dacic and Kosovo Prime Minister Hashim Thaci -- had signed onto the deal. Central to the agreement were 15 elements, which were aimed at greater autonomy for ethnic Serbs in Kosovo. These elements included the granting of "powers" to Serb communities in Kosovo, such as the formation of their own police

force and appeals court, although Kosovo laws would yet apply to the northern part of the country.

The proverbial "fly in the ointment" was the fact that ethnic Serbs in Kosovo rejected the deal, thus ensuring that its implementation would be difficult, and that the easing of tensions remained an exercise in theory. Still, the government of Serbia made it clear that it was serious about the implementation of the plan intended to normalize relations with Kosovo. Meanwhile, Kosovo's Prime Minister Hashim Thaci called the agreement "a plan of peace, understanding, tolerance and joint life in the future."

Nationalists in Kosovo rail against rapprochement with Serbia

The autumn of 2015 was marked by dissension on Kosovo -- one of the world's newest countries. At issue was a European Union-brokered agreement aimed at improving bilateral ties between Serbia and its former province of Kosovo. To this end, a plan was afoot to create an association of municipalities in areas of Kosovo inhabited by the minority Serb population, which would effectively give Serbs in those areas more power.

Since 2008 when Kosovo, with its predominantly ethnic Albanian population declared its independence from Serbia, with its mainly Slavic ethnic population, the two countries have had an acrimonious relationship. Serbia, as the remaining successor state of the former Yugoslavia, has been reluctant to accept the sovereignty of Kosovo, viewing the loss of the territory as illegal irrespective of the fact that it was deemed legitimate by the International Court of Justice at The Hague in 2010. Meanwhile, Kosovo has been adamant about removing itself from the orbit of Serbia. As such, the European Union-brokered deal, which was intended to steer the two countries on the path of more positive ties, has been opposed by nationalists on both sides of the border.

The situation in Kosovo reached a new nadir in October 2015 when Alin Kurti, the leader of the opposition Vetevendosje (Self-Determination) party, set off a smoke bomb in parliament. Kurti, who was a student protest leader during the campaign to liberate Kosovo from Serbian rule in the 1990s, has been eager to prevent any kind of significant rapprochement with Serbia. Moreover, he has cast the municipal association plan for minority Serbs to be surrender of sorts to Serbia. The political bloc led by Kurti released a statement vowing to oppose the plan that read as follows: "No one has the mandate nor the right to bring Serbia back into Kosovo. We will not let this happen."

By the start of November 2015, the European Union commissioner overseeing enlargement of the regional bloc urged opposition lawmakers to cease disrupting the work of the parliament using smoke bombs and tear gas. Commissioner Johannes Hahn addressed the parliament of Kosovo and warned that such action could prevent the country from forging positive links with the

European Union. But nationalists in parliament were undeterred and instead used Hahn's address to showcase banners emblazoned the following messages: "Unjust agreements shall not pass" and "Is ethnic segregation an EU value?".

The controversy moved to the judicial arena in the second week of November 2015 when Kosovo's Constitutional Court ruled to temporarily suspend the municipal association plan for Serb-dominated areas. The court said that the move would stand until the start of 2016 when it would issue a final verdict. There were hopes in Kosovo that the legal ruling might tamp down heightened tensions that had been sparked, and which had led to protests and smoke bombs in parliament. However, across the border in Serbia, Foreign Minister Ivica Dacic criticized the ruling, warning that it was a violation of the European Union brokered accord and would thus threaten regional stability.

The enduring antipathy between Kosovo and Serbia was highlighted in November 2015 when Serbia claimed "victory" over Kosovo when that country failed to win membership in the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The vote, which took place in France, ended with 92 nation states voting in favor of Kosovo's accession to UNESCO and 50 countries voting against the move. With a two-thirds majority needed, excluding abstentions, Kosovo was denied membership by a narrow margin of three votes. Foreign Minister Hashim Thaci promised a better result in the future, saying via the social media outlet Facebook, "Kosovo's road is unstoppable and we will apply and join other organizations, including UNESCO once again." But in Serbia, there was a sense of triumph that the breakaway nation state was not easily gaining the international recognition it sought. As stated by Serbian President Tomislav Nikolic, "This is a just and moral victory in almost impossible conditions."

In mid-November 2015, Donika Kadaj-Bujupi -- an opposition politician -- was arrested and arrest warrants were issued for three other members of parliament due to their respective roles in continuing disruptions during parliamentary sessions. By the end of November 2015, Albin Kurti -- the leader of the Vetevendosje (Self-Determination) party -- along with several other party members were arrested and taken into police custody on charges of releasing tear gas and setting off smoke bombs in parliament. These arrests were respectively being made due to the opposition politicians' radical actions in parliament aimed at disrupting procedures and registering strong objections to the controversial municipal association agreement along with broader plans aimed at settling ties between Kosovo and Serbia. T

Editor's Note:

Officially, the Serbian province of Kosovo -- inhabited by a predominantly ethnic Albanian population -- had been governed by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) since 1999, under the authority of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244.

That scenario had been intact until the 2008 declaration of independence. As Kosovo gained international recognition of its status from world powers including the United States, the United Kingdom and France, Serbia contemplated how to deal with this fracture to its identity, legacy and territorial integrity.

In the period of late 2008 to early 2009, several developments occurred, which effectively reified Kosovo's status as a sovereign state, en route to being recognized by the broader international community. In October 2008, the United Nations General Assembly voted to refer Kosovo's declaration of independence to the International Court of Justice. In December 2008, security, judicial and customs functions transitioned from United Nations administration to that of the European Union. In January 2009, a multi-ethnic security force was established under the aegis of NATO control. The Kosovo Security Force replaced the previous security force that had been composed of veterans of independence campaign against Serbia.

Note that in 2010, the International Court of Justice ruled in favor of Kosovo's unilateral independence from Serbia and affirmed the legality of the declaration of sovereignty.

Written by Dr. Denise Youngblood Coleman, Editor in Chief, www.countrywatch.com; see Bibliography for research sources.

National Security

Summary:

Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia on February 17, 2008. Officially, the Serbian province of Kosovo, inhabited by a predominantly ethnic Albanian population, has been governed by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) since 1999, under the authority of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244. That scenario has been in tact until the 2008 declaration of independence. Note that in 2010, the International Court of Justice ruled in favor of Kosovo's unilateral independence from Serbia and affirmed the legality of the declaration of sovereignty.

As Kosovo gained international recognition of its status from world leaders, Serbia contemplated how to deal with this fracture to its identity, legacy and territorial integrity. Following is a

synopsis of the background and current landscape that shapes contemporary Kosovo and its national security situation.

Background:

In the late 1980s, Slobodan Milosevic began his campaign to take control of the former Yugoslavia and eventually take away the autonomy that Kosovars (most of whom were ethnic Albanians) had enjoyed under the long-time ruler of Yugoslavia, Tito. This action, in tandem with rising Serbian nationalism, eventually led to the Bosnian War and the break-up of Yugoslavia. While Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia gained independence, the Kosovo issue was not explicitly addressed in the 1995 Dayton Accords that ended the Bosnian War and provided for the transition to peaceful governance. Instead, the Kosovo province was treated as part of Serbia in the new successor state -- Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY).

Instability in Kosovo threatened the entire region. This threat seemed more apparent when the Albanian government in Tirana announced that it would act as a unitary Albanian nation if Serbia were to take offensive action in Kosovo. A number of raids, protests, gun battles, and terrorist acts, including the shooting down of a Yugoslav Airlines training aircraft, occurred from 1996 to 1998. While ethnic Albanians had historically sought greater autonomy from Serbia by peaceful actions, attacks from the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) led to severe reprisals from the Serbian-led Yugoslav army and police forces. The severity and indiscriminate nature of the Yugoslav counterattacks led to a mass refugee crisis of tens of thousands of Kosovo Albanians in the summer of 1998. Then, a massacre of Kosovo's civilians by Serbian forces in January 1999 led to the threat of air strikes by NATO. Negotiations aimed at preventing military attacks were not ultimately successful and on March 24, 1999, NATO began a bombing campaign (Operation Allied Force) against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia due to its actions in Kosovo.

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The controversial nature of Kosovo's independence led the EU to call on Kosovo's leaders to exercise patience in their independence drive. The EU wanted the leadership of Kosovo to wait until the presidential election in Serbia was finished (the second round took place in February 2008), and until a civilian force could assume the mission in Kosovo from the U.N.

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Notwithstanding these objections on the part of Russia, United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon moved to begin the process of ceding United Nations functions in Kosovo to the European Union, which was to take responsibility for several missions there. To that end, the United Nations chief said, "It is my intention to reconfigure the structure and profile of the international civil presence to one that... enables the European Union to assume an enhanced operational role in Kosovo."

Meanwhile, Serbia's President Boris Tadic directly registered his country's objections to these developments by asserting, "Serbia does not accept the proclamation of Kosovo's constitution as a legal fact." Moreover, Serbia flexed its geopolitical muscle by declaring that the new constitution would not apply in the northern part of Kosovo, which has been dominated by ethnic Serbs.

These assertions coincided with the establishment of a parallel Serbia assembly in the ethnically divided city of Mitrovica. Indeed, Slobodan Samardzic, the minister for Kosovo in the outgoing Serbian government, announced a new Serbian parliament within Kosovo, composed of Serbian members who had been recently elected. The move presented an immediate challenge to the new constitution of Kosovo, and signaled a looming power struggle between ethnic Albanians and ethnic Serbians in Kosovo.

Defense Forces

Military Data

Kosovo does not have a military force; the Kosovo Security Force was established in 2009 and maintains a non-military mandate in four core competencies: search-and-rescue, firefighting, demining, and hazardous material response.

Chapter 3

Economic Overview

Economic Overview

Overview

A former autonomous province of Serbia, Kosovo - inhabited by a predominantly ethnic Albanian population -- was governed by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) after 1999, and declared its independence in February 2008. In June 2009, Kosovo joined the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Kosovo established the euro as its official currency. On July 22, 2010, the International Court of Justice at The Hague ruled in favor of Kosovo's independence, affirming the legality of the declaration of sovereignty.

With a per capita GDP of about US\$8,000, Kosovo is one of the poorest countries in Europe. A decade after the end of the conflict in 1999, Kosovo's economy continues to be hampered by profound structural impediments, including poor infrastructure, unreliable electricity supply, and inadequate transportation routes to connect to the region. The economy remains undiversified, with a narrow export base dominated by low-value added products, such as minerals and metals. Underpinned by large public investments in post-conflict reconstruction funded by donors, Kosovo's economic growth has been steady in the past decade.

In June 2009, Kosovo joined the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, and began servicing its share of the former Yugoslavia's debt. The global economic crisis had only a modest impact on its economy, reflecting Kosovo's limited international economic integration. Real GDP still expanded about 4 percent in 2009, with the drop in external demand being offset by rising public expenditures and by high inflows of remittances and donor support. However, rapid expenditure growth has undermined the fiscal position, and significant external imbalances persist owing to infrastructure bottlenecks and the recent fiscal loosening. Against this backdrop, the government has said it is committed to a comprehensive policy program aimed at restoring fiscal sustainability and safeguarding financial sector stability. The economy was expected to grow in 2011 at a slightly higher pace than it did in 2010, supported by continued large remittances inflows from the Kosovar diaspora, robust credit growth, especially to households, and higher public spending, including on infrastructure projects. While credit growth has moderated, banks' portfolio quality has deteriorated only modestly and profits have remained high. In 2011, the government increased public sector wages and benefits for war invalids and their families by 30 to 50 percent. This action violated an agreement the country had with the International Monetary Fund and led to the IMF to declare in May 2011 that it would not provide any more funding to Kosovo for the rest of the year. Kosovo responded by asking the IMF to monitor its economic and financial reforms. The government chose to give the IMF more oversight in 2011 so that it would get a bigger

package in 2012 than the US\$155 million 18-month IMF stand-by deal it agreed to in July of 2010. Meanwhile, the country was facing an unemployment rate of 48 percent.

Until 2011, Kosovo maintained a budget surplus as a result of efficient value added tax (VAT) collection at the borders and inefficient budget execution; in 2011 expenditures climbed sharply. Overall, Kosovo remained largely shielded from the euro area crisis due to limited trade and financial linkages. Real GDP growth for 2012 was projected at 3.8 percent, supported by robust remittances and capital inflows that originate, to a large extent, with the Kosovar diaspora.

A limited and unreliable electricity supply as a result of technical and financial woes has been a significant obstacle to economic development, but Kosovo has received technical assistance to help improve accounting and controls and, in 2012, privatized its distribution network. In 2012 and the first half of 2013, Kosovo's economy continued to display resilience in the face of headwinds from the global financial crisis and euro area turbulence. In May 2013, Kosovo reshuffled two ministries two months after the finance minister was appointed as the central bank governor, according to Reuters.

Kosovo's citizens in 2013 had the dubious distinction of being the poorest in Europe with a per capita GDP (PPP) of \$7,600. Unemployment estimated to be between 35 and 45 percent encourages emigration and fuels a significant informal, unreported economy. Remittances from the diaspora - located mainly in Germany, Switzerland, and the Nordic countries - are estimated to account for about 15 percent of GDP, and donor-financed activities and aid for approximately 10 percent.

Meanwhile, Kosovo in 2013 also signed a Free Trade Agreement with Turkey and was negotiating liberalization of trade with EU as part of a Stabilization and Association Agreement.

In January 2014, Kosovo asked the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for talks on a new precautionary program, but said it didn't expect to need to draw any funds. A previous 30-month \$US146 million stand-by deal - Kosovo's first since it declared independence from Serbia in 2008 - ended in December 2013. GDP growth for 2014 was estimated to be around 4 percent, up from 2013 and based mainly on increased remittances and foreign aid.

As of 2014, Kosovo's citizens remained the poorest in Europe with a per capita GDP (PPP) of \$8,000. An unemployment rate of 31 percent encouraged emigration and fueled a significant informal, unreported economy. In 2014, Kosovo concluded the Stabilization and Association Agreement negotiations (SAA) with the EU, focused on trade liberalization. The SAA was slated to be signed by the end of 2015. In May 2014, the government introduced a 25 percent salary increase for public sector employees and an equal increase in certain social benefits. Central revenues could not sustain this increase, and the government was forced to reduce its planned capital investments. The government recently made changes to its fiscal policy that extended the list of duty-free imports, decreased the Value Added Tax (VAT) for basic food items and public

utilities, and increased the VAT for all other goods.

In June 2015, the IMF noted that growth in Kosovo had remained relatively strong and resilient in recent years, driven in part by strong remittances from the Diaspora. However, there was consensus that higher growth was needed to bring incomes up to levels of neighboring countries and provide the high-quality jobs that Kosovo needs.

In early July 2015, the new U.S. ambassador to Kosovo - Gregory Delawie - said that during his term in office he would be committed to the strengthening of the rule of law, expansion of regional security and the boosting of economic reforms.

“Corruption prevents democratic and economic development in Kosovo, it prevents investments, encourages migration and weakens trust in public institutions. On the other hand, corruption may encourage violent extremism,” Delawie said in front of senators as reported by the Independent Balkan News Agency.

Economic Performance

Kosovo has enjoyed steady economic growth in the past decade. Despite the impact from the global economic crisis, real GDP growth slowed only modestly in 2009 and 2010, underpinned by public spending and inflows of remittances and donor support.

According to CountryWatch estimated calculations for 2014:

Real GDP growth rate was: 0.0 percent

The fiscal deficit/surplus as percent of GDP (%) was: -2.5 percent

Inflation was measured at: 5.9 percent

Updated in 2015

**Please note that the figures in our Economic Performance section are estimates or forecasts based on IMF-based data that are formulated using CountryWatch models of analysis.*

Supplementary Sources: International Monetary Fund, Independent Balkan News Agency and Reuters

Nominal GDP and Components

Nominal GDP and Components					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Nominal GDP (LCU billions)	4.817	5.059	5.327	5.482	5.655
Nominal GDP Growth Rate (%)	9.440	5.026	5.301	2.908	3.150
Consumption (LCU billions)	4.176	4.480	4.673	4.884	4.637
Government Expenditure (LCU billions)	0.8021	0.8421	0.8639	0.8863	0.8415
Gross Capital Formation (LCU billions)	1.632	1.465	1.471	1.428	1.679
Exports of Goods & Services (LCU billions)	0.9434	0.9220	0.9271	1.091	0.9449
Imports of Goods & Services (LCU billions)	2.737	2.650	2.607	2.807	2.447

Population and GDP Per Capita

Population and GDP Per Capita					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Population, total (million)	1.791	1.805	1.818	1.823	1.836
Population growth (%)	0.8603	0.7953	0.7155	0.2768	0.7155
Nominal GDP per Capita (LCU 1000s)	2,689.68	2,802.57	2,930.17	3,007.05	3,079.74

Real GDP and Inflation

Real GDP and Inflation					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Real Gross Domestic Product (LCU billions 2005 base)	5.014	5.153	5.327	5.449	5.649
Real GDP Growth Rate (%)	4.441	2.766	3.393	2.284	3.660
GDP Deflator (2005=100.0)	96.075	98.188	100.000	100.610	100.115
Inflation, GDP Deflator (%)	4.786	2.199	1.845	0.6100	-0.4920

Government Spending and Taxation

Government Spending and Taxation					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Government Fiscal Budget (billions)	1.389	1.451	1.480	1.476	1.650
Fiscal Budget Growth Rate (percentage)	10.063	4.464	1.999	-0.2703	11.789
National Tax Rate Net of Transfers (%)	27.091	26.131	24.627	24.333	26.578
Government Revenues Net of Transfers (LCU billions)	1.305	1.322	1.312	1.334	1.503
Government Surplus(-) Deficit(+) (LCU billions)	-0.0840	-0.1290	-0.1680	-0.1420	-0.1470
Government Surplus(+) Deficit(-) (%GDP)	-1.7438	-2.5498	-3.1535	-2.5902	-2.5995

Money Supply, Interest Rates and Unemployment

Money Supply, Interest Rates and Unemployment					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Money and Quasi-Money (M2) (LCU billions)	1.900	2.035	2.384	2.290	2.362
Money Supply Growth Rate (%)	8.800	7.123	17.173	-3.9470	3.150
Lending Interest Rate (%)	13.863	12.860	11.070	9.239	14.741
Unemployment Rate (%)	35.800	31.000	33.100	35.200	32.129

Foreign Trade and the Exchange Rate

Foreign Trade and the Exchange Rate					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Official Exchange Rate (LCU/\$US)	0.7191	0.7780	0.7530	0.7490	0.8963
Trade Balance NIPA (\$US billions)	-2.4939	-2.2206	-2.2315	-2.2901	-1.6757
Trade Balance % of GDP	-37.2281	-34.1481	-31.5400	-31.2898	-26.5600
Total Foreign Exchange Reserves (\$US billions)	0.7415	1.108	1.103	0.9063	0.7874

Data in US Dollars

Data in US Dollars					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Nominal GDP (\$US billions)	6.699	6.503	7.075	7.319	6.309
Exports (\$US billions)	1.312	1.185	1.231	1.457	1.054
Imports (\$US billions)	3.806	3.406	3.463	3.747	2.730

Energy Consumption and Production Standard Units

Energy Consumption and Production Standard Units					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Petroleum Consumption (TBDP)	13.273	12.113	12.000	12.063	12.231
Petroleum Production (TBDP)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Petroleum Net Exports (TBDP)	-13.2734	-12.1127	-12.0000	-12.0632	-12.2314
Natural Gas Consumption (bcf)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Natural Gas Production (bcf)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Natural Gas Net Exports (bcf)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Coal Consumption (1000s st)	9,488.70	9,641.92	10,145.49	9,039.31	9,202.83
Coal Production (1000s st)	8,966.91	9,018.02	7,991.05	7,434.88	7,032.50

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Coal Net Exports (1000s st)	-521.7897	-623.8940	-2154.4419	-1604.4317	-2170.3289
Nuclear Production (bil kwh)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Hydroelectric Production (bil kwh)	0.1040	0.0950	0.1076	0.1041	0.1042
Renewables Production (bil kwh)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000

Energy Consumption and Production QUADS

Energy Consumption and Production QUADS					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Petroleum Consumption (Quads)	0.0283	0.0259	0.0256	0.0258	0.0261
Petroleum Production (Quads)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Petroleum Net Exports (Quads)	-0.0283	-0.0259	-0.0256	-0.0258	-0.0261
Natural Gas Consumption (Quads)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Natural Gas Production (Quads)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Natural Gas Net Exports (Quads)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Coal Consumption (Quads)	0.1898	0.1928	0.2029	0.1808	0.1841
Coal Production (Quads)	0.1828	0.1914	0.1680	0.1487	0.1268
Coal Net Exports (Quads)	-0.0069	-0.0014	-0.0349	-0.0321	-0.0572
Nuclear Production (Quads)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Hydroelectric Production (Quads)	0.0010	0.0010	0.0011	0.0010	0.0010
Renewables Production (Quads)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000

World Energy Price Summary

World Energy Price Summary					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Petroleum-WTI (\$/bbl)	95.054	94.159	97.943	93.112	48.709
Natural Gas-Henry Hub (\$/mmbtu)	3.999	2.752	3.729	4.369	2.614
Coal Thermal-Australian (\$/mt)	121.448	96.364	84.562	70.130	57.511

CO2 Emissions

CO2 Emissions					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Petroleum Based (mm mt C)	0.6332	0.5778	0.5724	0.5755	0.5835
Natural Gas Based (mm mt C)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Coal Based (mm mt C)	5.438	5.526	5.814	5.180	5.274
Total CO2 Emissions (mm mt C)	6.071	6.104	6.387	5.756	5.858

Agriculture Consumption and Production

Agriculture Consumption and Production					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Corn Total Consumption (1000 metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Corn Production (1000 metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Corn Net Exports (1000 metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Soybeans Total Consumption (1000 metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Soybeans Production (1000 metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Soybeans Net Exports (1000 metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Rice Total Consumption (1000 metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Rice Production (1000 metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Rice Net Exports (1000 metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Coffee Total Consumption (metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Coffee Production (metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Coffee Net Exports (metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Cocoa Beans Total Consumption (metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Cocoa Beans Production (metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Cocoa Beans Net Exports (metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Wheat Total Consumption (1000 metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Wheat Production (1000 metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Wheat Net Exports (1000 metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000

World Agriculture Pricing Summary

World Agriculture Pricing Summary					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Corn Pricing Summary (\$/metric ton)	291.684	298.417	259.389	192.881	169.750
Soybeans Pricing Summary (\$/metric ton)	540.667	591.417	538.417	491.771	390.417
Rice Pricing Summary (\$/metric ton)	458.558	525.071	473.989	425.148	386.033
Coffee Pricing Summary (\$/kilogram)	5.976	4.111	3.076	4.424	3.526
Cocoa Beans Pricing Summary (\$/kilogram)	2.980	2.392	2.439	3.062	3.135
Wheat Pricing Summary (\$/metric ton)	316.264	313.242	312.248	284.895	203.177

Metals Consumption and Production

Metals Consumption and Production					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Copper Consumption (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Copper Production (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Copper Net Exports (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Zinc Consumption (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Zinc Production (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Zinc Exports (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Lead Consumption (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Lead Production (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Lead Exports (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Tin Consumption (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Tin Production (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Tin Exports (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Nickel Consumption (1000 mt)	7,728.00	4,436.00	3,100.42	2,166.95	1,716.68
Nickel Production (1000 mt)	7,668.46	4,394.17	3,083.36	2,143.99	1,954.52
Nickel Exports (1000 mt)	-59.5409	-41.8271	-17.0604	-22.9671	237.844
Gold Consumption (kg)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Gold Production (kg)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Gold Exports (kg)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Silver Consumption (mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Silver Production (mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Silver Exports (mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000

World Metals Pricing Summary

World Metals Pricing Summary					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Copper (\$/mt)	8,828.19	7,962.35	7,332.10	6,863.40	5,510.46
Zinc (\$/mt)	2,193.90	1,950.41	1,910.26	2,160.97	1,931.68
Tin (\$/mt)	26,053.68	21,125.99	22,282.80	21,898.87	16,066.63
Lead (\$/mt)	2,400.81	2,064.64	2,139.79	2,095.46	1,787.82
Nickel (\$/mt)	22,910.36	17,547.55	15,031.80	16,893.38	11,862.64
Gold (\$/oz)	1,569.21	1,669.52	1,411.46	1,265.58	1,160.66
Silver (\$/oz)	35.224	31.137	23.850	19.071	15.721

Economic Performance Index

Economic Performance Index

The Economic Performance rankings are calculated by CountryWatch's editorial team, and are based on criteria including sustained economic growth, monetary stability, current account deficits, budget surplus, unemployment and structural imbalances. Scores are assessed from 0 to 100 using this aforementioned criteria as well as CountryWatch's proprietary economic research data and models.

