

**FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF
'MACEDONIA'
(FYROM)**

COUNTRY ASSESSMENT

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**COUNTRY INFORMATION & POLICY UNIT
IMMIGRATION & NATIONALITY DIRECTORATE
HOME OFFICE, UNITED KINGDOM**

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1. Scope of Document

1.1 This assessment has been produced by the Country Information and Policy Unit, Immigration and Nationality Directorate, Home Office, from information obtained from a wide variety of recognised sources. The document does not contain any Home Office opinion or policy.

1.2 The assessment has been prepared for background purposes for those involved in the asylum / human rights determination process. The information it contains is not exhaustive. It concentrates on the issues most commonly raised in asylum / human rights claims made in the United Kingdom.

1.3 The assessment is sourced throughout. It is intended to be used by caseworkers as a signpost to the source material, which has been made available to them. The vast majority of the source material is readily available in the public domain.

1.4 It is intended to revise the assessment on a six-monthly basis while the country remains within the top 35 asylum-seeker producing countries in the United Kingdom.

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2. Geography

2.1 The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYRoM, or according to its Constitution, the Republic of Macedonia) lies in South-Eastern Europe, on the Balkan Peninsula. Macedonia is a land-locked state having a northern border with Yugoslavia (the Serbian province of Kosovo and Metohija to the north-west and Serbia proper to the north-east). To the west lies Albania, to the south, Greece and to the east, Bulgaria. **[1]**

2.2 The historical region of Macedonia is divided between the country that uses its name, and Greece and Bulgaria. The Republic of Macedonia, which is sometimes known as Vardar Macedonia (Pirin Macedonia is that part of the territory in Bulgaria and Aegean Macedonia in Greece). **[1]** The country is mountainous and is bisected by the Vardar (Axios) river, which flows from northwest to southeast across the centre of the country and into Greece. **[1]**

2.3 The capital is Skopje, populated mainly by Serbs and is located on the Vardar in the central north of the country. Other principal towns are Bitola in the south-west, Prilep in the centre, Kumanovo in the north and Tetovo, which is west of Skopje and the centre of Albanian settlement. **[1]**

2.4 According to the census of 1994, ethnic Macedonians accounted for 66.6% of the national population and ethnic Albanians for 22.7%. The Macedonians are a southern Slav people, closely related to Bulgarians. However, the separate existence of a Macedonian ethnic group was acknowledged neither by Bulgaria or Greece. Most Albanians were concentrated in the west of the country, particularly the northwest, where they tended to live in distinct communities, mostly in the countryside. **[1]** The other ethnic groups consist of, Turks, 4.0%, Roma, 2.3%, Serbs, 2.1%, Slav Muslims 0.8%. There are also approximately 8,601 Vlahs or Vlaches. **[1]**

2.5 The official language is Macedonian, but provision was made for the use of minority languages (notably Albanian) at the local level. **[1]** Most of the population was nominally Christian and of the Eastern Orthodox faith. The Macedonians were adherents of the Macedonian Orthodox Church, which was independent, but was not recognised by the other Orthodox. Most of the Albanians were Muslim, although there were some Roman Catholics in Skopje (immigrants from the Prizren area of Kosovo) and some Orthodox near Ohrid. Most of the remaining minority groups were also Muslim. **[1]**

For more detailed information please see Europa at source **[1]** at Annex D.

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3. Economy

3.1 Although mountainous, Macedonia has fertile agricultural land, much of it suitable for growing subtropical crops like tobacco. **[1]** However, the country is not

rich in industrial raw materials, with the exception of some ferrous metals. Macedonia is dependent on foreign trade, both for markets for its specialised agricultural crops and for supplies for its industry. [1]

3.2 Due to the insurgency in 2001, the Government redirected economic development funds to support new security measures. [2] According to the National Bureau of Statistics, at the end of November 2001, unemployment was at 39.1%. There is a large unofficial economy. Inflation was fairly stable and averaged 5.5% during the year. [2]

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4. History

4.1 Macedonia became independent in 1991, it became the only Yugoslav republic to secede without violence following the break up of Yugoslavia.

