

# **THE MACEDONIAN QUESTION: REFORM OR REBELLION**

5 April 2001

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## THE MACEDONIAN QUESTION: REFORM OR REBELLION

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In late February, violence flared in Albanian-inhabited villages in northern Macedonia<sup>1</sup> close to the border with Kosovo. In mid March, the violence spread to Macedonia's second largest city, Tetovo. The rebels claimed to be defending themselves against Macedonian security forces, i.e. their own government, and to be fighting for Albanian national rights in Macedonia. The coalition government in Skopje promptly raised the alarm, blaming Kosovo Albanian elements for exporting rebellion to Macedonia, and calling for the NATO-led forces in Kosovo (KFOR) to seal the border. The rebels claimed they were local Albanians, numbering 2,000 and recruiting dozens of volunteers from the surrounding area every day.

The international community reacted unanimously with high-level affirmations of support for Macedonia and its elected government, identifying the rebels as a few hundred "terrorists". On 21 March, the government gave the rebels a 24-hour deadline to lay down arms and/or leave the country, or face a full-scale offensive. The offensive began on 25 March. Four days later, the government announced that the military operation had successfully pushed all the terrorists back into Kosovo.

Lacking a central command structure, the rebels appear to be a cluster of loosely coordinated cells of experienced ethnic Albanian fighters from Macedonia, Kosovo and abroad as well as a small number of foreigners.<sup>2</sup> The political demands issued by the rebels are designed to gain popular support in the Albanian community, and a hearing by the international community. Whatever the rebels' long-term intentions may be, they clearly tapped into the frustrated local demands for basic minority rights: citizenship, ownership, education, language and representative government.

Now that the dust around Tetovo has settled, the government and parliament need to face squarely, without panicking, a large political question: Are the Macedonians and Albanians in the country committed to integrated living? Or, should they accept nationalist logic and prepare to negotiate federalisation?

A policy of half-hearted, half-reluctant ethnic cohabitation has led to the present crisis. If the government does not want federalisation, it should declare its commitment to the full and equal integration of all nationalities in the country. It will not be enough to improve

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<sup>1</sup> The use of the term Macedonia in this report is purely a convenient terminology. It recognises that historically "Macedonia" is a geographical expression – not the name of a state. It does not pre-judge any opinion on the use of "FYROM" or "Republic of Macedonia" as the correct name of the state.

<sup>2</sup> Macedonian officials have alleged the involvement of mujahedin. While this is possible, no evidence has been presented.

the legal framework. The Slavic majority must be ready to challenge the notion that Macedonian state identity is synonymous with the Slavic population.

The government should get strong international backing to ensure that political dialogue leads to real action. The troublesome preamble of the constitution must be deleted, as well as other discriminatory references. Decentralisation measures that have languished in parliament should be adopted and implemented. A census should be prepared and conducted, with international assistance, to determine demographic reality as accurately as possible. Political ethics must be reformed, in particular by introducing and enforcing effective anti-corruption measures. Otherwise, violence may spread along the lines of ethnic cleavage. A strategy to prevent such escalation and produce credible negotiations should include the following elements:

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The international community has reacted to the crisis in Macedonia with one voice. All countries have condemned the rebel violence. This solidarity must be maintained while supporting and lending assistance to Macedonia, and insisting on a political solution to the current crisis. However, NATO should be prepared to consider direct support for the security forces, in the event of a dramatic escalation of violence by the rebels, and if the government so requests.
2. While the rebels failed to mobilise Albanian support inside Macedonia, the sympathy for their complaints about Albanian status was obvious and widespread. This longstanding sense of grievance is dangerous. The international community should urge the government to begin parliamentary discussions on measures to improve the constitutional and legal status of minorities.
3. It may prove impossible to achieve consensus among the main political actors on a reform agenda and process without widening the governing coalition. The government should be ready to bring the principal opposition parties, the Social Democratic Alliance of Macedonia and the Party for Democratic Prosperity, into the coalition.
4. The forthcoming census should be postponed until late autumn. The census should be conducted so that its findings reflect demographic reality as accurately as possible, in line with internationally accepted criteria of residency. This will require international assistance, not only in processing the census results but also in preparing it and supervising its conduct.
5. The international community has contributed to an environment of mistrust and cynicism by reluctantly validating a series of elections dating from 1994 that were marred by deaths, violence, and widespread voting irregularities including ballot stuffing, proxy voting and tampering with returns. The international community must insist on the conduct of free and fair elections rather than lower acceptable standards.
6. The European Union, the United States and international organisations should facilitate a dialogue in Macedonia representatives, on improving media portrayal of all nationalities and minorities. Tensions in the country have been exacerbated by

media coverage that polarises the largest ethnic groups. Macedonia's media must be judged, and reformed, according to the same international standards that are invoked elsewhere in the region.

7. Tensions in northern Macedonia – as also in the Albanian-majority districts of southern Serbia – are fuelled by uncertainty over Kosovo's future. This uncertainty should be removed insofar as possible. The United Nations-led mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) should set a date for elections later this year to a Kosovo assembly as a watershed on the way to real self-government, commencing the process that will eventually lead to final status negotiations.
8. The rebels are receiving logistic and financial support from inside Kosovo. Recent discussion of trimming back the Kosovo Protection Force (KPC) should be discouraged, as such steps would increase the pool of unemployed former members of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), so heightening the security risks to Macedonia (as well as in Kosovo itself).
9. The rebels fighting in Macedonia are financed by funds collected abroad. The international community must strongly urge an investigation of currently legal funding of rebel movements in Macedonia and adjoining countries, and crack down on illegal funding of such movements.
10. Efforts should be made to reduce the proliferation of weapons in the region. A staggering quantity of weapons has been stockpiled in the region. Approximate figures circulating in Balkan and Western ministries for the totals of weapons in Albania, Macedonia and Kosovo are as follows: 280,000 Kalashnikovs, one million anti-tank missiles, 3.1 million hand-grenades, one billion rounds of ammunition, and 24 million machine guns. Although the climate may not be ripe for voluntary compliance, the international community must develop mechanisms to reduce this proliferation. As a start, means should be found to extend the United Nations' "Weapons in Exchange for Development" project to Macedonia.

**Skopje/Brussels, 5 April 2001**



## THE MACEDONIAN QUESTION: REFORM OR REBELLION

### I. INTRODUCTION

Although Macedonia's Slavic majority and its largest minority, the ethnic Albanians, have co-existed uneasily both before and after the country declared independence in September 1991, their relations have been peaceful. Successive governments have included Albanian parties as coalition partners. The economic picture has been improving. There was nearly 3 per cent growth in 1999, and the second half of 2000 saw steady growth, leading to a 5 per cent GDP increase for the year. In January 2001, the government projected a budget surplus for the second year in a row. In the past year, the country's emerging middle class began buying new cars, adding extensions to apartments and planning summer vacations in Greece. The mood was quietly optimistic until a few months ago. While there is no simple explanation why the country now finds itself within reach of war, the chain of events that led to the current crisis can be traced to a village on the border with Kosovo.