	Bank stability risk	Monetary/ Currency stability	Government Finances	Empl./ Unempl.	Econ.GNP growth or decline/ forecast
	0 - 100	0 - 100	0 - 100	0 - 100	%
North Americas					
Canada	92	69	35	38	3.14%
United States	94	76	4	29	3.01%
Western Europe					
Austria	90	27	30	63	1.33%
Belgium	88	27	19	23	1.15%
Cyprus	81	91	16	80	-0.69%
Denmark	97	70	45	78	1.20%
Finland	89	27	41	33	1.25%

France	87	27	18	27	1.52%
Germany	86	27	22	21	1.25%
Greece	79	27	5	24	-2.00%
Iceland	90	17	2	34	-3.04%
Italy	85	27	37	24	0.84%
Ireland	92	27	11	10	-1.55%
Luxembourg	99	27	28	66	2.08%
Malta	77	27	41	51	0.54%
Netherlands	91	27	26	74	1.30%
Norway	98	44	10	76	1.08%
Portugal	77	27	13	20	0.29%
Spain	83	27	9	3	-0.41%
Sweden	94	72	54	32	1.23%
Switzerland	97	86	55	77	1.53%
United Kingdom	85	12	9	37	1.34%
Central and Eastern Europe					
Albania	44	60	33	6	2.30%
Armenia	45	59	49	30	1.80%

Azerbaijan	56	4	84	99	2.68%
Belarus	59	21	83	98	2.41%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	34	68	69	N/A	0.50%
Bulgaria	58	75	88	49	0.20%
Croatia	69	68	94	9	0.18%
Czech Republic	80	89	29	70	1.67%
Estonia	72	90	66	92	0.80%
Georgia	36	60	53	56	2.00%
Hungary	70	66	26	54	-0.16%
Latvia	67	100	65	44	-3.97%
Lithuania	65	91	87	79	-1.65%
Macedonia (FYR)	53	69	56	2	2.03%
Moldova	23	36	81	67	2.50%
Poland	74	74	38	12	2.72%
Romania	62	56	70	62	0.75%
Russia	73	18	90	8	4.00%
Serbia	48	49	52	5	1.97%

Montenegro	39	27	73	1	-1.70%
Slovak Republic	80	62	30	14	4.06%
Slovenia	81	27	36	65	1.12%
Ukraine	41	11	57	N/A	3.68%
Africa					
Algeria	57	18	96	7	4.55%
Angola	49	1	97	N/A	7.05%
Benin	19	91	20	N/A	3.22%
Botswana	68	58	76	N/A	6.33%
Burkina Faso	16	91	13	N/A	4.41%
Burundi	2	91	6	N/A	3.85%
Cameroon	26	91	91	N/A	2.58%
Cape Verde	52	87	4	N/A	4.96%
Central African Republic	9	91	32	N/A	3.18%
Chad	22	91	89	N/A	4.42%
Congo	52	87	87	N/A	12.13%
Côte d'Ivoire	25	91	82	28	2.98%
Dem. Republic					

Congo	4	91	47	N/A	5.44%
Djibouti	31	76	50	N/A	4.47%
Egypt	37	20	24	69	5.01%
Equatorial Guinea	82	91	85	N/A	0.94%
Eritrea	1	3	1	18	1.81%
Ethiopia	6	45	8	N/A	6.96%
Gabon	64	91	96	N/A	5.36%
Gambia	8	48	86	N/A	4.82%
Ghana	9	11	69	N/A	4.50%
Guinea	10	7	91	N/A	3.03%
Guinea-Bissau	5	91	46	N/A	3.47%
Kenya	20	41	59	N/A	4.11%
Lesotho	13	40	12	N/A	2.98%
Liberia	12	73	74	N/A	5.92%
Libya	73	2	94	N/A	5.22%
Madagascar	4	22	24	N/A	-1.02%
Malawi	7	25	55	N/A	5.96%
Mali	20	91	82	N/A	5.12%

Mauritania	15	13	93	N/A	4.58%
Mauritius	65	52	56	55	4.10%
Morocco	37	72	48	26	3.23%
Mozambique	12	23	71	N/A	6.45%
Namibia	40	39	62	N/A	1.70%
Niger	10	91	21	N/A	4.41%
Nigeria	30	6	61	N/A	6.98%
Rwanda	21	40	68	N/A	5.39%
Sao Tome & Principe	1	61	100	N/A	3.40%
Senegal	24	91	63	N/A	3.44%
Seychelles	60	67	97	N/A	4.01%
Sierra Leone	5	10	39	N/A	4.77%
Somalia	2	38	59	N/A	3.19%
South Africa	61	37	70	N/A	2.59%
Sudan	16	5	73	N/A	5.52%
Swaziland	32	44	79	N/A	1.09%
Tanzania	15	45	32	N/A	6.17%
Togo	8	91	92	N/A	2.56%

Tunisia	50	61	44	39	4.00%
Uganda	11	17	54	N/A	5.59%
Zambia	29	20	49	N/A	5.84%
Zimbabwe	0	8	16	N/A	2.24%
South and Central America					
Argentina	66	3	80	36	3.50%
Belize	47	76	80	N/A	1.00%
Bolivia	32	51	61	81	3.99%
Brazil	71	47	78	11	5.50%
Chile	78	25	92	73	4.72%
Columbia	47	52	34	47	2.25%
Costa Rica	60	42	39	57	3.45%
Ecuador	43	76	75	64	2.51%
El Salvador	35	76	67	N/A	1.04%
Guatemala	46	59	58	N/A	2.52%
Honduras	27	47	58	N/A	2.00%
Mexico	69	42	52	61	4.07%
Nicaragua	23	49	42	N/A	1.75%

Panama	66	76	72	45	5.00%
Paraguay	35	46	66	16	5.27%
Peru	59	66	75	22	6.33%
Suriname	58	26	81	59	4.02%
Uruguay	70	26	27	N/A	5.71%
Venezuela	55	1	28	13	-2.63%
Caribbean					
Antigua & Barbuda	72	76	15	N/A	-2.01%
Bahamas	74	76	45	87	-0.50%
Barbados	67	76	33	15	-0.50%
Bermuda	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Cuba	45	76	18	95	0.25%
Dominica	53	76	65	N/A	1.40%
Dominican Republic	54	39	43	4	3.50%
Grenada	63	76	48	N/A	0.80%
Guyana	28	56	17	N/A	4.36%
Haiti	11	27	89	N/A	-8.50%
Jamaica	42	9	85	19	-0.28%

St Lucia	55	76	67	N/A	1.14%
St Vincent & Grenadines	49	76	95	N/A	0.50%
Trinidad & Tobago	82	37	77	72	2.13%
Middle East					
Bahrain	84	76	62	91	3.48%
Iran	51	19	40	58	3.01%
Iraq	48	9	8	N/A	7.27%
Israel	87	62	12	48	3.20%
Jordan	41	51	3	N/A	4.10%
Kuwait	96	4	99	N/A	3.10%
Lebanon	63	54	2	N/A	6.00%
Oman	76	16	88	N/A	4.71%
Qatar	99	16	83	N/A	18.54%
Saudi Arabia	76	8	98	N/A	3.70%
Syria	61	24	40	N/A	5.00%
Turkey	75	23	27	60	5.20%
United Arab Emirates	96	24	98	94	1.29%

Yemen	28	2	78	N/A	7.78%
Asia					
Afghanistan	17	70	74	N/A	8.64%
Bangladesh	13	43	25	N/A	5.38%
Bhutan	24	55	5	N/A	6.85%
Brunei	78	19	99	75	0.48%
Cambodia	18	67	42	N/A	4.77%
China	54	90	19	68	11.03%
Hong Kong	89	76	14	82	5.02%
India	31	38	34	35	8.78%
Indonesia	42	46	37	31	6.00%
Japan	88	89	6	71	1.90%
Kazakhstan	62	13	76	42	2.40%
Korea North	18	65	23	N/A	1.50%
Korea South	83	63	22	85	4.44%
Kyrgyz Republic	24	15	84	88	4.61%
Laos	17	54	7	N/A	7.22%
Macao	91	76	14	82	3.00%

Malaysia	68	65	44	90	4.72%
Maldives	44	55	17	N/A	3.45%
Mongolia	33	5	77	93	7.22%
Myanmar	3	41	72	N/A	5.26%
Nepal	3	14	25	N/A	2.97%
Pakistan	19	15	31	41	3.00%
Papua New Guinea	75	50	11	N/A	7.96%
Philippines	30	48	53	43	3.63%
Singapore	93	75	63	40	5.68%
Sri Lanka	38	22	10	N/A	5.50%
Taiwan	84	88	35	89	6.50%
Tajikistan	6	6	60	97	4.00%
Thailand	56	64	90	96	5.46%
Turkmenistan	51	53	68	N/A	12.00%
Uzbekistan	40	10	60	100	8.00%
Vietnam	25	12	20	N/A	6.04%
Pacific					
Australia	96	63	31	46	2.96%

Fiji	46	53	3	N/A	2.06%
Marshall Islands	27	76	46	N/A	1.08%
Micronesia (Fed. States)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
New Caledonia	96	73	51	52	2.00%
New Zealand	98	73	51	52	2.00%
Samoa	34	88	64	N/A	-2.77%
Solomon Islands	14	71	1	N/A	3.36%
Tonga	26	57	38	N/A	0.60%
Vanuatu	33	58	47	N/A	3.80%

Source:

CountryWatch Inc. www.countrywatch.com

Updated:

This material was produced in 2010; it is subject to updating in 2012.

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Chapter 4

Investment Overview

Foreign Investment Climate

Note on Economy of Kosovo

At the time of writing, soon after Kosovo declared its independence, there was limited information available on the economy.

However, the World Bank's Kosovo Brief (2006) noted that Kosovo suffered from one of the most under-developed economies in Europe, even with the assistance of development subsidies from several former Yugoslav republics. The World Bank Mission in Kosovo (2006/2007) noted that bad economic policies, international sanctions, limited external commerce and ethnic conflict in the 1990s all contributed to the economic problems facing Kosovo. There was temporary increase in GDP growth in the post-war early 2000s, however, by 2002, that turned negative. By 2005, declining foreign assistance led to an estimated rate of 3 percent.

Meanwhile, economic development in post-war Kosovo has ensued in the trade, retail and the construction sectors, while there is a limited private sector. As well, unemployment has registered extraordinarily high rate -- as much as 50 percent in recent years.

Going forward, the controversial nature of Kosovo's independent status was expected to continue to hinder foreign investment and loans. However, its establishment of Investment Promotion Agency of Kosovo was intended to transcend such obstacles.

Foreign Investment in Kosovo

There was limited foreign investment information about Kosovo available soon after independence was declared. That said, Kosovo is home to a black market economy and has been plagued by corruption and criminality. The United Nations has urged a "zero tolerance" policy toward the challenges of corruption and organized crime. Going forward, the controversial nature of Kosovo's independent status was expected to continue to hinder foreign investment and loans.

Today, the foreign investment climate in Kosovo is far more established, with the institution of the Investment Promotion Agency of Kosovo (IPAK). According to IPAK: "With the subsequent international recognition by the world's leading democracies, Kosovo has removed the remaining

obstacles for foreign investors."

IPAK acknowledges obstacles to the path of attracting foreign investment as follows: "However, key challenges remain, such as a big trade imbalance and high unemployment. The Government views the attraction of foreign direct investment as one of the key ways in which these challenges can be met and the objective of sustainable, long-term economic development realized. It is working hard to provide better conditions for all investors, domestic and foreign alike, with a 'win, win' mentality – an investment in Kosovo is seen as a win for the investor and a win for Kosovo."

Kosovo appears to be in the path towards embracing free trade. Indeed, the country has signed onto the Memorandum of Understanding on Trade Liberalization and Facilitation.

IPAK touts the country's "Customs-free access to the EU market based on the EU Autonomous Trade Preference (ATP) Regime, Customs-free access to the US market, Central European Free Trade Area – CEFTA."

On the matter of CEFTA, IPAK says the following:

"Kosovo now is member of the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA). This agreement between Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia and Macedonia promotes trade liberalization among the member countries covering a wide range of trade-related cooperation on the basis of the EU acquis and international rules. Now CEFTA expanded and includes the rest of the Balkan Countries, such as Albania, BH, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo and Moldova, and incorporate the existing 31 SEE FTA's into a single treaty.

The enlarged CEFTA will consolidate the network of bilateral free trade agreements in the region and ensure that Kosovo is an equal partner in it. It will give Kosovo exporters duty free access to a large regional market. It will also create common institutions to promote further economic development and to deal with trade barriers in a cooperative manner.

The signing of CEFTA is the ultimate success of the regional parties that committed to the Memorandum of Understanding on Trade Liberalisation concluded under the auspices of the Stability Pact in 2001.

Membership of CEFTA allows Kosovo to be part of a regional free trade area of over 22 million consumers."

As well, IPAK emphasizes that Kosovo is located in a favorable central part of Europe, with a "competitive and well educated workforce, enviable natural resources (mining, agriculture), low taxes and a transparent tax system, high purchase power through remittances (app. 400 million € annually), customs free access to the EU and US market and CEFTA members market."

IPAK stresses that with "a general tariff rate of 10% for imports and 0% for exports, Kosovo has already established a liberal trade regime."

NOTE:

See IPAK online for more information: URL - <http://www.invest-ks.org>

Sources: World Bank; Investment Promotion Agency of Kosovo.

Foreign Investment Index

Foreign Investment Index

The Foreign Investment Index is a proprietary index measuring attractiveness to international investment flows. The Foreign Investment Index is calculated using an established methodology by CountryWatch's Editor-in-Chief and is based on a given country's economic stability (sustained economic growth, monetary stability, current account deficits, budget surplus), economic risk (risk of non-servicing of payments for goods or services, loans and trade-related finance, risk of sovereign default), business and investment climate (property rights, labor force and laws, regulatory transparency, openness to foreign investment, market conditions, and stability of government). Scores are assigned from 0-10 using the aforementioned criteria. A score of 0 marks the lowest level of foreign investment viability, while a score of 10 marks the highest level of foreign investment viability, according to this proprietary index.

Country	Assessment
Afghanistan	2
Albania	4.5
Algeria	6

Andorra	9
Angola	4.5-5
Antigua	8.5
Argentina	5
Armenia	5
Australia	9.5
Austria	9-9.5
Azerbaijan	5
Bahamas	9
Bahrain	7.5
Bangladesh	4.5
Barbados	9
Belarus	4
Belgium	9
Belize	7.5
Benin	5.5
Bhutan	4.5
Bolivia	4.5

Bosnia-Herzegovina	5
Botswana	7.5-8
Brazil	8
Brunei	7
Bulgaria	5.5
Burkina Faso	4
Burma (Myanmar)	4.5
Burundi	4
Cambodia	4.5
Cameroon	5
Canada	9.5
Cape Verde	6
Central African Republic	3
Chad	4
Chile	9
China	7.5
China: Hong Kong	8.5
China: Taiwan	8.5

Colombia	7
Comoros	4
Congo DRC	4
Congo RC	5
Costa Rica	8
Cote d'Ivoire	4.5
Croatia	7
Cuba	4.5
Cyprus	7
Czech Republic	8.5
Denmark	9.5
Djibouti	4.5
Dominica	6
Dominican Republic	6.5
East Timor	4.5
Ecuador	5.5
Egypt	4.5-5
El Salvador	6

Equatorial Guinea	4.5
Eritrea	3.5
Estonia	8
Ethiopia	4.5
Fiji	5
Finland	9
Former Yugoslav Rep. of Macedonia	5
France	9-9.5
Gabon	5.5
Gambia	5
Georgia	5
Germany	9-9.5
Ghana	5.5
Greece	5
Grenada	7.5
Guatemala	5.5
Guinea	3.5
Guinea-Bissau	3.5

Guyana	4.5
Haiti	4
Holy See (Vatican)	n/a
Hong Kong (China)	8.5
Honduras	5.5
Hungary	8
Iceland	8-8.5
India	8
Indonesia	5.5
Iran	4
Iraq	3
Ireland	8
Israel	8.5
Italy	8
Jamaica	5.5
Japan	9.5
Jordan	6
Kazakhstan	6

Kenya	5
Kiribati	5.5
Korea, North	1
Korea, South	9
Kosovo	4.5
Kuwait	8.5
Kyrgyzstan	4.5
Laos	4
Latvia	7
Lebanon	5
Lesotho	5.5
Liberia	3.5
Libya	3
Liechtenstein	9
Lithuania	7.5
Luxembourg	9-9.5
Madagascar	4.5
Malawi	4.5

Malaysia	8.5
Maldives	6.5
Mali	5
Malta	9
Marshall Islands	5
Mauritania	4.5
Mauritius	7.5-8
Mexico	6.5-7
Micronesia	5
Moldova	4.5-5
Monaco	9
Mongolia	5
Montenegro	5.5
Morocco	7.5
Mozambique	5
Namibia	7.5
Nauru	4.5
Nepal	4

Netherlands	9-9.5
New Zealand	9.5
Nicaragua	5
Niger	4.5
Nigeria	4.5
Norway	9-9.5
Oman	8
Pakistan	4
Palau	4.5-5
Panama	7
Papua New Guinea	5
Paraguay	6
Peru	6
Philippines	6
Poland	8
Portugal	7.5-8
Qatar	9
Romania	6-6.5

Russia	6
Rwanda	4
Saint Kitts and Nevis	8
Saint Lucia	8
Saint Vincent and Grenadines	7
Samoa	7
San Marino	8.5
Sao Tome and Principe	4.5-5
Saudi Arabia	7
Senegal	6
Serbia	6
Seychelles	5
Sierra Leone	4
Singapore	9.5
Slovak Republic (Slovakia)	8.5
Slovenia	8.5-9
Solomon Islands	5
Somalia	2

South Africa	8
Spain	7.5-8
Sri Lanka	5.5
Sudan	4
Suriname	5
Swaziland	4.5
Sweden	9.5
Switzerland	9.5
Syria	2.5
Tajikistan	4
Taiwan (China)	8.5
Tanzania	5
Thailand	7.5-8
Togo	4.5-5
Tonga	5.5-6
Trinidad and Tobago	8-8.5
Tunisia	6
Turkey	6.5-7

Turkmenistan	4
Tuvalu	7
Uganda	5
Ukraine	4.5-5
United Arab Emirates	8.5
United Kingdom	9
United States	9
Uruguay	6.5-7
Uzbekistan	4
Vanuatu	6
Venezuela	5
Vietnam	5.5
Yemen	3
Zambia	4.5-5
Zimbabwe	3.5

Editor's Note:

As of 2015, the global economic crisis (emerging in 2008) had affected many countries across the world, resulting in changes to their rankings. Among those countries affected were top tier economies, such as the [United Kingdom](#), [Iceland](#), [Switzerland](#) and [Austria](#). However, in all these

cases, their rankings have moved back upward in the last couple of years as anxieties have eased. Other top tier countries, such as [Spain](#), [Portugal](#), [Ireland](#), and [Italy](#), suffered some effects due to debt woes and the concomitant effect on the euro zone. Greece, another euro zone nation, was also downgraded due to its sovereign debt crisis; however, Greece's position on the precipice of default incurred a sharper downgrade than the other four euro zone countries mentioned above. Cyprus' exposure to Greek bank yielded a downgrade in its case. Slovenia and [Latvia](#) have been slightly downgraded due to a mix of economic and political concerns but could easily be upgraded in a future assessment, should these concerns abate. Meanwhile, the crisis in eastern [Ukraine](#) fueled downgrades in that country and neighboring [Russia](#).

Despite the "trifecta of tragedy" in [Japan](#) in 2011 -- the earthquake, the ensuing tsunami, and the resulting nuclear crisis -- and the appreciable destabilization of the economic and political terrain therein, this country has only slightly been downgraded. Japan's challenges have been assessed to be transient, the government remains accountable, and there is little risk of default. Both [India](#) and China retain their rankings; [India](#) holds a slightly higher ranking than [China](#) due to its record of democratic representation and accountability.

There were shifts in opposite directions for [Mali](#) and [Nigeria](#) versus the [Central African Republic](#), [Burkina Faso](#), and [Burundi](#). [Mali](#) was slightly upgraded due to its efforts to return to constitutional order following the 2012 coup and to neutralize the threat of separatists and Islamists. Likewise, a new government in [Nigeria](#) generated a slight upgrade as the country attempts to confront corruption, crime, and terrorism. But the [Central African Republic](#) was downgraded due to the takeover of the government by Seleka rebels and the continued decline into lawlessness in that country. Likewise, the attempts by the leaders of [Burundi](#) and [Burkina Faso](#) to hold onto power by by-passing the constitution raised eyebrows and resulted in downgrades.

Political unrest in [Libya](#) and [Algeria](#) have contributed to a decision to marginally downgrade these countries as well. [Syria](#) incurred a sharper downgrade due to the devolution into de facto civil war and the dire security threat posed by Islamist terrorists. [Iraq](#) saw a similar downgrade as a result of the takeover of wide swaths of territory and the threat of genocide at the hands of Islamist terrorists. [Yemen](#), likewise, has been downgraded due to political instability at the hands of secessionists, terrorists, Houthi rebels, and the intervention of external parties. Conversely, [Egypt](#) and [Tunisia](#) saw slight upgrades as their political environments stabilize.

At the low end of the spectrum, devolving security conditions and/or economic crisis have resulted in countries like [Pakistan](#), [Afghanistan](#), [Somalia](#), and [Zimbabwe](#) maintaining their low ratings.

The [United States](#) continues to retain its previous slight downgrade due to the enduring threat of default surrounding the debt ceiling in that country, matched by a conflict-ridden political climate. In the case of [Mexico](#), there is limited concern about default, but increasing alarm over the security situation in that country and the government's ability to contain it. In [Argentina](#), a default to bond

holders resulted in a downgrade to that country. Finally, a small but significant upgrade was attributed to [Cuba](#) due to its recent pro-business reforms and its normalization of ties with the United States.

Source:

CountryWatch Inc. www.countrywatch.com

Updated:

2015

Corruption Perceptions Index

Corruption Perceptions Index

Transparency International: [Corruption Perceptions Index](#)

Editor's Note:

Transparency International's [Corruption Perceptions Index](#) is a composite index which ranks countries in terms of the degree to which corruption is perceived to exist among public officials. This index indicates the views of national and international business people and analysts about the levels of corruption in each country. The highest (and best) level of transparency is indicated by the number, 10. The lower (and worse) levels of transparency are indicated by lower numbers.

Rank	Country/Territory	CPI 2009 Score	Surveys Used	Confidence Range
1	New Zealand	9.4	6	9.1 - 9.5
2	Denmark	9.3	6	9.1 - 9.5
3	Singapore	9.2	9	9.0 - 9.4
3	Sweden	9.2	6	9.0 - 9.3

5	Switzerland	9.0	6	8.9 - 9.1
6	Finland	8.9	6	8.4 - 9.4
6	Netherlands	8.9	6	8.7 - 9.0
8	Australia	8.7	8	8.3 - 9.0
8	Canada	8.7	6	8.5 - 9.0
8	Iceland	8.7	4	7.5 - 9.4
11	Norway	8.6	6	8.2 - 9.1
12	Hong Kong	8.2	8	7.9 - 8.5
12	Luxembourg	8.2	6	7.6 - 8.8
14	Germany	8.0	6	7.7 - 8.3
14	Ireland	8.0	6	7.8 - 8.4
16	Austria	7.9	6	7.4 - 8.3
17	Japan	7.7	8	7.4 - 8.0
17	United Kingdom	7.7	6	7.3 - 8.2
19	United States	7.5	8	6.9 - 8.0
20	Barbados	7.4	4	6.6 - 8.2
21	Belgium	7.1	6	6.9 - 7.3
22	Qatar	7.0	6	5.8 - 8.1

22	Saint Lucia	7.0	3	6.7 - 7.5
24	France	6.9	6	6.5 - 7.3
25	Chile	6.7	7	6.5 - 6.9
25	Uruguay	6.7	5	6.4 - 7.1
27	Cyprus	6.6	4	6.1 - 7.1
27	Estonia	6.6	8	6.1 - 6.9
27	Slovenia	6.6	8	6.3 - 6.9
30	United Arab Emirates	6.5	5	5.5 - 7.5
31	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	6.4	3	4.9 - 7.5
32	Israel	6.1	6	5.4 - 6.7
32	Spain	6.1	6	5.5 - 6.6
34	Dominica	5.9	3	4.9 - 6.7
35	Portugal	5.8	6	5.5 - 6.2
35	Puerto Rico	5.8	4	5.2 - 6.3
37	Botswana	5.6	6	5.1 - 6.3
37	Taiwan	5.6	9	5.4 - 5.9
39	Brunei Darussalam	5.5	4	4.7 - 6.4

39	Oman	5.5	5	4.4 - 6.5
39	Korea (South)	5.5	9	5.3 - 5.7
42	Mauritius	5.4	6	5.0 - 5.9
43	Costa Rica	5.3	5	4.7 - 5.9
43	Macau	5.3	3	3.3 - 6.9
45	Malta	5.2	4	4.0 - 6.2
46	Bahrain	5.1	5	4.2 - 5.8
46	Cape Verde	5.1	3	3.3 - 7.0
46	Hungary	5.1	8	4.6 - 5.7
49	Bhutan	5.0	4	4.3 - 5.6
49	Jordan	5.0	7	3.9 - 6.1
49	Poland	5.0	8	4.5 - 5.5
52	Czech Republic	4.9	8	4.3 - 5.6
52	Lithuania	4.9	8	4.4 - 5.4
54	Seychelles	4.8	3	3.0 - 6.7
55	South Africa	4.7	8	4.3 - 4.9
56	Latvia	4.5	6	4.1 - 4.9
56	Malaysia	4.5	9	4.0 - 5.1

56	Namibia	4.5	6	3.9 - 5.1
56	Samoa	4.5	3	3.3 - 5.3
56	Slovakia	4.5	8	4.1 - 4.9
61	Cuba	4.4	3	3.5 - 5.1
61	Turkey	4.4	7	3.9 - 4.9
63	Italy	4.3	6	3.8 - 4.9
63	Saudi Arabia	4.3	5	3.1 - 5.3
65	Tunisia	4.2	6	3.0 - 5.5
66	Croatia	4.1	8	3.7 - 4.5
66	Georgia	4.1	7	3.4 - 4.7
66	Kuwait	4.1	5	3.2 - 5.1
69	Ghana	3.9	7	3.2 - 4.6
69	Montenegro	3.9	5	3.5 - 4.4
71	Bulgaria	3.8	8	3.2 - 4.5
71	FYR Macedonia	3.8	6	3.4 - 4.2
71	Greece	3.8	6	3.2 - 4.3
71	Romania	3.8	8	3.2 - 4.3
75	Brazil	3.7	7	3.3 - 4.3

75	Colombia	3.7	7	3.1 - 4.3
75	Peru	3.7	7	3.4 - 4.1
75	Suriname	3.7	3	3.0 - 4.7
79	Burkina Faso	3.6	7	2.8 - 4.4
79	China	3.6	9	3.0 - 4.2
79	Swaziland	3.6	3	3.0 - 4.7
79	Trinidad and Tobago	3.6	4	3.0 - 4.3
83	Serbia	3.5	6	3.3 - 3.9
84	El Salvador	3.4	5	3.0 - 3.8
84	Guatemala	3.4	5	3.0 - 3.9
84	India	3.4	10	3.2 - 3.6
84	Panama	3.4	5	3.1 - 3.7
84	Thailand	3.4	9	3.0 - 3.8
89	Lesotho	3.3	6	2.8 - 3.8
89	Malawi	3.3	7	2.7 - 3.9
89	Mexico	3.3	7	3.2 - 3.5
89	Moldova	3.3	6	2.7 - 4.0
89	Morocco	3.3	6	2.8 - 3.9

89	Rwanda	3.3	4	2.9 - 3.7
95	Albania	3.2	6	3.0 - 3.3
95	Vanuatu	3.2	3	2.3 - 4.7
97	Liberia	3.1	3	1.9 - 3.8
97	Sri Lanka	3.1	7	2.8 - 3.4
99	Bosnia and Herzegovina	3.0	7	2.6 - 3.4
99	Dominican Republic	3.0	5	2.9 - 3.2
99	Jamaica	3.0	5	2.8 - 3.3
99	Madagascar	3.0	7	2.8 - 3.2
99	Senegal	3.0	7	2.5 - 3.6
99	Tonga	3.0	3	2.6 - 3.3
99	Zambia	3.0	7	2.8 - 3.2
106	Argentina	2.9	7	2.6 - 3.1
106	Benin	2.9	6	2.3 - 3.4
106	Gabon	2.9	3	2.6 - 3.1
106	Gambia	2.9	5	1.6 - 4.0
106	Niger	2.9	5	2.7 - 3.0
111	Algeria	2.8	6	2.5 - 3.1

111	Djibouti	2.8	4	2.3 - 3.2
111	Egypt	2.8	6	2.6 - 3.1
111	Indonesia	2.8	9	2.4 - 3.2
111	Kiribati	2.8	3	2.3 - 3.3
111	Mali	2.8	6	2.4 - 3.2
111	Sao Tome and Principe	2.8	3	2.4 - 3.3
111	Solomon Islands	2.8	3	2.3 - 3.3
111	Togo	2.8	5	1.9 - 3.9
120	Armenia	2.7	7	2.6 - 2.8
120	Bolivia	2.7	6	2.4 - 3.1
120	Ethiopia	2.7	7	2.4 - 2.9
120	Kazakhstan	2.7	7	2.1 - 3.3
120	Mongolia	2.7	7	2.4 - 3.0
120	Vietnam	2.7	9	2.4 - 3.1
126	Eritrea	2.6	4	1.6 - 3.8
126	Guyana	2.6	4	2.5 - 2.7
126	Syria	2.6	5	2.2 - 2.9
126	Tanzania	2.6	7	2.4 - 2.9

130	Honduras	2.5	6	2.2 - 2.8
130	Lebanon	2.5	3	1.9 - 3.1
130	Libya	2.5	6	2.2 - 2.8
130	Maldives	2.5	4	1.8 - 3.2
130	Mauritania	2.5	7	2.0 - 3.3
130	Mozambique	2.5	7	2.3 - 2.8
130	Nicaragua	2.5	6	2.3 - 2.7
130	Nigeria	2.5	7	2.2 - 2.7
130	Uganda	2.5	7	2.1 - 2.8
139	Bangladesh	2.4	7	2.0 - 2.8
139	Belarus	2.4	4	2.0 - 2.8
139	Pakistan	2.4	7	2.1 - 2.7
139	Philippines	2.4	9	2.1 - 2.7
143	Azerbaijan	2.3	7	2.0 - 2.6
143	Comoros	2.3	3	1.6 - 3.3
143	Nepal	2.3	6	2.0 - 2.6
146	Cameroon	2.2	7	1.9 - 2.6
146	Ecuador	2.2	5	2.0 - 2.5

146	Kenya	2.2	7	1.9 - 2.5
146	Russia	2.2	8	1.9 - 2.4
146	Sierra Leone	2.2	5	1.9 - 2.4
146	Timor-Leste	2.2	5	1.8 - 2.6
146	Ukraine	2.2	8	2.0 - 2.6
146	Zimbabwe	2.2	7	1.7 - 2.8
154	Côte d'Ivoire	2.1	7	1.8 - 2.4
154	Papua New Guinea	2.1	5	1.7 - 2.5
154	Paraguay	2.1	5	1.7 - 2.5
154	Yemen	2.1	4	1.6 - 2.5
158	Cambodia	2.0	8	1.8 - 2.2
158	Central African Republic	2.0	4	1.9 - 2.2
158	Laos	2.0	4	1.6 - 2.6
158	Tajikistan	2.0	8	1.6 - 2.5
162	Angola	1.9	5	1.8 - 1.9
162	Congo Brazzaville	1.9	5	1.6 - 2.1
162	Democratic Republic of Congo	1.9	5	1.7 - 2.1
162	Guinea-Bissau	1.9	3	1.8 - 2.0

162	Kyrgyzstan	1.9	7	1.8 - 2.1
162	Venezuela	1.9	7	1.8 - 2.0
168	Burundi	1.8	6	1.6 - 2.0
168	Equatorial Guinea	1.8	3	1.6 - 1.9
168	Guinea	1.8	5	1.7 - 1.8
168	Haiti	1.8	3	1.4 - 2.3
168	Iran	1.8	3	1.7 - 1.9
168	Turkmenistan	1.8	4	1.7 - 1.9
174	Uzbekistan	1.7	6	1.5 - 1.8
175	Chad	1.6	6	1.5 - 1.7
176	Iraq	1.5	3	1.2 - 1.8
176	Sudan	1.5	5	1.4 - 1.7
178	Myanmar	1.4	3	0.9 - 1.8
179	Afghanistan	1.3	4	1.0 - 1.5
180	Somalia	1.1	3	0.9 - 1.4

Methodology:

As noted above, the highest (and best) level of transparency with the least perceived corruption is indicated by the number, 10. The lower (and worse) levels of transparency are indicated by lower

numbers.

