

# Early elections in Kosovo after the dissolution of Parliament

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Translated by Helen Levy

Analysis

1.5 million Kosovars are being called to ballot early on 8th June next to renew the 120 members of the Assembly of Kosovo, the only chamber in Parliament, which was dissolved on 7th May with 90 votes in support, 4 against and 3 abstentions. This general election follows the failure of Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi (Democratic Party PDK) to convince MPs to approve the creation of a national armed force.

He hoped to transform the security forces (2,500 people armed with light weapons) who were introduced in 2009, into a real army comprising 5000 soldiers and 3000 reservists. However the Serb minority (10,000 people out of a total 1.8 million inhabitants) is against the creation of this new security force and prefers that NATO continue to guarantee Kosovo's security. Since the law on the creation of the Kosovar army had to be approved by 2/3 of the MPS, i.e. 90, and 2/3 of the minority representatives in the chamber it did not achieve the required number of votes for adoption.

Ethnic minorities tried to achieve, in exchange for their support of the creation of a national military force, the upkeep of their especially reserved seats in Parliament for the following two terms. The Democratic Party supported this extension but the opposition – the Democratic League (LDK) and the Movement for Self-Rule (Vetëvendosje, VV) prevented Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi from reaching the 2/3 quorum necessary for this specific legislation granted to minorities to be extended.

*"A parliament that cannot vote on its country's army makes any further parliamentary work nonsense,"* declared Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi after failing to convince parliament of the idea of creating a Kosovar army. *"Parliament is no longer functioning; the only way to solve this situation is to organise general elections,"* indicated Isa Mustafa, leader of the Democratic League (LDK).

After this President of the Republic Atifete Jahjaga, announced that early general elections would take place on 8th June. Pristina has very little time to organise the elections about which several opposition parties have made complaints.

## A short campaign

*"Kosovo has the best airport and motorways in the Balkans. Now we are going to build the biggest tourist complex in the region, which will offer 4000*

*new jobs to the citizens of Kosovo. My main aim is the creation of jobs. It is time for us to focus our energy on this project,"* declared outgoing Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi, who maintained that his government was going to invest 500 million € and create 50,000 new jobs in the agricultural sector. He has promised to create a Kosovar army immediately after the 8th June election – he also announced a 25% increase in civil servants' wages and also the creation of a fund to counter unemployment. The Kosovar government comprises the Hashim Thaçi's Democratic Party, the New Kosovo Coalition (AKR) and several parties representing the minorities.

The Democratic League, led by Isa Mustafa and the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK), a conservative party led by former Prime Minister (2004-2005) and former commander of the Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK), Ramush Haradinaj, are

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the main opposition parties. Both have said they are prepared to work together with all Kosovar parties after the election with the exception of the Democratic Party. Getting rid of Hashim Thaçi and replacing him as head of government forms the core of the opposition forces' programme. They have made many promises to the Kosovars, who are extremely mistrustful of their politicians and disillusioned about the ability of those in power to improve their daily lot in a difficult socio-economic situation: 45% are unemployed and around 30% live below the poverty line.

Fatmir Limaj, former Transport and Telecommunications Minister (2008-2010), left the Democratic Party to form Initiative for Kosovo. The party might weaken the Prime Minister's party. Fatmir Limaj was arrested a few days ago by the EULEX mission (EU mission aiming to promote the rule of law in Kosovo) for organised crime, corruption and embezzlement at the time when he was a government member. He has been arrested several times over the last few years.

### Local elections on 3rd November and 1st December 2013

The Kosovars voted six months ago to renew their local representatives. The country has 38 towns 10 of which have a Serb majority (6 enclaves and 4 towns: Laposavic/Leposaviq, Zubin Potok, Zvecan/Zvecan and North Mitrovica). The local election was the first in which the Serb minority took part since Kosovo's independence on 7th February 2008 (the first general elections were organised under international guidance and monitoring in 2010).

The agreement signed on 19th April 2013 by Pristina and Belgrade foresees the integration of the towns in the north formerly controlled by Serbia into the Kosovar electoral system and the extension of their autonomy as part of the Association of Serb Towns. This comprises 9 towns 8 of which were won by the Srpska Initiative and one by the Independent Liberal Party (SLS). In all turn out in the local election rose to 45.79%.

The Democratic Party won 10 towns; the Democratic League 9; the Alliance for the Future (AAK) 3; the Movement for Self-Rule won Pristina where Sphend Ahmeti beat outgoing Mayor Isa Mustafa (LDK). Finally the New Kosovo Alliance won Mitrovica South.

### The Kosovar political system

The Kosovar Parliament is monocameral. The Kosovo Assembly comprises 120 MP elected for four years in a proportional system. 20 seats are reserved for the minorities: 10 for the Serbs, 4 for the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians (supposedly from Egypt, the latter are like the Ashkali - Muslims and Albanian speaking), 3 for the Bosniaks and 2 for the Turks, 1 for the Gorani (Slav speaking Muslim community).