### II. TANUSEVCI

Tanusevci is a village, or area of scattered hamlets, of some 350 to 700 inhabitants<sup>3</sup> on the Macedonia—Kosovo border. It adjoins the troubled Presevo Valley area of southern Serbia, and is not far from the Ground Safety Zone between Kosovo and southern Serbia. Located high (1050 m.) on what is now a border ridge, it was originally the summer grazing village of Vitina, now in Kosovo. The Albanian population resents the new border as "an unnatural imposition upon their traditional regional habits and rights".<sup>4</sup> ICG interviews with refugees and the remaining inhabitants suggest a long history of (claimed) ethnically based oppression by both Serbian and Macedonian police and border guards. During 1999, Tanusevci received hundreds of Kosovo refugees, and served as a KLA base.

There have been minor incidents of terrorism or violence along the border with Kosovo throughout the last year, and isolated incidents since 1992. The difficulty lies in distinguishing between Albanian terrorism and simple smuggling, in which all three nationalities (Serb, Macedonian and Albanian) have participated, keeping Serbia in consumer goods and food throughout the time of sanctions. This illegal trade, whilst politically useful for the Milosevic regime and lucrative for Skopje, has left a history of violence and police corruption in the area, which will be hard to overcome. To a large degree, the United Nations peacekeeping troops who

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<sup>3</sup> ICG interviews on 11 March with villagers who claim that the real population is about 700, only 350 of whom have been able to obtain Macedonian citizenship.

<sup>4</sup> UNHCR Skopje internal report dated 26 February 2001.

patrolled the border area from late 1992 until early 1999, minimised friction between ethnic Albanians and Macedonian border guards. The inhabitants of this region resented the return of the border guards after UNPREDEP's departure.

In this context, the stage was set for an escalation of tensions. On 2 April 2000, four Macedonian soldiers (one officer and three enlisted soldiers) were captured at the Macedonia-Kosovo border, in the vicinity of Tanusevci. The government described the captors as "Kosovo militants". They wanted to exchange the soldiers for Xhavit Hasani, who was at that time in detention awaiting trial. Hasani had been a controversial figure in the area for some time, since his arrest for shooting at an official from the Ministry of Urban Planning and Civil Construction. He had been ordered to demolish his house because it was built without a construction permit. Macedonian media repeatedly alleged that Hasani, a native of Tanusevci, was a former KLA leader.

After visiting Asani, Minister of Justice Dzevdet Nasufi ordered his release on a bail of 200,000 German Marks. Public Prosecutor Stavre Dzikov then wrote to the investigating judge to suggest that the people who had captured the Macedonian soldiers threatened to kill them unless Asani was released. The Supreme Court ruled on 21 April 2000 that there was inconclusive evidence as to whether the investigating judge had been pressured to release Asani.

Public obsession with the story grew as the events in Tanusevci became more tangled and intertwined with the Liberation Army of Presevo, Medvedja and Bujanovac (UCPMB) and the splinter groups of the KLA.<sup>5</sup> Hasani was eventually released, and the soldiers returned home. Although the Macedonian officials initially denied the whole event, Prime Minister Georgievski publicly admitted that he had no choice in this case, as he wanted to save the lives of the soldiers. Georgievski's initial denial and later admission damaged public confidence in the government's ability to handle the brewing crisis.

Border incidents at Tanusevci continued through the first half of June 2000, with occasional shooting at the Macedonian border controls. The Special Forces of the Macedonian army, the "Wolves", were sent to assist the border controls at the areas of Dolno and Gorno Blace, Kodra Fura observation post, Tanusevci and Lojane. On 31 July, a Macedonian army tank with six soldiers drove over a landmine in the vicinity of Tanusevci. No injuries were reported. On 17 September, a Macedonian army vehicle with four people drove over a landmine near Tanusevci. One soldier was seriously wounded and three were injured.

#### **A. Bombing of Police Station near Tetovo and Media Reactions**

The police station in Tearce, an ethnically mixed Macedonian, Albanian and Turkish village midway between Tetovo and the Kosovo border, was attacked by a self-propelled rocket grenade on 22 January 2001. One policeman was killed and three were wounded. The police searched the area and arrested three men from the nearby ethnic-Albanian village of Semsevo, who were found to have weapons and ammunition in their homes.

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<sup>5</sup> The Liberation Army of Presevo, Medvedje and Bujanovac is an ethnic Albanian rebel organisation active in the Presevo valley in southern Serbia (known by its Albanian initials as UCPMB). The KLA was the Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK in Albanian).



The government-controlled *Nova Makedonija* paid little attention to the event. The other pro-government daily, *Vecer*, quoted a villager that Muslims and Christians had always lived quietly together in the village, but they had been scared in recent years mostly by young aggressive Albanians who came into the area from Kosovo. A relative of the deceased policeman stated that the ethnic Macedonians in the village had not felt secure since a new chief (not an Albanian) was appointed to the police station.

The opposition daily *Utrinski vesnik*, however, carried three prominent stories relating to the confiscation of a large quantity of weapons at Jazinec, the nearest crossing on the border with Kosovo. *Dnevnik*, considered the most independent daily newspaper, mentioned a rumour that the attack was an act of revenge because three villagers from Semsevo had been detained ten days earlier at the border with Kosovo, wearing KLA uniforms.

Arben Xhaferi, leader of the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA),<sup>6</sup> criticised the bombing of the police station in these terms: "[T]he Tetovo incident is part of an orchestrated action against the government and a very crude attempt to overthrow it. Regardless who is behind it, as a political party we deeply condemn this act. This is a deeply anti-Macedonian act, but also an act against the interests of the Albanians in Macedonia."

## B. First Public Knowledge of National Liberation Army

An organisation calling itself the National Liberation Army (NLA) claimed responsibility for the attack in a statement titled Communiqué no. 4, sent to *Dnevnik* on 23 January 2001. The statement read: "On 22 January a special unit of the National Liberation Army supported by a group of observers with automatic guns and hand grenade launchers attacked a Macedonian police station. In the attack the opponent forces were quickly paralysed and they did not resist while other Macedonian forces from other directions did not approach the location. The attack was limited and was a warning to the Macedonian occupiers and their Albanophone collaborators. The uniforms of the Macedonian occupiers will continue to be attacked until the Albanian people are liberated. The policemen are called upon to return to their families and not sacrifice their lives in vain for the illusory Macedonian plans to dominate the Albanian majority."

Minister of Interior Dosta Dimovska denied having had any information about any organisation called the National Liberation Army, and claimed that the fax number in Germany from which the statement had been sent, did not exist. The former Director of Counterintelligence, Aleksa Stamenkovski, countered that his service had had information about the NLA for more than a year. "We knew that this terrorist group was established simultaneously with the Liberation Army of Presevo, Medvedje and Bujanovac," he said. Minister of Defence Ljuben Paunovski replied that "if the [NLA] statement proves to be true, it will almost certainly be the beginning of the defeat of the Albanian issue in the international community. It is a fact that Macedonia hosted and rescued almost 400,000 Albanians from Kosovo in 1999. Because of these reasons, and because of the democracy and improvement of inter-ethnic relations in this country, the political

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<sup>6</sup> The DPA is part of the current coalition government.

factors of the Albanians in Macedonia should be even more involved [i.e. in peacefully resolving problems].”