According to Transparency International, the [Corruption Perceptions Index](#) (CPI) table shows a country's ranking and score, the number of surveys used to determine the score, and the confidence range of the scoring.

The rank shows how one country compares to others included in the index. The CPI score indicates the perceived level of public-sector corruption in a country/territory.

The CPI is based on 13 independent surveys. However, not all surveys include all countries. The surveys used column indicates how many surveys were relied upon to determine the score for that country.

The confidence range indicates the reliability of the CPI scores and tells us that allowing for a margin of error, we can be 90% confident that the true score for this country lies within this range.

Note:

Kosovo, which separated from the Yugoslav successor state of [Serbia](#), is not listed above. No calculation is available for [Kosovo](#) at this time, however, a future corruption index by Transparency International may include the world's newest country in its tally. Taiwan has been listed above despite its contested status; while Taiwan claims sovereign status, [China](#) claims ultimate jurisdiction over Taiwan. Hong Kong, which is also under the rubric of Chinese sovereignty, is listed above. Note as well that Puerto Rico, which is a [United States](#) domain, is also included in the list above. These inclusions likely have to do with the size and fairly autonomous status of their economies.

Source:

Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index; available at URL: <http://www.transparency.org>

Updated:

Uploaded in 2011 using most recent ranking available; reviewed in 2015.

Competitiveness Ranking

Competitiveness Ranking

Editor's Note:

The Global Competitiveness Report's competitiveness ranking is based on the Global Competitiveness Index (GCI), which was developed for the World Economic Forum. The GCI is based on a number of competitiveness considerations, and provides a comprehensive picture of the competitiveness landscape in countries around the world. The competitiveness considerations are: institutions, infrastructure, macroeconomic environment, health and primary education, higher education and training, goods market efficiency, labour market efficiency, financial market development, technological readiness, market size, business sophistication, and innovation. The rankings are calculated from both publicly available data and the Executive Opinion Survey.

Country/Economy	GCI 2010 Rank	GCI 2010 Score	GCI 2009 Rank	Change 2009-2010
Switzerland	1	5.63	1	0
Sweden	2	5.56	4	2
Singapore	3	5.48	3	0
United States	4	5.43	2	-2
Germany	5	5.39	7	2
Japan	6	5.37	8	2
Finland	7	5.37	6	-1
Netherlands	8	5.33	10	2
Denmark	9	5.32	5	-4
Canada	10	5.30	9	-1
Hong Kong SAR	11	5.30	11	0

United Kingdom	12	5.25	13	1
Taiwan, China	13	5.21	12	-1
Norway	14	5.14	14	0
France	15	5.13	16	1
Australia	16	5.11	15	-1
Qatar	17	5.10	22	5
Austria	18	5.09	17	-1
Belgium	19	5.07	18	-1
Luxembourg	20	5.05	21	1
Saudi Arabia	21	4.95	28	7
Korea, Rep.	22	4.93	19	-3
New Zealand	23	4.92	20	-3
Israel	24	4.91	27	3
United Arab Emirates	25	4.89	23	-2
Malaysia	26	4.88	24	-2
China	27	4.84	29	2
Brunei Darussalam	28	4.75	32	4
Ireland	29	4.74	25	-4

Chile	30	4.69	30	0
Iceland	31	4.68	26	-5
Tunisia	32	4.65	40	8
Estonia	33	4.61	35	2
Oman	34	4.61	41	7
Kuwait	35	4.59	39	4
Czech Republic	36	4.57	31	-5
Bahrain	37	4.54	38	1
Thailand	38	4.51	36	-2
Poland	39	4.51	46	7
Cyprus	40	4.50	34	-6
Puerto Rico	41	4.49	42	1
Spain	42	4.49	33	-9
Barbados	43	4.45	44	1
Indonesia	44	4.43	54	10
Slovenia	45	4.42	37	-8
Portugal	46	4.38	43	-3
Lithuania	47	4.38	53	6

Italy	48	4.37	48	0
Montenegro	49	4.36	62	13
Malta	50	4.34	52	2
India	51	4.33	49	-2
Hungary	52	4.33	58	6
Panama	53	4.33	59	6
South Africa	54	4.32	45	-9
Mauritius	55	4.32	57	2
Costa Rica	56	4.31	55	-1
Azerbaijan	57	4.29	51	-6
Brazil	58	4.28	56	-2
Vietnam	59	4.27	75	16
Slovak Republic	60	4.25	47	-13
Turkey	61	4.25	61	0
Sri Lanka	62	4.25	79	17
Russian Federation	63	4.24	63	0
Uruguay	64	4.23	65	1
Jordan	65	4.21	50	-15

Mexico	66	4.19	60	-6
Romania	67	4.16	64	-3
Colombia	68	4.14	69	1
Iran	69	4.14	n/a	n/a
Latvia	70	4.14	68	-2
Bulgaria	71	4.13	76	5
Kazakhstan	72	4.12	67	-5
Peru	73	4.11	78	5
Namibia	74	4.09	74	0
Morocco	75	4.08	73	-2
Botswana	76	4.05	66	-10
Croatia	77	4.04	72	-5
Guatemala	78	4.04	80	2
Macedonia, FYR	79	4.02	84	5
Rwanda	80	4.00	n/a	n/a
Egypt	81	4.00	70	-11
El Salvador	82	3.99	77	-5
Greece	83	3.99	71	-12

Trinidad and Tobago	84	3.97	86	2
Philippines	85	3.96	87	2
Algeria	86	3.96	83	-3
Argentina	87	3.95	85	-2
Albania	88	3.94	96	8
Ukraine	89	3.90	82	-7
Gambia, The	90	3.90	81	-9
Honduras	91	3.89	89	-2
Lebanon	92	3.89	n/a	n/a
Georgia	93	3.86	90	-3
Moldova	94	3.86	n/a	n/a
Jamaica	95	3.85	91	-4
Serbia	96	3.84	93	-3
Syria	97	3.79	94	-3
Armenia	98	3.76	97	-1
Mongolia	99	3.75	117	18
Libya	100	3.74	88	-12
Dominican Republic	101	3.72	95	-6

Bosnia and Herzegovina	102	3.70	109	7
Benin	103	3.69	103	0
Senegal	104	3.67	92	-12
Ecuador	105	3.65	105	0
Kenya	106	3.65	98	-8
Bangladesh	107	3.64	106	-1
Bolivia	108	3.64	120	12
Cambodia	109	3.63	110	1
Guyana	110	3.62	104	-6
Cameroon	111	3.58	111	0
Nicaragua	112	3.57	115	3
Tanzania	113	3.56	100	-13
Ghana	114	3.56	114	0
Zambia	115	3.55	112	-3
Tajikistan	116	3.53	122	6
Cape Verde	117	3.51	n/a	n/a
Uganda	118	3.51	108	-10
Ethiopia	119	3.51	118	-1

Paraguay	120	3.49	124	4
Kyrgyz Republic	121	3.49	123	2
Venezuela	122	3.48	113	-9
Pakistan	123	3.48	101	-22
Madagascar	124	3.46	121	-3
Malawi	125	3.45	119	-6
Swaziland	126	3.40	n/a	n/a
Nigeria	127	3.38	99	-28
Lesotho	128	3.36	107	-21
Côte d'Ivoire	129	3.35	116	-13
Nepal	130	3.34	125	-5
Mozambique	131	3.32	129	-2
Mali	132	3.28	130	-2
Timor-Leste	133	3.23	126	-7
Burkina Faso	134	3.20	128	-6
Mauritania	135	3.14	127	-8
Zimbabwe	136	3.03	132	-4
Burundi	137	2.96	133	-4

Angola	138	2.93	n/a	n/a
Chad	139	2.73	131	-8

Methodology:

The competitiveness rankings are calculated from both publicly available data and the Executive Opinion Survey, a comprehensive annual survey conducted by the World Economic Forum together with its network of Partner Institutes (leading research institutes and business organizations) in the countries covered by the Report.

Highlights according to WEF --

- The [United States](#) falls two places to fourth position, overtaken by [Sweden](#) and [Singapore](#) in the rankings of the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report 2010-2011
- The People's Republic of [China](#) continues to move up the rankings, with marked improvements in several other Asian countries
- [Germany](#) moves up two places to fifth place, leading the Eurozone countries
- [Switzerland](#) tops the rankings

Source:

World Economic Forum; available at URL: <http://www.weforum.org>

Updated:

2011 using most recent ranking available; reviewed in 2015.

Taxation

Taxation

No information on independent Kosovo was available at the time when independence was

declared. Since that time,
according to the Investment Protection Agency of Kosovo, tariffs are as follows --

Customs duties: 10% on imports; Excise tax on fuel, tobacco alcohol and luxury goods. No duties and taxes on exports. Taxes in place: VAT 16%, Corporate Profit Tax 10 %, Wage Tax progressive max.10%

Stock Market

Stock Market Data

No information on independent Kosovo was available at the time of writing when independence was declared.

Partner Links

Partner Links

Chapter 5

Social Overview

People

Origins: Cultural Legacy

Historians suggest that the earliest known inhabitants of Kosovo were the Illyrians. While ethnic Albanians of contemporary Kosovo identify themselves as direct descendants of the Illyrians, Serbian scholars have suggested that claim that Albanians emerged in Kosovo in the Middle Ages as a result of unions between Illyrians and Dardanians from Thrace.

The area was conquered by Alexander the Great in 300 B.C.E. (before the common era) and was subsumed as part of the Roman interests in the 4th century C.E. Slavs moved into the region in the 6th century after crossing the Danube. This movement shifted the Illyrian-speaking population landscape as inhabitants (regarded by some as Albanians) traversed eastward from the Adriatic into present-day Kosovo. Meanwhile, the Slavs migrating across the Danube sub-divided into Serbs, Slovenes, and Croats.

In the 12th century, Kosovo became the governmental and cultural nexus of a medieval Serbian state, which was headed by the Nemanjic Dynasty. This situation lasted two centuries and, as such, among Serbs, Kosovo came to be known as "Old Serbia." Kosovo, however, was soon to become part of the Ottoman Empire.

As discussed above under "Serbia," the battle of Kosovo Polje, in which the Serbs put forth a valiant effort against the Ottoman Turks, has been emblazoned in Serbian national consciousness. But at the same time, Kosovo has also been the center of society and culture for Albanians of the area. Indeed, ethnic Albanians began returning to the area in the 15th century. Over time, they converted to Islam and the Islamization of the Kosovo Albanians commenced. Serbian conversion to Islam was far more limited by comparison, as a result of the strength of the Orthodox Church. Losses in battles against the Turks resulted in Serbs moving out of the area of Kosovo and northward to Belgrade. This movement has come to be known as "the great migration." Consequently, Kosovo became underpopulated and was eventually re-inhabited by ethnic Albanians from the eastern hills of Albania.

It was not until 1912 that Kosovo was ceded to Serbia by the Turks in the Balkan Wars, becoming part of what would be known as Yugoslavia. Then, in 1974, then-Yugoslav President

Tito established a new constitution in which the autonomous nature of Kosovo was recognized, conveying similar rights as had been bestowed on the six republics of Yugoslavia -- Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia and Macedonia.

In the late 1980s, Slobodan Milosevic began his campaign to take control of the former Yugoslavia and eventually take away the autonomy that Kosovars (most of whom were ethnic Albanians) had enjoyed under the long-time ruler of Yugoslavia, Tito. This action, in tandem with rising Serbian nationalism, eventually led to the Bosnian War and the break-up of Yugoslavia. While Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia gained independence, the Kosovo issue was not explicitly addressed in the 1995 Dayton Accords that ended the Bosnian War and provided for the transition to peaceful governance. Instead, the Kosovo province was treated as part of Serbia in the new successor state -- Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY).

Instability in Kosovo threatened the entire region. This threat seemed more apparent when the Albanian government in Tirana announced that it would act as a unitary Albanian nation if Serbia were to take offensive action in Kosovo. A number of raids, protests, gun battles, and terrorist acts, including the shooting down of a Yugoslav Airlines training aircraft, occurred from 1996 to 1998. While ethnic Albanians had historically sought greater autonomy from Serbia by peaceful actions, attacks from the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) led to severe reprisals from the Serbian-led Yugoslav army and police forces. The severity and indiscriminate nature of the Yugoslav counterattacks led to a mass refugee crisis of tens of thousands of Kosovo Albanians in the summer of 1998. Then, a massacre of Kosovo's civilians by Serbian forces in January 1999 led to the threat of air strikes by NATO. Negotiations aimed at preventing military attacks were not ultimately successful and on March 24, 1999, NATO began a bombing campaign (Operation Allied Force) against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia due to its actions in Kosovo.

NATO suspended air strikes on June 10, 1999, after the Yugoslav leaders accepted the terms of the Military Technical Agreement and Serbian troops began withdrawing from Kosovo. The demilitarization of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and other armed Kosovo Albanian group followed as well. A formal peace settlement was soon reached under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and an international civil and security presence was deployed under United Nations' auspices.

Within Serbia, Kosovo has been regarded as an intrinsic aspect of Serbian identity, legacy and territorial integrity. But among Kosovars, the thrust for sovereign independent status has been at the forefront of the national consciousness throughout the years since the establishment of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244.

Contemporary Cultural Demography

The total population for Kosovo is estimated to be 2.2 million. Ethnic Albanians make up the vast majority of the population, although there is a notable ethnic Serbian minority. As well, there are Bosnians, Gorans, Roma, Turks and others who make up the people of Kosovo.

Islam is the predominant religion, as practiced by the majority ethnic Albanian population. However, there are Muslims within the Bosniak, Goran, Turkish and Roma communities as well. Orthodox Christianity is claimed by most ethnic Serbians. There are also some Roman Catholics and Protestants within the Christian population. That said, religion is not a dominating force of life in Kosovo.

Serbian and Albanian are the main languages spoken in Kosovo. Turkish, Gorani, Romani and Bosnian are also spoken languages in Kosovo.

Human Development

The literacy rate in Kosovo is 91.9 percent and about 4.3 percent of GDP is spent in the country on educational expenditures. Poverty, as well as a legacy of ethnic cleansing and political violence, have constituted recent life in Kosovo. As such, human development is low relative to other European countries.

Written by Dr. Denise Youngblood Coleman, Editor in Chief, www.countrywatch.com; see Bibliography for research sources.

Human Development Index

Human Development Index

Human Development Index (Ranked Numerically)

The [Human Development Index](#) (HDI) is used to measure quality of life in countries across the world. The HDI has been compiled since 1990 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on a regular basis. The HDI is a composite of several indicators, which measure a country's achievements in three main arenas of human development: longevity, education, and economic standard of living. Although the concept of human development is complicated and cannot be properly captured by values and indices, the HDI offers a wide-ranging assessment of human development in certain countries, not based solely upon traditional economic and financial

indicators. For more information about the methodology used to calculate the HDI, please see the "Source Materials" in the appendices of this review.

Very High Human Development	High Human Development	Medium Human Development	Low Human Development
1. Norway	43. Bahamas	86. Fiji	128. Kenya
2. Australia	44. Lithuania	87. Turkmenistan	129. Bangladesh
3. New Zealand	45. Chile	88. Dominican Republic	130. Ghana
4. United States	46. Argentina	89. China	131. Cameroon
5. Ireland	47. Kuwait	90. El Salvador	132. Myanmar (Burma)
6. Liechtenstein	48. Latvia	91. Sri Lanka	133. Yemen
7. Netherlands	49. Montenegro	92. Thailand	134. Benin
8. Canada	50. Romania	93. Gabon	135. Madagascar
9. Sweden	51. Croatia	94. Suriname	136. Mauritania
10. Germany	52. Uruguay	95. Bolivia	137. Papua New Guinea
11. Japan	53. Libya	96. Paraguay	138. Nepal
12. South Korea	54. Panama	97. Philippines	139. Togo
13. Switzerland	55. Saudi Arabia	98. Botswana	140. Comoros

14. France	56. Mexico	99. Moldova	141. Lesotho
15. Israel	57. Malaysia	100. Mongolia	142. Nigeria
16. Finland	58. Bulgaria	101. Egypt	143. Uganda
17. Iceland	59. Trinidad and Tobago	102. Uzbekistan	144. Senegal
18. Belgium	60. Serbia	103. Micronesia	145. Haiti
19. Denmark	61. Belarus	104. Guyana	146. Angola
20. Spain	62. Costa Rica	105. Namibia	147. Djibouti
21. Hong King	63. Peru	106. Honduras	148. Tanzania
22. Greece	64. Albania	107. Maldives	149. Cote d'Ivoire
23. Italy	65. Russian Federation	108. Indonesia	150. Zambia
24. Luxembourg	66. Kazakhstan	109. Kyrgyzstan	151. Gambia
25. Austria	67. Azerbaijan	110. South Africa	152. Rwanda
26. United Kingdom	68. Bosnia and Herzegovina	111. Syria	153. Malawi
27. Singapore	69. Ukraine	112. Tajikistan	154. Sudan
28. Czech Republic	70. Iran	113. Vietnam	155. Afghanistan
29. Slovenia	71. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	114. Morocco	156. Guinea

30. Andorra	72. Mauritius	115. Nicaragua	157. Ethiopia
31. Slovakia	73. Brazil	116. Guatemala	158. Sierra Leone
32. United Arab Emirates	74. Georgia	117. Equatorial Guinea	159. Central African Republic
33. Malta	75. Venezuela	118. Cape Verde	160. Mali
34. Estonia	76. Armenia	119. India	161. Burkina Faso
35. Cyprus	77. Ecuador	120. East Timor	162. Liberia
36. Hungary	78. Belize	121. Swaziland	163. Chad
37. Brunei	79. Colombia	122. Laos	164. Guinea-Bissau
38. Qatar	80. Jamaica	123. Solomon Islands	165. Mozambique
39. Bahrain	81. Tunisia	124. Cambodia	166. Burundi
40. Portugal	82. Jordan	125. Pakistan	167. Niger
41. Poland	83. Turkey	126. Congo RC	168. Congo DRC
42. Barbados	84. Algeria	127. Sao Tome and Principe	169. Zimbabwe
	85. Tonga		

Methodology:

For more information about the methodology used to calculate the HDI, please see the "Source Materials" in the appendices of this Country Review.

Reference:

As published in United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Report 2010.

Source:

United Nations Development Programme's [Human Development Index](http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/) available at URL: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/>

Updated:

Uploaded in 2011 using ranking available; reviewed in 2015

Life Satisfaction Index

Life Satisfaction Index

Life Satisfaction Index

Created by Adrian G. White, an Analytic Social Psychologist at the University of Leicester, the "Satisfaction with Life Index" measures subjective life satisfaction across various countries. The data was taken from a metastudy (see below for source) and associates the notion of subjective happiness or life satisfaction with qualitative parameters such as health, wealth, and access to basic education. This assessment serves as an alternative to other measures of happiness that tend to rely on traditional and quantitative measures of policy on quality of life, such as GNP and GDP. The methodology involved the responses of 80,000 people across the globe.

Rank	Country	Score
1	Denmark	273.4

2	Switzerland	273.33
3	Austria	260
4	Iceland	260
5	The Bahamas	256.67
6	Finland	256.67
7	Sweden	256.67
8	Iran	253.33
9	Brunei	253.33
10	Canada	253.33
11	Ireland	253.33
12	Luxembourg	253.33
13	Costa Rica	250
14	Malta	250
15	Netherlands	250
16	Antiguaand Barbuda	246.67
17	Malaysia	246.67
18	New Zealand	246.67
19	Norway	246.67

20	Seychelles	246.67
21	Saint Kitts and Nevis	246.67
22	United Arab Emirates	246.67
23	United States	246.67
24	Vanuatu	246.67
25	Venezuela	246.67
26	Australia	243.33
27	Barbados	243.33
28	Belgium	243.33
29	Dominica	243.33
30	Oman	243.33
31	Saudi Arabia	243.33
32	Suriname	243.33
33	Bahrain	240
34	Colombia	240
35	Germany	240
36	Guyana	240
37	Honduras	240

38	Kuwait	240
39	Panama	240
40	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	240
41	United Kingdom	236.67
42	Dominican Republic	233.33
43	Guatemala	233.33
44	Jamaica	233.33
45	Qatar	233.33
46	Spain	233.33
47	Saint Lucia	233.33
48	Belize	230
49	Cyprus	230
50	Italy	230
51	Mexico	230
52	Samoa	230
53	Singapore	230
54	Solomon Islands	230
55	Trinidad and Tobago	230

56	Argentina	226.67
57	Fiji	223.33
58	Israel	223.33
59	Mongolia	223.33
60	São Tomé and Príncipe	223.33
61	El Salvador	220
62	France	220
63	Hong Kong	220
64	Indonesia	220
65	Kyrgyzstan	220
66	Maldives	220
67	Slovenia	220
68	Taiwan	220
69	East Timor	220
70	Tonga	220
71	Chile	216.67
72	Grenada	216.67
73	Mauritius	216.67

74	Namibia	216.67
75	Paraguay	216.67
76	Thailand	216.67
77	Czech Republic	213.33
78	Philippines	213.33
79	Tunisia	213.33
80	Uzbekistan	213.33
81	Brazil	210
82	China	210
83	Cuba	210
84	Greece	210
85	Nicaragua	210
86	Papua New Guinea	210
87	Uruguay	210
88	Gabon	206.67
89	Ghana	206.67
90	Japan	206.67
91	Yemen	206.67

92	Portugal	203.33
93	Sri Lanka	203.33
94	Tajikistan	203.33
95	Vietnam	203.33
96	Bhutan	200
97	Comoros	196.67
98	Croatia	196.67
99	Poland	196.67
100	Cape Verde	193.33
101	Kazakhstan	193.33
102	South Korea	193.33
103	Madagascar	193.33
104	Bangladesh	190
105	Republic of the Congo	190
106	The Gambia	190
107	Hungary	190
108	Libya	190
109	South Africa	190

110	Cambodia	186.67
111	Ecuador	186.67
112	Kenya	186.67
113	Lebanon	186.67
114	Morocco	186.67
115	Peru	186.67
116	Senegal	186.67
117	Bolivia	183.33
118	Haiti	183.33
119	Nepal	183.33
120	Nigeria	183.33
121	Tanzania	183.33
122	Benin	180
123	Botswana	180
124	Guinea-Bissau	180
125	India	180
126	Laos	180
127	Mozambique	180

128	Palestinian Authority	180
129	Slovakia	180
130	Myanmar	176.67
131	Mali	176.67
132	Mauritania	176.67
133	Turkey	176.67
134	Algeria	173.33
135	Equatorial Guinea	173.33
136	Romania	173.33
137	Bosnia and Herzegovina	170
138	Cameroon	170
139	Estonia	170
140	Guinea	170
141	Jordan	170
142	Syria	170
143	Sierra Leone	166.67
144	Azerbaijan	163.33
145	Central African Republic	163.33

146	Republic of Macedonia	163.33
147	Togo	163.33
148	Zambia	163.33
149	Angola	160
150	Djibouti	160
151	Egypt	160
152	Burkina Faso	156.67
153	Ethiopia	156.67
154	Latvia	156.67
155	Lithuania	156.67
156	Uganda	156.67
157	Albania	153.33
158	Malawi	153.33
159	Chad	150
160	Côte d'Ivoire	150
161	Niger	150
162	Eritrea	146.67
163	Rwanda	146.67

164	Bulgaria	143.33
165	Lesotho	143.33
166	Pakistan	143.33
167	Russia	143.33
168	Swaziland	140
169	Georgia	136.67
170	Belarus	133.33
171	Turkmenistan	133.33
172	Armenia	123.33
173	Sudan	120
174	Ukraine	120
175	Moldova	116.67
176	Democratic Republic of the Congo	110
177	Zimbabwe	110
178	Burundi	100

Commentary:

European countries, such as [Denmark](#), [Iceland](#), [Finland](#), [Sweden](#), [Switzerland](#), [Austria](#) resided at the top of the ranking with highest levels of self-reported life satisfaction. Conversely, European countries such as [Latvia](#), [Lithuania](#), [Moldova](#), [Belarus](#) and [Ukraine](#) ranked low on the index.

African countries such as Democratic Republic of Congo, [Zimbabwe](#) and [Burundi](#) found themselves at the very bottom of the ranking, and indeed, very few African countries could be found in the top 100. [Japan](#) was at the mid-way point in the ranking, however, other Asian countries such as [Brunei](#) and [Malaysia](#) were in the top tier, while [Pakistan](#) was close to the bottom with a low level of self-identified life satisfaction. As a region, the Middle East presented a mixed bag with Saudi Arabians reporting healthy levels of life satisfaction and Egyptians near the bottom of the ranking. As a region, Caribbean countries were ranked highly, consistently demonstrating high levels of life satisfaction. The findings showed that health was the most crucial determining factor in life satisfaction, followed by prosperity and education.

Source:

White, A. (2007). A Global Projection of Subjective Well-being: A Challenge To Positive Psychology? *Psychiatry* 56, 17-20. The data was extracted from a meta-analysis by Marks, Abdallah, Simms & Thompson (2006).

Uploaded:

Based on study noted above in "Source" ; reviewed in 2015

Happy Planet Index

Happy Planet Index

The Happy Planet Index (HPI) is used to measure human well-being in conjunction with environmental impact. The HPI has been compiled since 2006 by the New Economics Foundation. The index is a composite of several indicators including subjective life satisfaction, life expectancy at birth, and ecological footprint per capita.