14 political parties are represented in the Kosovo Assembly:

- the Democratic Party (PDK), led by outgoing Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi, 34 seats;
- the Democratic League (LDK) party of former President (2008-2010) Fatmir Sejdiu, led by the former Mayor of Pristina (2007-2014), Isa Mustafa, 27 MPs;
- the Movement for Self-Rule (Vetëvendosja, VV), a party that hopes that the country will join Albania and which is against any rapprochement with Serbia, led by Albin Kurti, 14 seats;
- the Alliance for the Future (AAK), a party led by Ramush Haradinaj, imprisoned in The Hague and under prosecution for war crimes by the ICTY, 12 seats;
- the New Kosovo Coalition (AKR), liberal party led by Behgjet Pacolli, 8 seats.

9 parties represent the minorities in parliament: the Independent Liberal Party (SLS), the Turkish Party (KDTP), the United Serbia List (JSL), the Vakut Coalition, the Ashkali Democratic Party (PDAK), the Ashkali Integration Party (PAI), the Serb Party (SDSKM), the Gora Civic Initiative (GIG) and the United Roma Party (PRBK).

**Reminder of the general elections results in Kosovo on 12th December 2010**

Participation: 47.5%

Political Parties	No of votes won	% of votes won	No of seats won
<b>Democratic Party (PDK)</b>	224 339	32,11	34
<b>Democratic League (LDK)</b>	172 552	24,69	27
<b>Movement for Self-Rule (Vetëvendosje, VV)</b>	88 652	12,69	14
<b>Alliance for the Future (AAK)</b>	77 130	11,04	12
<b>New Kosovo Coalition (KKR)</b>	50 951	7,29	8
<b>Independent Liberal Party (SLS)</b>	14 352	2,05	8
<b>Turkish Party (KDTP)</b>	8 548	1,22	5
<b>United Serb List (JSL)</b>	6 004	0,86	4
<b>Vakat Coalition</b>	5 296	0,76	2
<b>Ashkali Democratic Party (PDAK)</b>	2 871	0,41	2
<b>Ashkali Integration Party (PAI)</b>	1 386	0,20	1
<b>Serb Party (SDSKM)</b>	1 008	0,14	1
<b>Gora Civic Initiative (GIG)</b>	787	0,11	1
<b>United Roma Party (PRBK)</b>	690	0,10	1
<b>Others</b>	37189	5,34	0

Source: Kosovo Elections 2010

<http://www.fes-prishtina.org/wb/media/Publications/2011/KIPRED%20-%20Parliamentary%20Elections%202010%20%28English%29.pdf>

# Outgoing Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi's Democratic Party wins early elections in Kosovo

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## Results

The Democratic Party led by outgoing Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi won the early elections on 8th June in Kosovo. It won 30.69% of the vote just a few points ahead of the Democratic league (LDK) led by former Mayor of Pristina (2007-2014), Isa Mustafa, which won 25.7% of the vote.

With 13.48% of the vote the Self-Rule Movement (Vetëvendosja, VV), a left-wing party led by Albin Kurti, failed to disrupt the country's political system as it had promised to do. It came out ahead of the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK), led by former Prime Minister (2004-2005) and former leader of the Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK) Ramush Haradinaj (who is at present in prison in the Hague and under prosecution for war crimes by the International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) - it won 9.6% of the vote. Representing the Serb minority of Kosovo (10 000 out of a total population of 1.8 million), the United Serb List (JLS) won 4.21% of the vote.

Turnout totalled 43.16%, ie -5.5 points in comparison with the previous general elections on 12th December 2010.

The Serb authorities had called on Kosovo Serbs to go and vote. "Voting in the elections is a patriotic duty for each Serb citizen living in Kosovo," declared the government in Belgrade. "Voting on the part of the Serb community is important and this will have a positive impact on the implementation of the Brussels agreement," indicated Behlul Beqaj, political science professor in Pristina - he believes that the minorities' representatives (Serbs and

others) may find themselves popular after the elections amongst the leaders of the main parties who will be looking for allies in order to form a majority.

The Brussels agreement was signed by Pristina and Belgrade on 13th April 2013. It marks the start of a rapprochement between the two countries. It should be noted that the Serb authorities have not yet acknowledged Kosovo's independence.

### Elections results of 8th June 2014 in Kosovo

**Turnout: 43.16%**

Political Parties	% of votes won
Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK)	30.69
Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK)	25.7
Self-Rule Movement (Vetëvendosje, VV)	13.48
Alliance for the future of Kosovo (AAK)	9.6
United Serb List (JSL)	4.21

Source: <http://rezultatet.kqz-ks.org/NightResults/Results.aspx?RaceID=1&UnitID=1&IsPS=0&Turnout=0&LangID=1>

"Tonight Kosovo won. Tomorrow we shall start work; we shall show the world that gaining independence was just the beginning of our history," declared outgoing head of government Hashim Thaçi when the results were announced. "People and parties in our country have shown that democracy is a reality in Kosovo," he stressed adding: "We shall continue to work for the country's development."

The Democratic Party will need to find partners if it wants to continue governing the country. The other parties however have ruled out any agreement with the outgoing Prime Minister. Again the MPs represen-

ting the national minorities may be especially popular, notably the United Serb List (JSL). Some analysts have spoken of a possible grand coalition between the Democratic Party and the Democratic League led by Hashim Daçi and Isa Mustafa respectively.

Whoever the participants the future Kosovar government will have a great many challenges to overcome within the next four years. The country is facing a serious economic crisis. Unemployment totals 35% and poverty affects 47% of the population. The executive will also have to overcome – quickly and effectively – corruption and organised crime which is undermining society.

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