*Utrinski vesnik* (23 January) linked the attack on the police station to a series of similar bombings in 1997 and 1998. The paper also reminded readers that the KLA had claimed responsibility for those attacks, and that its spokesman, Jakup Krasniqi, had repeated on several occasions that Macedonia would be the KLA's next target after Kosovo.

### **C. Seizure of Television Crew in Tanusevci**

The next episode in the sequence occurred back in Tanusevci. On 16 February 2001, a three-person crew from the well-regarded independent television station, A1, went to Tanusevci to follow up a tip that the village was being used as a training camp of the Liberation Army for Preshevo, Medvedje and Bujanovac (UCPMB). On the way to the village the crew stopped for a hitchhiker. He introduced himself as a local and they all went to the village. At the entry to Tanusevci, the car was stopped by a man in a black uniform armed with a machine gun.<sup>7</sup> He asked who they were and where they were going. He then shot in the air and other people appeared from nearby houses. According to the journalist member of the crew, there were a dozen people, some in uniforms, carrying weapons and axes, and with KLA insignia engraved on their machine guns.

The crew and the hitchhiker were taken to a house in the village and questioned for half an hour. The crew was told it had “no business in the village” and that the police should have warned them not to come. They said they were the national defence force of the village, and that they had liberated it. They confiscated the TV crew's camera and mobile phones and let them go. The crew reported the incident at the police station in Mirkovci, the first ethnic Macedonian village on the road back to Skopje.

According to media reports, a one-hour gun battle ensued, as a unit of Macedonian border guards attempted to enter the village. According to villagers and also to the Deputy Minister of the Interior (an ethnic Albanian), the guards were not under fire. Nonetheless an Albanian young male, Muzafer Xhaferi, was shot and later died. The Macedonian authorities admitted Xhaferi had been unarmed, while insisting that he was a rebel ringleader.

The Minister of Defence stated that the TV crew should not have gone alone to this high-risk area near the border; they should have asked for army back-up or reported their presence.<sup>8</sup> He denied that the army had been nowhere to be seen, and said that on the contrary the army had observed the vehicle of the TV crew and started to investigate who they were. Although Tanusevci was not a logistics base for UCPMB, he said, there were a number of “collaborators' bases” there.

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<sup>7</sup> Both the NLA and UCPMB wear camouflage uniforms. Only military police wore black in the former KLA, making it even less likely that there were really 200 men in black uniforms waiting to invade Macedonia, as subsequently reported. Numbers may have been inflated by the Macedonian border guards to justify having shot an unarmed Albanian.

<sup>8</sup> *Dnevnik*, 19 February 2001.

Shootings in Tanusevci continued during February between the Macedonian army and armed groups reportedly stationed in the village. These minor but escalating incidents culminated in a two-hour gun battle on 26 February. Menduh Thaci, deputy president of the DPA, said that the incidents at Tanusevci should be solved in a democratic way, but "if that should fail, it is well known how it should be solved". The other principal Albanian party, the Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP), claimed that the Macedonian police were conducting "ethnic cleansing" at Tanusevci.<sup>9</sup>

After a year of fighting in the area, the public opinion expressed in newspapers, television and on the streets began to question not only the government's resolve in dealing with the "terrorists" but also its competence. Adding to the country's sense of being under siege, *Dnevnik* reported (27 February) a prediction in the *New York Times* that the "Kosovo guerrillas will move their front to the Macedonian border". The Ministry of Defence reported movements of armed people Kosovo towards Tanusevci.

#### **D. Border Demarcation Agreement with Serbia**

Improvements in relations between Skopje and the new authorities in Serbia triggered new rounds of political confrontation between Slavic majority and ethnic minority officials and party leaders. The first state visit between Macedonia and Serbia occurred on 28 February, when Prime Minister Ljupco Georgievski and Minister of Foreign Affairs Srgjan Kerim met with Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic in Belgrade. The PDP party leader, Imer Imeri, commented derisively that "Georgievski and Djindjic agreed on a joint Macedonian-Serbian fight against so-called Albanian extremism".

At the same time, the two countries reached agreement on the demarcation of their joint border. The agreement, achieved after 14 rounds of negotiation, covers the entire 260-kilometre length of the border, including "problematic" spots such as the Prohor Pciniski Monastery and the so-called "Sar Triangle".

The PDP members of parliament and the two MPs of the soon to-be-established new political party National Democratic Party (NDP in Macedonian, PDK in Albanian; see page 14) voted against ratifying the agreement, on 2 March. They argued that it was "immoral" to negotiate the border between Macedonia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia without the participation of Kosovo political leaders and the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).<sup>10</sup> The Kosovo Albanians' reaction was even stronger; they were incensed by their exclusion from the demarcation negotiations. Belgrade's and Skopje's behaviour gave ethnic Albanians on both side of the border a common cause. This also forms part of the background to the Tetovo crisis.

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<sup>9</sup> *Dnevnik*, 24 February 2001.

<sup>10</sup> UNMIK sources confirmed to ICG that the mission was neither consulted about the border demarcation by the FRY authorities, nor informed of the agreement until after its ratification in Belgrade and Skopje.

## **E. Further Clashes in Tanusevci**

Clashes in Tanusevci escalated following the ratification of the border agreement. Three Macedonian soldiers were killed while leading a convoy of foreign observers (including from the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission) towards Tanusevci. The NLA then dispatched Communiqué no. 5, stating “we feel obliged to send a contingent of our troops to Tanusevci to protect the civilian population after they increased the number of Macedonian army representatives.” The Macedonian press reported that U.S. soldiers assigned to KFOR clashed with armed groups in the Kosovo village of Mijak on 7 March, and that a Macedonian army observation post at Kodra Fura came under fire for four hours.<sup>11</sup>

Public outcry over the government’s inability to protect state territory peaked when a police convoy including Deputy Minister of Interior, Refet Elmazi, the State Secretary at the Ministry of Interior, Ljube Boskovski, and the Police General Aleksandar Doncev was attacked between the villages of Gosince and Brest. One policeman was killed when his vehicle drove over a land mine, and the convoy was under siege for 20 hours until rescued by a back-up police force, including special forces police. Officially the convoy was carrying “humanitarian aid” for the people in the villages, but foreign journalists in the convoy reported seeing at least one truck loaded with weapons and ammunition.

## **III. TETOVO: ERUPTION OF VIOLENCE**

It appears that the entry of Macedonian special forces units into Tanusevci prompted extremist Macedonian Albanians, including ex-KLA fighters, to take military action in “defence” of the villages. There was a ready pool of Macedonian-born, trained guerrillas looking for the excuse that the events at Tanusevci provided. Their armed activity on the Kosovo border, however, attracted pressure from both Macedonian and U.S. forces and drew such criticism from mainstream Kosovo Albanian leaders that a decision was taken to open a front above Tetovo instead. On 13 March, a rebel group claiming to be members of the National Liberation Army (NLA) began firing at Macedonian police officers in Tetovo from high positions in the Sar mountains around the city.

Why Tetovo? Located some 30 kilometres west of Skopje, Tetovo is the second largest city in the country, with a clear Albanian majority. It is the ethnic minority’s unofficial capital, and was the political and intellectual centre of Kosovo Albanian refugee activity during the 1998-99 war. Also, Tetovo was associated with Albanian struggle for national rights and recognition, in the context of the long-running controversy over an Albanian-language university. Arms were stockpiled during the 1990s, in tunnels dug in the mountains by the Yugoslav military in the Tito era. And there was an established local group of potential guerrillas.