4.2 In February 2001, ethnic Albanian extremists, began a violent insurgency near the Kosovo border in northern Macedonia. [2] A group of ethnic Albanians calling themselves the 'National Liberation Army' (NLA or UCK in Albanian), purporting to fight for greater civil rights for ethnic Albanians in Macedonia, seized territory and attacked government forces. [2] There were disagreement as to the causes of the conflict, with NLA leaders claiming that they were fighting to end systematic discrimination against ethnic Albanians by the Macedonian authorities, while the government claimed that the NLA's goal was control over Macedonian territory. [2] [3] Government officials insisted that Kosovar Albanian radicalism lay behind the conflict, not legitimate grievances of Macedonia's own ethnic Albanians. [3] The insurgency was centred around Tetovo and spread to some northern and western areas along the borders.

4.3 In June 2001, the insurgents occupied Aracinovo, a village five miles from the capital, Skopje. After a government offensive failed to remove them, and at the Government's request, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) negotiated the insurgents withdrawal and escorted them out of the Aracinovo area. [2] On July 5 2001, with international facilitation, the Government and the insurgents negotiated a cease-fire, and on August 13 2001, the ruling ethnic Macedonian and ethnic Albanian party leaders signed the Framework Agreement and its annexes. [2] [4] This laid down the groundwork for the preservation of a peaceful, unitary, multiethnic state with improved civil rights for minority groups. The Agreement called for the implementation of constitutional and legislative changes. [4] On September 26 2001, under the terms of the demilitarisation agreement, NLA combatants completed a voluntary hand-over of weapons to NATO troops and announced their disbandment. [2] The Framework Agreement was ratified by Parliament in a series of three sets of votes; in the final vote on November 16 2001, Parliament amended the country's Constitution, as required by the peace agreement, to better protect citizens civil rights. [2] [4] [5]

4.4 The European Union began its first military mission on 31 March 2003, code name 'Operation Concordia', when NATO handed over its responsibility of peacekeeping. Like the NATO troops the 'Eufor' mission, which is made up of 27 nations both inside and outside the EU, is to ensure the enforcement of the peace accord. [26]

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5. State Structures

The Constitution

5.1 In September 1991, Macedonia was established as a national state of the Macedonian people, in which full equality as citizens and permanent co-existence with the Macedonian people is provided for Albanians, Turks, Vlachs, Romanics and other nationalities living in the Republic of Macedonia, and intent on:

- The establishment of the Republic of Macedonia as a sovereign and independent state, as well as a civil and democratic one;
- The establishment and consolidation of the rule of law as a fundamental system of government;
- The guaranteeing of human rights, citizens' freedoms and ethnic equality;
- The provision of peace and a common home for the Macedonian people with the nationalities living in the Republic of Macedonia; and on
- The provision of social justice, economic well being and prosperity in the life of the individual and the community.

5.2 Full details of the constitution can be found at source [5], the 'Framework agreement', can be found at source [4].

Please note, the Constitution is still going through changes and amendments, the Framework agreement covers the most recent of these.

Political System

5.3 The Republic of Macedonia is a sovereign, independent, democratic state, where sovereignty derives from democratically elected citizens, referendums and other forms of expression. [1]

5.4 Legislative power resides with the Sobranje (assembly), which consists of between 120 and 140 deputies elected for four years. The Sobranje adopts and amends the Constitution, enacts laws and gives interpretations thereof, adopts the budget of the Republic, decides on war and peace, chooses the Government, elects judges and releases them from duty. [1] The Sobranje may decide, by a majority vote, to call a referendum if the majority of voters taking part in the vote has voted in favour of it and if more than one-half of the electorate has participated in the vote. [1] The Sobranje previously formed a Council for Inter-Nationality

Relations, consisting of the President of the Republic and two representatives from each of the ethnic Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish and Roma communities and two representatives of other nationalities living in the state. [1]

