

Perhaps the most immediate, troublesome issue is the easy availability of weapons. The collection of a large portion of these weapons is a necessary condition for stability and the reassertion of state authority in Albania.

Despite the myriad of problems plaguing Albania, many simple, concrete measures can be undertaken today to diminish the likelihood of civil unrest in the future. Canada, as a neutral country that is highly respected by Albanians, is in an excellent position to play an important role in supporting a variety of stabilizing initiatives.

KOSOVO

Kosovo is a province of Serbia, the largest and most powerful of Yugoslavia's two remaining republics, and is about twice the size of Canada's Prince Edward Island. This landlocked, mountainous territory has sufficient minerals and other natural resources to make it a valued prize in an otherwise impoverished region. By the turn of the century, Albanians were already a majority in Kosovo and in the aftermath of the Second World War, their numerical superiority grew steadily due to a high birth rate, lower infant mortality and the out-migration of Serbs. Today, there are about 2.2 million Kosovars, of whom about ninety percent are ethnic Albanians, eight percent Serbian, and the remainder primarily Montenegrin. While Albania's implosion in 1997 took many by surprise, Kosovo's relative calm until early 1998 was equally surprising.

History of Ethnic Conflict

Between 1389 and 1912, the Kosovo territory was under direct rule of the Ottoman Empire. In 1912 during the First Balkan War, Albania declared independence and Kosovo became part of Serbia. From 1919 to 1939 Kosovo was contained in the newly created Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (re-named Yugoslavia in 1928). In 1945, Tito and the Communists founded a federal Yugoslavia in which Serbia was one of six republics and the Kosovo territory was simply a region of the Serb Republic.

Throughout the communist period, the Albanians in Kosovo sought equality with the other nations of federal Yugoslavia. Equality, in terms of granting the ethnic Albanians a republic, also would have included the right to secede—a concession no Yugoslav leader was willing to permit. For two decades Serbia maintained a tight grip on Kosovo. However, in 1966, Yugoslavia granted Kosovo self-rule within Serbia. This did not satisfy the Albanians as the Yugoslav government continued to strictly control all expressions of Albanian nationhood. Mass student demonstrations in 1968 were quickly and brutally repressed. In 1974, a new Yugoslav constitution granted Kosovo the status of an "autonomous province"—a constituent part of Yugoslavia and a *de facto* republic. Nonetheless, Albanians continued to demand their own republic within Yugoslavia. Albanian university student protests in early 1981 were severely crushed and led to bloody riots throughout Kosovo.

In 1989, Slobodan Milosevic became President of Serbia. He shaped his entire political agenda around undoing the legacies of the 1974 constitution. The Serb's explicit objective was now to eliminate public evidence of the Albanian nation and to reestablish Serb authority and national presence in Kosovo. In July 1990, the Serb government formally revoked Kosovo's status as an autonomous province and dissolved Kosovo's government. The Serbs instituted an apartheid-like system to control the majority Albanian population; it abolished Kosovo's Albanian political, educational and cultural institutions. The new Serbian language only policy in the schools and