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<sup>11</sup> According to the KFOR U.S. spokesman, there were no exchanges of fire, but U.S. forces believed they had shot two young Albanian men who pointed weapons at them. One was subsequently recovered by village women and taken to the U.S. forces for treatment.

Most political leaders were fully aware of the growing threat. In autumn 2000, as the legitimate Albanian political parties continued bickering, a small group of rebels or guerrillas began recruiting in north-western Macedonia and in the south west part of the country between Debar and Kicevo. DPA and PDP leaders hinted darkly that unless they achieved quick concessions from the Macedonians regarding national rights, the rebel forces might take matters in to their own hands.<sup>12</sup> This was obliquely referred to as "Plan B" or the "undemocratic plan". The eruption of violence in Tanusevci and Tetovo showed that neither the DPA nor the PDP now has much real influence, let alone control, over the rebels and hence cannot prevent a future groundswell of popular support.

The polarisation of the two ethnic groups was starkly evident on 14 March, when three non-governmental organisations held a protest demonstration in Tetovo under the motto of "Stop Macedonian Government Terror against Albanians". The NGOs were the Organisation of Albanian Women, the Civil Rights Forum and the Association of Political Prisoners. "We expect no incidents, it will be a peaceful protest," said Muqereme Rusi of the Organisation of Albanian Women. Some 5,000 demonstrators had gathered when shooting started at the Ottoman castle above Tetovo. The demonstrators at the rally cheered "UCK, UCK" with every machine gun volley from the hill, clearly indicating support for the armed faction.<sup>13</sup> Camera crews from A1 TV and TV Sitel were attacked by the crowd, and Miliam Fejziu of the Civil Rights Forum was recorded expressing support for the people who were shooting: "They are our children, our sons and daughters."<sup>14</sup>

On 21 March, the government gave the rebels a 24-hour deadline to lay down their arms and/or leave the country, or face a full-scale offensive. The rebels initially responded with a unilateral cease-fire (perhaps making the best of a shortage of ammunition), and a call for dialogue on Albanian rights in Macedonia. The government rejected any negotiations with "terrorists", and the Macedonian military offensive began on the early morning of 25 March. The following day, the government announced that the rebels had been flushed out of a string of villages above the city.

The Army of the Republic of Macedonia (ARM) prepared what it called the "final operation". On the evening of 23 March, the government warned villagers and rebel guerrillas to evacuate the hillside villages between Tetovo and the Kosovo border, some 10 or 15 kilometres to the north. The offensive began two days later, on 25 March, after a slow troop build-up and a week of political indecisiveness.

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<sup>12</sup> ICG interviews with Arben Xhaferi, leader of DPA, and Imer Imeri, leader of PDP, in Skopje and Tetovo, 29-30 October 2000 and 22-24 November 2000.

<sup>13</sup> The crowd might have meant the 'original' UCK – the Kosovo Liberation Army – rather than the new Macedonian faction; more likely, it meant all and any ethnic Albanian rebels.

<sup>14</sup> He also said that armed conflict was maybe not the best way, but it was "certainly useful". The Public Prosecutor of Tetovo used this statement to press charges against Fejziu for "appealing for violent constitutional change".

The Macedonian troops met little resistance and proceeded to pour shells on mostly civilian houses where the guerrillas were thought to have been holed up. In Skopje, rumours circulated that the offensive was more for show than in earnest. Be this as it may, most of the guerrillas dispersed in the first hours of the offensive, but the ARM pushed forward, beyond the Macedonian border into Kosovo.

The ARM forces appeared to be poorly equipped and trained, according to military observers on the scene.<sup>15</sup> The heavy artillery and mortars employed in the offensive seemed an inappropriate choice and may have contributed to the accident in which two civilians (including a British journalist) were killed and ten others were wounded on 29 March, in a village one kilometre inside Kosovo. Although the ARM denied responsibility, both ARM and NATO-led KFOR troops have opened inquiries. The ARM nonetheless declared victory on 29 March and announced that the military operation had successfully pushed all the terrorists back into Kosovo, and “ended the 40-day crisis”. The rebel commanders say their forces simply fell back to regroup elsewhere.<sup>16</sup>

International observers on both sides of the Macedonia—Kosovo border are less confident that the insurgents have been defeated. Ethnic Albanian leaders in Albania and Skopje have denounced the violence but many believe that the close links between the NLA leaders in Macedonia with former KLA fighters in Kosovo made the situation hard to read. Two of the principal founders of the NLA, Ali Ahmeti and Amrush Xhemajli, were, along with Ramush Haradinaj, also principal founding members of the original KLA in Kosovo. It is hard to believe these guerrilla fighters will now slink off to Kosovo, not to be heard of again.

As soon as the government declared victory, DPA leader Arben Xhaferi, aware of his badly weakened position, threatened to quit the coalition government if ethnic Albanian demands were not met within one month, i.e. by May. European leaders, including commissioners Javier Solana and Chris Patten, hurried to meet Macedonian leaders, hoping “to find a way of reinvigorating the process and solidifying the national consensus.”<sup>17</sup> President Trajkovski presented a Platform for government and opposition parties. Refusing to join the talks, the opposition PDP attacked the platform as ignoring Albanian national concerns and focusing on other political and economic measures. The PDP also demanded the inclusion of the NLA in the talks. The governing coalition sent contradictory signals whether constitutional reform was on the agenda or not.

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<sup>15</sup> “Macedonian Army Lacking Strength”, *Jane’s Information Group*, 30 March 2001.

<sup>16</sup> “Amid Calm, Macedonia Reopens Kosovo Border”, *International Herald Tribune*, 4 April 2001.

<sup>17</sup> Javier Solana’s spokesperson, quoted in “MACEDONIA: ANALYSIS – High stakes as Macedonia swaps guns for talks”, Reuters, 1 April 2001.

## **IV. OTHER CONTRIBUTING FACTORS**

### **A. Kosovo**

The Macedonian government insists that the present troubles are the result of aggression planned and led from Kosovo, and that the Kosovo invaders enjoy little or no support amongst ordinary Albanians in Macedonia. They believe their prime minister when he blames the international community and KFOR troops for allowing "rebel gangs" to "invade Macedonia".<sup>18</sup>

This claim has strong appeal for the Slavic majority, attributing exclusive responsibility for the crisis to the province and the great powers beyond the northern border. A long-standing antipathy towards Kosovo Albanians has been boosted by a perception of their ingratitude since 1999, when Macedonia sheltered several hundred thousand Kosovo refugees. Again, however, perceptions differ sharply on either side of the ethnic divide. Many of the refugees have bitter memories of being held on the border in the open for days before being allowed in by the border guards. Others, albeit a minority, have equally unpleasant memories of being robbed by the Macedonian officials before being allowed entry.<sup>19</sup>

In favour of the government's allegation, the rebel ranks do certainly include a hard-line element from Kosovo. However, these groupings are so small and fragmented that they cannot plausibly be credited with starting single-handedly such an effective insurrection. Many of the fighters around Tetovo were what they claimed to be: from Macedonia.