5.5 The President (Boris Trajkovski) of the Republic represents the country and is responsible for ensuring respect for the Constitution and laws. [1] He is commander of the Armed forces and appoints the Prime Minister, appoints and recalls ambassadors, proposes members for the Judicial Council, appoints three members of the Security Council of the Republic (of which he is president) and proposes members for the Council of Inter-Nationality Relations. [1]

5.6 Executive power in the Republic resides with the Prime Minister and Ministers, who cannot concurrently be deputies in the Sobranje. [1] The Ministers are elected by the majority vote of all the deputies in the Sobranje. The Ministers implement laws and the state budget and are responsible for foreign and diplomatic relations. [1]

5.7 Prime Ministerial elections were held on Sunday 15 September 2002, the Social Democrats coalition opposition party 'Together for Macedonia' won 41 per cent, while the Nationalist 'VMRO-DPMNE' only managed 24 per cent. The table below gives the main results. [6] [7]

Parties	No. of Seats
Social Democratic Union	60
VMRO-DPMNE	33
DUI - Albanian	16
DPA - Albanian	7
PDP	2
NDP	1
SP	1

A full list of parties can be found in the Annexes under 'Political Organisations. [8]

5.8 Gunmen opened fire in two towns and raided a polling station during the day on Sunday. Other violent incidents were also reported along with irregularities at some polling stations. [9]

5.9 There were over 700 domestic journalists covering the elections with approximately 146 foreign journalists. There were also 4,858 observers, 3,799 domestic with 1,015 foreign, along with these there were approximately 181 translators. [10] A full list of observers can be found at source. [10]

5.10 The new Macedonian government headed by Branko Crvenkovski, was formally approved by the Sobranje (the unicameral legislature) in a vote held early on 1 November 2002. [21j] Below is a listing of the new government as recorded by Keesings.

* Branko Crvenkovski	Prime Minister
* Musa Xhaferi	Deputy Prime Minister for Political Systems
* Radmila Sekerinska (f)	Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration
Ilinka Mitreva (f)	Foreign Affairs
Vlado Buchkovski	Defence
* Hari Kostov	Interior
* Petar Gosev	Finance
+ Ilija Filipovski	Economy
* Ismail Dardhishta	Justice
* Slavko Petrov	Agriculture, Forestry and Waterways
* Blagoja Stefanovski	Culture
* Aziz Pollozhani	Education and Science
* Ljubomir Janev	Environment
* Rexhep Selmani	Health
* Jovan Manasievski	Labour and Social Welfare
* Aleksandar Gestakovski	Local Government
* Milaim Ajdini	Transport and Communications
+ Vlado Popovski	Minister without Portfolio

*New appointment

+Altered responsibilities

Women are denoted by (f)

Judiciary

5.11 Judicial power is vested in the courts and is autonomous and independent. The Supreme Court is the highest court. The election and dismissal of judges is proposed by a Republican Judicial Council, this body is composed of seven members, elected by the Sobranje from among the ranks of prominent lawyers. **[1]**

5.12 The Constitution provides for an independent judiciary and the Government respected this provision in practice, although the court system was still developing and at times was inefficient and slow. **[2]** The judiciary is generally weak and was influenced by political pressure and corruption, however, there were not widespread reports of abuse or systemic corruption. **[2]** The Constitutional Court has a mandate to protect the human rights of citizens but has not taken action in any case in this area. **[2]**

5.13 The judges are assisted by two community-member consulting jurors, although the judge makes the final decision. **[2]** The Constitution provides for a public attorney to protect the constitutional and legal rights of citizens when violated by bodies of state administration and other agencies with public mandates; the Office of the People's Ombudsman was created and became functional in 1997. **[2]**

5.14 The Framework Agreement **[4]** states that the judiciary should better reflect the ethnic composition of the population. It also states that one-third of the judges on the Constitutional Court, the Ombudsman and three members of the Judicial

Council will be chosen by the Parliament, including a majority of the ethnic minority Members of Parliament. [2] During 2002, the ethnic diversity of judges increased. There was no change in the membership of the Constitutional Court, but two of its nine members were ethnic Albanians. Two of the four new judges on the 25 judge Supreme Court were ethnic Albanians. One of the six new judges on the appellate court was ethnic Albanian and one of the 17 new judges on the Basic Court was ethnic Albanian. [2a]

