



Kosovo — Va-PoReg Country Report

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06/10/1999 End Part of Other Country [of Yugoslavia, Electoral Autocracy]/Start Indirect Rule Occupation Regime [by United Nations]: 10/20/1448 Start Part of Other Country [of Ottoman Empire]: Kosovo became part of the Ottoman Empire after the Second Battle of Kosovo that ended in 10/20/1448.¹ The area became the scene of the Albanian nationalism movement in the 19th century, which is closely tied to the conflict between the Serbs and the Albanians.² From the early 20th century on, the Ottoman Empire started to disintegrate. They lost the Italo-Turkish War in 1912 and the Balkan Wars from 1912 until 1913. The first Balkan War between Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro and Serbia against the Ottoman Empire ended with the Treaty of London.³

05/30/1913 End Part of Other Country [of Ottoman Empire, Constitutional Monarchy]/Start Part of Other Country [of Montenegro, Autocratic Monarchy and Serbia, Constitutional Monarchy]: On this date the Treaty of London was signed, and the region of the western Kosovo ceded to Montenegro while the eastern Kosovo was handed to Serbia.⁴ During the Balkan Wars, a great exodus of Albanians took place, playing into the following colonization efforts of Serbia. New Settlements of Serbs in Kosovo were promoted, and the existing Albanians had to either assimilate or leave the country.⁵ During the First World War, the Serbian Army was forced out of Kosovo by the Central Powers. Serbia was occupied by Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria.⁶

11/24/1915 End Part of Other Country [of Montenegro, Autocratic Monarchy and Serbia, Occupation Regime]/Start Direct Rule Occupation Regime [by Austria, Constitutional Monarchy and Bulgaria, Constitutional Monarchy]: On this date, the Kosovo offensive of the Central Powers against Serbia ended and resulted in the occupation of Serbia. Kosovo was split between Austrian and Bulgarian control, with the Bulgarian army occupying the eastern territories and the Austro-Hungarian forces occupying the western regions.⁷ On 12/01/1918 the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, later Kingdom of Yugoslavia was established and Kosovo became a part of it.⁸ The governance of the state was vested in the Serbian dynasty of Karađorđević, which had previously held sway over the Kingdom of Serbia under the reign of Peter I from 1903, following the May Coup, onward.⁹ During this period, Kosovo was continued to be colonized by Serbians. Kosovar Albanians, as well as other Slavic minorities, were heavily discriminated against.¹⁰ On 04/06/1941 the Axis powers started their invasion of Yugoslavia in the context of World War II.¹¹ As a result, Kosovo was controlled partly by Italian-controlled Albania, Germany and Bulgaria. In the following war years, ethnic tensions intensified further.¹² On 11/29/1945, a government dominated by Tito and the communists was established (Petrovich 1947: 508-9, Van Dyke 1947: 375) and, the Socialist Federal Republic Yugoslavia was officially proclaimed.¹³ The Socialist Autonomous Province of Kosovo, commonly known as Kosovo, constituted one of the two autonomous provinces within the Socialist Republic of Serbia under the framework of Yugoslavia.¹⁴ Over the following years, the region attained different levels of autonomy, before their freedom was significantly reduced in 1989. The ethnic tensions in Kosovo only increased during the 1980s, while the Serbian effort to oppress the Albanian population grew. In July 1990, Kosovo Albanians declared the establishment of the Republic of Kosovo, proclaiming it as a sovereign and independent state in September 1992. Ibrahim Rugova was elected president in May 1992, in an election limited to Kosovo Albanians. Throughout its existence, the Republic of Kosovo was only officially recognized by Albania. By the mid-1990s, Kosovo Albanians grew increasingly discontented, as the status of Kosovo was unresolved in

the Dayton Agreement of November 1995, which concluded the Bosnian War. By 1996, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), an ethnic Albanian guerrilla paramilitary group advocating for Kosovo's separation and the creation of a Greater Albania, had surpassed Rugova's non-violent resistance movement and initiated attacks against the Yugoslav Army and Serbian police in Kosovo, leading to the Kosovo War.¹⁵ The War ended June 1999, the Yugoslav and Serb forces retreated, and the UN send peacekeeping missions to Kosovo.¹⁶ Per FH, for the years 1993 to 1999, the territory scores between 11 and 14 as not free, which we also interpret as not free. UN Security Council Resolution 1244 established the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), which formally assumed authority. Kosovo was administered by UNMIK, with gradually expanding self-government through the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (established 2001). Sovereignty formally remained with Serbia under UNSC 1244, but in practice Serbia had no effective control. Per FH, for the years 1999 to 2001, the territory scores between 11 and 14 as not free, which we also interpret as not free. Per FH's evaluation for 2002 and 2003, the territory scores from 9 to 10 as not free, which we categorize as rather not free. Per FH, for the rest of this regime period, the territory scores between 11 and 14 as not free, which we also interpret as not free. V-Dem starts treating Kosovo in their data in 1999 and LIED only in 2008. V-Dem's PCLI indicates political liberties as somewhat present in 1999 and as present from 2000 onwards. V-Dem only starts to provide data for Kosovo in 1999 and LIED in 2008.