For many years, observers of the Balkans had expected trouble to break out in Macedonia before Kosovo erupted, rather than afterwards. Resentful of their perceived second-rank status in the newly independent state, Macedonian Albanians had been stockpiling arms for a decade. There had been some well-publicised court cases where leading Albanian politicians in Macedonia were charged with smuggling weapons. When Kosovo erupted in 1998, many Macedonian Albanians with long-standing ties to Kosovo took up arms to fight with the KLA. At the end of the war they were largely unable to return home, since Macedonian police harassment made life too difficult.

The real contribution of Kosovo to the current crisis is of a different sort. The uncertain final status of the province is in itself an invitation to Albanian extremism. For as long as Kosovo Albanians believe that the international community harbours a plan to reunite them with Belgrade, there will be sympathy for radicals who argue that violence is the only way to change the Western mind. Setting a timetable for final status negotiations will not, of course, prevent ethnic violence in Macedonia; but it would close one source of ethnic Albanian community tolerance for such violence.

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<sup>18</sup> "[T]his was a long planned aggression of Kosovo towards Macedonia... You can convince no one in Macedonia that the U.S. and German governments are unfamiliar with the identity of chiefs of rebel gangs invading Macedonia today and that had they implemented a much stricter policy, the aggression of these gangs against our country would have been thwarted." From Prime Minister Ljupco Georgievski's address to the nation, 20 March 2001.

<sup>19</sup> Personal communication by an ICG employee.

## **B. Deterioration of Inter-Ethnic Relations**

Ethnic Macedonians do not face the same obstacles in acquiring citizenship as many ethnic Albanians do, hence they do not see citizenship legislation as a significant political issue.<sup>20</sup> Nor, to characterise widespread views, do they accept that the lack of educational or employment opportunities, or the forthcoming census, are genuine problems. There is a marked tendency to explain the deterioration in inter-ethnic relations as a result of heightened insecurity due to the series of unexplained bombings and terrorists attacks that began last April.

Another pervasive feeling among Macedonians is that the present government has made too many concessions to ethnic Albanians at the expense of national sovereignty. They believe the government has turned administrative control of the western part of the country over to their Albanian coalition partners. Despite the government's attempts to present improved inter-ethnic relations as vital to the country's survival, there is a nagging fear that further integration of the Albanian minority will undermine Macedonia's identity and stability, with dire consequences in the medium to long term.

Ethnic Albanian leaders seem equally divided over their interpretations of events leading to the current crisis. In government, members of the DPA point to their recent accomplishments: construction of a new university with instruction in the Albanian language, increased Albanian participation in senior government structures, more public sector jobs, and better access to public services. DPA leaders consistently talk about participation in government and in the democratic process as the only way to achieve greater national rights. The slow pace of reform, however, has left many Albanians frustrated and searching for faster results. A new political party (see page 14) is poised to exploit this mood, to the detriment of the moderate DPA.

## **C. Controversy Over the Census**

This year, Macedonia is due to conduct its third census since 1991. The 1991 and 1994 censuses were extremely controversial, and the results continue to be disputed by the country's minorities. The highly politicised 1994 census drew widespread allegations of deliberate attempts to reduce minority numbers, and was boycotted by some minority communities. The ethnic Albanian political parties complained that it was conducted without consulting or including minority representatives. International experts remarked at the time that, "technical preparations by the Statistical Office were often jeopardised by an insensitive handling of inter-community relations and a lack of communication between the authorities and some nationalities. Furthermore, rigid attitudes on both sides and

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<sup>20</sup> Present requirements for citizenship include a minimum 15-year residency in Macedonia, proof of a permanent source of income and the ability to speak the Macedonian language. Ethnic Albanian officials claimed to ICG that 110,00 to 117,000 Albanians residing in Macedonia lack proper documentation. In communication with ICG, the Macedonian Ministry of the Interior stated that the real figure is 11,151.



frequent recourse by members of some nationalities to their political parties added to the difficulties."<sup>21</sup>

Albanian party leaders claim that the 2001 census, scheduled for 15 May, will show up to 35 per cent of the population as being ethnic Albanian, if it is properly conducted. Macedonian officials, on the other hand estimate that the percentage of ethnic Albanians to be around 26 per cent. The discrepancy is mostly due to the difference between the number of ethnic Albanians residing in the country and the number of *legally* residing in the country.

By all accounts, the government is not prepared to meet all critical benchmarks by this date. The OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission estimates that at least three months will be needed to identify and train enough enumerators to conduct the census.<sup>22</sup> A further complication relates to how the ethnic Albanian diaspora will be counted. To date, the government has little infrastructure in place to reckon a full accounting of citizens residing abroad. Given the current political environment, it seems unlikely that full political participation in and endorsement of the census methodology will be achieved in the immediate future. Accordingly, on both technical and political grounds, it is strongly recommended that the conduct of the census be postponed until late autumn.

#### **D. Erosion of Political Legitimacy**

The international community has contributed to the environment of distrust and suspicion by reluctantly endorsing a series of elections dating from 1994 that were marred by deaths, violence, and widespread voting irregularities that included ballot stuffing, proxy voting and tampering with returns. The 1999 presidential elections and the 2000 parliamentary elections were especially troublesome and many Macedonians and Albanians alike are extremely cynical about the electoral process.<sup>23</sup> They believe that if a certain outcome is preferred by the international community, then electoral short-cuts may be used to engineer the appropriate results.

It is generally believed that Albanian voters, those who supported the DPA in particular, ensured the election of Boris Trajkovski as president and expected a *quid pro quo*. This is not to suggest that President Trajkovski made any such agreement, but the expectation remained on the part of the Albanians that he would support their demands. The first round of voting on 31 October 1999 was considered by international observers to be conducted fairly and freely but there were allegations of fraud and ballot stuffing in the second round and the Supreme Court ordered another vote in 230 polling stations in mostly ethnic Albanian precincts.

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<sup>21</sup> Working Draft of OSCE Background Report on Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Census 2001, 2 March 2001.

<sup>22</sup> ICG interview, 27 March 2001.

<sup>23</sup> OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Municipal Elections, 10 September 2000; U.S. State Department Report on Macedonia Human Rights Practices – 2000, pp. 1 and 10; Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Newsline, Vol. 4, No. 177, Part II, 13 September 2000; and international election monitors' observations (including for the ICG) in the 1994, 1996, 1998, 1999 and 2000 elections.

International observers supported Social Democratic (SDSM) complaints that the second round was filled with irregularities. A third round was ordered but was equally flawed according to international monitors. Despite serious problems with ballot stuffing and continued violence in or near polling stations, the international observers perhaps wearily concluded that these irregularities did not affect the final outcome and resulted in the election of President Boris Trajkovski. A fourth round of voting was not held.