5.15 The law provides the right to a fair trial, the presumption of innocence until proven guilty by a court, the right to a lawyer in pre-trial, trial proceedings and the right to an appeal, the judiciary generally enforced these rights. [2] Court hearings and the rendering of verdicts are open to the public except in some cases, such as those involving minors and those in which personal safety of the defendant is of concern. [2] Trials cannot be televised, pursuant to the Criminal Procedure Code [11], although the court in certain cases can authorise the presence of television and film cameras. [2]

5.16 Under the NATO-NLA demilitarisation agreement, President Boris Trajkovski in October 2001, further elaborated on immunity from prosecution and detention for former NLA combatants who disarmed by September 26 2001.

Military

5.17 Citizens of Macedonia were expected to serve 9 months military service with no options for conscientious objectors. This was changed on 30 May 2001 by the Macedonian Assembly's Law on Defense, article 120, section 2. It is reported to state "every person, due to religious or moral beliefs do not want to use weapon (sic) during military service in the Macedonian Army, can serve without using weapon or can serve in the health, social, and humanitarian organisations or in the fire brigades. In that case the military service will last for 14 months instead of 9". [12]

Internal Security

5.18 The Ministry of Interior oversees the uniformed police, the criminal police, the border police and the police reservists. The state intelligence service is under the control of a civilian minister, a parliamentary commission oversees operations. The Ministry of Defence shares with the border police responsibility for border security. [2]

5.19 Police conduct during the conflict deteriorated significantly and resulted in human rights abuses. The human rights performance of undisciplined and untrained police reservists, who formed paramilitary groups, was poor. Police committed extra-judicial killings and killed civilians during combat operations, in most cases the Government took insufficient steps to investigate and discipline responsible officers. [2]

5.20 There has been a big increase of ethnic Albanians in the Macedonian police force. Training of Albanian recruits is proceeding at a rapid pace, the interior

ministry organises three courses a year in conjunction with the Office for Security and Co-operation in Europe. Four advertising campaigns for police recruitment of minorities between September 2001 and December 2002 had elicited more than 1,000 applications, 80 per cent of them from the Albanian community. [24]

5.21 In September 2001 training of new police officers by international community trainers began, with later training throughout the year (2002) conducted by the OSCE. By year's end 533 new 'non-majority' officers had received ICITAP or OSCE basic training. Of that number, there were 437 ethnic Albanians, 6 Bosnians, 1 Croatian, 4 Macedonian Muslims, 30 Romas, 10 Serbs, 40 Turks, and 5 Vlach's. [2a]

Legal Rights / Detention

5.22 The Constitution states that a person must be arraigned in court within 24 hours of arrest, that the accused is entitled to contact a lawyer at the time of arrest and to have a lawyer present during police and court proceedings. During the conflict, at times, police violated the 24 hour time period within which a suspect must be arraigned and denied detainees immediate access to an attorney. The maximum length for pre-trial detention is 180 days. There were reportedly cases of pre-trial detainees being held for 2 to 3 months before being tried, that the Government denied international community members access to pre-trial detainees without government representatives present. [2]

5.23 At the time of the conflict, arbitrary arrest and detention was a serious problem. The law requires warrants for arrests, although it was common for a warrant not to be issued until some time after an arrest. During the conflict, police frequently and arbitrarily detained ethnic Albanian males, particularly at checkpoints and roadblocks, this was done mainly in the Tetovo and Skopje area. Many detainees were beaten severely and then released without charges. [2]

Prisons

5.24 Prison conditions generally meet international standards, and prisons meet basic needs of food, hygiene and access to medical care. The Ministry of Justice reported two deaths in custody due to natural causes. Men and women are held separately. While juveniles also are supposed to be held separately, limited facilities at times result in older juveniles being confined with adults. Pre-trial detainees are held separately from convicted criminals. [2]