As noted by NEFA, the HPI "reveals the ecological efficiency with which human well-being is delivered." Indeed, the index combines environmental impact with human well-being to measure the environmental efficiency with which, country by country, people live long and happy lives. The countries ranked highest by the HPI are not necessarily the ones with the happiest people overall, but the ones that allow their citizens to live long and fulfilling lives, without negatively impacting this opportunity for either future generations or citizens of other countries. Accordingly, a country like the [United States](#) will rank low on this list due to its large per capital ecological

footprint, which uses more than its fair share of resources, and will likely cause planetary damage.

It should be noted that the HPI was designed to be a counterpoint to other well-established indices of countries' development, such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which measures overall national wealth and economic development, but often obfuscates the realities of countries with stark variances between the rich and the poor. Moreover, the objective of most of the world's people is not to be wealthy but to be happy. The HPI also differs from the [Human Development Index](#) (HDI), which measures quality of life but not ecology, since it [HPI] also includes sustainability as a key indicator.

Rank	Country	HPI
1	Costa Rica	76.1
2	Dominican Republic	71.8
3	Jamaica	70.1
4	Guatemala	68.4
5	Vietnam	66.5
6	Colombia	66.1
7	Cuba	65.7
8	El Salvador	61.5
9	Brazil	61.0
10	Honduras	61.0
11	Nicaragua	60.5
12	Egypt	60.3

13	Saudi Arabia	59.7
14	Philippines	59.0
15	Argentina	59.0
16	Indonesia	58.9
17	Bhutan	58.5
18	Panama	57.4
19	Laos	57.3
20	China	57.1
21	Morocco	56.8
22	Sri Lanka	56.5
23	Mexico	55.6
24	Pakistan	55.6
25	Ecuador	55.5
26	Jordan	54.6
27	Belize	54.5
28	Peru	54.4
29	Tunisia	54.3
30	Trinidad and Tobago	54.2

31	Bangladesh	54.1
32	Moldova	54.1
33	Malaysia	54.0
34	Tajikistan	53.5
35	India	53.0
36	Venezuela	52.5
37	Nepal	51.9
38	Syria	51.3
39	Burma	51.2
40	Algeria	51.2
41	Thailand	50.9
42	Haiti	50.8
43	Netherlands	50.6
44	Malta	50.4
45	Uzbekistan	50.1
46	Chile	49.7
47	Bolivia	49.3
48	Armenia	48.3

49	Singapore	48.2
50	Yemen	48.1
51	Germany	48.1
52	Switzerland	48.1
53	Sweden	48.0
54	Albania	47.9
55	Paraguay	47.8
56	Palestinian Authority	47.7
57	Austria	47.7
58	Serbia	47.6
59	Finland	47.2
60	Croatia	47.2
61	Kyrgyzstan	47.1
62	Cyprus	46.2
63	Guyana	45.6
64	Belgium	45.4
65	Bosnia and Herzegovina	45.0
66	Slovenia	44.5

67	Israel	44.5
68	South Korea	44.4
69	Italy	44.0
70	Romania	43.9
71	France	43.9
72	Georgia	43.6
73	Slovakia	43.5
74	United Kingdom	43.3
75	Japan	43.3
76	Spain	43.2
77	Poland	42.8
78	Ireland	42.6
79	Iraq	42.6
80	Cambodia	42.3
81	Iran	42.1
82	Bulgaria	42.0
83	Turkey	41.7
84	Hong Kong	41.6

85	Azerbaijan	41.2
86	Lithuania	40.9
87	Djibouti	40.4
88	Norway	40.4
89	Canada	39.4
90	Hungary	38.9
91	Kazakhstan	38.5
92	Czech Republic	38.3
93	Mauritania	38.2
94	Iceland	38.1
95	Ukraine	38.1
96	Senegal	38.0
97	Greece	37.6
98	Portugal	37.5
99	Uruguay	37.2
100	Ghana	37.1
101	Latvia	36.7
102	Australia	36.6

103	New Zealand	36.2
104	Belarus	35.7
105	Denmark	35.5
106	Mongolia	35.0
107	Malawi	34.5
108	Russia	34.5
109	Chad	34.3
110	Lebanon	33.6
111	Macedonia	32.7
112	Republic of the Congo	32.4
113	Madagascar	31.5
114	United States	30.7
115	Nigeria	30.3
116	Guinea	30.3
117	Uganda	30.2
118	South Africa	29.7
119	Rwanda	29.6
120	Democratic Republic of the Congo	29.0

121	Sudan	28.5
122	Luxembourg	28.5
123	United Arab Emirates	28.2
124	Ethiopia	28.1
125	Kenya	27.8
126	Cameroon	27.2
127	Zambia	27.2
128	Kuwait	27.0
129	Niger	26.9
130	Angola	26.8
131	Estonia	26.4
132	Mali	25.8
133	Mozambique	24.6
134	Benin	24.6
135	Togo	23.3
136	Sierra Leone	23.1
137	Central African Republic	22.9
138	Burkina Faso	22.4

139	Burundi	21.8
140	Namibia	21.1
141	Botswana	20.9
142	Tanzania	17.8
143	Zimbabwe	16.6

Source: *This material is derived from the Happy Planet Index issued by the New Economics Foundation (NEF).*

Methodology: *The methodology for the calculations can be found at URL: <http://www.happyplanetindex.org/>*

Status of Women

Status of Women in Kosovo

At the time of writing, there were limited statistics available on the status of women in Kosovo. That said, in the late 1990s during the time of Serbia's crackdown on Kosovo, when ethnic cleansing was the norm, rape of Kosovar women was widespread. Since that conflict, the United Nations and NATO have worked to stabilize Kosovo. Nevertheless, unemployment, economic hardship, violence, threats of unrest and a lack of civil liberties -- all of which deleteriously affect the larger population base -- have a particularly negative effect on women. This is largely attributable to the fact that that post-war Kosovo is marked by high levels of widowhood.

Global Gender Gap Index

Global Gender Gap Index

Editor's Note:

The Global Gender Gap Index by the World Economic Forum ranks most of the world's countries in terms of the division of resources and opportunities among males and females. Specifically, the ranking assesses the gender inequality gap in these four arenas:

1. Economic participation and opportunity (salaries and high skilled employment participation levels)
2. Educational attainment (access to basic and higher level education)
3. Political empowerment (representation in decision-making structures)
4. Health and survival (life expectancy and sex ratio)

	2010 rank	2010 score	2010 rank among 2009 countries	2009 rank	2009 score	2008 rank	2008 score	2007 rank
Country								
Iceland	1	0.8496	1	1	0.8276	4	0.7999	4
Norway	2	0.8404	2	3	0.8227	1	0.8239	2
Finland	3	0.8260	3	2	0.8252	2	0.8195	3
Sweden	4	0.8024	4	4	0.8139	3	0.8139	1
New Zealand	5	0.7808	5	5	0.7880	5	0.7859	5
Ireland	6	0.7773	6	8	0.7597	8	0.7518	9

Denmark	7	0.7719	7	7	0.7628	7	0.7538	8
Lesotho	8	0.7678	8	10	0.7495	16	0.7320	26
Philippines	9	0.7654	9	9	0.7579	6	0.7568	6
Switzerland	10	0.7562	10	13	0.7426	14	0.7360	40
Spain	11	0.7554	11	17	0.7345	17	0.7281	10
South Africa	12	0.7535	12	6	0.7709	22	0.7232	20
Germany	13	0.7530	13	12	0.7449	11	0.7394	7
Belgium	14	0.7509	14	33	0.7165	28	0.7163	19
United Kingdom	15	0.7460	15	15	0.7402	13	0.7366	11
Sri Lanka	16	0.7458	16	16	0.7402	12	0.7371	15
Netherlands	17	0.7444	17	11	0.7490	9	0.7399	12
Latvia	18	0.7429	18	14	0.7416	10	0.7397	13
United States	19	0.7411	19	31	0.7173	27	0.7179	31
Canada	20	0.7372	20	25	0.7196	31	0.7136	18
Trinidad and Tobago	21	0.7353	21	19	0.7298	19	0.7245	46
Mozambique	22	0.7329	22	26	0.7195	18	0.7266	43
Australia	23	0.7271	23	20	0.7282	21	0.7241	17

Cuba	24	0.7253	24	29	0.7176	25	0.7195	22
Namibia	25	0.7238	25	32	0.7167	30	0.7141	29
Luxembourg	26	0.7231	26	63	0.6889	66	0.6802	58
Mongolia	27	0.7194	27	22	0.7221	40	0.7049	62
Costa Rica	28	0.7194	28	27	0.7180	32	0.7111	28
Argentina	29	0.7187	29	24	0.7211	24	0.7209	33
Nicaragua	30	0.7176	30	49	0.7002	71	0.6747	90
Barbados	31	0.7176	31	21	0.7236	26	0.7188	n/a
Portugal	32	0.7171	32	46	0.7013	39	0.7051	37
Uganda	33	0.7169	33	40	0.7067	43	0.6981	50
Moldova	34	0.7160	34	36	0.7104	20	0.7244	21
Lithuania	35	0.7132	35	30	0.7175	23	0.7222	14
Bahamas	36	0.7128	36	28	0.7179	n/a	n/a	n/a
Austria	37	0.7091	37	42	0.7031	29	0.7153	27
Guyana	38	0.7090	38	35	0.7108	n/a	n/a	n/a
Panama	39	0.7072	39	43	0.7024	34	0.7095	38
Ecuador	40	0.7072	40	23	0.7220	35	0.7091	44
Kazakhstan	41	0.7055	41	47	0.7013	45	0.6976	32

Slovenia	42	0.7047	42	52	0.6982	51	0.6937	49
Poland	43	0.7037	43	50	0.6998	49	0.6951	60
Jamaica	44	0.7037	44	48	0.7013	44	0.6980	39
Russian Federation	45	0.7036	45	51	0.6987	42	0.6994	45
France	46	0.7025	46	18	0.7331	15	0.7341	51
Estonia	47	0.7018	47	37	0.7094	37	0.7076	30
Chile	48	0.7013	48	64	0.6884	65	0.6818	86
Macedonia, FYR	49	0.6996	49	53	0.6950	53	0.6914	35
Bulgaria	50	0.6983	50	38	0.7072	36	0.7077	25
Kyrgyz Republic	51	0.6973	51	41	0.7058	41	0.7045	70
Israel	52	0.6957	52	45	0.7019	56	0.6900	36
Croatia	53	0.6939	53	54	0.6944	46	0.6967	16
Honduras	54	0.6927	54	62	0.6893	47	0.6960	68
Colombia	55	0.6927	55	56	0.6939	50	0.6944	24
Singapore	56	0.6914	56	84	0.6664	84	0.6625	77
Thailand	57	0.6910	57	59	0.6907	52	0.6917	52
Greece	58	0.6908	58	85	0.6662	75	0.6727	72

Uruguay	59	0.6897	59	57	0.6936	54	0.6907	78
Peru	60	0.6895	60	44	0.7024	48	0.6959	75
China	61	0.6881	61	60	0.6907	57	0.6878	73
Botswana	62	0.6876	62	39	0.7071	63	0.6839	53
Ukraine	63	0.6869	63	61	0.6896	62	0.6856	57
Venezuela	64	0.6863	64	69	0.6839	59	0.6875	55
Czech Republic	65	0.6850	65	74	0.6789	69	0.6770	64
Tanzania	66	0.6829	66	73	0.6797	38	0.7068	34
Romania	67	0.6826	67	70	0.6805	70	0.6763	47
Malawi	68	0.6824	68	76	0.6738	81	0.6664	87
Paraguay	69	0.6804	69	66	0.6868	100	0.6379	69
Ghana	70	0.6782	70	80	0.6704	77	0.6679	63
Slovak Republic	71	0.6778	71	68	0.6845	64	0.6824	54
Vietnam	72	0.6776	72	71	0.6802	68	0.6778	42
Dominican Republic	73	0.6774	73	67	0.6859	72	0.6744	65
Italy	74	0.6765	74	72	0.6798	67	0.6788	84
Gambia, The	75	0.6762	75	75	0.6752	85	0.6622	95

Bolivia	76	0.6751	76	82	0.6693	80	0.6667	80
Brueni Darussalem	77	0.6748	77	94	0.6524	99	0.6392	n/a
Albania	78	0.6726	78	91	0.6601	87	0.6591	66
Hungary	79	0.6720	79	65	0.6879	60	0.6867	61
Madagascar	80	0.6713	80	77	0.6732	74	0.6736	89
Angola	81	0.6712	81	106	0.6353	114	0.6032	110
Bangladesh	82	0.6702	82	93	0.6526	90	0.6531	100
Malta	83	0.6695	83	88	0.6635	83	0.6634	76
Armenia	84	0.6669	84	90	0.6619	78	0.6677	71
Brazil	85	0.6655	85	81	0.6695	73	0.6737	74
Cyprus	86	0.6642	86	79	0.6706	76	0.6694	82
Indonesia	87	0.6615	87	92	0.6580	93	0.6473	81
Georgia	88	0.6598	88	83	0.6680	82	0.6654	67
Tajikistan	89	0.6598	89	86	0.6661	89	0.6541	79
El Salvador	90	0.6596	90	55	0.6939	58	0.6875	48
Mexico	91	0.6577	91	98	0.6503	97	0.6441	93
Zimbabwe	92	0.6574	92	95	0.6518	92	0.6485	88

Belize	93	0.6536	93	87	0.6636	86	0.6610	94
Japan	94	0.6524	94	101	0.6447	98	0.6434	91
Mauritius	95	0.6520	95	96	0.6513	95	0.6466	85
Kenya	96	0.6499	96	97	0.6512	88	0.6547	83
Cambodia	97	0.6482	97	104	0.6410	94	0.6469	98
Malaysia	98	0.6479	98	100	0.6467	96	0.6442	92
Maldives	99	0.6452	99	99	0.6482	91	0.6501	99
Azerbaijan	100	0.6446	100	89	0.6626	61	0.6856	59
Senegal	101	0.6414	101	102	0.6427	n/a	n/a	n/a
Suriname	102	0.6407	102	78	0.6726	79	0.6674	56
United Arab Emirates	103	0.6397	103	112	0.6198	105	0.6220	105
Korea, Rep.	104	0.6342	104	115	0.6146	108	0.6154	97
Kuwait	105	0.6318	105	105	0.6356	101	0.6358	96
Zambia	106	0.6293	106	107	0.6310	106	0.6205	101
Tunisia	107	0.6266	107	109	0.6233	103	0.6295	102
Fiji	108	0.6256	108	103	0.6414	n/a	n/a	n/a
Guatemala	109	0.6238	109	111	0.6209	112	0.6072	106
Bahrain	110	0.6217	110	116	0.6136	121	0.5927	115

Burkina Faso	111	0.6162	111	120	0.6081	115	0.6029	117
India	112	0.6155	112	114	0.6151	113	0.6060	114
Mauritania	113	0.6152	113	119	0.6103	110	0.6117	111
Cameroon	114	0.6110	114	118	0.6108	117	0.6017	116
Nepal	115	0.6084	115	110	0.6213	120	0.5942	125
Lebanon*	116	0.6084	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Qatar	117	0.6059	116	125	0.5907	119	0.5948	109
Nigeria	118	0.6055	117	108	0.6280	102	0.6339	107
Algeria	119	0.6052	118	117	0.6119	111	0.6111	108
Jordan	120	0.6048	119	113	0.6182	104	0.6275	104
Ethiopia	121	0.6019	120	122	0.5948	122	0.5867	113
Oman	122	0.5950	121	123	0.5938	118	0.5960	119
Iran	123	0.5933	122	128	0.5839	116	0.6021	118
Syria	124	0.5926	123	121	0.6072	107	0.6181	103
Egypt	125	0.5899	124	126	0.5862	124	0.5832	120
Turkey	126	0.5876	125	129	0.5828	123	0.5853	121
Morocco	127	0.5767	126	124	0.5926	125	0.5757	122
Benin	128	0.5719	127	131	0.5643	126	0.5582	123

Saudi Arabia	129	0.5713	128	130	0.5651	128	0.5537	124
Côte d'Ivoire*	130	0.5691	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Mali	131	0.5680	129	127	0.5860	109	0.6117	112
Pakistan	132	0.5465	130	132	0.5458	127	0.5549	126
Chad	133	0.5330	131	133	0.5417	129	0.5290	127
Yemen	134	0.4603	132	134	0.4609	130	0.4664	128
Belarus	n/a	n/a	n/a	34	0.7141	33	0.7099	23
Uzbekistan	n/a	n/a	n/a	58	0.6913	55	0.6906	41

*new country 2010

Commentary:

According to the report's index, Nordic countries, such as [Iceland](#), [Norway](#), [Finland](#), and [Sweden](#) have continued to dominate at the top of the ranking for gender equality. Meanwhile, [France](#) has seen a notable decline in the ranking, largely as a result of decreased number of women holding ministerial portfolios in that country. In the Americas, the [United States](#) has risen in the ranking to top the region, predominantly as a result of a decreasing wage gap, as well as higher number of women holding key positions in the current Obama administration. [Canada](#) has continued to remain as one of the top ranking countries of the Americas, followed by the small Caribbean island nation of Trinidad and Tobago, which has the distinction of being among the top three countries of the Americans in the realm of gender equality. [Lesotho](#) and South African ranked highly in the index, leading not only among African countries but also in global context. Despite [Lesotho](#) still lagging in the area of life expectancy, its high ranking was attributed to high levels of female participation in the labor force and female literacy. The [Philippines](#) and [Sri Lanka](#) were the top

ranking countries for gender equality for Asia, ranking highly also in global context. The [Philippines](#) has continued to show strong performance in all strong performance on all four dimensions (detailed above) of the index. Finally, in the Arab world, the [United Arab Emirates](#) held the highest-rank within that region of the world; however, its placement near the bottom of the global list highlights the fact that Arab countries are generally poor performers when it comes to the matter of gender equality in global scope.

Source:

This data is derived from the latest edition of The Global Gender Gap Report by the World Economic Forum.

Available at URL:

<http://www.weforum.org/en/Communities/Women%20Leaders%20and%20Gender%20Parity/Gende>

Updated:

Based on latest available data as set forth in chart; reviewed in 2014

Culture and Arts

Content to come!

Etiquette

Cultural Dos and Taboos

1. If invited to a Muslim Kosovar's home, be sure to take off your shoes upon entering the house.
2. It is customary to give a small gift to the host or hostess on the first visit to their house. Chocolates or a gift from your own country make fine gifts. One may want to avoid gifts of alcohol or flowers.

3. Good topics of conversation include sports, travel, culture, family.
4. It is best that the foreign visitor stay out of conversations that involve discussions of local politics, especially Kosovo's relationship with neighboring countries. One may wish to avoid initiating the discussion of religion as well.
5. Handshakes are the customary greeting. When arriving at a business meeting or a private dinner, always greet the eldest man first. Among conservative Muslims, one should be careful shake hands with persons of the opposite sex (in such cases, a smile should suffice).
6. Note that Kosovo has a large Muslim population; among this population, the Muslim rules and codes of the religion must be applied.

Travel Information

Please Note

This is a generalized travel guide and it is intended to coalesce several resources, which a traveler might find useful, regardless of a particular destination. As such, it does not include travel warnings for specific "hot spot" destinations.

For travel alerts and warnings, please see the United States Department of State's listings available at URL:

<http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings.html>

Please note that travel to the following countries, based on these warnings, is ill-advised, or should be undertaken with the utmost precaution:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, Honduras, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, North Korea, Pakistan, Palestinian Territories of West Bank and Gaza, Philippines areas of Sulu Archipelago, Mindanao, and southern Sulu Sea, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, Venezuela, and Yemen.

International Travel Guide

Checklist for Travelers

1. Take out travel insurance to cover hospital treatment or medical evacuation. Overseas medical costs are expensive to most international travelers, where one's domestic, nationalized or even private health insurance plans will not provide coverage outside one's home country. Learn about "reciprocal insurance plans" that some international health care companies might offer.
2. Make sure that one's travel insurance is appropriate. If one intends to indulge in adventurous activities, such as parasailing, one should be sure that one is fully insured in such cases. Many traditional insurance policies do not provide coverage in cases of extreme circumstances.
3. Take time to learn about one's destination country and culture. Read and learn about the place one is traveling. Also check political, economic and socio-cultural developments at the destination by reading country-specific travel reports and fact sheets noted below.
4. Get the necessary visas for the country (or countries) one intends to visit - but be aware that a visa does not guarantee entry. A number of useful sites regarding visa and other entry requirements are noted below.
5. Keep in regular contact with friends and relatives back at home by phone or email, and be sure to leave a travel itinerary.
6. Protect one's personal information by making copies of one's passport details, insurance policy, travelers checks and credit card numbers. Taking copies of such documents with you, while leaving another collection copies with someone at home is also good practice for travelers. Taking copies of one's passport photograph is also recommended.
7. Stay healthy by taking all possible precautions against illness. Also, be sure to take extra supplies of prescription drugs along for the trip, while also taking time to pack general pharmaceutical supplies, such as aspirin and other such painkillers, bandages, stomach ailment medication, anti-inflammatory medication and anti-bacterial medication.
8. Do not carry illicit drugs. Understand that the punishment for possession or use of illegal drugs in some countries may be capital punishment. Make sure your prescription drugs are legal in the countries you plan to visit.
9. Know the laws of one's destination country and culture; be sure to understand the repercussions of breaking those laws and regulations. Often the transparency and freedoms of the juridical system at home is not consistent with that of one's destination country. Become aware of these complexities and subtleties before you travel.
10. For longer stays in a country, or where the security situation is volatile, one should register one's self and traveling companions at the local embassy or consulate of one's country of citizenship.
11. Women should take care to be prepared both culturally and practically for traveling in a different country and culture. One should be sure to take sufficient supplies of personal feminine products and prescription drugs. One should also learn about local cultural standards for women, including norms of dressing. Be aware that it is simply inappropriate and unsafe for women to

travel alone in some countries, and take the necessary precautions to avoid risk-filled situations.

12. If one is traveling with small children, one should pack extra supplies, make arrangements with the travel carrier for proper seating that would adequately accommodate children, infants or toddlers. Note also that whether one is male or female, traveling with children means that one's hands are thus not free to carry luggage and bags. Be especially aware that this makes one vulnerable to pickpockets, thieves and other sorts of crime.

13. Make proper arrangements for accommodations, well in advance of one's arrival at a destination. Some countries have limited accommodation, while others may have culturally distinctive facilities. Learning about these practicalities before one travels will greatly aid the enjoyment of one's trip.

14. Travel with different forms of currency and money (cash, traveler's checks and credit cards) in anticipation that venues may not accept one or another form of money. Also, ensuring that one's financial resources are not contained in one location, or by one person (if one is traveling with others) can be a useful measure, in the event that one loses a wallet or purse.

15. Find out about transportation in the destination country. In some places, it might be advisable to hire a local driver or taxi guide for safety reasons, while in other countries, enjoying one's travel experience may well be enhanced by renting a vehicle and seeing the local sights and culture independently. Costs may also be prohibitive for either of these choices, so again, prior planning is suggested.

Note to Travelers

The country of Serbia and Montenegro is a moderately developed European nation state undergoing profound political and economic change. Civil wars and conflicts with other former Yugoslav successor states damaged infrastructure throughout the 1990s. Despite an influx of aid from the international community, utilities and services are subject to interruption. Tourist facilities are widely available, but they vary in quality. Some may not be up to Western standards.

Because of the federal structure of Serbia and Montenegro and the presence of United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the travel situation and requirements in Kosovo differ from the rest of the country in certain ways. The Department of State urges American citizens to defer all non-essential travel to Kosovo. Please see additional specific information on Kosovo which follows the information on Yugoslavia.

The situation in Kosovo remains unsettled and potentially dangerous. Despite the deployment of KFOR, the international peacekeeping force in Kosovo, throughout Kosovo, and UNMIK attempts to re-establish civil authority, some civil institutions in Kosovo, including the criminal justice system, are not fully functioning. Incidents of violence in the Kosovo region continue to be reported, and land mines remain in some areas.

Tips for Travelers

- Check with your embassy, consulate, or appropriate government institution related to travel before traveling.
- Never carry drugs. Penalties are severe.
- Keep belongings in a safe place.
- Beware of pickpockets.
- Leave a photocopy of your passport and itinerary with a contact in your home country.
- Enter next of kin details into the back of your passport.
- Obtain a valid visa before traveling and do not overstay.
- Carry identification at all times.
- Register with the police within three days of arriving, if not staying in a Hotel.
- Get adequate travel insurance, including medical insurance. European Green Card insurance is not valid in Yugoslavia.
- Bring enough money (Deutschmarks). Travelers checks and credit cards are not generally accepted.
- We advise against all holiday and other non-essential visits to Kosovo.

Note: This information is directly quoted from the United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Sources: *United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office*

Business Culture: Information for Business Travelers

For general information on etiquette in Serbia and Montenegro see our Cultural Etiquette page.

Online Resources Regarding Entry Requirements and Visas

Foreign Entry Requirements for Americans from the United States Department of State

<http://travel.state.gov/foreignentryreqs.html>

Visa Services for Non-Americans from the United States Department of State

<http://www.unitedstatesvisas.gov/>

http://travel.state.gov/visa/visa_1750.html

Visa Bulletins from the United States Department of State

http://travel.state.gov/visa_bulletin.html

Visa Waivers from the United States Department of State

<http://travel.state.gov/jvw.html>

Passport and Visa Information from the Government of the United Kingdom

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/travel/dynpage.asp?Page=402>

Visa Information from the Government of Australia

<http://www.dfat.gov.au/visas/index.html>

Entry Requirements and Other Services for Travelers from the Government of Canada

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1082.html

Online Visa Processing by Immigration Experts by VisaPro

<http://www.visapro.com>

Sources: *United States Department of State, United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Government of Australia: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Government of Canada: Canada International*

Useful Online Resources for Travelers

Your trip abroad

http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/brochures/brochures_1225.html

A safe trip abroad

http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/safety/safety_1747.html

Tips for expatriates abroad

http://travel.state.gov/travel/living/residing/residing_1235.html

Tips for students

http://travel.state.gov/travel/living/studying/studying_1238.html <http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/broch>

Medical information for travelers

http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/health/health_1185.html

US Customs Travel information

<http://www.customs.gov/xp/cgov/travel/>

UK Travelers' Checklist

[http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?
pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1098377239217](http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1098377239217)

Canadian Government's resources on traveling, living or working abroad

http://www.voyage.gc.ca/Consular-e/living_menu-e.htm

Plan a trip to an exotic location

<http://www.geopassage.com>

Sources: *United States Department of State; United States Customs Department, United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Government of Canada: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade*

Other Practical Online Resources for Travelers

World Weather Forecasts

<http://www.intellicast.com/>

Worldwide Time Zones and World Clock

<http://www.timeanddate.com/>

International Currency Exchange Rates

<http://www.xe.com/ucc/>

Banking and Financial Institutions Across the World

<http://www.123world.com/banks/index.html>

International Credit Card or Automated Teller Machine (ATM) Locator

<http://international.visa.com/ps/services/atmnetwork.jsp>

<http://www.mastercard.com/cardholderservices/atm/>

Foreign Language Phrases for Travelers

<http://www.travlang.com/languages/>

International Dialing Codes

<http://www.kropla.com/dialcode.htm>

International Airport Codes

<http://www.ar-group.com/icaoiaata.htm>

International Internet Café Search Engine

<http://cybercaptive.com/>

World Electric Power Information

<http://www.kropla.com/electric.htm>

World Electric Power Guide

<http://www.kropla.com/electric2.htm>

World Television Standards and Codes

<http://www.kropla.com/tv.htm>

International Chambers of Commerce

<http://www.123world.com/chambers/index.html>

Diplomatic and Consular Information

United States Diplomatic Posts Abroad

<http://usembassy.state.gov/>

Resources for Finding Embassies and other Diplomatic Posts Across the World

<http://www.escapeartist.com/embassy1/embassy1.htm>

Travel and Tourism Information

World Tourism Websites

<http://123world.com/tourism/>

Safety and Security

United States Department of State Travel Warnings and Consular Information Sheets

http://travel.state.gov/travel_warnings.html

United States Department of State Current Warnings

http://travel.state.gov/warnings_list.html

United Kingdom Current Warnings and Travel Advice By Country

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029390590>

United Kingdom Travel Fact Sheets By Country

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029394365#T1>

Government of Canada Travel Reports By Country

<http://www.voyage.gc.ca/dest/ctry/new-en.asp#ctr>

Government of Canada Travel Warnings

<http://www.voyage.gc.ca/dest/sos/warnings-en.asp>

Government of Australia Travel Advice Reports By Country

<http://www.dfat.gov.au/consular/advice/index.html>

Sources: *United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the United States Department of State, the Government of Canada: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Government of Australia: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade*

Other Safety and Security Online Resources for Travelers

Information on Terrorism from Government of Canada

http://canada.gc.ca/wire/2001/09/110901-US_e.html

Information on Human Rights

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/hr/>

Government of the United Kingdom Resource on the Risk of Terrorism

[http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?
pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1044011304926](http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1044011304926)

FAA Resource on Aviation Safety

<http://www.faa.gov/safety/>

In-Flight Safety Information for Air Travel (by British Airways crew trainer, Anna Warman)

<http://www.warman.demon.co.uk/anna/inflight.html>

Hot Spots: Travel Safety and Risk Information

<http://www.airsecurity.com/hotspots/HotSpots.asp>

Current Issues and Warnings by Government of United States

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_1766.html

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html

Sources: *The United States Department of State, the United States Customs Department, the Federal Aviation Authority, Anna Warman's In-flight Website, Hot Spots Travel and Risk Information, the United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Government*

Diseases/Health Data

Please Note: Most of the entry below constitutes a generalized health advisory, which a traveler might find useful, regardless of a particular destination.