Now, with the government led by Commander in Chief Trajkovski having launched a military offensive in which the only civilian casualties were likely to be ethnic Albanians, many Albanian voters feel betrayed. The point was made by rebel leader Fazli Veliu: "Nobody likes the armed struggle, but it is necessary for solving problems that politics has not been able to solve. We are not visionaries and we do not look for the moon, we just want equal rights and participation in the administration of the country with equal dignity, which is not provided by the President of Macedonia, Boris Trajkovski, who forgets that he would not have been elected without our help."<sup>24</sup>

The 10 September 2000 local elections fell equally short of acceptable international standards. During the first and second rounds of polling, four ethnic Albanian party activists were wounded by gunfire and one victim later died. Opposition party leaders have sought to portray persistent fraud in the three most recent elections as the source of Macedonia's problems. When pushed on the issue of whether the 1994 parliamentary elections and 1996 local elections met international standards, Branko Crvenkovski, the prime minister at the time, commented that "no one was killed in 1996". Indeed not, but the standard of free and fair elections should not be the absence of violent deaths. Nor should voters arrive at polling stations around noon to find that all ballots have already been cast by local party activists. This does not mean to imply that all electoral results have been suspect, but that a significantly high percentage of irregularities calls into question the legitimacy of the political leadership.

Also responsible for dwindling popular confidence in Macedonia's leadership is the ever more apparent linkage between politics and criminality. During the economic embargo against the FRY during the 1990s, Macedonia became the southern conduit for smuggling goods into Serbia. Prime Minister Georgievski has stated that 27 Macedonian firms mainly involved in cigarette, alcohol, oil, steel and chemical production have close connections to the Milosevic regime and are involved in money-laundering.<sup>25</sup> He also admitted that a significant number of Macedonian banks had opened non-resident accounts in order for Serbian assets to enter the country for transfer later to third countries, which indicates that a vast network of people and companies actively colluded with Serbian firms controlled by the Milosevic regime.

Until recently, political parties loosely interpreted the Law on Political Parties as allowing parties to purchase and own companies. VMRO-DPMNE, for example, owns the agricultural co-operative Edinstvo and is a shareholder of Makedonska Banka and the recently privatized Buchim (the country's only copper and gold

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<sup>24</sup> *La Repubblica*, 12 March 2001.

<sup>25</sup> *Dnevnik*, 23 February 2001, p. 1.

mine).<sup>26</sup> Bowing to public pressure, the Constitutional Court reviewed the law in early January and declared it unconstitutional.

The ongoing "sugar scandal" has confirmed the cosy relationship between government and business. A controversy regarding the sale of the country's only sugar factory in Bitola, led to a severe shortage of white (refined) sugar in the country, practically disabling the confectionery and soft-drink industry. The government stepped in and decided to allow the import of limited quantities of white sugar to the country, duty-free. Twelve companies won the tender to import white sugar, all reported to be close to DPA or VMRO-DPMNE, and all located in Skopje and Tetovo. The media accused Minister of Economy Besnik Fetai of demonstrating a complete lack of transparency in selecting party-affiliated companies: "Deputy Prime Minister Zoran Krstevski said he was ashamed to be a member of a government shaken by 'sugar scandals' such as the latest one, when companies close to government structures imported 15,000 kilos of refined sugar duty-free... Our sources say the sugar was divided among companies close to the two biggest parties in the government, VMRO-DPMNE and DPA, and the profit generated is 5 million DM."<sup>27</sup>

The second reason for the surge of corruption relates to the porous borders between Macedonia and Kosovo that have allegedly become highly profitable for smuggling cigarettes, petrol, weapons, drugs and prostitutes. Perennial accusations of government corruption, and institutional support for smuggling networks, sharpened after the failure last November of the opposition parties' most recent effort to topple the government. There have been venomous attacks on public officials and a barrage of accusations that the government was not competent to confront the threats to the country's security. This, in turn, increased a sense of popular insecurity.

The smuggling channels are not limited to heavily laden donkeys trudging up mountain passes. Rather it is about institutional support for illegal trade. The real profits are made using trucks on tarmac roads with the collusion of customs agents and other officials. That Macedonian and Albanian government ministers and officials have grown very rich in the past decade is the general public consensus. In a public opinion poll conducted by *Forum* magazine, only 1 percent of those surveyed believed that politicians were honest.<sup>28</sup>

Corruption of a different kind was confirmed in January, when Branko Crvenkovski, leader of the largest opposition party, the SDSM, accused the government of wire-tapping the telephone conversations of more than 100 public figures. Crvenkovski claimed to have obtained hundreds of pages of transcripts taken from the electronic eavesdropping of 25 prominent journalists, members of Georgievski's own cabinet, and conversations between Trajkovski and a local Albanian journalist, during the campaign before the September 2000 local elections. Journalists who have seen the transcripts of their own conversations confirm their authenticity. The government clumsily attempted to blame others, such as the Ministry of Defence and SDSM, of ordering the wire tapping in order

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 17 September 2000, p. 1.

<sup>27</sup> *Dnevnik*, 30 March 2001, p. 1.

<sup>28</sup> *Forum*, 25 February 2000, issue 54, pp. 27-30.

to trigger a government crisis. A parliamentary commission has not yet shed any light on this affair.

This political corruption has opened the political space for more radical or nationalist political parties. The gradual splintering of the VMRO-DPMNE, at the centre of the government, has led to the creation of VMRO-VMRO, directed by former minister of finance, Boris Stoymenov, who promises to lead VMRO loyalists back to their nationalist roots. The Democratic Alternative (DA) has also fragmented, with former members citing political corruption as the reason for their dissension. It is widely believed that DA leader Vasil Tupurkovski personally profited from his role in engineering the country's diplomatic ties with Taiwan in 1999.

The recent formation of a new ethnic Albanian political party cites party corruption and nepotism as the main reason behind its genesis. The National Democratic Party (NDP) is led by former PDP leaders Kastriot Haxhirexa and Shtim Polozhani, and former DPA leaders Fadil Bajrami and Ahir Hasani. Hadziredza and Bajrami are currently members of parliament. Hadziredza said that a new party was needed to "reinforce moral values and principles because the actions of the two known parties of the Albanians in Macedonia have become skilled Mafia workers. Because of this, democracy and the establishment of real democratic values are blocked, especially within the Albanian electorate. Both parties are corrupt and have abused the mandates of the voters."<sup>29</sup>

Whether or not the stated motives for establishing the new party are entirely credible, the party platform is clearly designed to tap into the increasing disaffection with the current ethnic Albanian leadership. Hadziredza, however, denies rumours that link the new party to the UCK: "We absolutely deny it...We will use political means to solve the problems the Albanian people are facing in Macedonia because we are convinced that they can be solved through dialogue... We have no knowledge about any KLA structures, nor do we have anything to do with such structures or support them." The NLA is the first Albanian party with members in the parliament to support the (ethnic) federalisation of Macedonia: a radical and potentially explosive agenda.

## **V. CONCLUSIONS**

The series of incidents in Tanusevci spiralled out of control, setting in motion a series of unplanned actions by loosely co-ordinated guerrilla cells. The shooting from the hills above Tetovo does not appear to have been part of a larger strategic plan but rather an improvised show of strength to test government resolve and radicalise ethnic Albanian opinion.

