Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

**Resolution 1255 (2001)**[1]

# Situation in "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly expresses its deep concern about the current situation in Macedonia[2] where the escalation of extremist action and violence from within both communities, has jeopardised democratic stability and security in the country and has caused the loss of human lives, suffering of the people and produced many thousands of refugees and displaced persons.

2. The Assembly condemns in the strongest terms the action by armed ethnic Albanian extremist groups, and urges them to stop military action immediately and to agree to disarm. It calls for the strictest measures to be taken in the neighbouring regions as well as elsewhere in Europe against Albanian extremist circles which support and finance the armed rebels in Macedonia.[3]

3. The action of these Albanian extremists goes against the interests and well-being of all citizens of Macedonia[4] regardless of their ethnic origin and is damaging the efforts to improve both the legal and de facto situation of the ethnic Albanians and other ethnic minorities.

4. At the same time the Assembly resolutely condemns acts of retaliation against the ethnic Albanian population which have taken the form of house-burning, violent intimidation and other harassment.

5. The Assembly calls on both parties to cease hostilities immediately in order to allow the rapid deployment of a force led by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato), as requested by the Macedonian Government, to ensure the disarmament of the ethnic Albanian extremists and the transfer of their weapons to the international forces.

6. The Assembly reiterates its full attachment to the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Macedonia,[5] which must be respected in the interest of all its citizens and for the stability of the region.

7. The Assembly welcomes the efforts of Macedonian President, Mr Boris Trajkovski, to intensify the inter-ethnic dialogue and propose measures aimed at strengthening the civic character of the state.

8. The Assembly welcomes the establishment of the Government of National Unity and its efforts to work out measures aimed at solving the current crisis and improving inter-ethnic relations in the country. It calls on the parties in the governing coalition to conclude without further delay an agreement on the solution of the crisis.

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1. Assembly debate on 28 June 2001 (22nd Sitting) (see Doc. 9146Doc. 9146, report of the Political Affairs Committee, rapporteur: Mr Jakič). Text adopted by the Assembly on 28 June 2001 (22nd Sitting).
2. The use in the text of the term "Macedonia" is for descriptive purposes and the convenience of the reader: it does not prejudge the position of the Assembly on the question of the name of the state.
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9. The Assembly fully supports the efforts of the international community to help the Macedonian Government to stabilise the situation and to combat extremist violence. It welcomes, in particular, the Stabilisation and Association Agreement concluded between Macedonia[2] and the European Union and hopes that the international efforts will be pursued with the full support of the United Nations.

10. The attitude of the Government of Albania and other countries in the region, which have consistently condemned the use of violence to resolve the concerns of ethnic Albanian communities in the Balkans, deserves full recognition. However, the Assembly considers that it would not be appropriate for the neighbouring countries to send troops to Macedonia[6] within the framework of international operations.

11. While recognising the existing difficulties, the Assembly regrets that little progress has been accomplished so far by the Macedonian authorities on the recommendations regarding relations with the ethnic Albanian minority formulated in Resolution 1213 (2000) on honouring of obligations and commitments by "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia". It regrets, in particular, the authorities' failure to adopt adequate measures regarding the use of the Albanian language in public life and education and to increase the proportion of ethnic Albanians in state institutions, the police and the army. At the same time, the Albanian minority should not make excessive demands.

12. The Assembly asks the Government of Macedonia[7]

*a.* to adopt urgent measures, including constitutional ones, aimed at improving the legal and practical position of the ethnic Albanian population and other minorities, in particular:

  *a.* the adoption of legal measures which would enable the population belonging to the Albanian minority to use their language when dealing with the state administration and the courts;

  *b.* the improvement of education, in particular secondary and third level, in the Albanian language;

  *c.* the opening of the South East Europe University in Tetovo this year;

  *d.* adequate representation of ethnic Albanians in public institutions and enterprises, the police and the army;

*b.* to limit the use of force to the extent strictly necessary to protect the country and its population against armed extremists;

*c.* to engage in a political dialogue with those leaders whose movements are not represented in the parliament, and who renounce violent action and have surrendered their arms;

*d.* to declare an amnesty for those rebels who lay down arms and who have not committed war crimes;

*e.* to ensure efficient protection of all citizens irrespective of their ethnic origins against possible acts of retaliation and harassment and to bring to justice the perpetrators of those acts;

*f.* to take measures aimed at improving inter-ethnic relations in the country and facilitating reconciliation;

*g.* to ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages;

*h.* to co-operate closely with the Venice Commission on the adoption of amendments to the constitution.

13. The Assembly invites the Venice Commission to offer its co-operation to the Macedonian authorities and all interested parties on the problems relating to the amendment of the constitution in order to ensure that the principles of the Council of Europe are guaranteed.

14. The Assembly is committed to do its best to overcome the dangerous crises confronting Macedonia.[8] It therefore calls upon the Political Affairs Committee to immediately establish a small ad hoc committee to travel to the region and to report back to the Assembly's next Ordinary Session in September.

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