5.25 The Government permits prison visits to prisoners by independent human rights monitors and the Human Rights Ombudsman. In February the Government signed an agreement allowing the ICRC to visit and register convicted prisoners under procedures that the ICRC reported were acceptable. [2]

5.26 The European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) released a report on 11 October 2001 covering the condition of persons being held in police custody and two of Macedonia's prisons. Regarding the prisons the report states, "the delegation

received no allegations of torture or other forms of deliberate ill treatment and gathered no other evidence of such treatment of inmates by staff in the establishments visited; or in other establishments under the authority of the Ministry of Justice". [27]

5.27 As a result of the Government's ratification of the European Convention the CPT was authorised to visit all places of detention on a regular and ad hoc basis. [2a]

Medical Services

5.28 During the crisis, the World Health Organisation (WHO), worked closely with the Ministry of Health (MOH) and partner organisations to ensure essential supply of drugs, to improve health service provision in vulnerable communities and to monitor public health concerns. [13] In October 2001, WHO together with the MOH conducted a rapid health assessment to identify key issues and prioritise health interventions. Based on the results of the assessment WHO developed a strategy to support access to health care services in under-served areas affected by the conflict while also addressing structural problems to upgrade health care provision. [13]

5.29 Areas of concern include poor maintenance of health care facilities with an estimated 85 per cent of the clinics in the crisis area in need of repair and maintenance and 32 per cent in need of complete reconstruction. A lack of essential equipment, some of which was looted or damaged during the conflict, further compounds structural problems. [13]

5.30 In agreement with the MOH, WHO will augment primary health services through expanded use of mobile health teams provided by international NGO's, while the national health system builds capacity to assume full responsibility. Temporary deployment of mobile teams will be closely linked to nation health facilities and will also provide needed coverage while rehabilitation of health facilities in conflict affected areas is undertaken. [13] In addition, WHO will work to ensure that health facilities have the necessary basic equipment, drugs and medical consumables to support basic services. At the same time, UNICEF will continue support for immunisations and mother and child health care programmes and will provide basic supplies and medications including paediatric drugs, Oral Rehydration Salts and vaccines. [13]

5.31 WHO will also support the MOH in reintegrating health services in crisis areas through training and professional skill development. Support for decentralisation of community based services for vulnerable groups including mentally ill and disabled persons as well as rehabilitation programmes for substance abuse and prevention activities for HIV/AIDS are also planned. [13]

Psychosocial Services

5.32 To assess increased levels of vulnerability within the population as a result of the conflict and displacement, UNICEF, together with the Government

counterparts and NGO partners, co-ordinated a comprehensive psychosocial assessment involving 32 teams interviewing some 6,000 IDP's and host families during August 2001. [13]

5.33 To support IDP's in coping with conflict related stress and trauma, existing psychosocial activities were expanded and mobile teams and SOS help lines added during the second half of 2001. Since then, UNICEF and WHO, working in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Ministry of Education and the MOH, are working to make psychosocial support available to all children in FYROM through the development of a multi-sector training of trainers programme. The aim of this programme will be to ensure that every school, clinic and centre for social work has at least two staff members trained in psychosocial assistance techniques. The programme will also include broader skills to assist in the recognition and referral of psychological difficulties, including neglect and abuse. [13]

Persons with Disabilities

5.34 The law prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability; however, in practice this provision is not enforced. Social programs to meet the needs of persons with disabilities exist to the extent that government resources allow. [2] No laws or regulations mandate accessibility to buildings for disabled persons. There is societal discrimination against persons with disabilities. [2a]

Education System

5.35 The Constitution provides for primary and secondary education in the languages of the ethnic minorities and this provision was reaffirmed in the Framework Agreement. [1] [4] Primary education is available in Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish and Serbian. Albanian language education remained a crucial issue for the ethnic Albanian community; it is seen as vital for preserving Albanian culture and heritage. [2] Almost all ethnic Albanian children receive eight years of education in Albanian language schools. The number of ethnic minority students who receive secondary education in their native languages continues to increase. [2]

5.36 At the university level, ethnic minorities remained underrepresented, although there has been progress in increasing the number of minority students. There are eased admission requirements for minorities at the universities in Skopje and Bitola for up to 23 percent of entering places. [2] Most university education is conducted in the Macedonian language; until 2001 there was Albanian language university education only for students at Skopje University's teacher training facility.