02/17/2008 End Indirect Rule Occupation Regime [by United Nations]/Start Electoral Democracy: On this date Kosovo declared itself independent. During the 2010 parliamentary elections in Kosovo, it was necessary to recount more than 40% of the ballots. Additionally, authorities indicted over 500 officials on charges of electoral fraud, and there were numerous instances of attempted vote buying in municipalities predominantly inhabited by ethnic Albanians and Serbs.¹⁷ In 2023 at one time or another independence was recognized by a total of 119 nations.¹⁸ Universal suffrage was guaranteed since independence and democratic structures were established. In the 2025 parliamentary election in Kosovo, Prime Minister Albin Kurti's left-wing Vetëvendosje (LVV) party won, remaining the largest political force but losing its outright majority. The party secured 48 of the 120 seats. The election, held on 09/02/2025, focused heavily on domestic issues such as the economy, anti-corruption efforts, and LGBTQ rights, with less emphasis on the ongoing dialogue with Serbia. After the election, forming a new government required complex coalition negotiations because no single party or pre-election coalition achieved a working majority.¹⁹ This lack of a working majority immediately led to a month-long stalemate in parliament over the election of the Speaker, as the opposition categorically rejected LVV's candidates, plunging the country into a government crisis. The deadlock was finally resolved in August 2025, only after more than 40 failed votes and an intervention by the Constitutional Court, with Dimal Basha (LVV) eventually being elected Speaker.²⁰ Per FH, for this regime period, the country score fluctuates between 7 and 9, categorized as partly free, which we interpret as moving between rather free and rather not free. Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. LIED categorizes the country's elections as competitive since 2012. V-Dem's EF&FI scores electoral freedom and fairness as somewhat given between 2002 and 2009. From 2010 to 2013 the score drops down to ambiguous freedom and fairness. After this it jumps up to speak of free and fair elections. V-Dem's CEI scores electoral cleanliness as ambiguous between 2002 and 2013. Since then it lists elections as somewhat clean. Besides, political liberties are considered as absent by LIED. However, V-Dem's PCLI scores them as fully present ever since the country declared its independence. According to Polity5, during this period, the executive was subordinate to or held equal power with other institutions, indicating executive parity or subordination. Corruption, high youth employment and concerns over religious extremism remain problematic.²¹ The status of the Serb minority remained unsettled, and the government in Pristina continued to face difficulty in establishing authority over the Serb-dominated areas north of the Ibër (Ibar) River. Obviously unsettled as well were relations with Serbia, still a major trading partner.²² The regime in this period is a borderline case between an electoral democracy and an electoral hybrid regime. Overall, Kosovo during this period represents a borderline case between electoral democracy

and electoral hybrid regime, as regular multiparty elections and universal suffrage coexisted with serious irregularities, weak rule of law, and limited territorial control.

Electoral Democracy as of 07/01/2025 continued.

Notes

¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kosovo>

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kosovo#Ottoman_rule

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balkan_Wars

⁴ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kosovo>

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kosovo#Ottoman_rule

⁶ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kosovo_offensive_\(1915\)#:~:text=Kosovo%20was%20divided%20between%20the,army%20would%20fight%20on%20regardless.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kosovo_offensive_(1915)#:~:text=Kosovo%20was%20divided%20between%20the,army%20would%20fight%20on%20regardless.)

⁷ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kosovo_offensive_\(1915\)#Aftermath](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kosovo_offensive_(1915)#Aftermath)

⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Yugoslavia

⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Yugoslavia

¹⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kosovo#Ottoman_rule

¹¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Invasion_of_Yugoslavia

¹² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kosovo_during_World_War_II#Overview

¹³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socialist_Federal_Republic_of_Yugoslavia

¹⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socialist_Autonomous_Province_of_Kosovo

¹⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kosovo#Ottoman_rule

¹⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kosovo#Kosovo_War

¹⁷ <https://www.democratic-erosion.com/event-dataset/raw-data/>

¹⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kosovo#Declaration_of_independence

¹⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2025_Kosovan_parliamentary_election

²⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2025_Kosovo_Assembly_deadlock

²¹ <https://www.ndi.org/central-and-eastern-europe/kosovo>

²² <https://www.britannica.com/place/Kosovo/Self-declared-independence>

References

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Van Dyke, Vernon (1947): Communism in Eastern and Southeastern Europe, in: *Journal of Politics* 9, 355-391.