As a supplement, however, reader will also find below a list of countries flagged with current health notices and alerts issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Please note that travel to the following countries, based on these 3 levels of warnings, is ill-advised, or should be undertaken with the utmost precaution:

Level 3 (highest level of concern; avoid non-essential travel) --

Guinea - Ebola

Liberia - Ebola

Nepal - Earthquake zone

Sierra Leone - Ebola

Level 2 (intermediate level of concern; use utmost caution during travel) --

Cameroon - Polio

Somalia - Polio

Vanuatu - Tropical Cyclone zone

Throughout Middle East and Arabia Peninsula - MERS ((Middle East Respiratory Syndrome)

Level 1 (standard level of concern; use practical caution during travel) -

Australia - Ross River disease

Bosnia-Herzegovina - Measles

Brazil - Dengue Fever

Brazil - Malaria

Brazil - Zika

China - H7N9 Avian flu

Cuba - Cholera

Egypt - H5N1 Bird flu

Ethiopia - Measles

Germany - Measles

Japan - Hand, foot, and mouth disease (HFMD)

Kyrgyzstan - Measles

Malaysia -Dengue Fever

Mexico - Chikungunya

Mexico - Hepatitis A

Nigeria - Meningitis

Philippines - Measles

Scotland - Mumps

Singapore - Hand, foot, and mouth disease (HFMD)

South Korea - MERS ((Middle East Respiratory Syndrome)

Throughout Caribbean - Chikungunya

Throughout Central America - Chikungunya

Throughout South America - Chikungunya

Throughout Pacific Islands - Chikungunya

For specific information related to these health notices and alerts please see the CDC's listing available at URL:

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>

Health Information for Travelers to Kosovo

Food and waterborne diseases are the number one cause of illness in travelers. Travelers' diarrhea can be caused by viruses, bacteria, or parasites, which are found throughout Eastern Europe and can contaminate food or water. Infections may cause diarrhea and vomiting (*E. coli*, *Salmonella*, cholera, and parasites), fever (typhoid fever and toxoplasmosis), or liver damage (hepatitis). Make sure your food and drinking water are safe. (See below.)

Malaria is a preventable infection that can be fatal if left untreated. Prevent infection by taking prescription antimalarial drugs and protecting yourself against mosquito bites (see below). Risk for malaria exists only in small southern border areas of Azerbaijan and Tajikistan. Travelers to these areas should take chloroquine to prevent malaria. For more detailed information about malaria in this region, see Malaria Risk and Prevention in Eastern Europe and the Newly Independent States (<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/regionalmalaria/easteurp.htm>).>

A certificate of yellow fever vaccination may be required for entry into certain of these countries if you are coming from a tropical South American or sub-Saharan African country. (There is no risk for yellow fever in Eastern European and NIS countries.) For detailed information, see Comprehensive Yellow Fever Vaccination Requirements (<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/yelfever.htm>).>

Tickborne encephalitis, a viral infection of the central nervous system occurs chiefly in Central and Western Europe. Travelers are at risk who visit or work in forested areas during the summer months and who consume unpasteurized dairy products. Vaccine for this disease is not available in the United States at this time. To prevent tickborne encephalitis, as well as Lyme disease, travelers should take precautions to prevent tick bites (see below).

Because motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of injury among travelers, walk and drive defensively. Avoid nighttime travel if possible and always use seat belts.

CDC Recommends the Following Vaccines (as Appropriate for Age):

See your doctor at least 4-6 weeks before your trip to allow time for shots to take effect.

- Hepatitis A or immune globulin (IG).
- Hepatitis B, if you might be exposed to blood (for example, health-care workers), have sexual contact with the local population, stay longer than 6 months, or be exposed through medical treatment.
- Rabies, if you might be exposed to wild or domestic animals through your work or recreation.
- Typhoid, particularly if you are visiting developing countries in this region.
- As needed, booster doses for tetanus-diphtheria, measles, and a one-time dose of polio vaccine for adults. Hepatitis B vaccine is now recommended for all infants and for 11- to 12-year-olds who did not receive the series as infants.

To Stay Healthy, Do:

- Wash hands often with soap and water.
- Drink only bottled or boiled water, or carbonated (bubbly) drinks in cans or bottles. Avoid tap

water, fountain drinks, and ice cubes. If this is not possible, make water safer by BOTH filtering through an "absolute 1-micron or less" filter AND adding iodine tablets to the filtered water. "Absolute 1-micron filters" are found in camping/outdoor supply stores.

- Eat only thoroughly cooked food or fruits and vegetables you have peeled yourself. Remember: boil it, cook it, peel it, or forget it.
- If you are going to visit risk areas for malaria, take your malaria prevention medication before, during, and after travel, as directed. (See your doctor for a prescription.)
- Protect yourself from insects by remaining in well-screened areas, using repellents (applied sparingly at 4-hour intervals), and wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants tucked into boots or socks as a deterrent to ticks.
- To prevent fungal and parasitic infections, keep feet clean and dry, and do not go barefoot.
- Always use latex condoms to reduce the risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.

To Avoid Getting Sick:

- Don't eat food purchased from street vendors.
- Don't drink beverages with ice.
- Don't eat dairy products unless you know they have been pasteurized.
- Don't share needles with anyone.
- Don't handle animals (especially monkeys, dogs, and cats), to avoid bites and serious diseases (including rabies and plague).

What You Need To Bring with You:

- Long-sleeved shirt and long pants to wear while outside whenever possible, to prevent illnesses carried by insects.
- Insect repellent containing DEET (diethylmethylnolamide), in 30%-35% strength for adults and 6%-10% for children. The insecticide permethrin applied to clothing is an effective deterrent to ticks.
- Over-the-counter antidiarrheal medicine to take if you have diarrhea.
- Iodine tablets and water filters to purify water if bottled water is not available. See above for more information about water filters.
- Sunblock, sunglasses, hat.
- Prescription medications: make sure you have enough to last during your trip, as well as a copy of the prescription(s).

After You Return Home:

If you have visited an area where there is risk for malaria, continue taking your malaria medication weekly for 4 weeks after you leave the area.

If you become ill after your trip-even as long as a year after you return-tell your doctor where you have traveled.

For More Information:

Ask your doctor or check the CDC web sites for more information about how to protect yourself against diseases that occur in Eastern Europe and the Newly Independent States (NIS).

For information about diseases-

Carried by Insects

Lyme disease, Malaria

Carried in Food or Water

Bovine spongiform encephalopathy ("mad cow disease"), Cholera, *Escherichia coli*, diarrhea, Hepatitis A, Typhoid Fever

Person-to-Person Contact

Hepatitis B, HIV/AIDS

For more information about these and other diseases, also check the Diseases ([≤http://www.cdc.gov/travel/diseases.htm>](http://www.cdc.gov/travel/diseases.htm)) section and the Health Topics A-Z ([≤http://www.cdc.gov/health/diseases.htm>](http://www.cdc.gov/health/diseases.htm)).

Note:

Kosovo is located in the Eastern Europe and Newly Independent States (NIS) health region.

Sources:

The Center for Disease Control Destinations Website:

[≤http://www.cdc.gov/travel/destinat.htm>](http://www.cdc.gov/travel/destinat.htm)

Chapter 6

Environmental Overview

Environmental Issues

Current Issues:

- pollution from sewage outlets
- air pollution around industrial cities
- water pollution from industrial wastes

Total Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Mtc):

n/a

Country Rank (GHG output):

n/a

Natural Hazards:

- earthquakes

Environmental Policy

Editor's Note:

Information about environmental policy is not available at the time of writing for independent

Kosovo.

Greenhouse Gas Ranking

Greenhouse Gas Ranking

GHG Emissions Rankings

Country Rank	Country
1	United States
2	China
4	Russia
5	Japan
6	India
7	Germany
8	United Kingdom
9	Canada
10	Korea, South
11	Italy
12	Mexico

13	France
14	South Africa
15	Iran
16	Indonesia
17	Australia
18	Spain
19	Brazil
20	Saudi Arabia
21	Ukraine
22	Poland
23	Taiwan
24	Turkey
25	Thailand
26	Netherlands
27	Kazakhstan
28	Malaysia
29	Egypt
30	Venezuela

31	Argentina
32	Uzbekistan
33	Czech Republic
34	Belgium
35	Pakistan
36	Romania
37	Greece
38	United Arab Emirates
39	Algeria
40	Nigeria
41	Austria
42	Iraq
43	Finland
44	Philippines
45	Vietnam
46	Korea, North
47	Israel
48	Portugal

49	Colombia
50	Belarus
51	Kuwait
52	Hungary
53	Chile
54	Denmark
55	Serbia & Montenegro
56	Sweden
57	Syria
58	Libya
59	Bulgaria
60	Singapore
61	Switzerland
62	Ireland
63	Turkmenistan
64	Slovakia
65	Bangladesh
66	Morocco

67	New Zealand
68	Oman
69	Qatar
70	Azerbaijan
71	Norway
72	Peru
73	Cuba
74	Ecuador
75	Trinidad & Tobago
76	Croatia
77	Tunisia
78	Dominican Republic
79	Lebanon
80	Estonia
81	Yemen
82	Jordan
83	Slovenia
84	Bahrain

85	Angola
86	Bosnia & Herzegovina
87	Lithuania
88	Sri Lanka
89	Zimbabwe
90	Bolivia
91	Jamaica
92	Guatemala
93	Luxembourg
94	Myanmar
95	Sudan
96	Kenya
97	Macedonia
98	Mongolia
99	Ghana
100	Cyprus
101	Moldova
102	Latvia

103	El Salvador
104	Brunei
105	Honduras
106	Cameroon
107	Panama
108	Costa Rica
109	Cote d'Ivoire
110	Kyrgyzstan
111	Tajikistan
112	Ethiopia
113	Senegal
114	Uruguay
115	Gabon
116	Albania
117	Nicaragua
118	Botswana
119	Paraguay
120	Tanzania

121	Georgia
122	Armenia
123	Congo, RC
124	Mauritius
125	Nepal
126	Mauritius
127	Nepal
128	Mauritania
129	Malta
130	Papua New Guinea
131	Zambia
132	Suriname
133	Iceland
134	Togo
135	Benin
136	Uganda
137	Bahamas
138	Haiti

139	Congo, DRC
140	Guyana
141	Mozambique
142	Guinea
143	Equatorial Guinea
144	Laos
145	Barbados
146	Niger
147	Fiji
148	Burkina Faso
149	Malawi
150	Swaziland
151	Belize
152	Afghanistan
153	Sierra Leone
154	Eritrea
155	Rwanda
156	Mali

157	Seychelles
158	Cambodia
159	Liberia
160	Bhutan
161	Maldives
162	Antigua & Barbuda
163	Djibouti
164	Saint Lucia
165	Gambia
166	Guinea-Bissau
167	Central African Republic
168	Palau
169	Burundi
170	Grenada
171	Lesotho
172	Saint Vincent & the Grenadines
173	Solomon Islands
174	Samoa

175	Cape Verde
176	Nauru
177	Dominica
178	Saint Kitts & Nevis
179	Chad
180	Tonga
181	Sao Tome & Principe
182	Comoros
183	Vanuatu
185	Kiribati
Not Ranked	Andorra
Not Ranked	East Timor
Not Ranked	Holy See
Not Ranked	Hong Kong
Not Ranked	Liechtenstein
Not Ranked	Marshall Islands
Not Ranked	Micronesia
Not Ranked	Monaco

Not Ranked	San Marino
Not Ranked	Somalia
Not Ranked	Tuvalu

* European Union is ranked 3rd

Cook Islands are ranked 184th

Niue is ranked 186th

Global Environmental Snapshot

Introduction

The countries of the world face many environmental challenges in common. Nevertheless, the nature and intensity of problem vary from region to region, as do various countries' respective capacities, in terms of affluence and infrastructure, to remediate threats to environmental quality.

Consciousness of perils affecting the global environment came to the fore in the last third or so of the 20th century has continued to intensify well into the new millennium. According to the United Nations Environment Programme, considerable environmental progress has been made at the level of institutional developments, international cooperation accords, and public participation. Approximately two-dozen international environmental protection accords with global implications have been promulgated since the late 1970s under auspices of the United Nations and other international organizations, together with many additional regional agreements. Attempts to address and rectify environmental problems take the form of legal frameworks, economic instruments, environmentally sound technologies and cleaner production processes as well as conservation efforts. Environmental impact assessments have increasingly been applied across the globe.

Environmental degradation affects the quality, or aesthetics, of human life, but it also displays potential to undermine conditions necessary for the sustainability of human life. Attitudes toward the importance of environmental protection measures reflect ambivalence derived from this bifurcation. On one hand, steps such as cleaning up pollution, dedicating parkland, and suchlike, are seen as embellishments undertaken by wealthy societies already assured they can successfully perform those functions deemed, ostensibly, more essential-for instance, public health and

education, employment and economic development. On the other hand, in poorer countries, activities causing environmental damage-for instance the land degradation effects of unregulated logging, slash-and-burn agriculture, overgrazing, and mining-can seem justified insofar as such activities provide incomes and livelihoods.

Rapid rates of resource depletion are associated with poverty and high population growth, themselves correlated, whereas consumption per capita is much higher in the most developed countries, despite these nations' recent progress in energy efficiency and conservation. It is impossible to sequester the global environmental challenge from related economic, social and political challenges.

First-tier industrialized countries have recently achieved measurable decreases in environmental pollution and the rate of resource depletion, a success not matched in middle income and developing countries. It is believed that the discrepancy is due to the fact that industrialized countries have more developed infrastructures to accommodate changes in environmental policy, to apply environmental technologies, and to invest in public education. The advanced industrialized countries incur relatively lower costs in alleviating environmental problems, in comparison to developing countries, since in the former even extensive environmental programs represent a rather minuscule percentage of total expenditures. Conversely, budget constraints, lagged provision of basic services to the population, and other factors such as debt service and militarization may preclude institution of minimal environmental protection measures in the poorest countries.

A synopsis for the current situation facing each region of the world follows:

Regional Synopsis: Africa

The African continent, the world's second-largest landmass, encompasses many of the world's least developed countries. By global standards, urbanization is comparatively low but rising at a rapid rate. More heavily industrialized areas at the northern and southern ends of the continent experience the major share of industrial pollution. In other regions the most serious environmental problems typically stem from inefficient subsistence farming methods and other forms of land degradation, which have affected an increasingly extensive area under pressure of a widely impoverished, fast-growing population. Africa's distribution of natural resources is very uneven. It is the continent at greatest risk of desertification, especially in the Sahel region at the edge of the Sahara but also in other dry-range areas. Yet at the same time, Africa also harbors some of the earth's richest and most diverse biological zones.

Key Points:

Up to half a billion hectares of African land are moderately to severely degraded, an occurrence

reflecting short-fallow shifting cultivation and overgrazing as well as a climatic pattern of recurrent droughts.

Soil degradation is severe along the expanse directly south of the Sahara, from the west to the east coasts. Parts of southern Africa, central-eastern Africa, and the neighboring island of Madagascar suffer from serious soil degradation as well.

Africa contains about 17 percent of the world's forest cover, concentrated in the tropical belt of the continent. Many of the forests, however, are severely depleted, with an estimated 70 percent showing some degree of degradation.

Population growth has resulted in continuing loss of arable land, as inefficient subsistence farming techniques affect increasingly extensive areas. Efforts to implement settled, sustainable agriculture have met with some recent success, but much further progress in this direction is needed. Especially in previously uninhabited forestlands, concern over deforestation is intensifying.

By contrast, the African savanna remains the richest grassland in the world, supporting a substantial concentration of animal and plant life. Wildlife parks are sub-Saharan Africa's greatest tourist attraction, and with proper management-giving local people a stake in conservation and controlling the pace of development-could greatly enhance African economies.

Significant numbers of mammal species in parts of northern, southern and eastern Africa are currently threatened, while the biological diversity in Mauritania and Madagascar is even further compromised with over 20 percent of the mammal species in these two countries currently under threat.

With marine catch trends increasing from 500,000 metric tons in the 1950s to over 3,000,000 metric tons by 2000, there was increasing concern about the reduction in fisheries and marine life, should this trend continue unabated.

Water resource vulnerability is a major concern in northeastern Africa, and a moderate concern across the rest of the continent. An exception is central Africa, which has plentiful water supplies.

Many Africans lack adequate access to resources, not just (if at all) because the resources are unevenly distributed geographically, but also through institutional failures such as faulty land tenure systems or political upheaval. The quality of Africa's natural resources, despite their spotty distribution, is in fact extraordinarily rich. The infrastructure needed to protect and benefit from this natural legacy, however, is largely lacking.

Regional Synopsis: Asia and the Pacific

Asia-earth's largest landmass-and the many large and nearly innumerable small islands lying off its Pacific shore display extraordinarily contrasting landscapes, levels of development, and degrees of environmental stress. In the classification used here, the world's smallest continent, Australia, is also included in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Asia-Pacific region is home to 9 of the world's 14 largest urban areas, and as energy use for utilities, industry and transport increases in developing economies, urban centers are subject to worsening air quality. Intense population density in places such as Bangladesh or Hong Kong is the quintessential image many people have of Asia, yet vast desert areas such as the Gobi and the world's highest mountain range, the Himalayas, span the continent as well. Forested areas in Southeast Asia and the islands of Indonesia and the Philippines were historically prized for their tropical hardwood, but in many places this resource is now severely depleted. Low-lying small island states are extremely vulnerable to the effects of global warming, both rising sea levels and an anticipated increase in cyclones.

Key Points:

Asian timber reserves are forecast to be depleted in the next 40 years. Loss of natural forest is irreversible in some areas, but plantation programs to restore tree cover may ameliorate a portion of the resulting land degradation.

Increased usage of fossil fuels in China and other parts of southern Asia is projected to result in a marked increase in emissions, especially in regard to carbon dioxide. The increased usage of energy has led to a marked upsurge in air pollution across the region.

Acidification is an emerging problem regionally, with sulfur dioxide emissions expected to triple by 2010 if the current growth rate is sustained. China, Thailand, India, and Korea seem to be suffering from particularly high rates of acid deposition. By contrast, Asia's most highly developed economy, Japan, has effected substantial improvements in its environmental indicators.

Water pollution in the Pacific is an urgent concern since up to 70 percent of the water discharged into the region's waters receives no treatment. Additionally, the disposal of solid wastes, in like manner, poses a major threat in a region with many areas of high population density.

The Asia-Pacific region is the largest expanse of the world's land that is adversely affected by soil degradation.

The region around Australia reportedly suffers the largest degree of ozone depletion.

The microstates of the Pacific suffer land loss due to global warming, and the consequent rise in

the levels of ocean waters. A high-emissions scenario and anthropogenic climate impact at the upper end of the currently predicted range would probably force complete evacuation of the lowest-elevation islands sometime in this century.

The species-rich reefs surrounding Southeast Asia are highly vulnerable to the deleterious effects of coastal development, land-based pollution, over-fishing and exploitative fishing methods, as well as marine pollution from oil spills and other activities.

With marine catch trends increasing from 5,000,000 metric tons in the 1950s to over 20,000,000 metric tons by 2000, there was increasing concern about the reduction in fisheries and marine life, should this trend continue unabated.

Significant numbers of mammal species in parts of China and south-east Asia are currently threatened, while the biological diversity in India, Japan, Australia, the Philippines, Indonesia and parts of Malaysia is even further compromised with over 20 percent of the mammal species in these countries currently under threat.

Water resource vulnerability is a serious concern in areas surrounding the Indian subcontinent.

Regional Synopsis: Central Asia

The Central Asian republics, formerly in the Soviet Union, experience a range of environmental problems as the result of poorly executed agricultural, industrial, and nuclear programs during the Soviet era. Relatively low population densities are the norm, especially since upon the breakup of the U.S.S.R. many ethnic Russians migrated back to European Russia. In this largely semi-arid region, drought, water shortages, and soil salinization pose major challenges.

Key Points:

The use of agricultural pesticides, such as DDT and other chemicals, has contributed to the contamination of soil and groundwater throughout the region.

Land and soil degradation, and in particular, increased salinization, is mostly attributable to faulty irrigation practices.

Significant desertification is also a problem in the region.

Air pollution is prevalent, mostly due to use of low octane automobile fuel.

Industrial pollution of the Caspian Sea and the Aral Sea, as a result of industrial effluents as well as

mining and metal production, presents a challenge to the countries bordering these bodies of water.

One of the most severe environmental problems in the region is attributable to the several billion tons of hazardous materials stored in landfills across Central Asia.

Uzbekistan's particular problem involves the contraction of the Aral Sea, which has decreased in size by a third, as a consequence of river diversions and poor irrigation practices. The effect has been the near-total biological destruction of that body of water.

Kazakhstan, as a consequence of being the heartland of the former Soviet Union's nuclear program, has incurred a high of cancerous malignancies, biogenetic abnormalities and radioactive contamination.

While part of the Soviet Union, the republics in the region experienced very high levels of greenhouse gas emissions, as a consequence of rapid industrialization using cheap but dirty energy sources, especially coal.

By contrast, however, there have recently been substantial reductions in the level of greenhouse gas emissions, especially those attributable to coal burning, with further decreases anticipated over the next decade. These changes are partially due to the use of cleaner energy technologies, such as natural gas, augmented by governmental commitment to improving environmental standards.

Regional Synopsis: Europe

Western Europe underwent dramatic transformation of its landscape, virtually eliminating large-scale natural areas, during an era of rapid industrialization, which intensified upon its recovery from World War II. In Eastern Europe and European Russia, intensive land development has been less prevalent, so that some native forests and other natural areas remain. Air and water pollution from use of dirty fuels and industrial effluents, however, are more serious environmental problems in Eastern than in Western Europe, though recent trends show improvement in many indicators. Acid rain has inflicted heavy environmental damage across much of Europe, particularly on forests. Europe and North America are the only regions in which water usage for industry exceeds that for agriculture, although in Mediterranean nations agriculture is the largest water consumer.

Key Points:

Europe contributes 36 percent of the world's chlorofluorocarbon emissions, 30 percent of carbon dioxide emissions, and 25 percent of sulfur dioxide emissions.

Sulfur and nitrogen oxide emissions are the cause of 30 to 50 percent of Central and Eastern

Europe's deforestation.

Acid rain has been an environmental concern for decades and continues to be a challenge in parts of Western Europe.

Overexploitation of up to 60 percent of Europe's groundwater presents a problem in industrial and urban areas.

With marine catch trends increasing from 5,000,000 metric tons in the 1950s to over 20,000,000 metric tons by 2000, there was increasing concern about the reduction in fisheries and marine life, should this trend continue unabated.

Significant numbers of mammal species in parts of western Europe, Eastern Europe and Russia are currently threatened, while the biological diversity on the Iberian Peninsula is even further compromised with over 40 percent of the mammal species in this region currently under threat. As a result, there has been a 10 percent increase in protected areas of Europe.

A major environmental issue for Europe involves the depletion of various already endangered or threatened species, and most significantly, the decline of fish stocks. Some estimates suggest that up to 50 percent of the continent's fish species may be considered endangered species. Coastal fisheries have been over-harvested, resulting in catch limits or moratoriums on many commercially important fish species.

Fortunately, in the last few years, these policies have started to yield measurable results with decreasing trends in marine fish catch.

Recently, most European countries have adopted cleaner production technologies, and alternative methods of waste disposal, including recycling.

The countries of Eastern Europe have made air quality a major environmental priority. This is exemplified by the Russian Federation's addition to the 1995 "Berlin Mandate" (transnational legislation based on resolutions of the Rio Earth Summit) compelling nations to promote "carbon sinks" to absorb greenhouse gases.

On a relative basis, when compared with the degree of industrial emissions emitted by many Eastern European countries until the late 1980s, there has been some marked increase in air quality in the region, as obsolete plants are closed and a transition to cleaner fuels and more efficient energy use takes place.

Regional Synopsis: The Middle and Near East

Quite possibly, the Middle East will exemplify the adage that, as the 20th century was a century fixated on oil, the 21st century will be devoted to critical decisions about water. Many (though far from all) nations in the Middle East rank among those countries with the largest oil and gas reserves, but water resources are relatively scarce throughout this predominantly dry region. Effects of global warming may cause moderately high elevation areas that now typically receive winter "snowpack" to experience mainly rain instead, which would further constrain dry-season water availability. The antiquities and religious shrines of the region render it a great magnet for tourism, which entails considerable economic growth potential but also intensifies stresses on the environment.

Key Points:

Water resource vulnerability is a serious concern across the entire region. The increased usage of, and further demand for water, has exacerbated long-standing water scarcity in the region. For instance, river diversions and industrial salt works have caused the Dead Sea to shrink by one-third from its original surface area, with further declines expected.

The oil industry in the region contributes to water pollution in the Persian Gulf, as a result of oil spills, which have averaged 1.2 million barrels of oil spilt per year (some sources suggest that this figure is understated). The consequences are severe because even after oil spills have been cleaned up, environmental damage to the food webs and ecosystems of marine life will persist for a prolonged period.

The region's coastal zone is considered one of the most fragile and endangered ecosystems of the world. Land reclamation, shoreline construction, discharge of industrial effluents, and tourism (such as diving in the Red Sea) contribute to widespread coastal damage.

Significant numbers of mammal species in parts of the Middle East are currently threatened.

Since the 1980s, 11 percent of the region's natural forest has been depleted.

Regional Synopsis: Latin America and the Caribbean

The Latin American and Caribbean region is characterized by exceedingly diverse landforms that have generally seen high rates of population growth and economic development in recent decades. The percentage of inhabitants residing in urban areas is quite high at 73.4 percent; the region includes the megacities of Mexico City, Sao Paulo, and Rio de Janeiro. The region also includes the world's second-highest mountain range, the Andes; significant expanses of desert and grassland; the

coral reefs of the Caribbean Sea; and the world's largest contiguous tropical forest in the Amazon basin. Threats to the latter from subsistence and commercial farming, mineral exploitation and timbering are well publicized. Nevertheless, of eight countries worldwide that still retain at least 70 percent of their original forest cover, six are in Latin America. The region accounts for nearly half (48.3 percent) of the world's greenhouse gas emissions derived from land clearing, but as yet a comparatively minuscule share (4.3 percent) of such gases from industrial sources.