5.37 In 2000, a Law on Higher Education authorised private institutions of higher learning and, during the year, under OSCE sponsored and internationally financed plan, a new institution, Southeast Europe University was created with classes conducted in Albanian, English and Macedonian. [2] Under the Framework Agreement, the Government committed to 'provide for university level education in languages spoken by at least 20percent of the population of Macedonia.[2]

5.38 The Macedonian government has moved closer to legalising Tetovo University the university has long been an issue between Albanians and the Macedonian majority. A shift in the official position was signalled on 27 March 2003, when the education minister told parliament, “There is a clear need for a larger number of high education institutions for Albanians... There is political will to include institutions such as Tetevo University in the system. **[29]**

Human Rights

6.A Human Rights Issues

Overview

6.1 There was disagreement as to the causes of the conflict, with NLA leaders claiming that they were fighting to end systematic discrimination against Albanians by the Macedonian authorities, while the government claimed that the NLA's real goal was control over Macedonian territory. **[3]** Government officials insisted that Kosovar Albanian radicalism lay behind the conflict, not legitimate grievances of Macedonia's own ethnic Albanians. **[3]** **[14]**

6.2 Support for the insurgency by the country's ethnic Albanians, which was tepid early in the conflict, grew quickly as Macedonian security forces launched increasingly heavy-handed attacks against ethnic Albanian civilians and their villages and towns. **[3]** **[14]**

6.3 Both government forces and NLA committed serious violations of international humanitarian law in the course of the six-month conflict. **[3]**, **[14]** The government police forces had long been a cause of intense resentment and were responsible for a number of grave assaults against civilians and their property. **[3]**

6.4 The most serious violations by the government forces were committed during a three-day operation in a village north of Skopje. **[3]** Following a land mine explosion that killed eight government soldiers, the Macedonian police launched a fierce attack on the village of Ljuboten, which was heavily shelled for two days on August 10 and 11, 2001. **[3]** On August 12 2001, several hundred police entered the village and began a house-to-house assault, killing six ethnic Albanian civilians, burning scores of houses and terrorising the village population. **[3]** Human Rights Watch researchers who visited the village have alleged that the police operation appeared to be motivated by nothing more than revenge, that it was there was no NLA presence in Ljuboten as claimed by the minister of the interior, Ljube Boskovski. **[3]**

6.5 NLA forces were responsible for indiscriminate killings, abductions, intimidation of ethnic Macedonians and other civilians. **[3]** In June 2001, NLA forces arbitrarily detained and tortured eight elderly ethnic Serb civilians from the village of Matejce, subjecting them to repeated mock executions. On August 7 2001, uniformed members of the NLA kidnapped a group of construction workers on the Skopje-Tetovo highway, and, holding them for several hours, the NLA fighters severely beat, humiliated and sexually abused them. **[3]**

6.6 The Government's human rights record still remained poor during 2002' although there were some improvements in a few areas. The government that assumed power on 31 October demonstrated a commitment to improving the

country's human rights observance through concrete actions. [2a] Although generally declining during the year, there was an upsurge in inter-ethnic and political violence and intimidation in the weeks preceding the general election held in September 2002; although, the elections took place with few incidents. [3a]

Freedom of Speech and the Media

6.7 The Constitution provides for freedom of speech and of the press; however, there were reports that the Government intimidated media that was critical of the Government. [2] There were incidents of law enforcement action against media companies and their financial backers in areas such as tax collection and checks of building permits, areas in which there is widespread non-compliance among private companies. [2]

6.8 The out break of internal hostilities had a significant and negative impact on all media, particularly on media objectivity. [2] A few outlets attempted to present unbiased reporting, but criticism from listeners, viewers, or readers stifled objectivity. After the July cease-fire and the formulation of the Framework Agreement, [4] press objectivity improved, with the exception of reporting on ethnic issues that remained biased. [2]

6.9 The Government restricted, both directly and indirectly, the work of the ethnic Albanian media. [2] See paragraph 6.12 for further details.