Seeking a genuine political solution after a major military offensive aimed at eradicating rebel fighters who have penetrated the security, economic and perhaps political structures of the country will be a challenge. Fortunately, there have been few casualties so far. If the offensive resumes, there will be a very

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<sup>29</sup> *Vecer*, 25 February 2001.

real danger that the rebels will gain popular support among ethnic Albanians throughout the country.<sup>30</sup>

Inter-ethnic political dialogue in Macedonia has been dogged by insincerity. Both sides feel that their essential concerns and fears cannot be freely discussed, because the attempt to do so would open the door to extremist demands and reactions. The crises at Tanusevci and Tetovo should be seen as proof that a sincere dialogue can no longer be postponed. Now that the dust around Tetovo has settled, the government and parliament need to face squarely, without panicking, a large political question: Are the Macedonians and Albanians in the country committed to integrated living? Or, should they accept nationalist logic and prepare to negotiate federalisation? The very question raises the worst fears in Macedonians and Albanians, as well as hopes with a sizeable number of Albanians.

While arguably 'protecting' the Slavic majority and Albanian minority from each other through a form of territorial segregation, federalisation would swiftly reduce Macedonian politics to the single paralysing question of ethnic Albanian secession. This would also be the outcome of making the Albanians the second constituent people (an option discussed below). While many ethnic Macedonians believe that federalisation may be inevitable, they are not ready to countenance it just yet. A smaller number suggest that Macedonia should negotiate now, while they are likely to gain the unanimous support of the international community to gain the maximum amount of territory for 'their' portion of a federated Macedonia. Still others, a shrinking majority, are determined to make the country multi-ethnic and to support whatever reasonable political changes are necessary to preserve the special character of society in this small country surrounded by four (or five) keenly interested neighbours.

A policy of half-hearted, half-reluctant ethnic cohabitation has led to the present crisis. If the government does not want federalisation, it should declare its commitment to the full and equal integration of all nationalities in the country. It will not be enough to improve the legal framework. The Slavic majority must be ready to challenge the notion that Macedonian state identity is synonymous with the Slavic population. The troublesome preamble of the constitution must be deleted, as well as other discriminatory references. (The assertion that Macedonia is the national state of the Macedonian people is a simple tautology, and at odds with other statements in the constitution about the equality of citizens.) All political parties, including the opposition Social Democrats, must endorse these revisions if they are to succeed. Otherwise, a majority of ethnic Macedonians will reject this compromise as further proof of the VMRO's capitulation to the Albanians.

The opposition ethnic Albanian party, the PDP, should join the government for the same reasons. This next process of negotiations must not leave any doubt among the ethnic Albanians that their rights and aspirations were fairly considered and addressed within a democratic process. The DPA and PDP must

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<sup>30</sup> ICG interviews in early March 2001 with villagers in Tanusevci and the Tetovo valley indicated widespread support for the Albanian fighters. There was a sense of satisfaction that the Macedonian forces were reaping what they had sown. However, at this time there appears to be no groundswell of support outside these villages.

present a united front in negotiations. The PDP should stop trying to get a seat at the table for the NLA, and both parties should reconsider their demand to promote the Albanians to equal status in the constitution with the (ethnic) Macedonians. If it were implemented, this amendment – with its Titoist echo – would encourage radical Albanian demands for “self-determination” and, eventually, “the right of secession”. Hence it is a regressive option, and should not be supported. Macedonia’s future and stability would not be served by turning a mono-ethnic constitution into a bi-ethnic one.<sup>31</sup> The direction of reform should rather be towards de-ethnicising the constitution.

The next step should be the adoption of legislation that brings government closer to the population and away from an often corrupt and partisan central government. Real decentralisation is urgently needed. Draft laws on local self-government have languished in parliament for more than five years.<sup>32</sup> Meaningful local government reform will go a long way to build confidence in government’s impartial and equal application of the law, allow communities to manage their own schools, hospitals, public services, and determine whether minority languages will be used in addition to Macedonian.<sup>33</sup>

A fair and politically neutral census should, however, be conducted before the adoption of laws on territorial division or decentralisation. The ethnic Macedonians will need to accept that the ethnic Albanian and Roma populations are considerably higher than the official government figures, while the Albanians will probably need to drop their claim to comprise 40 per cent or more of the population. The reality on the ground must be ascertained and accepted, without legal gerrymandering and strategic boycotts designed to deflate or inflate minority numbers.

The government will need to develop new electoral laws and procedures. The choice of electoral model is less important than a commitment to ensure a free and fair process, restoring voters’ faith that each and every vote matters and is accurately reflected in the election results.

Lastly, the government-owned and private media must play a more responsible and constructive role in presenting their multi-ethnic character. Media coverage of the crisis was generally balanced until violence began at Tetovo, after which the media contributed to a mood of public hysteria, reinforcing negative stereotypes in and of each language-community.

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<sup>31</sup> Arben Xhaferi describes the current constitution as containing “a mono-ethnic vision of the state”. Quoted in “Solana Urges Macedonians to Find ‘Comfortable’ Constitution”, Agence France Presse, 3 April 2001.

<sup>32</sup> Four key pieces of legislation are pending: the Law on Local Self-Government, the Law on Self-Financing, the Law on Territorial Division, and the Law on Government of Skopje.

<sup>33</sup> ICG interview on 23 March 2001 with Minister of Local Self-Government, Xhemail Saiti, who said the draft law would allow for the legal adoption of minority language use provided that at least 20 per cent of the population is a “significant minority”. If a minority comprises more than 50 per cent of the municipal electorate, the legal use of a second language is automatic. Currently about 35 of the 124 local municipalities have ethnic minority mayors, which implies that the electorates there are more than 50 per cent minority composition.

The international community must also be aware of Macedonia's likely future if the issue of Kosovo is not resolved. The final status of Kosovo, whether it becomes independent or autonomous, is less important than the kind of place it becomes. If Kosovo becomes democratic and legal economic prosperity is possible for its citizens, then Macedonia is likely to benefit from its close proximity.

This burden of necessary reform cannot be lifted without strong international assistance, including pressure. Yet, even then, and even with a political leadership willing to change Macedonia's constitutional and legal framework, popular support for the rebels will increase if leaders in both camps continue to mix politics with massive corruption and organised crime. This is the truth of the matter, and almost everyone in the country is aware of it. Western Macedonia could easily become what northern Ireland was and parts of northern Spain still are: a byword for endemic terrorism.

**Skopje/Brussels, 5 April 2001**

*ICG conducted interviews in Macedonia from 21 to 27 March, in preparation for this report, with the following: the former and current Ministers of Defence, Development and Economy, Foreign Affairs, Interior, Justice, Local Self-Government, members of the Intelligence Agency and National Security Council and nine members of Parliament, as well as leading Albanian and Macedonian journalists and Western diplomats from seven countries.*

## 1. Armed Albanian Organisations Believed to Exist in Macedonia

NLA and UCK	<p>National Liberation Army (allegedly ethnic-Albanian armed groups dedicated to the 'liberation' of Albanian regions of Macedonia). In Albanian, NLA is <i>Ushtira Clirimtare Kombetare</i>, giving the acronym UCK, which confusingly was also the acronym of the Kosova Liberation Army – in Albanian, <i>Ushtira Clirimtare e Kosoves</i>, known in English as the KLA.</p> <p>The NLA is said to have a base in Vitina, Kosovo, and believed to be led by Ali Ahmeti and his uncle Fazli Veliu, both from the village of Zajas near Kicevo. According to media reports, other leaders are Xhavit Hasani from Tanusevci, Skender Habibi, Amrush Xhemajli, and Emrus Dzemali, long-time leader of KLA secret services in Kosovo.</p> <p>Most NLA members fought with the KLA in Kosovo, but are of Macedonian Albanian origin.</p>
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## 2. Political Parties in Macedonia