Key Points:

Although Latin America is one of the most biologically diverse regions of the world, this biodiversity is highly threatened, as exemplified by the projected extinction of up to 100,000 species in the next few decades. Much of this loss will be concentrated in the Amazon area, although the western coastline of South America will also suffer significant depletion of biological diversity. The inventory of rainforest species with potentially useful commercial or medical applications is incomplete, but presumed to include significant numbers of such species that may become extinct before they are discovered and identified.

Up to 50 percent of the region's grazing land has lost its soil fertility as a result of soil erosion, salinization, alkalinization and overgrazing.

The Caribbean Sea, the Atlantic Ocean, and the Pacific Ocean have all been contaminated by agricultural wastes, which are discharged into streams that flow into these major waters. Water pollution derived from phosphorous, nitrates and pesticides adversely affects fish stocks, contributes to oxygen depletion and fosters overgrowth of aquatic vegetation. Marine life will continue to be severely compromised as a result of these conditions.

Due to industrial development in the region, many beaches of eastern Latin America and the Caribbean suffer from tar deposits.

Most cities in the region lack adequate sewage treatment facilities, and rapid migration of the rural poor into the cities is widening the gap between current infrastructure capacity and the much greater level needed to provide satisfactory basic services.

The rainforest region of the Amazon Basin suffers from dangerously high levels of deforestation, which may be a significant contributory factor to global warming or "the greenhouse effect." In the late 1990s and into the new millennium, the rate of deforestation was around 20 million acres of rainforest being destroyed annually.

Deforestation on the steep rainforest slopes of Caribbean islands contributes to soil erosion and landslides, both of which then result in heavy sedimentation of nearby river systems. When these sedimented rivers drain into the sea and coral reefs, they poison the coral tissues, which are vital to

the maintenance of the reef ecosystem. The result is marine degradation and nutrient depletion. Jamaica's coral reefs have never quite recovered from the effects of marine degradation.

The Southern Cone of Latin America (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay) suffers the effects of greatly increased ultraviolet-B radiation, as a consequence of more intense ozone depletion in the southern hemisphere.

Water resource vulnerability is an increasingly major concern in the northwestern portion of South America.

Regional Synopsis: North America

North American nations, in particular the United States and Canada, rank among the world's most highly developed industrial economies—a fact which has generated significant pollution problems, but also financial resources and skills that have enabled many problems to be corrected. Although efforts to promote energy efficiency, recycling, and suchlike have helped ease strains on the environment in a part of the world where per capita consumption levels are high, sprawling land development patterns and recent preferences many households have demonstrated for larger vehicles have offset these advances.

Meanwhile, a large portion of North America's original forest cover has been lost, though in many cases replaced by productive second-growth woodland. In recent years, attitudes toward best use of the region's remaining natural or scenic areas seem to be shifting toward recreation and preservation and away from resource extraction. With increasing attention on the energy scarcity in the United States, however, there is speculation that this shift may be short-lived. Indeed, the energy shortage on the west coast of the United States and associated calls for energy exploration, indicate a possible retrenchment toward resource extraction. At the same time, however, it has also served to highlight the need for energy conservation as well as alternative energy sources.

Despite generally successful anti-pollution efforts, various parts of the region continue to suffer significant air, water and land degradation from industrial, vehicular, and agricultural emissions and runoff. Mexico, as a middle-income country, displays environmental problems characteristic of a developing economy, including forest depletion, pollution from inefficient industrial processes and dirty fuels, and lack of sufficient waste-treatment infrastructure.

Key Points:

Because of significantly greater motor vehicle usage in the United States (U.S.) than in the rest of the world, the U.S. contribution of urban air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, especially carbon dioxide, is disproportionately high in relation to its population.

Acid rain is an enduring issue of contention in the northeastern part of the United States, on the border with Canada.

Mexico's urban areas suffer extreme air pollution from carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, and other toxic air pollutants. Emissions controls on vehicles are in their infancy, compared to analogous regulations in the U.S.

The cities of Mexico, including those on the U.S. border, also discharge large quantities of untreated or poorly treated sewage, though officials are currently planning infrastructure upgrades.

Deforestation is noteworthy in various regions of the U.S., especially along the northwest coastline. Old growth forests have been largely removed, but in the northeastern and upper midwestern sections of the United States, evidence suggests that the current extent of tree cover probably surpasses the figure for the beginning of the 20th century.

Extreme weather conditions in the last few years have resulted in a high level of soil erosion along the north coast of California; in addition, the coastline itself has shifted substantially due to soil erosion and concomitant landslides.

Agricultural pollution-including nitrate contamination of well water, nutrient runoff to waterways, and pesticide exposure-is significant in various areas. Noteworthy among affected places are California's Central Valley, extensive stretches of the Midwest, and land in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Inland waterways, especially around the Great Lakes, have substantially improved their water quality, due to concentrated efforts at reducing water pollution by governmental, commercial and community representatives. Strict curbs on industrial effluents and near-universal implementation of sewage treatment are the chief factors responsible for this improvement.

A major environmental issue for Canada and the United States involves the depletion of various already endangered or threatened species, and most significantly, the decline of fish stocks. Coastal fisheries have been over-harvested, resulting in catch limits or moratoriums on many commercially important fish species. In the last few years, these policies have started to yield measurable results with decreasing trends in marine fish catch.

Due to the decay of neighboring ecosystems in Central America and the Caribbean, the sea surrounding Florida has become increasingly sedimented, contributing to marine degradation, nutrient depletion of the ecosystem, depletion of fish stocks, and diseases to coral species in particular.

Polar Regions

Key Points:

The significant rise in sea level, amounting 10 to 25 centimeters in the last 100 years, is due to the melting of the Arctic ice sheets, and is attributed to global warming.

The Antarctic suffers from a significant ozone hole, first detected in 1976. By 1985, a British scientific team reported a 40 percent decrease in usual regeneration rates of the ozone. Because a sustained increase in the amount of ultraviolet-B radiation would have adverse consequences upon all planetary life, recent environmental measures have been put into effect, aimed at reversing ozone depletion. These measures are projected to garner significant results by 2050.

Due to air and ocean currents, the Arctic is a sink for toxic releases originally discharged thousands of miles away. Arctic wildlife and Canada's Inuit population have higher bodily levels of contaminants such as PCB and dioxin than those found in people and animals in much of the rest of the world.

Global Environmental Concepts

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1. Global Warming and Greenhouse Gases

The Greenhouse Effect:

In the early 19th century, the French physicist, Jean Fourier, contended that the earth's atmosphere functions in much the same way as the glass of a greenhouse, thus describing what is now understood as the "greenhouse effect." Put simply, the "greenhouse effect" confines some of the sun's energy to the earth, preserving some of the planet's warmth, rather than allowing it to flow back into space. In so doing, all kinds of life forms can flourish on earth. Thus, the "greenhouse effect" is necessary to sustain and preserve life forms and ecosystems on earth.

In the late 19th century, a Swedish chemist, Svante Arrhenius, noticed that human activities, such as the burning of coal and other fossil fuels for heat, and the removal of forested lands for urban development, led to higher concentrations of greenhouse gases, like carbon dioxide and methane, in

the atmosphere. This increase in the levels of greenhouse gases was believed to advance the "greenhouse effect" exponentially, and might be related to the trend in global warming.

In the wake of the Industrial Revolution, after industrial development took place on a large scale and the total human population burgeoned simultaneously with industrialization, the resulting increase in greenhouse gas emissions could, many scientists believe, be significant enough to have some bearing on climate. Indeed, many studies in recent years support the idea that there is a linkage between human activities and global warming, although there is less consensus on the extent to which this linkage may be relevant to environmental concerns.

That said, some scientists have argued that temperature fluctuations have existed throughout the evolution of the planet. Indeed, Dr. S. Fred Singer, the president of the Science and Environment Policy Project has noted that 3,000-year-old geological records of ocean sediment reveal changes in the surface temperature of the ocean. Hence, it is possible that climate variability is merely a normal fact of the planet's evolution. Yet even skeptics as to anthropogenic factors concur that any substantial changes in global temperatures would likely have an effect upon the earth's ecosystems, as well as the life forms that inhabit them.

The Relationship Between Global Warming and Greenhouse Gases:

A large number of climatologists believe that the increase in atmospheric concentrations of "greenhouse gas emissions," mostly a consequence of human activities such as the burning of fossil fuels, are contributing to global warming. The cause notwithstanding, the planet has reportedly warmed 0.3°C to 0.6°C over the last century. Indeed, each year during the 1990s was one of the very warmest in the 20th century, with the mean surface temperature for 1999 being the fifth warmest on record since 1880.

In early 2000, a panel of atmospheric scientists for the National Research Council concluded in a report that global warming was, indeed, a reality. While the panel, headed by Chairman John Wallace, a professor of atmospheric sciences at the University of Washington, stated that it remained unclear whether human activities have contributed to the earth's increasing temperatures, it was apparent that global warming exists.

In 2001, following a request for further study by the incoming Bush administration in the [United States](#), the National Academy of Sciences again confirmed that global warming had been in existence for the last 20 years. The study also projected an increase in temperature between 2.5 degrees and 10.4 degrees Fahrenheit by the year 2100. Furthermore, the study found the leading cause of global warming to be emissions of carbon dioxide from the burning of fossil fuels, and it noted that greenhouse gas accumulations in the earth's atmosphere was a result of human activities.

Within the scientific community, the controversy regarding has centered on the difference between

surface air and upper air temperatures. Information collected since 1979 suggests that while the earth's surface temperature has increased by about a degree in the past century, the atmospheric temperature five miles above the earth's surface has indicated very little increase. Nevertheless, the panel stated that this discrepancy in temperature between surface and upper air does not invalidate the conclusion that global warming is taking place. Further, the panel noted that natural events, such as volcanic eruptions, can decrease the temperature in the upper atmosphere.

The major consequences of global warming potentially include the melting of the polar ice caps, which, in turn, contribute to the rise in sea levels. Many islands across the globe have already experienced a measurable loss of land as a result. Because global warming may increase the rate of evaporation, increased precipitation, in the form of stronger and more frequent storm systems, is another potential outcome. Other consequences of global warming may include the introduction and proliferation of new infectious diseases, loss of arable land (referred to as "desertification"), destructive changes to existing ecosystems, loss of biodiversity and the isolation of species, and concomitant adverse changes in the quality of human life.

International Policy Development in Regard to Global Warming:

Regardless of what the precise nature of the relationship between greenhouse gas emissions and global warming may be, it seems that there is some degree of a connection between the phenomena. Any substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and global warming trends will likely involve systematic changes in industrial operations, the use of advanced energy sources and technologies, as well as global cooperation in implementing and regulating these transformations.

In this regard, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) stipulated the following objectives:

1. To stabilize "greenhouse gas" concentrations within the atmosphere, in such a manner that would preclude hazardous anthropogenic intervention into the existing biosphere and ecosystems of the world. This stabilization process would facilitate the natural adaptation of ecosystems to changes in climate.
2. To ensure and enable sustainable development and food production on a global scale.

*** See section on "International Environmental Agreements and Associations" for information related to international policies related to limiting greenhouse gases and controlling climate change emanating from historic summits at Kyoto, Copenhagen, Doha, and Paris. ***

2. Air Pollution

Long before global warming reared its head as a significant issue, those concerned about the environment and public health noted the deleterious effects of human-initiated combustion upon the atmosphere. Killer smogs from coal burning triggered acute health emergencies in London and other places. At a lower level of intensity motor vehicle, power plant, and industrial emissions impaired long-range visibility and probably had some chronic adverse consequences on the respiratory systems of persons breathing such air.

In time, scientists began associating the sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides released from coal burning with significant acid deposition in the atmosphere, eventually falling as "acid rain." This phenomenon has severely degraded forestlands, especially in Europe and a few parts of the [United States](#). It has also impaired some aquatic ecosystems and eaten away the surface of some human artifacts, such as marble monuments. Scrubber technology and conversion to cleaner fuels have enabled the level of industrial production to remain at least constant while significantly reducing acid deposition. Technologies aimed at cleaning the air and curtailing acid rain, soot, and smog may, nonetheless, boomerang as the perils of global warming become increasingly serious. In brief, these particulates act as sort of a sun shade -- comparable to the effect of volcanic eruptions on the upper atmosphere whereby periods of active volcanism correlate with temporarily cooler weather conditions. Thus, while the carbon dioxide releases that are an inevitable byproduct of combustion continue, by scrubbing the atmosphere of pollutants, an industrial society opens itself to greater insolation (penetration of the sun's rays and consequent heating), and consequently, it is likely to experience a correspondingly greater rise in ambient temperatures.

The health benefits of removing the sources of acid rain and smog are indisputable, and no one would recommend a return to previous conditions. Nevertheless, the problematic climatic effects of continually increasing emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases pose a major global environmental challenge, not as yet addressed adequately.

3. Ozone Depletion

The stratospheric ozone layer functions to prevent ultraviolet radiation from reaching the earth. Normally, stratospheric ozone is systematically disintegrated and regenerated through natural photochemical processes. The stratospheric ozone layer, however, has been depleted unnaturally as a result of anthropogenic (man-made) chemicals, most especially chlorine and bromide compounds such as chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), halons, and various industrial chemicals in the form of solvents, refrigerants, foaming agents, aerosol propellants, fire retardants, and fumigants. Ozone depletion is of concern because it permits a greater degree of ultraviolet-B radiation to reach the earth, which then increases the incidences of cancerous malignancies, cataracts, and human immune deficiencies. In addition, even in small doses, ozone depletion affects the ecosystem by

disturbing food chains, agriculture, fisheries and other forms of biological diversity.

Transnational policies enacted to respond to the dangers of ozone depletion include the 1985 Vienna Convention on the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the 1987 Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. The Montreal Protocol was subsequently amended in London in 1990, Copenhagen in 1992 and Vienna in 1995. By 1996, 155 countries had ratified the Montreal Protocol, which sets out a time schedule for the reduction (and eventual elimination) of ozone depleting substances (OPS), and bans exports and imports of ODS from and to non-participant countries.

In general, the Protocol stipulates that developed countries must eliminate halon consumption by 1994 and CFC consumption by 1996, while developing countries must eliminate these substances by 2010. Consumption of methyl bromide, which is used as a fumigant, was to be frozen at the 1995 in developed countries, and fully eliminated in 2010, while developing countries are to freeze consumption by 2002, based on average 1995-1998 consumption levels. Methyl chloroform is to be phased out by 2005. Under the Montreal Protocol, most ODS will be completely eliminated from use by 2010.

4. Land Degradation

In recent decades, land degradation in more arid regions of the world has become a serious concern. The problem, manifest as both "desertification" and "devegetation," is caused primarily by climate variability and human activities, such as "deforestation," excessive cultivation, overgrazing, and other forms of land resource exploitation. It is also exacerbated by inadequate irrigation practices. Although the effects of droughts on drylands have been temporary in the past, today, the productivity and sustainability of these lands have been severely compromised for the long term. Indeed, in every region of the world, land degradation has become an acute issue.

Desertification and Devegetation:

"Desertification" is a process of land degradation causing the soil to deteriorate, thus losing its nutrients and fertility, and eventually resulting in the loss of vegetation, known as "devegetation." As aforementioned, "desertification" and "devegetation" are caused by human activities, yet human beings are also the greatest casualties. Because these forms of land degradation affect the ability of the soil to produce crops, they concomitantly contribute to poverty. As population increases and demographic concentrations shift, the extent of land subject to stresses by those seeking to wrest subsistence from it has inexorably risen.

In response, the United Nations has formed the Convention to Combat Desertification-aimed at

implementing programs to address the underlying causes of desertification, as well as measures to prevent and minimize its effects. Of particular significance is the formulation of policies on transboundary resources, such as areas around lakes and rivers. At a broader level, the Convention has established a Conference of Parties (COP), which includes all ratifying governments, for directing and advancing international action.

To ensure more efficacious use of funding, the Convention intends to reconfigure international aid to utilize a consultative and coordinated approach in the disbursement and expenditure of donor funds. In this way, local communities that are affected by desertification will be active participants in the solution-generation process. In-depth community education projects are envisioned as part of this new international aid program, and private donor financing is encouraged. Meanwhile, as new technologies are developed to deal with the problem of desertification, they need to be distributed for application across the world. Hence, the Convention calls for international cooperation in scientific research in this regard.

Desertification is a problem of sustainable development. It is directly connected to human challenges such as poverty, social and economic well-being and environmental protection as well. Broader environmental issues, such as climate change, biological diversity, and freshwater supplies, are indirectly related, so any effort to resolve this environmental challenge must entail coordinated research efforts and joint action.

Deforestation:

Deforestation is not a recent phenomenon. For centuries, human beings have cut down trees to clear space for land cultivation, or in order to use the wood for fuel. Over the last 200 years, and most especially after World War II, deforestation increased because the logging industry became a globally profitable endeavor, and so the clearing of forested areas was accelerated for the purposes of industrial development. In the long term, this intensified level of deforestation is considered problematic because the forest is unable to regenerate itself quickly. The deforestation that has occurred in tropical rainforests is seen as an especially serious concern, due to the perceived adverse effects of this process upon the entire global ecosystem.

The most immediate consequence of deforestation is soil degradation. Soil, which is necessary for the growth of vegetation, can be a fragile and vital property. Organically, an extensive evolution process must take place before soil can produce vegetation, yet at the same time, the effects of natural elements, such as wind and rain, can easily and quickly degrade this resource. This phenomenon is known as soil erosion. In addition, natural elements like wind and rain reduce the amount of fertile soil on the ground, making soil scarcity a genuine problem. When fertile topsoil that already exists is removed from the landscape in the process of deforestation, soil scarcity is further exacerbated. Equally significant is the fact that once land has been cleared so that the

topsoil can be cultivated for crop production, not only are the nutrient reserves in the soil depleted, thus producing crops of inferior quality, but the soil structure itself becomes stressed and deteriorates further.

Another direct result of deforestation is flooding. When forests are cleared, removing the cover of vegetation, and rainfall occurs, the flow of water increases across the surface of land. When extensive water runoff takes place, the frequency and intensity of flooding increases. Other adverse effects of deforestation include the loss of wildlife and biodiversity within the ecosystem that supports such life forms.

At a broader level, tropical rainforests play a vital role in maintaining the global environmental system. Specifically, destruction of tropical rainforests affects the carbon dioxide cycle. When forests are destroyed by burning (or rotting), carbon dioxide is released into the air, thus contributing to an intensified "greenhouse effect." The increase in greenhouse gas emissions like carbon dioxide is a major contributor to global warming, according to many environmental scientists. Indeed, trees themselves absorb carbon dioxide in the process of photosynthesis, so their loss also reduces the absorption of greenhouse gases.

Tropical rainforest destruction also adversely affects the nitrogen cycle. Nitrogen is a key nutrient for both plants and animals. Plants derive nitrogen from soil, while animals obtain it via nitrogen-enriched vegetation. This element is essential for the formation of amino acids, and thereby for proteins and biochemicals that all living things need for metabolism and growth. In the nitrogen cycle, vegetation acquires these essential proteins and biochemicals, and then cyclically returns them to the atmosphere and global ecosystem. Accordingly, when tropical rainforest ecosystems are compromised, not only is vegetation removed; the atmosphere is also affected and climates are altered. At a more immediate level, the biodiversity within tropical rainforests, including wildlife and insect species and a wealth of plant varieties, is depleted. Loss of rare plants is of particular concern because certain species as yet unknown and unused could likely yield many practical benefits, for instance as medicines.

As a result of the many challenges associated with deforestation, many environmental groups and agencies have argued for government policies on the sustainable development of forests by governments across the globe. While many countries have instituted national policies and programs aimed at reducing deforestation, and substantial research has been advanced in regard to sustainable and regenerative forestry development, there has been very little progress on an international level. Generally speaking, most tropical rainforests are located in developing and less developed countries, where economic growth is often dependent upon the exploitation of tropical rainforests. Timber resources as well as wildlife hunting tend to be particularly lucrative arenas.

In places such as the Amazon, where deforestation takes place for the construction of energy plants aimed at industrialization and economic development, there is an exacerbated effect on the

environment. After forests are cleared in order to construct such projects, massive flooding usually ensues. The remaining trees then rot and decay in the wake of the flooding. As the trees deteriorate, their biochemical makeup becomes more acidic, producing poisonous substances such as hydrogen sulphide and methane gases. Acidified water subsequently corrodes the mechanical equipment and operations of the plants, which are already clogged by rotting wood after the floodwaters rise.

Deforestation generally arises from an economically plausible short-term motivation, but nonetheless poses a serious global concern because the effects go beyond national boundaries. The United Nations has established the World Commission on Forest and Sustainable Development. This body's task is to determine the optimal means of dealing with the issue of deforestation, without unduly affecting normal economic development, while emphasizing the global significance of protecting tropical forest ecosystems.

5. Water Resources

For all terrestrial fauna, including humans, water is the most immediate necessity to sustain life. As the population has increased and altered an ever-greater portion of the landscape from its natural condition, demand on water resources has intensified, especially with the development of industrialization and large-scale irrigation. The supply of freshwater is inherently limited, and moreover distributed unevenly across the earth's landmasses. Moreover, not just demand for freshwater but activities certain to degrade it are becoming more pervasive. By contrast, the oceans form a sort of "last wilderness," still little explored and in large part not seriously affected by human activity. However, coastal environments - the biologically richest part of the marine ecosystem-are experiencing major depletion due to human encroachment and over-exploitation.

Freshwater:

In various regions, for instance the Colorado River in the western [United States](#), current withdrawals of river water for irrigation, domestic, and industrial use consume the entire streamflow so that almost no water flows into the sea at the river's mouth. Yet development is ongoing in many such places, implying continually rising demand for water. In some areas reliant on groundwater, aquifers are being depleted at a markedly faster rate than they are being replenished. An example is the San Joaquin Valley in California, where decades of high water withdrawals for agriculture have caused land subsidence of ten meters or more in some spots. Naturally, the uncertainty of future water supplies is particularly acute in arid and semi-arid regions. Speculation that the phenomenon of global warming will alter geographic and seasonal rainfall patterns adds further uncertainty.

Water conservation measures have great potential to alleviate supply shortages. Some city water systems are so old and beset with leaking pipes that they lose as much water as they meter. Broad-scale irrigation could be replaced by drip-type irrigation, actually enhancing the sustainability of agriculture. In many areas where heavy irrigation has been used for decades, the result is deposition of salts and other chemicals in the soil such that the land becomes unproductive for farming and must be abandoned.

Farming is a major source of water pollution. Whereas restrictions on industrial effluents and other "point sources" are relatively easy to implement, comparable measures to reform hydraulic practices at farms and other "nonpoint sources" pose a significantly knottier challenge. Farm-caused water pollution takes the following main forms:

- Nitrate pollution found in wells in intensive farming areas as a consequence of heavy fertilizer use is a threat to human health. The most serious danger is to infants, who by ingesting high-nitrate water can contract methemoglobinemia, sometimes called "blue baby syndrome," a potentially fatal condition.
- Fertilizer runoff into rivers and lakes imparts unwanted nutrients that cause algae growth and eventual loss of oxygen in the body of water, degrading its ability to support fish and other desirable aquatic life.
- Toxic agricultural chemicals - insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides - are detectable in some aquifers and waterways.

In general, it is much easier to get a pollutant into water than to retrieve it out. Gasoline additives, dry cleaning chemicals, other industrial toxins, and in a few areas radionuclides have all been found in water sources intended for human use. The complexity and long time scale of subterranean hydrological movements essentially assures that pollutants already deposited in aquifers will continue to turn up for decades to come. Sophisticated water treatment processes are available, albeit expensive, to reclaim degraded water and render it fit for human consumption. Yet source protection is unquestionably a more desirable alternative.

In much of the developing world, and even some low-income rural enclaves of the developed world, the population lacks ready access to safe water. Surface water and shallow groundwater supplies are susceptible to contamination from untreated wastewater and failing septic tanks, as well as chemical hazards. The occurrence of waterborne disease is almost certainly greatly underreported.

Marine Resources:

Coastal areas have always been desirable places for human habitation, and population pressure on them continues to increase. Many types of water degradation that affect lakes and rivers also affect coastal zones: industrial effluents, untreated or partially treated sewage, nutrient load from agriculture figure prominently in both cases. Prospects for more extreme storms as a result of global warming, as well as the pervasiveness of poorly planned development in many coastal areas, forebode that catastrophic hurricanes and landslides may increase in frequency in the future. Ongoing rise in sea levels will force remedial measures and in some cases abandonment of currently valuable coastal property.

Fisheries over much of the globe have been overharvested, and immediate conservation measures are required to preserve stocks of many species. Many governments subsidized factory-scale fishing fleets in the 1970s and 1980s, and the resultant catch increase evidently surpassed a sustainable level. It is uncertain how much of the current decline in fish stocks stems from overharvesting and how much from environmental pollution. The deep ocean remains relatively unaffected by human activity, but continental shelves near coastlines are frequently seriously polluted, and these close-to-shore areas are the major biological nurseries for food fish and the smaller organisms they feed on.

6. Environmental Toxins

Toxic chemical pollution exploded on the public consciousness with disclosure of spectacularly polluted industrial areas such as Love Canal near Buffalo, New York. There is no question that pollutants such as organophosphates or radionuclides can be highly deleterious to health, but evidence to date suggests that seriously affected areas are a localized rather than universal problem.

While some explore the possibilities for a lifestyle that fully eschews use of modern industrial chemicals, the most prevalent remediative approach is to focus on more judicious use. The most efficient chemical plants are now able to contain nearly all toxic byproducts of their production processes within the premises, minimizing the release of such substances into the environment. Techniques such as Integrated Pest Management (IPM) dictate limited rather than broadcast use of pesticides: application only when needed using the safest available chemical, supplemented as much as possible with nontoxic controls.

While heightened public awareness and growing technical sophistication suggest a hopeful outlook on limiting the damage from manmade environmental toxins, one must grant that previous incidents of their misuse and mishandling have already caused environmental damage that will have to be dealt with for many years to come. In the case of the most hazardous radioactive substances, the time scale for successful remediation actually extends beyond that of the recorded history of civilization. Moreover, in this era of high population density and rapid economic growth, quotidian activities such as the transport of chemicals will occasionally, seemingly inevitably result in

accidents with adverse environmental consequences.

7. "Islandization" and Biodiversity

With increased awareness regarding the adverse effects of unregulated hunting and habitat depletion upon wildlife species and other aspects of biodiversity, large-scale efforts across the globe have been initiated to reduce and even reverse this trend.

In every region of the world, many species of wildlife and areas of biodiversity have been saved from extinction. Nationally, many countries have adopted policies aimed at preservation and conservation of species, and one of the most tangible measures has been the proliferation of protected habitats. Such habitats exist in the form of wildlife reserves, marine life reserves, and other such areas where biodiversity can be protected from external encroachment and exploitation.

Despite these advances in wildlife and biodiversity protection, further and perhaps more intractable challenges linger. Designated reserves, while intended to prevent further species decline, exist as closed territories, fragmented from other such enclaves and disconnected from the larger ecosystem. This environmental scenario is referred to as "islandization." Habitat reserves often serve as oversized zoos or game farms, with landscapes and wildlife that have effectively been "tamed" to suit. Meanwhile, the larger surrounding ecosystem continues to be seriously degraded and transformed, while within the islandized habitat, species that are the focus of conservation efforts may not have sufficient range and may not be able to maintain healthy genetic variability.

