



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

# **1999 NATO Response to the Humanitarian Crisis in Kosovo**

As delivered by Chargé d’Affaires Katherine Brucker  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
March 27, 2025

Twenty-six years ago, NATO launched Operation Allied Force to end the Milosevic regime’s massacre of civilians and ongoing humanitarian crisis in Kosovo. After exhausting all diplomatic avenues to end the regime’s campaign of ethnic cleansing, military action was the option of last resort to prevent a much broader tragedy.

NATO’s use of force was necessary and legitimate. The UN Security Council had expressed concerns about the grave humanitarian situation in Kosovo, the mounting number of refugees, and the threat posed to international peace and security.

We remember the thousands of innocent people killed by Milosevic’s forces and those who remain missing, and the hundreds of thousands driven from their homes.

Recognizing this painful past, the United States is focused on the future.

We urge all partners in the Western Balkans region to focus on finishing the task of building a stable, prosperous, multi-ethnic, and secure environment where all can thrive in peace. This requires normalizing relations between Serbia and Kosovo, including eventual mutual recognition.

We thank the OSCE Missions in Kosovo and Serbia for their active work to prevent and defuse conflicts, promote effective governance, and counter trafficking and corruption. We urge all parties to work together, in good faith, to build a stable, peaceful, and prosperous future in the Western Balkans for everyone in the region.

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