**International Relations & World Affairs: Kosovo Protests 2022**

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Protests marred Kosovo in 2022 were motivated by nationalist issues, which also contributed to the nation-state's formation. According to Walker (2022) and Hopkins (2022), violence had been inspired by the Kosovar government's initiative to replace Serbian car number plates and identity cards with Kosovar. Most of the protests occurred in the northern provinces where Kosovo shares a border with Serbia. Kosovo is one of the world's youngest nation-states and has made significant steps to exercise its independence. Several initiatives attributed to the moves include converting its population from its former nationalities and registering property and other assets under Kosovar laws. Civil friction has been propagated by the population's resistance to change, which has left certain parts of the population demanding a status-quo, a situation that led to the protests. The country has a minority Serbian population which remained when the country declared independence from Serbia in 2008. Most Serbs in Kosovo still hold Serbian nationality and have their motor vehicles registered under Serbian law. Therefore, there was anticipated resistance to Kosovar's government initiative to insist on the Serbian minority to change their car plates. Protests led to the erection of roadblocks and run-ins with law enforcers. The challenge to Kosovar identity has been due to Serbian dominance in the Balkan states and the fumbling steps of an emerging state.

***Resistance to Kosovar nationalist policies***

Serbs have been a dominant ethnic group in the Balkans and are characterized by their inability to lose their ethnic and national identity. The civil strife in Kosovo was caused by disgruntled Serbs unwilling to surrender their identity to Kosovo. Kosovars and Serbs in Kosovo have been in considerable civil strife regarding the nation's status. Most ethnic Serbs do not recognize Kosovo's independence and regard the nation-state as part of Serbia. Kosovars believe that their government has the right to exercise authority over their state and do the same in the majority's best interest. Kosovar government has, on many occasions, attempted to form an identity for all citizens. Its recent initiative to launch massive registration of the population and assets has been debatable due to the significant population inherited from Serbia. Ethnic Serbs are a minority in Kosovo; a majority Islamic country carved out of Serbia. Most Serbs are eastern orthodox or engage in the form of Christianity. Besides, Serbs have strong ties to their ethnicity and would like to remain so regardless. Kosovar's government move stems from its urge to claim legitimacy by aligning the entire population with the state. For instance, national identification would include ethnic Serbs as Kosovar nationals. Besides, vehicle registration documents would place Serbian-owned vehicles in Kosovo under the supervision of the state's laws, making the assets different from those used in Serbia and elsewhere. Therefore, protests emerged due to the civil resistance to forceful conversion. Creating Kosovar citizenship would include ethnic Serbs and the majority Kosovars, new citizenship in the Balkans.

***Asserting influence by the new state***

The Kosovar state is yet to achieve the legitimate mandate to exercise authority over the entire population under its territory. Neighboring Serbia would treat Kosovo as part of its territory, a claim which informs the resistance of the ethnic Serbs living in Kosovo (Russell, 2019). Rewarding citizens with an identity is one of the ways of seeking legitimate authority by a government. However, the effort requires dialogue and accommodating various broad concerns raised by the population. The protests were a show of public displeasure by the Kosovar government for imposing nationalist tendencies without the approval of its minority community. Serbs were the dominant ethnicity in the former Yugoslavia, where Kosovo was among the provinces of the Serbian federation. Yugoslavia collapsed into various Balkan states where former provinces declared their independence and biter conflicts were fought in others. Kosovo remained under Serbia before the nation-state declared independence later. Therefore, Kosovar's government's consideration of national identity has been a slow process that has dragged on for over a decade. The continuing public dissatisfaction indicates the lack of general agreement on the viability of a Kosovar state. Gashi & Musliu (20170 note that there should be enhanced negotiations to include ethnic Serbs into the emerging republic by thawing relations with their homeland Serbia. The historical ties to Serbia cannot be wished away in the attempt to create a new republic.

**Conclusion**

There should be the anticipation of several flare-ups between ethnic Serbs and Kosovar state operatives in the future if the situation is not rectified. The reality that most tension occurs in the border provinces with Serbia should not be wished away. Serbia is yet to accept the loss of Kosovar territory and its identity. However, there should be radical measures to ensure the safety and other socioeconomic concerns raised by the ethnic Serbs. Besides, Kosovar authorities have to ensure that they exercise authority over the entire population and allay all fears of discrimination. Although the government occurs as an outcome of a democratic process, the state belongs to all the entire groups that exist in Kosovo. Therefore, finding an amicable and long-term solution to the identity challenges between Kosovars and ethnic Serbs is essential.

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