As a consequence, many conservationists and preservationists have demanded that substantially larger portions of land be withheld as habitat reserves, and a network of biological corridors to connect continental reserves be established. While such efforts to combat islandization have considerable support in the [United States](#), how precisely such a program would be instituted, especially across national boundaries, remains a matter of debate. International conservationists and preservationists say without a network of reserves a massive loss of biodiversity will result.

The concept of islandization illustrates why conservation and preservation of wildlife and biodiversity must consider and adopt new, broader strategies. In the past, conservation and preservation efforts have been aimed at specific species, such as the spotted owl and grizzly bear in North America, the Bengal tiger in Southeast Asia, the panda in [China](#), elephants in Africa. Instead, the new approach is to simultaneously protect many and varied species that inhabit the same ecosystem. This method, referred to as "bio-regional conservation," may more efficaciously generate longer-term and more far-reaching results precisely because it is aimed at preserving entire ecosystems, and all the living things within.

More About Biodiversity Issues:

This section is directly taken from the United Nations Environmental Program: "[Biodiversity Assessment](#)"

The Global Biodiversity Assessment, completed by 1500 scientists under the auspices of United Nations Environmental Program in 1995, updated what is known (or unknown) about global biological diversity at the ecosystem, species and genetic levels. The assessment was uncertain of the total number of species on Earth within an order of magnitude. Of its working figure of 13 million species, only 13 percent are scientifically described. Ecological community diversity is also poorly known, as is its relationship to biological diversity, and genetic diversity has been studied for only a small number of species. The effects of human activities on biodiversity have increased so greatly that the rate of species extinctions is rising to hundreds or thousands of times the background level. These losses are driven by increasing demands on species and their habitats, and by the failure of current market systems to value biodiversity adequately. The Assessment calls for urgent action to reverse these trends.

There has been a new recognition of the importance of protecting marine and aquatic biodiversity. The first quantitative estimates of species losses due to growing coral reef destruction predict that almost 200,000 species, or one in five presently contributing to coral reef biodiversity, could die out in the next 40 years if human pressures on reefs continue to increase.

Since Rio, many countries have improved their understanding of the status and importance of their biodiversity, particularly through biodiversity country studies such as those prepared under the auspices of UNEP/GEF. The [United Kingdom](#) identified 1250 species needing monitoring, of which 400 require action plans to ensure their survival. Protective measures for biodiversity, such as legislation to protect species, can prove effective. In the USA, almost 40 percent of the plants and animals protected under the Endangered Species Act are now stable or improving as a direct result of recovery efforts. Some African countries have joined efforts to protect threatened species through the 1994 Lusaka Agreement, and more highly migratory species are being protected by specialized cooperative agreements among range states under the Bonn Agreement.

There is an emerging realization that a major part of conservation of biological diversity must take place outside of protected areas and involve local communities. The extensive agricultural areas occupied by small farmers contain much biodiversity that is important for sustainable food production. Indigenous agricultural practices have been and continue to be important elements in the maintenance of biodiversity, but these are being displaced and lost. There is a new focus on the interrelationship between agrodiversity conservation and sustainable use and development practices in smallholder agriculture, with emphasis on use of farmers' knowledge and skills as a source of information for sustainable farming.

Perhaps even more important than the loss of biodiversity is the transformation of global biogeochemical cycles, the reduction in the total world biomass, and the decrease in the biological productivity of the planet. While quantitative measurements are not available, the eventual economic and social consequences may be so significant that the issue requires further attention.

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Online resources used generally in the Environmental Overview:

Environmental Protection Agency Global Warming Site. URL: <http://www.epa.gov/globalwarming>

Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations: Forestry. URL: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/sofo/en/>

Global Warming Information Page. URL: <http://globalwarming.org>

U n i t e d N a t i o n s E n v i r o n m e n t a l P r o g r a m . U R L : http://www.unep.org/GEO/GEO_Products/Assessment_Reports/

United Nations Global Environmental Outlook. URL: <http://www.unep.org/geo/geo4/media/>

Note on Edition Dates:

The edition dates for textual resources are noted above because they were used to formulate the original content. We also have used online resources (cited above) to update coverage as needed.

Information Resources

For more information about environmental concepts, CountryWatch recommends the following resources:

The United Nations Environmental Program Network (with country profiles)

[<http://www.unep.net/>](http://www.unep.net/)

The United Nations Environment Program on Climate Change

[<http://climatechange.unep.net/>](http://climatechange.unep.net/)

The United Nations Environmental Program on Waters and Oceans

[<http://www.unep.ch/earthw/Pdepwat.htm>](http://www.unep.ch/earthw/Pdepwat.htm)

The United Nations Environmental Program on Forestry: "Forests in Flux"

[<http://www.unep-wcmc.org/forest/flux/homepage.htm>](http://www.unep-wcmc.org/forest/flux/homepage.htm)

FAO "State of the World's Forests"

[<http://www.fao.org/forestry/FO/SOFO/SOFO99/sofo99-e.stm>](http://www.fao.org/forestry/FO/SOFO/SOFO99/sofo99-e.stm)

World Resources Institute.

[<http://www.wri.org/>](http://www.wri.org/)

Harvard University Center for Health and the Global Environment

[<http://www.med.harvard.edu/chge/the-review.html>](http://www.med.harvard.edu/chge/the-review.html)

The University of Wisconsin Center for Sustainability and the Global Environment

<http://sage.aos.wisc.edu/>

International Environmental Agreements and Associations

International Policy Development in Regard to Global Warming:

Introduction

Regardless of what the precise nature of the relationship between greenhouse gas emissions and global warming may be, it seems that there is some degree of a connection between the phenomena. Any substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and global warming trends will likely involve systematic changes in industrial operations, the use of advanced energy sources and technologies, as well as global cooperation in implementing and regulating these transformations.

In this regard, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) stipulated the following objectives:

1. To stabilize "greenhouse gas" concentrations within the atmosphere, in such a manner that would preclude hazardous anthropogenic intervention into the existing biosphere and ecosystems of the world. This stabilization process would facilitate the natural adaptation of ecosystems to changes in climate.
2. To ensure and enable sustainable development and food production on a global scale.

Following are two discussions regarding international policies on the environment, followed by listings of international accords.

Special Entry: The Kyoto Protocol

The UNFCCC was adopted at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, and entered into force in 1994. Over 175 parties were official participants.

Meanwhile, however, many of the larger, more industrialized nations failed to reach the emissions' reduction targets, and many UNFCCC members agreed that the voluntary approach to reducing emissions had not been successful. As such, UNFCCC members reached a consensus that legally binding limits were necessitated, and agreed to discuss such a legal paradigm at a meeting in Kyoto, [Japan](#) in 1997. At that meeting, the UNFCCC forged the Kyoto Protocol. This concord is the first legally binding international agreement that places limits on emissions from industrialized countries. The major greenhouse gas emissions addressed in the Kyoto Protocol include carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, sulfur hexafluoride, and methane.

The provisions of the Kyoto Protocol stipulate that economically advanced nations must reduce their combined emissions of greenhouse gases, by approximately five percent from their 1990 levels, before the 2008-2010 deadline. Countries with the highest carbon dioxide emissions, such as the [United States](#) (U.S.), many of the European Union (EU) countries, and [Japan](#), are to reduce emissions by a scale of 6 to 8 percent. All economically advanced nations must show "demonstrable progress" by 2005. In contrast, no binding limits or timetable have been set on developing countries. Presumably, this distinction is due to the fact that most developing countries - - with the obvious exceptions of [India](#) and [China](#) -- simply do not emit as many greenhouse gases as do more industrially advanced countries. Meanwhile, these countries are entrenched in the process of economic development.

Regardless of the aforementioned reasoning, there has been strong opposition against the asymmetrical treatment assigned to emissions limits among developed and developing countries.

Although this distinction might be regarded as unfair in principle, associations such as the Alliance of Small Island States have been vocal in expressing how global warming -- a result of greenhouse gas emissions - has contributed to the rise in sea level, and thus deleteriously affected their very existence as island nation states. For this reason, some parties have suggested that economically advanced nations, upon returning to their 1990 levels, should be required to further reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by a deadline of 2005. In response, interested parties have observed that even if such reductions were undertaken by economically advanced nations, they would not be enough to completely control global warming. Indeed, a reduction in the rate of fossil fuel usage by developing nations would also be necessary to have substantial ameliorative effect on global warming. Indeed, a reduction in the rate of fossil fuel usage by developing nations would also be necessary to have substantial ameliorative effect on global warming.

As such, the Protocol established a "Clean Development Mechanism" which permits developed countries to invest in projects aimed at reducing emissions within developing countries in return for credit for the reductions. Ostensibly, the objective of this mechanism is to curtail emissions in developing countries without unduly penalizing them for their economic development. Under this model, the countries with more potential emissions credits could sell them to other signatories of the Kyoto Protocol, whose emissions are forecast to significantly rise in the next few years. Should this trading of emissions credits take place, it is estimated that the Kyoto Protocol's emissions targets could still be met.

In 1999, the International Energy Outlook projected that Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union and Newly Independent States, as well as parts of Asia, are all expected to show a marked decrease in their level of energy-related carbon emissions in 2010. Nations with the highest emissions, specifically, the U.S., the EU and [Japan](#), are anticipated to reduce their emissions by up to 8 percent by 2012. By 2000, however, the emissions targets were not on schedule for achievement. Indeed, the U.S. Department of Energy estimates forecast that by 2010, there will be a 34 percent increase in carbon emissions from the 1990 levels, in the absence of major shifts in policy, economic growth, energy prices, and consumer trends. Despite this assessment in the U.S., international support for the Kyoto Protocol remained strong, especially among European countries and island states, who view the pact as one step in the direction away from reliance on fossil fuels and other sources of greenhouse gases.

In 2001, U.S. President, George W. Bush, rejected his country's participation in the Kyoto Protocol, saying that the costs imposed on the global economic system, and especially, on the US, overshadowed the benefits of the Protocol. He also cited the unfair burden on developed nations to reduce emissions, as another primary reasons for withdrawal from the international pact, as well as insufficient evidence regarding the science of global warming. Faced with impassioned international disapproval for his position, the U.S. president stated that his administration remained interested in dealing with the matter of global warming, but would endorse alternative measures to combat the problem, such as voluntary initiatives limiting emissions. Critics of Bush's position, however, have

noted that it was the failure of voluntary initiatives to reduce emissions following the Rio Summit that led to the establishment of the Kyoto Protocol in the first place.

In the wake of the Bush administration's decision, many participant countries resigned themselves to the reality that the goals of the Kyoto Protocol might not be achieved without U.S. involvement. Nevertheless, in Bonn, [Germany](#), in July 2001, the remaining participant countries struck a political compromise on some of the key issues and sticking points, and planned to move forward with the Protocol, irrespective of the absence of the U.S. The key compromise points included the provision for countries to offset their targets with carbon sinks (these are areas of forest and farmland which can absorb carbon through the process of photosynthesis). Another compromise point within the broader Bonn Agreement was the reduction of emissions cuts of six gases from over 5 percent to a more achievable 2 percent. A third key change was the provision of funding for less wealthy countries to adopt more progressive technologies.

In late October and early November 2001, the UNFCCC's 7th Conference of the Parties met in Marrakesh, [Morocco](#), to finalize the measures needed to make the Kyoto Protocol operational. Although the UNFCCC projected that ratification of the Protocol would make it legally binding within a year, many critics noted that the process had fallen short of implementing significant changes in policy that would be necessary to actually stop or even slow climate change. They also maintained that the absence of U.S. participation effectively rendered the Protocol into being a political exercise without any substance, either in terms of transnational policy or in terms of environmental concerns.

The adoption of the compromises ensconced within the Bonn Agreement had been intended to make the provisions of the Kyoto Protocol more palatable to the U.S. In this regard, it failed to achieve its objective as the Bush administration continued to eschew participation in the international accord. Still, however, the Bonn Agreement did manage to render a number of other positive outcomes. Specifically, in 2002, key countries, such as [Russia](#), [Japan](#) and [Canada](#) agreed to ratify the protocol, bringing the number of signatories to 178. The decision by key countries to ratify the protocol was regarded as "the kiss of life" by observers.

By 2005, on the eve of a climate change conference in London, British Prime Minister Tony Blair was hoping to deal with the problems of climate change beyond the provisions set forth in the Kyoto Protocol. Acknowledging that the Kyoto Protocol could not work in its current form, Blair wanted to open the discussion for a new climate change plan.

Blair said that although most of the world had signed on to Kyoto, the protocol could not meet any of its practical goals of cutting greenhouse gas emissions without the participation of the United States, the world's largest polluter. He also noted that any new agreement would have to include India and China -- significant producers of greenhouse gas emissions, but exempt from Kyoto

because they have been classified as developing countries. Still, he said that progress on dealing with climate change had been stymied by "a reluctance to face up to reality and the practical action needed to tackle problem."

Blair also touted the "huge opportunities" in technology and pointed toward the possibilities offered by wind, solar and nuclear power, along with fuel cell technology, eco-friendly biofuels, and carbon capture and storage which could generate low carbon power. Blair also asserted that his government was committed to achieving its domestic goal of reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 20 percent by 2010.

In the United States, President George W. Bush has said that global warming remained a debatable issue and despite conclusions reached by his own Environmental Protection Agency, he has not agreed with the conclusion that global warming and climate change are linked with human activities. Bush has also refused to ratify Kyoto on the basis of its economic costs.

Australia, an ally of the United States, has taken a similarly dim view of the Kyoto Protocol. Ahead of the November 2005 climate change meeting in Canada in which new goals for the protocol were to be discussed, Australia's Environment Minister, Ian Campbell, said that negotiating new greenhouse gas emission levels for the Kyoto Protocol would be a waste of time. Campbell said, "There is a consensus that the caps, targets and timetables approach is flawed. If we spend the next five years arguing about that, we'll be fiddling and negotiating while Rome burns." Campbell, like the Bush administration, has also advocated a system of voluntary action in which industry takes up new technologies rather than as a result of compelling the reduction of emissions. But the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) has called on its government to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, to establish a system of emissions trading, and to set binding limits on emissions. Interestingly, although it did not sign on to Kyoto, Australia was expected to meet its emissions target by 2012 (an 8 percent increase in 1990 levels in keeping with the country's reliance on coal). But this success has nothing to do with new technologies and is due to state-based regulations on land clearing.

Note: The Kyoto Protocol calls for developed nations to cut greenhouse emissions by 5.2 percent of 1990 levels by 2012.

Special Entry: Climate Change Summit in Copenhagen (2009) --

In December 2009, the United Nations Climate Change Summit opened in the Danish capital of Copenhagen. The summit was scheduled to last from Dec. 7-18, 2009. Delegates from more than 190 countries were in attendance, and approximately 100 world leaders, including British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and [United States](#) President Barack Obama, were expected to participate. At issue was the matter of new reductions targets on greenhouse gas emissions by 2020.

Despite earlier fears that little concurrence would come from the conference, effectively pushing significant actions forward to a 2010 conference in [Mexico](#) City, negotiators were now reporting that the talks were productive and several key countries, such as [South Africa](#), had pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The two main issues that could still lead to cleavages were questions of agreement between the industrialized countries and the developing countries of the world, as well as the overall effectiveness of proposals in seriously addressing the perils of climate change.

On Dec. 9, 2009, four countries -- the [United Kingdom](#), [Australia](#), [Mexico](#) and [Norway](#) -- presented a document outlining ideas for raising and managing billions of dollars, which would be intended to help vulnerable countries dealing with the perils of climate change. Described as a "green fund," the concept could potentially help small island states at risk because of the rise in sea level. [Bangladesh](#) identified itself as a potential recipient of an assistance fund, noting that as a country plagued by devastating floods, it was particularly hard-hit by climate change. The "green fund" would fall under the rubric of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, for which developed countries have been committed to quantifying their emission reduction targets, and also to providing financial and technical support to developing countries.

The [United Kingdom](#), [Australia](#), [Mexico](#) and [Norway](#) also called for the creation of a new legal treaty that would replace the Kyoto Protocol. This new treaty, which could go into force in 2012, would focus largely on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2020. But [Australia](#) went even further in saying that the successor treaty to the Kyoto Protocol, should be one with provisions covering all countries. Such a move would be a departure from the structure of the Kyoto Protocol, which contained emissions targets for industrialized countries due to the prevailing view that developed countries had a particular historic responsibility to be accountable for climate change. More recently, it has become apparent that substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions demanded by scientists would only come to pass with the participation also of significant developing nation states, such as [China](#) and [India](#). Indeed, one of the most pressing critiques of the Kyoto Protocol was that it was a "paper tiger" that failed to address the impact of the actions of emerging economies like [China](#) and [India](#), with its focus on the developed economies.

Now, in 2009, [China](#) -- as the world's biggest greenhouse gas emitter -- was responding this dubious distinction by vocalizing its criticism of the current scenario and foregrounding its new commitments. Ahead of the Copenhagen summit, [China](#) had announced it would reduce the intensity of its carbon emissions per unit of its GDP in 2020 by 40 to 45 percent against 2005 levels. With that new commitment at hand, [China](#) was now accusing the [United States](#) and the European Union of shirking their own responsibilities by setting weak targets for greenhouse gas emissions cuts. Senior Chinese negotiator, Su Wei, characterized the goals of the world's second largest greenhouse gas emitter -- the [United States](#) -- as "not notable," and the European Union's target as "not enough." Su Wei also took issue with [Japan](#) for setting implausible preconditions.

On Dec. 11, 2009, [China](#) demanded that developed and wealthy countries in Copenhagen should

help deliver a real agreement on climate change by delivering on their promises to reduce carbon emissions and provide financial support for developing countries to adapt to global warming. In so doing, China's Vice Foreign Minister He Yafei said his country was hoping that a "balanced outcome" would emerge from the discussions at the summit. Echoing the position of the Australian government, He Yafei spoke of a draft agreement as follows: "The final document we're going to adopt needs to be taking into account the needs and aspirations of all countries, particularly the most vulnerable ones."

China's Vice Foreign Minister emphasized the fact that climate change was "a matter of survival" for developing countries, and accordingly, such countries need wealthier and more developed countries to accentuate not only their pledges of emissions reduction targets, but also their financial commitments under the aforementioned United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. To that end, scientists and leaders of small island states in the Indian Ocean, the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea, have highlighted the existential threat posed by global warming and the concomitant rise in sea level.

China aside, attention was also on [India](#) -- another major player in the developing world and a country with an industrializing economy that was impacting the environment. At issue was the Indian government's decision to set a carbon intensity target, which would slow emissions growth by up to 25 percent by the 2020 deadline. This strong position was resisted by some elements in [India](#), who argued that their country should not be taking such a strong position when developed wealthy countries were yet to show accountability for their previous commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The matter grew so heated that the members of the opposition stormed out of the parliament in protest as Indian Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh defended the policy. But the political pressure at home in [India](#) was leaving the Indian delegation in Copenhagen in a state of chaos as well. In fact, India's top environmental negotiator refused to travel to Copenhagen in protest of the government's newly-announced stance.

China and [India](#) were joined by [Brazil](#) and [South Africa](#) in the crafting of a draft document calling for a new global climate treaty to be completed by June 2010. Of concern has been the realization that there was insufficient time to find concurrence on a full legal treaty, which would leave countries only with a politically-binding text by the time the summit at Copenhagen closed. But Guyana's leader, President Bharrat Jagdeo, warned that the summit in [Denmark](#) would be classified as a failure unless a binding document was agreed upon instead of just political consensus. He urged his cohorts to act with purpose saying, "Never before have science, economics, geo-strategic self-interest and politics intersected in such a way on an issue that impacts everyone on the planet."

Likewise, [Tuvalu](#) demanded that legally binding agreements emerge from Copenhagen. Its proposal was supported by many of the vulnerable countries, from small island states and sub-Saharan Africa, all of whom warned of the catastrophic impact of climate change on their

citizens. [Tuvalu](#) also called for more aggressive action, such as an amendment to the 1992 agreement, which would focus on sharp greenhouse gas emissions and the accepted rise in temperatures, due to the impact the rise in seas. The delegation from [Kiribati](#) joined the call by drawing attention to the fact that one village had to be abandoned due to waist-high water, and more such effects were likely to follow. Kiribati's Foreign Secretary, Tessie Lambourne, warned that the people of [Kiribati](#) could well be faced with no homeland in the future saying, "Nobody in this room would want to leave their homeland." But despite such impassioned pleas and irrespective of warnings from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that the rise in sea level from melting polar ice caps would deleteriously affect low-lying atolls such as such as [Tuvalu](#) and [Kiribati](#) in the Pacific, and the [Maldives](#) in the Indian Ocean, the oil-giant [Saudi Arabia](#) was able to block this move.

Meanwhile, within the developed countries, yet another power struggle was brewing. The European Union warned it would only agree to raise its target of 20 percent greenhouse gas emissions reductions to 30 percent if the [United States](#) demonstrated that it would do more to reduce its own emissions. It was unknown if such pressure would yield results. [United States](#) President Barack Obama offered a "provisional" 2020 target of 17 percent reductions, noting that he could not offer greater concessions at Copenhagen due to resistance within the [United States](#) Congress, which was already trying to pass a highly controversial "cap and trade" emissions legislation. However, should that emissions trading bill fail in the Senate, the [United States](#) Environment Protection Agency's declaration that greenhouse gases pose a danger to human health and the environment was expected to facilitate further regulations and limits on power plants and factories at the national level. These moves could potentially strengthen the Obama administration's offering at Copenhagen. As well, President Obama also signaled that he would be willing to consider the inclusion of international forestry credits.

Such moves indicated willingness by the Obama administration to play a more constructive role on the international environmental scene than its predecessor, the Bush administration. Indeed, ahead of his arrival at the Copenhagen summit, President Barack Obama's top environmental advisors promised to work on a substantial climate change agreement. To that end, [United States](#) Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson said at a press conference, "We are seeking robust engagement with all of our partners around the world." But would this pro-engagement assertion yield actual results?

By Dec. 12, 2009, details related to a draft document prepared by Michael Zammit Cutajar, the head of the Ad-hoc Working Group on Long-Term Cooperative Action, were released at the Copenhagen climate conference. Included in the document were calls for countries to make major reductions in carbon emissions over the course of the next decade. According to the Washington Post, industrialized countries were called on to make cuts of between 25 percent and 40 percent below 1990 levels -- reductions that were far more draconian than the [United States](#) was likely to accept. As discussed above, President Obama had offered a provisional reduction target of 17

percent. The wide gap between the released draft and the United States' actual stated position suggested there was much more negotiating in the offing if a binding agreement could be forged, despite the Obama administration's claims that it was seeking greater engagement on this issue.

In other developments, the aforementioned call for financial support of developing countries to deal with the perils of climate change was partly answered by the European Union on Dec. 11, 2009. The European bloc pledged an amount of 2.4 billion euros (US\$3.5 billion) annually from 2010 to 2012. Environment Minister Andreas Carlgren of [Sweden](#) -- the country that holds the rotating presidency of the European Union at the time of the summit -- put his weight behind the notion of a "legally binding deal." Meanwhile, Yvo de Boer, a top United Nations climate change official, focused less on the essence of the agreement and more on tangible action and effects saying, "Copenhagen will only be a success if it delivers significant and immediate action that begins the day the conference ends."

The division between developed and developing countries in Copenhagen reached new heights on Dec. 14, 2009, when some of the poor and less developed countries launched a boycott at the summit. The move, which was spurred by African countries but backed by [China](#) and [India](#), appeared to be geared toward redirecting attention and primary responsibility to the wealthier and more industrialized countries. The impasse was resolved after the wealthier and more industrialized countries offered assurances that they did not intend on shirking from their commitments to reducing greenhouse gases. As a result, the participating countries ceased the boycott.

Outside the actual summit, thousands of protestors had gathered to demand crucial global warming, leading to clashes between police and demonstrators elsewhere in the Danish capital city. There were reports of scattered violence across Copenhagen and more than 1,000 people were arrested.

Nevertheless, by the second week of the climate change summit, hopes of forging a strong deal were eroding as developed and developing nations remained deadlocked on sharing cuts in greenhouse gases, and particularly on the matters of financing and temperature goals. In a bid to shore up support for a new climate change, [United States](#) President Barack Obama joined other world leaders in Copenhagen. On Dec. 14, 2009, there was a standoff brewing between the [United States](#) and [China](#). At issue was China's refusal to accept international monitoring of its expressed targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The [United States](#) argued that China's opposition to verification could be a deal-breaker.

By the close of the summit, the difficult process eventually resulted in some consensus being cultivated. A draft text called for \$100 billion a year by 2020 to assist poor nations cope with climate change, while aiming to limit global warming to two degrees Celsius compared with pre-industrial levels. The deal also included specific targets for developed countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and called for reductions by developing countries as a share of their

economies. Also included in the agreement was a mechanism to verify compliance. The details of the agreement were supported by President Barack Obama, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

This draft would stand as an interim agreement, with a legally-binding international pact unlikely to materialize until 2010. In this way, the summit in Copenhagen failed to achieve its central objective, which was to negotiate a successor to the Kyoto Protocol on greenhouse gas emissions.

Editor's Note

In the background of these developments was the growing global consciousness related to global warming and climate change. Indeed, as the Copenhagen summit was ongoing, it was clear there was enormous concurrence on the significance of the stakes with an editorial on the matter of climate change being published in 56 newspapers in 45 countries. That editorial warned that without global action, climate change would "ravage our planet." Meanwhile, a global survey taken by Globescan showed that concern over global warming had exponentially increased from 1998 -- when only 20 percent of respondents believed it to be a serious problem -- to 64 percent in 2009. Such survey data, however, was generated ahead of the accusations by climate change skeptics that some climate scientists may have overstated the case for global warming, based on emails derived in an illicit manner from a British University.

Special Entry: Climate change talks in Doha in [Qatar](#) extend life of Kyoto Protocol (2012)

December 2012 saw climate talks ensue in the Qatari city of Doha as representatives from countries across the world gathered to discuss the fate of the Kyoto Protocol, which seeks to minimize greenhouse gas emissions. The summit yielded results with decisions made (1) to extend the Kyoto Protocol until 2020, and (2) for wealthier countries to compensate poorer countries for the losses and damage incurred as a result of climate change.

In regards to the second matter, Malia Talakai of [Nauru](#), a leading negotiator for the Alliance of Small Island States, explained the necessity of the compensation package as follows: "We are trying to say that if you pollute you must help us."

This measure was being dubbed the "Loss and Damage" mechanism, and was being linked with [United States](#) President Barack Obama's request for \$60 billion from Congress to deal with the devastation caused by Hurricane Sandy months before. The sight of a hurricane bearing down on the northern Atlantic seaboard, along with the reality of the scope of reconstruction, appeared to have illustrated the economic costs of climate change -- not so much as a distant environmental issue -- but as a danger to the quotidian lives of people. Still, there was blame to be placed on the [United States](#) and European countries -- some of world's largest emitters -- for failing to do more

to reduce emissions.

To that latter end, there was in fact little progress made on the central issue of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Had those emissions been reduced, there would have been less of a need to financially deal with the devastation caused by climate change. One interpretation was that the global community was accepting the fact that industrialization was contributing to global warming, which had deleterious effects on the polar ice caps and concomitantly on the rise of sea level, with devastating effects for small island nations. Thus, wealthier countries were willing to pay around \$10 billion a year through 2020, effectively in "damages," to the poor countries that could be viewed as the "collateral damage" of industrial progress. But damages today could potentially be destruction tomorrow, leaving in place the existential challenges and burdens to be born by some of the world's smallest and least wealthy island countries.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the representative for the small island nation states at the Doha summit responded with ire, characterizing the lack of progress on reducing emissions as follows: "We see the package before us as deeply deficient in mitigation (carbon cuts) and finance. It's likely to lock us on the trajectory to a 3,4,5C rise in global temperatures, even though we agreed to keep the global average temperature rise of 1.5C to ensure survival of all islands. There is no new finance (for adapting to climate change and getting clean energy) -- only promises that something might materialize in the future. Those who are obstructive need to talk not about how their people will live, but whether our people will live."