Common Abbreviation used by IC in FYRoM	
VMRO-DPMNE	The main ethnic Macedonian government coalition party, led by Prime Minister Ljubco Georgievski. VMRO stands for Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation, and DPMNE for Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity. Currently holds 46 of the 120 parliamentary seats. Sometimes seen as pro Bulgarian. Party's natural constituency are right-wing nationalist voters.
DPA Also known as PDP(Sh)	Democratic Party of Albanians - Albanian party in governing coalition. Led by Arben Xhaferi, the party, which is the largest Albanian party, has gained significantly in international stature. Vice Presidents are Menduh Thaci and Iljaz Halimi (also deputy speaker of parliament).
PDP Also known as PPD (Sh)	Party for Democratic Prosperity – second ethnic Albanian party, now in opposition, led by Imer Imeri, formerly by Abduraman Haliti. Previously the main Albanian party, with socialist/partisan origins, now largely discredited and moving to a more nationalist position.
NDP Also known as PDK	National Democratic Party. The new Albanian party formed on 12 March 2001, which advocates a federal solution for Macedonia. The party may have close connections to LCK and LPCK, the marginal political parties that founded the KLA in Kosovo. Leaders are Kastriot Haxhirexha and Shtim Polozhani, both until recently in the leadership of PDP. The Secretary is Xhevat Ademi. Two MPs from the DPA have also joined: Fadil Bajrami and Ahir Hasani. Bardhyl Mahmuti of PDK Kosova is connected, as is Rufi Osmani, or at least both attended early meetings.



**APPENDIX A**

LP	Liberal Party. The smallest party in the coalition led by Speaker of Parliament, Stojan Andov and Risto Gusterov. Was part of the former SDSM-led government coalition, now provides the critical votes needed for the parliamentary majority.
SDSM	Social Democratic Alliance of Macedonia. The main Macedonian opposition party, led by Branko Crvenkovski, and formerly the governing party between 1991-98. Party has unsuccessfully tried to force early elections by repeatedly calling for the resignation of Prime Minister Georgievski.
DA	Democratic Alternative. Part of the governing coalition until late 2000. A majority of members left when party leader, Vasil Tupurkovski, tried unsuccessfully to challenge the VMRO-DPMNE.

**3. Data From the 1999 Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Macedonia**

**A. Population Breakdown by Ethnic Background (for Groups over 1,000)**

<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Census 1991</b>	<b>Census 1994</b>
Macedonians	1,328,187 (65.3%)	1,401,389 (66.5%)
Albanians	441,987 (21.7%)	484,228 (22.9%)
Turks	77,080 (3.8%)	82,976 (3.9%)
Roma	52,103 (2.5%)	47,363 (2.2%)
Serbs	42,775 (2.1%)	40,972 (1.9%)
Muslims	31,356 (1.5%)	16,366 (0.77%)
Vlachs	7,764 (0.38%)	8,730 (0.41%)
Bosniaks	...	7,167 (0.64%)
Bulgarians	1,370	1,711
Egyptians	3,307	3,276
Montenegrins	3,225	2,368
Croats	2,878	2,508
Ethnically undeclared	1,791	2,189
Other	36,313	2,845
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,033,964</b>	<b>2,106,664</b>

**B. Primary School Enrolment for Ethnic Groups**

Primary School Students according to Language of instruction	1991/1992	1993/1994	1995/1996
Total	261,127 (100.0%)	258,671 (100.0%)	259,515 (100.0%)
Albanian	69,950 (26.7%)	70,320 (27.2%)	72,124 (27.8%)

**APPENDIX A**

Turkish	5,084 (1.9%)	5,368 (2.0%)	5,612 (2.1%)
Serbian	1,008 (0.4%)	798 (0.3%)	730 (0.28%)

**C. High School Enrolment and Graduation Figures**

High School Total Number of students	1991/1992	1993/1994	1995/1996
Albanian	2,875 (4.0%)	5,350 (7.4%)	8,687 (11.1%)
Turkish	193	260	445
Total students	70,250	72,248	77,817

**D. Live Born Children (According to the Ethnicity of the Mother)**

Ethnic background mother	1991	1993	1996
Macedonian	18,012	16,666	15,315
Albanian	11,813	11,353	11,409
Turkish	1,809	1,491	1,400
Roma	1,487	1,211	1,643

The Conclusions of the Macedonian Parliament After the Urgent Session (as Shown by the Media After the End of the Session, 18 March 2001, at 2:00 am)

(SUMMARY)

With 97 votes for, 6 abstained, and none against, out of the 103 members of parliament present, the Macedonian Parliament reached the following conclusions:

1. The security situation in the country has deteriorated due to the activities of the armed extremist groups who endanger the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Macedonia.
2. With respect to this, the Macedonian authorities will undertake adequate measures to preserve the peace and stability of the country. Urgent and efficient measures will be implemented to prevent the further escalation of the situation.
3. The Parliament appeals to the international organisations to continue offering their unconditional support to the preservation of the integrity and sovereignty of Macedonia with all necessary military and technical aid without the presence of military forces from the neighbouring countries.
4. The Parliament calls upon the political parties to continue working in respect of improving the situation and condemn all acts of violence.
5. The Parliament asks KFOR for a bigger presence and efforts along the border between Macedonia and Kosovo.
6. The Parliament calls upon the Macedonian citizens not to abandon their homes and not to succumb to misinformation and pressure of any armed groups for mobilisation.
7. The Parliament will immediately intensify a wider political dialogue within the institutions of the state in an effort to find a solution for all the open issues in the country.

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## About the International Crisis Group

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The International Crisis Group (ICG) is a private, multinational organisation committed to strengthening the capacity of the international community to anticipate, understand and act to prevent and contain conflict.

ICG's approach is grounded in field research. Teams of political analysts, based on the ground in countries at risk of conflict, gather information from a wide range of sources, assess local conditions and produce regular analytical reports containing practical recommendations targeted at key international decision-takers.

ICG's reports are distributed widely to officials in foreign ministries and international organisations and made generally available at the same time via the organisation's internet site, [www.crisisweb.org](http://www.crisisweb.org). ICG works closely with governments and those who influence them, including the media, to highlight its crisis analysis and to generate support for its policy prescriptions. The ICG Board - which includes prominent figures from the fields of politics, diplomacy, business and the media - is directly involved in helping to bring ICG reports and recommendations to the attention of senior policy-makers around the world. ICG is chaired by former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari; former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans has been President and Chief Executive since January 2000.

ICG's international headquarters are at Brussels, with advocacy offices in Washington DC, New York and Paris. The organisation currently operates field projects in eighteen crisis-affected countries and regions across three continents: Albania, Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia in Europe; Algeria, Burundi, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe in Africa; and Burma/Myanmar, Cambodia, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan in Asia.

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*Albania Briefing: Albania's Local Elections, A test of Stability and Democracy*, 25 August 2000

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