6.10 Several daily newspapers were published in Skopje, as well as numerous weekly and monthly publications. Most towns and municipalities have local newspapers. Government subsidised newspapers in Albanian and Turkish were published and distributed nationally. [2] The process of granting media subsidies is not transparent, leading to charges of political bias in government support of the media. Several privately owned publications have a wide distribution throughout the country. [2]

6.11 Distributors of foreign newspapers and magazines must obtain permits from the Ministry of Interior. There were no known reports of such requests being turned down during 2001. Foreign newspapers, including those from neighbouring countries, were available throughout the country. [2]

6.12 Political opposition groups and the Association of Macedonian Journalists criticised government intimidation tactics against media organisations that carried reports critical of the Government. Financial backers and supporters of media organisations complained that they were threatened with reprisals for their affiliation with media outlets critical of the Government. [2a]

Journalists

6.13 Police denied ethnic Albanian journalists access to conflict areas. [2] Ethnic Albanian journalists were denied access to report on conflicts in the ethnic Albanian majority village of Aracinovo and were not granted access until months after their ethnic Macedonian colleagues had been granted access. [2] High level

authorities at times invited only ethnic Macedonian journalists to press events that they organised and seldom granted invitations to ethnic Albanian journalists to join state delegations on visits abroad. [2]

6.14 After the crisis began, many cases were reported in the ethnic Albanian media of ethnic Albanian journalists being detained by the police and being held for "informative talks." [2] In June 2001, police reportedly arrested an ethnic Albanian journalist and held him in detention for two hours and allegedly threatened him verbally. [2]

6.15 On June 11 2001, police searched the homes of a number of journalists of the Albanian language Skopje newspaper, Fakti. [2] The editor-in-chief of Fakti complained to the Ministry of Interior; however, the Ministry did not respond to Fakti's complaints. Fakti also claimed that the Government tapped its office telephones, the editors telephone and phones of other journalists. [2]

Freedom of Religion

6.16 The Constitution provides for freedom of religion and the government generally respects this right in practice; however, the places limits on religious practice by restricting the establishments of places of worship and restricting where contributions may be made. [2] While the Macedonian Orthodox Church is mentioned specifically in the Constitution , it does not have official status. The constitutional article on religion was amended per the Framework Agreement [4] to reflect the country's religious diversity. [2]

6.17 The Government requires that religious groups be registered. The 1997 Law on Religious Communities and Religious Groups contained a number of specific requirements for the registration of religious groups that were struck down by the Constitutional Court in 1999. [2] Subsequently there was considerable confusion over which procedures still applied, and several foreign religious groups experienced delays in their efforts to register. The Government no longer keeps a count of registered groups and communities. [2]

6.18 The Law on Religious Communities and Religious Groups places some restrictions on the establishment of places of worship. It provides that religious rites and religious activities "shall take place at churches, mosques and other temples, and in gardens that are parts of those facilities, at cemeteries and at other facilities of the religious group." [2a] Provision is made for holding services in other places, provided that a permit is obtained at least 15 days in advance. No permit of permission is required to perform religious rites in a private home.[2]

6.19 The 1997 Law on Religious Communities and Religious Groups specifically allows for foreign citizens to carry out religious activities, but only at the request of a registered body. Only a citizen may establish a religious group. The law also stipulates that anyone carrying out religious work be registered with the Government's Commission on Religious Communities and Groups. [2]

6.20 The issue of restitution of previously state-owned religious properties has not been resolved fully. Many churches and mosques had extensive grounds or other properties that were expropriated by the Communist regime. [2] Virtually all churches and mosques have been returned to the ownership of the appropriate religious community, but that is not the case for many of the other properties. Often the claims are complicated by the fact that the seized properties have changed hands many times or have been developed. [2] In view of the country's very limited financial resources, it is unlikely that religious communities can expect to regain much from the expropriated properties.