Indeed, in most small island countries not just in the Pacific, but also the Caribbean and Indian Ocean, ecological concerns and the climate crisis have been dominant themes with dire life and death consequences looming in the background for their people. Small island nations in these region are already at risk from the rise of sea-level, tropical cyclones, floods. But their very livelihoods of fishing and subsistence farming were also at risk as a result of ecological and environmental changes. Increasingly high storm surges can wipe out entire villages and contaminate water supplies. Accordingly, the very existence of island nations, such as [Kiribati](#) and [Tuvalu](#), are at severe risk of being obliterated from the map. Yet even with the existential threat of being wiped off the map in the offing, the international community has been either slow or restrictive in its efforts to deal with global warming, climate change, economic and ecological damage, as well as the emerging global challenge of environmental refugees.

A 2012 report from the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the Pacific Regional Environment Program underlined the concerns of small island nations and their people as it concluded that the livelihoods of approximately 10 million people in Pacific island communities were increasingly vulnerable to climate change. In fact, low-lying islands in that region would likely confront losses of up to 18 percent of gross domestic product due to climate change, according to the report. The report covers 21 countries and territories, including [Fiji](#), [Kiribati](#), [Samoa](#) and [Tonga](#), and recommended environmental legislation intended to deal with the climate

crisis facing the small island countries particularly. As noted by David Sheppard, the director general of the Pacific Regional Environment Program that co-sponsored this study: "The findings... emphasize the need more than ever to raise the bar through collective actions that address the region's environmental needs at all levels."

Regardless of the failures of the summit in [Qatar](#) (discussed above), the meeting did facilitate a process starting in 2015, which would bind both wealthy and poor countries together in the mission of forging a new binding treaty that would replace the Kyoto Protocol and tackle the central causes of climate change.

For more information on the threats faced in small island nations by climate change and the measures being undertaken to lobby for international action, please see the Alliance for Small Island States available online at the URL: <http://aosis.org/>

Special Report

COP 21 summit in Paris ends with historic agreement to tackle climate change; rare international consensus formed on environmental crisis facing the planet (2015) --

In mid-December 2015, the highly-anticipated United Nations climate conference of parties (COP) in Paris, [France](#), ended with a historic agreement. In fact, it would very likely be understood as the most significant international agreement signed by all the recognized countries of the world since the Cold War. Accordingly, the Paris Agreement was being distinguished as the first multilateral pact that would compel all countries across the world to cut its carbon emissions -- one of the major causes of increasing greenhouse gas emissions, which contribute to global warming, and its deleterious effects ranging from the dangerous rise in sea level to catastrophic climate change.

The accord, which was dubbed to be the "Paris Agreement," was the work of rigorous diplomacy and fervent environmental advocacy, and it aimed to address the climate change crisis facing the planet. As many as 195 countries were represented in the negotiations that led to the landmark climate deal. Indeed, it was only after weeks of passionate debate that international concurrence was reached in addressing the environmental challenges confronting the world, with particular attention to moving beyond fossil fuels and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The success of the COP 21 summit in Paris and the emergence of the landmark Paris Agreement was, to some extent, attributed to the efforts of France's Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius who presided over the negotiations. The French foreign minister's experience and credentials as a seasoned diplomat and respected statesman paid dividends. He skillfully guided the delegates from almost 200 countries and interest groups along the negotiations process, with ostensibly productive

results and a reasonably robust deal to show for it.

On Dec. 12, 2015, French Foreign Minister Fabius officially adopted the agreement, declaring: "I now invite the COP to adopt the decision entitled Paris Agreement outlined in the document. Looking out to the room I see that the reaction is positive, I see no objections. The Paris agreement is adopted." Once Foreign Minister Fabius' gavel was struck, symbolically inaugurating the Paris Agreement into force, the COP delegate rushed to their feet with loud and bouyant cheers as well as thunderous applause.

In general, the Paris Agreement was being hailed as a victory for enviromental activists and a triumph for international diplomats, while at the same time being understood as simply an initial -- and imperfect -- move in the direction of a sustainable future. China's chief negotiator, Xie Zhenhua, issued this message, saying that while the accord was not ideal, it should "not prevent us from marching historical steps forward."

United States President Barack Obama lauded the deal as both "ambitious" and "historic," and the work of strenuous multilateral negotiations as he declared, "Together, we've shown what's possible when the world stands as one." The [United States](#) leader acknowledged that the accord was not "perfect," but he reminded the critics that it was "the best chance to save the one planet we have."

Former [United States](#) Vice President Al Gore, one of the world's most well known environmental advocates, issued a lengthy statement on the accomplishments ensconced in the Paris Agreement. He highlighted the fact that the Paris Agreement was a first step towards a future with a reduced carbon footprint on Planet Earth as he said, "The components of this agreement -- including a strong review mechanism to enhance existing commitments and a long-term goal to eliminate global-warming pollution this century -- are essential to unlocking the necessary investments in our future. No agreement is perfect, and this one must be strengthened over time, but groups across every sector of society will now begin to reduce dangerous carbon pollution through the framework of this agreement."

The central provisions of the Paris Agreement included the following items:

- Greenhouse gas emissions should peak as quickly as possible, with a move towards balancing energy sources, and ultimately the decrease of greenhouse gases in the second half of this century
- Global temperature increase would be limited to 1.5 degrees Centigrade above pre-industrial levels and would be held "well below" the two degrees Centigrade threshold
- Progress on these goals would be reviewed every five years beginning in 2020 with new greenhouse gas reduction targets issued every five years
- \$100 billion would be expended each year in climate finance for developing countries to move forward with green technologies, with further climate financing to be advanced in the years beyond

It should be noted that there both legally binding and voluntary elements contained within the Paris Agreement. Specifically, the submission of an emissions reduction target and the regular review of that goal would be legally mandatory for all countries. Stated differently, there would be a system in place by which experts would be able to track the carbon-cutting progress of each country. At the same time, the specific targets to be set by countries would be determined at the discretion of the countries, and would not be binding. While there was some criticism over this non-binding element, the fact of the matter was that the imposition of emissions targets was believed to be a major factor in the failure of climate change talks in Copenhagen, [Denmark](#), in 2009.

In 2015, the talks faced challenges as several countries, such as [China](#) and [India](#), objected to conditions that would stymie economic and development. In order to avoid that kind of landmine, a system Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) was developed and formed the basis of the accord. As such, the Paris Agreement would, in fact, facilitate economic growth and development, as well as technological progress, but with the goal of long-term ecological sustainability based on low carbon sources. In fact, the agreement heralded as "the beginning of the end of the fossil fuel era." As noted by Nick Mabey, the head of the climate diplomacy organization E3G, said, "Paris means governments will go further and faster to tackle climate change than ever before. The transition to a low carbon economy is now unstoppable, ensuring the end of the fossil fuel age."

A particular sticking point in the agreement was the \$100 billion earmarked for climate financing for developing countries to transition from traditional fossil fuels to green energy technologies and a low carbon future. In 2014, a report by the International Energy Agency indicated that the cost of that transition would actually be around \$44 trillion by the mid-century -- an amount that would render the \$100 billion being promised to be a drop in the proverbial bucket. However, the general expectation was that the Republican-controlled Senate in the [United States](#), which would have to ratify the deal in that country, was not interested in contributing significant funds for the cause of climate change.

A key strength of the Paris Agreement was the ubiquitous application of measures to all countries. Of note was the frequently utilized concept of "flexibility" with regard to the Paris Agreement. Specifically, the varying capacities of the various countries in meeting their obligations would be anticipated and accorded flexibility. This aspect presented something of a departure from the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, which drew a sharp distinction between developed and developing countries, and mandated a different set of obligations for those categories of countries. Thus, under Kyoto, [China](#) and [India](#) were not held to the same standards as the [United States](#) and European countries. In the Paris Agreement, there would be commitments from all countries across the globe.

Another notable strength of the Paris Agreement was the fact that the countries of the world were

finally able to reach consensus on the vital necessity to limit global temperature increases to 1.5 degrees Centigrade. Ahead of the global consensus on the deal, and as controversy continued to surface over the targeted global temperature limits, the leaders of island countries were sounding the alarm about the melting of the Polar ice caps and the associated rise in sea level. Prime Minister Enele Sopoaga of [Tuvalu](#) issued this dismal reminder: "Tuvalu's future ... is already bleak and any further temperature increase will spell the total demise of [Tuvalu](#). No leader in this room carries such a level of worry and responsibility. Just imagine you are in my shoes, what would you do?" It was thus something of a victory for environmental advocates that the countries of the world could find consensus on the lower number -- 1.5 degrees rather than 2 degrees.

A significant weak point with regard to the Paris deal was a "loss and damage" provision, which anticipates that even with all the new undertakings intended to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and move to a low carbon future, there would nonetheless be unavoidable climate change consequences. Those consequences ranged from the loss of arable land for farmers as well as soil erosion and contamination of potable water by sea water, to the decimation of territory in coastal zones and on small islands, due to the rise in sea level, with entire small island countries being rendered entirely uninhabitable. The reality was that peoples' homes across the world would be destroyed along with their way of life.

With that latter catastrophic effect being a clear and present danger for small island countries, the Association of Small Island States (AOSIS) demanded that the developed world acknowledge its responsibility for this irreversible damage.. Despite the fact that greenhouse gas emissions and the ensuing plague of global warming was, indeed, the consequence of development in the West (the [United States](#) and Europe) and the large power house countries, such as [Russia](#), [China](#) and [India](#), there was no appetite by those countries to sign on to unlimited liability. Under the Paris Agreement, there was a call for research on insurance mechanisms that would address loss and damage issues, with recommendations to come in the future.

The call for research was being regarded as an evasion of sorts and constituted the weakest aspect of the Paris Agreement. Not surprisingly, a coalition of small island nations demanded a "Marshall Plan" for the Pacific. Borrowing the term "Marshall Plan" from the post-World War II reconstruction effort, the coalition of Pacific island nation, which included [Kiribati](#), [Tuvalu](#), [Fiji](#), and the [Marshall Islands](#), called for an initiative that would include investment in renewable energy and shoreline protection, cultural preservation, economic assistance for economies in transition, and a plan for migration and resettlement for these countries as they confront the catastrophic effects of the melting of the Polar ice caps and the concomitant rise in sea level. The precise contours of the initiative remained unknown, unspecified, and a mere exercise in theory at the time of writing. Yet such an initiative would, at some point, have to be addressed, given the realities of climate change and the slow motion calamity unfolding each day for low-lying island nations across the world.

As noted by Vice President Greg Stone of Conservation International, who also functions as an adviser to the government of [Kiribati](#), “Imagine living in a place where you know it’s going to go away someday, but you don’t know what day that wave’s going to come over and wash your home away.” He added, “It’s a disaster we know is going to happen.” Meanwhile, the intervening years promised to be filled with hardship for small island nations, such as [Kiribati](#). Stone explained, “For every inch of sea-level rise, these islands lose 10 feet of their freshwater table to saltwater intrusion,” Stone explained. “So it’s not just about the day the water finally goes over the island; it’s also about the day that there’s just not enough water left and everyone has to move off the island.” Presaging the future for island nations that could face submersion, Stone said, “If you look ahead 50 years, a country like [Kiribati](#) could become the first aqueous nation. possibility of migration. That is, they own this big patch of ocean, and they administer it from elsewhere.”

Foreign Minister Minister Tony Debrum of the [Marshall Islands](#) emerged as the champion advocating on behalf of small island nation states and a loose coalition of concerned countries from the Pacific to the Caribbean, but with support from the [United States](#). He addressed the comprehensive concerns of small island nations regarding the weaknesses of the deal, while simultaneously making clear that the Paris Agreement signified hope for the countries most at risk. In a formal statement, Debrum declared: “We have made history today. Emissions targets are still way off track, but this agreement has the tools to ramp up ambition, and brings a spirit of hope that we can rise to this challenge. I can go back home to my people and say we now have a pathway to survival.” Debrum highlighted the imperatives of Pacific island nations, saying, “Our High Ambition Coalition was the lightning rod we needed to lift our sights and expectations for a strong agreement here in Paris. We were joined by countries representing more than half the world. We said loud and clear that a bare-bones, minimalist agreement would not fly. We instead demanded an agreement to mark a turning point in history, and the beginning of our journey to the post-carbon era.”

Debrum of the [Marshall Islands](#) espoused the quintessential synopsis of the accord and its effects for those most likely to be affected by climate change as he noted, “Climate change won’t stop overnight, and my country is not out of the firing line just yet, but today we all feel a little safer.”

Editor's Entry on [Environmental Policy](#):

The low-lying Pacific island nations of the world, including [Kiribati](#), [Tuvalu](#), the [Marshall Islands](#), [Fiji](#), among others, are vulnerable to the threats posed by global warming and climate change, derived from carbon emissions, and resulting in the rise in sea level. Other island nations in the Caribbean, as well as poor countries with coastal zones, were also at particular risk of suffering the deleterious effects of climate change.

Political policy in these countries are often connected to ecological issues, which have over time

morphed into an existential crisis of sorts. Indeed, ecological concerns and the climate crisis have also been dominant themes with life and death consequences for the people of island nations in the Pacific. Indeed, the very livelihoods of fishing and subsistence farming remain at risk as a result of ecological and environmental changes. Yet even so, these countries are threatened by increasingly high storm surges, which could wipe out entire villages and contaminate water supplies. Moreover, because these are low lying island nations, the sustained rise in sea level can potentially lead to the terrain of these countries being uninhabitable at best, and submerged at worst. Stated in plain terms, these countries are at severe risk of being obliterated from the map and their plight illuminates the emerging global challenge of environmental refugees. In these manifold senses, climate change is the existential crisis of the contemporary era.

Since the time of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, there have been efforts aimed at extending the life of that agreement, with an eye on minimizing greenhouse gas emissions, and thus minimizing the effects of climate change. Those endeavors have largely ended in failure, as exemplified by the unsuccessful Copenhagen talks in 2009 and the fruitless Doha talks in 2012 respectively. The success of the COP 21 talks in [France](#), with the adoption of the landmark Paris Agreement in 2015, was regarded as the first glimmer of hope. Not only did the Paris Agreement signify the triumph of international diplomacy and global consensus, but it also marked the start of the end of the fossil fuel era, with the path forward toward a low carbon future reliant on greener technologies. Most crucially, the Paris Agreement stood as the first significant response in recent times to the central challenge of climate change and its quotidian effects on the lives of real human beings across the world.

1. Major International Environmental Accords:

General Environmental Concerns

Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context, Espoo, 1991.

Accords Regarding Atmosphere

Annex 16, vol. II (Environmental Protection: Aircraft Engine Emissions) to the 1044 Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation, Montreal, 1981

Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution (LRTAP), Geneva, 1979

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), New York, 1992

Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, Vienna, 1985 including the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Depleted the Ozone Layer, Montreal, 1987

Accords Regarding Hazardous Substances

Convention on the Ban of the Import into Africa and the Control of Transboundary Movements and Management of Hazardous Wastes within Africa, Bamako, 1991

Convention on Civil Liability for Damage Caused during Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road, Rail and Inland Navigation Vessels (CRTD), Geneva, 1989

Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal (Basel Convention), Basel, 1989

Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents, Helsinki, 1992

Convention to Ban the Importation into Forum Island Countries of Hazardous and Radioactive Wastes and to Control the Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within the South Pacific Region (Waigani Convention), Waigani, 1995

European Agreement Concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR), Geneva 1957

FAO International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides, Rome, 1985

2. Major International Marine Accords:

Global Conventions

Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter (London Convention 1972), London, 1972

International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as modified by Protocol of 1978 relation thereto (MARPOL 73/78), London, 1973 and 1978

International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage 1969 (1969 CLC), Brussels, 1969, 1976, and 1984

International Convention on the Establishment of an International Fund for Compensation for Oil

Pollution Damage 1971 (1971 Fund Convention), Brussels, 1971

Convention on Liability and Compensation for Damage in Connection with the Carriage of Hazardous and Noxious Substances by Sea (HNS), London 1996

International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response, and Co-operation (OPRC), London, 1990

International Convention Relation to Intervention on the High Seas in Cases of Oil Pollution Casualties (Intervention Convention), Brussels, 1969

United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), Montego Bay, 1982

Regional Conventions

Convention for the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping from Ships and Aircraft (Oslo Convention), Oslo, 1972

Convention for the Prevention of Marine Pollution from Land-based Sources (Paris Convention), Paris, 1974

Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North East Atlantic (OSPAR Convention), Paris, 1992

Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (1974 Helsinki Convention), Helsinki 1974

Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (1992 Helsinki Convention), Helsinki 1992

Conventions within the UNEP Regional Seas Programme

Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution, Bucharest, 1992

Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region, Cartagena de Indias, 1983

Convention for the Protection, Management, and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Eastern African Region, Nairobi, 1985

Kuwait Regional Convention for Co-operation on the Protection of the Marine Environment from Pollution, [Kuwait](#), 1978

Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment and Coastal Region of the Mediterranean Sea (Barcelona Convention), Barcelona, 1976

Regional Convention for the Conservation of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Environment, Jeddah, 1982

Convention for the Protection of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region, Noumea, 1986

Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and Coastal Area of the South-East Pacific, Lima, 1981

Convention for Co-operation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central African Region, Abidjan, 1981

3. Major Conventions Regarding Living Resources:

Marine Living Resources

Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), Canberra, 1980

International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), Rio de Janeiro, 1966

International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW), Washington, 1946

Nature Conservation and Terrestrial Living Resources

Antarctic Treaty, Washington, D.C., 1959

Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention), Paris, 1972

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Nairobi, 1992

Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), Bonn, 1979

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), Washington, D.C., 1973

Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention), Ramsar, 1971

Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD), Paris 1994

FAO International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources, Rome, 1983

International Tropical Timber Agreement, 1994 (ITTA, 1994), Geneva, 1994

Freshwater Resources

Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, Helsinki, 1992

4. Major Conventions Regarding Nuclear Safety:

Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency (Assistance Convention), Vienna, 1986

Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident (Notification Convention), Vienna, 1986

Convention on Nuclear Safety, Vienna, 1994

Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage, Vienna, 1963

5. Major Intergovernmental Organizations

Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)

European Union (EU): Environment

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

Global Environment Facility (GEF)

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

International Labour Organization (ILO)

International Maritime Organization (IMO)

International Monetary Fund (IMF)

International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds (IOPC Funds)

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Environment Policy Committee (EPOC)

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

World Bank

World Food Programme (WFP)

World Health Organization (WHO)

World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

World Trade Organization (WTO)

6. Major Non-Governmental Organizations

Atmosphere Action Network East Asia (AANE)

Climate Action Network (CAN)

Consumers International (CI)

Earth Council

Earthwatch Institute

Environmental Liaison Centre International (ELCI)

European Environmental Bureau (EEB)

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)

Friends of the Earth International (FoEI)

Greenpeace International

International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)

International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU)

International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)

International Solar Energy Society (ISES)

IUCN-The World Conservation Union

Pesticide Action Network (PAN)

Sierra Club

Society for International Development (SID)

Third World Network (TWN)

Water Environment Federation (WEF)

Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)

World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)

World Federalist Movement (WFM)

World Resources Institute (WRI)

World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF)

7. Other Networking Instruments

Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED)

Global Legislators for a Balanced Environment (GLOBE)

Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC)

United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS)

Appendices

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Methodology Note for Demographic Data:

The demographic numbers for cities and national populations listed in CountryWatch content are derived from the Geoba.se website, which analyzes data from the World Bank. The current demographic numbers displayed on the Countrywatch website are reflective of the latest available estimates.

The demographic information for language, ethnicity and religion listed in CountryWatch content is

derived from a mix of sources including the Altapedia, Central Intelligence Agency Factbook, Infoplease, and State Department Background Notes.

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[United States](#) Central Intelligence Agency, World Factbook. Washington, D.C.: Printing and Photography Group. URL: <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>

[United States](#) Department of State, World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers (WMEAT) URL : http://www.state.gov/www/global/arms/bureau_ac/reports_ac.html

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[United States](#) Department of State, Background Notes. URL : http://www.state.gov/www/background_notes/index.html

Virtual Library: International Relations Resources. URL: <http://www.etown.edu/vl/countgen.html>

World Bank: Governance Indicators. URL: <http://info.worldbank.org/governance>

-- See also list of News Wires services below, which are also used for research purposes. --

Note on Edition Dates:

The earlier edition dates are noted above because they were used to formulate the original Country Reviews and serve as the baseline for some of the information covered. Later editions have been used in some cases, and are cited as such, while other more recent online resources (cited above) contain recent and ever-updated data sets used for research.

Sources: [Economic Overview](#)

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United States Department of State, Country Commercial Guides. Washington, D.C. [United States of America](http://www.state.gov/www/about_state/business/com_guides/index.html). URL:http://www.state.gov/www/about_state/business/com_guides/index.html

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Yearbook of Tourism Statistics, World Tourism Organization. 1998 to present. Madrid: The World Tourism Organization.

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Methodology Notes for Economic Data:

Estimates by CountryWatch.com of GDP in dollars in most countries are made by converting local currency GDP data from the International Monetary Fund World Economic Outlook to US dollars by market exchange rates estimated from the International Monetary Fund International Financial Statistics and projected out by the CountryWatch Macroeconomic Forecast. Real GDP was estimated by deflating current dollar values by the US GDP Implicit Price Deflator.

Exceptions to this method were used for:

- Bosnia-Herzegovina
- Nauru
- Cuba
- Palau
- Holy See
- San Marino
- Korea, North
- [Serbia](#) & Montenegro
- Liberia
- Somalia
- Liechtenstein
- Tonga
- Monaco
- Tuvalu

In these cases, other data and/or estimates by CountryWatch.com were utilized.

Investment Overview

C o r r u p t i o n a n d T r a n s p a r e n c y I n d e x . U R L :
<http://www.transparency.org/documents/cpi/2001/cpi2001.html#cpi>
<<http://www.transparency.org/documents/>

Deloitte Tax Guides. URL: <http://www.deloittetaxguides.com>

Trade Policy Reviews by the World Trade Organization . URL: http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tpr_e/tp_rep_e.htm#bycountry

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Government of Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. URL: <http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo>

Government of Canada Foreign Affairs and International Trade. URL: http://www.voyage.gc.ca/consular_home-e.htm

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Lonely Planet. URL: <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide/>

Steve Kropla's Online Help For World Travelers. URL: <http://www.kropla.com/>

United Kingdom Ministry of Foreign and Commonwealth Office. URL: <http://www.fco.gov.uk/>

United Nations Human Development Report. URL: <http://www.undp.org/hdro>

UNICEF Statistical Database Online. URL: <http://www.unicef.org/statis/atoz.html>

United States Central Intelligence Agency, World Factbook. 2001. Washington, D.C.: Printing and Photography Group. URL: <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>

United States Department of State, Background Notes. URL: http://www.state.gov/www/background_notes/index.html

United States Department of State, Commercial and Business Affairs: Travel Tips. URL: http://www.state.gov/www/about_state/business/cba_travel.html

United States Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs. URL: <http://travel.state.gov/>

World Health Organization. URL: <http://www.who.int/home-page/>

World News Connection, National Technical Information Service. Springfield, Virginia, USA.

Internet News Service, Xinhua News Agency (U.S.) Inc. Woodside, New York. URL: <http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/>

Note on Edition Dates:

The earlier edition dates are noted above because they were used to formulate the original country reviews and serve as the baseline for some of the information covered. Later editions have been used in some cases, and are cited as such, while other more recent online resources (cited above) contain recent and ever-updated data sets used for research.

Methodology Notes for the HDI:

Since 1990, the United Nations Development Programme, in concert with organizations across the globe, has produced the [Human Development Index](#) (or HDI). According to the UNDP, the index measures average achievement in basic human development in one simple composite index, and produces from this index a ranking of countries. The HDI is a composite of three basic components of human development: longevity, knowledge and standard of living. Longevity is measured by life expectancy. Knowledge is measured by combination of adult literacy and mean

years of schooling. Standard of living is measured by purchasing power, based on real GDP per capita (in constant US\$) adjusted for differences in international living costs (or, purchasing power parity, PPP). While the index uses these social indicators to measure national performance with regard to human welfare and development, not all countries provide the same level of information for each component needed to compute the index; therefore, as in any composite indicator, the final index is predicated on projections, predictions and weighting schemes. The index is a static measure, and thus, an incomplete measure of human welfare. In fact, the UNDP says itself the concept of human development focuses on the ends rather than the means of development and progress, examining in this manner, the average condition of all people in a given country.

Specifically, the index is calculated by determining the maximum and minimum for each of the three components (as listed above) and then measuring where each country stands in relation to these scales-expressed as a value between 0 and 1. For example, the minimum adult literary rate is zero percent, the maximum is 100 percent, and the reading skills component of knowledge in the HDI for a country where the literacy rate is 75 percent would be 0.75. The scores of all indicators are then averaged into the overall index.

For a more extensive examination of human development, as well as the ranking tables for each participating country, please visit: <http://www.undp.org>

Note on [History](#) sections

In some CountryWatch Country Reviews, open source content from the State Department Background Notes and Country Guides have been used.

Environmental Overview

Environmental Profiles: A Global Guide to Projects and People. 1993. Linda Sobel Katz, Sarah Orrick, and Robert Honig. New York: Garland Publishing.

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Introduction to Global [Environmental Issues](#), 2nd Edition. 1997. Kevin Pickering and Lewis Owen.

London: Routledge.

Trends: Compendium of Data on Global Change. URL: http://cdiac.esd.ornl.gov/trends/emis/em_cont.htm

United Nations Environmental Program. URL: http://www.unep.org/GEO/GEO_Products/Assessment_Reports/

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1998/1999 Yearbook of International Cooperation on Environment and Development. 1998. London: Earthscan Publications.

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Other Sources:

General information has also been used in the compilation of this review, with the courtesy of governmental agencies from this country.

News Services:

CANA Daily Bulletin. Caribbean Media Agency Ltd., St. Michael, [Barbados](#).

Central and Eastern Africa Report, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - Integrated Regional Information Network for Central and Eastern Africa.

Daily News, Panafrican News Agency. Dakar, [Senegal](#).

PACNEWS, Pacific Islands Broadcasting Association. Suva, [Fiji](#).

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Reuters News. Thomson Reuters. New York, New York. USA.

Southern Africa Report, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - Integrated Regional Information Network for Southern Africa.

Voice of America, English Service. Washington D.C.

West Africa Report, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - Integrated Regional Information Network for West Africa. 1998-1999

Note: Some or all these news services have been used to research various sections of this Country Review.

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For items in a "Works Cited" list, CountryWatch.com suggests that users follow recommended patterns for indentation given in the *MLA Handbook*, 4th edition.

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Basic form, using an Internet protocol:

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Examples:

Youngblood-Coleman, Denise. *Country Review: France*. 2003. Houston, Texas: CountryWatch Publications, 2003. *Country Review:France*. Online. Available URL : http://www.countrywatch.com/cw_country.asp?vCOUNTRY=61 October, 12, 2003.

Note:

This is the citation format used when the print version is not used in the reference.

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Author/editor. "Part title." *Title of Print Version of Work*. Edition statement (if given). Publication information (Place of publication: publisher, date), if given. *Title of Electronic Work*. Medium. AvailableProtocol (if applicable): Site/Path/File. Access date.

Examples:

Youngblood-Coleman, Denise. "People." *CountryWatch.com: France*. 2003. Houston, Texas: CountryWatch Publications, 2003. *CountryWatch.com: France*. Online. Available URL : http://www.countrywatch.com/cw_topic.asp?vCOUNTRY=61&SECTION=SOCIAL&TOPIC=CLPEO&TYPE=TEXT. October 12, 2003.

Note:

This is the citation format used when the print version is not used in the reference.

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