



Kosovo Conflict: Indonesia

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1 Indonesia's Stance on the Kosovo Conflict

Although Indonesia has never recognized Kosovo's independence, it has come close. The then Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono said in 2009 that "it might be possible someday to recognize the independence of Kosovo." Indonesia has discussed the issue of Kosovo numerous times in its governing bodies, but the ruling political majority still believes in not recognizing Kosovo. There are 2 main reasons for this - firstly, the Independence of Kosovo breaks the UN Security Council Resolution 1244 and secondly, a similar situation in West Papua. [1]

Let's first look at the legal aspect of the problem. The UNSCR 1244 provides Kosovo "substantial autonomy and meaningful self-administration", but still implies that Kosovo remain under the authority of Serbia. Indonesia views Kosovo's unilateral secession as not following the set Resolution and therefore illegal. The country's President and various Ministers have publicly expressed that they stand with their Serbian counterparts and that Serbian Sovereignty should be upheld. [2]

The most important reason why Indonesia fails to recognize Kosovo is the West Papua conflict. Indonesia has its own "secession problem" as the indigenous population of West Papua have long called for independence and the formation of their own country - Free Papua. Nonetheless, West Papua remains under strict Indonesian control, while the Free Papua Movement engages in guerilla style warfare to disrupt Indonesian governance. The whole situation is hidden away, as Indonesia doesn't provide foreign access to West Papua due to "safety and security" concerns. It is easy to see that if Indonesia does recognize the one sided secession of Kosovo, it would make an irreversible precedent. In order to avoid seeming hypocritical by recognizing Kosovo and not allowing the secession of West Papua, Indonesia avoids the whole issue by not recognizing Kosovo at all. [3]

In conclusion, the ruling majority stand on the side of Serbia in this conflict. It is important to note that there is a minority in Indonesia's political apparatus that believe in recognition of Kosovo, mainly due to religious ties (Kosovo and Indonesia are both predominantly Muslim). Nonetheless, the governing parties have numerous times stated that "the Kosovo issue should not be a religious issue, but a political one". Therefore the representative of Indonesia in the UN will probably completely back Serbia and will push for dialogue between the 2 countries.



Fig. 1: Geographical Locations of Kosovo, Serbia and Indonesia

2 References

- 1 Wikipedia: 'Indonesia's reaction to the 2008 Kosovo Conflict'
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indonesia%27s_reaction_to_the_2008_Kosovo_declaration_of_independence
- 2 Wikipedia: 'UNSCR1244'
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Security_Council_Resolution_1244
- 3 Wikipedia: 'Papua Conflict'
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Papua_conflict