Religious Groups

6.21 Most ethnic Macedonians, approximately sixty-six percent, are adherents of the Eastern Orthodox Church and since 1967 there has been an autocephalous Macedonian Orthodox Church. [1] [15] However, the Serbian Orthodox Church refuses to recognise it and has persuaded the Ecumenical Patriarch and other Orthodox Churches not to do so either. [1] There are some adherents of other Orthodox rites in the country.

6.22 Those Macedonian (and Bulgarian) Slavs who converted to Islam during the Ottoman era are known as Pomaks and are included as an ethnic group of Muslims. [1] The substantial Albanian population is mostly Muslim, approximately thirty percent, [1] [15] (mainly Sunni, but some adherents of a Dervish sect); there are a few Roman Catholic Christians and a small Jewish community, between them approximately four percent. [1] [15]

Freedom of Assembly and Association

6.23 The Constitution provides for the freedoms of assembly and association and the Government generally respected these rights in practice. Advance notification of large meetings is optional. [2]

6.24 Political parties and organisations are required to register with a court. A few organisations were denied registration, including the DPA, one of the leading ethnic Albanian parties, which was denied registration under that name because the court assessed that its political platform was contrary to the Constitution. [2] The National Democratic Party was denied for the same reason. More than forty political parties are registered, including ethnically based parties of Albanians, Turks, Serbs and Roma. [2]

6.25 Numerous protests, many of them violent, occurred during the year 2001. On June 25 2001, reserve policemen and soldiers, some in uniform and bearing service weapons, joined a demonstration of internally displaced (IDP's), who attacked the Parliament. [2] Authorities took no disciplinary action against the reservists. On July 24 2001, hundreds of young men joined ethnic Macedonian IDP's in another violent protest at the parliament building. The angry mob attacked Skopje stores, burned ten OSCE and UN vehicles and attacked three foreign embassies.

Employment Rights

6.26 The Constitution provides for safe working conditions, temporary disability compensation and leave benefits. Although there are laws and regulations on worker safety, they are not enforced strictly. [2] The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare is responsible for enforcing regulations pertaining to working conditions. Under law, if workers have safety concerns, employers are obliged to address dangerous situations. [2] Should an employer fail to do so, employees are entitled to leave the dangerous situation without losing their jobs; however, this right is not respected in practice. [2]

6.27 The country has an official 42 hour working week with a minimum of 24 hour rest period and generous vacation and sick leave benefits. However, high unemployment and the fragile condition of the economy lead many employees to accept work conditions that do not comply with the law. [2]

6.28 The minimum wage is by law two thirds of the average wage; however, an average month's supply of food for a family of four, exceeds average income by about twenty percent, forcing multiple members of many households to work. [2] The Government Statistics Office estimated that 22.3 percent of the population lives below the poverty line. [2]

Trade Unions and the right to Strike

6.29 The Constitution provides for the right to form trade unions; however, this right is not extended to members of the military, police and civil service. Independent trade unions have been allowed to organise since 1992, when an Association of Independent and Autonomous Unions was formed, although there is still a national trade union. [2] The Federation of Trade Unions of Macedonia (SSM) is the successor organisation to the former Communist labour confederation; it is the Government's main negotiating partner on labour issues, along with the Chamber of Economy. [2] Although its officers tend to oppose strikes, the Federation reportedly is independent of the Government and committed to the interests of the workers it represents. The only other federation of unions is purportedly independent but in practice is closely linked to the ruling VMRO political party. [2] Over fifty percent of the legal workforce is unionised, and unions are particularly strong in the garment industry.

6.30 During 2001, there were up to 150 strikes, which included many protest work stoppages of a few hours or less. The reason for the strikes included demands for overdue pay, worker's objections to government changes in management personnel at some state owned entities, and objections to various decisions related to privatisation. [2]

6.31 Strikes were small and confined to company grounds; however, on May 29 2001, the SSM staged a country-wide protest, with approximately 15,000 protesters who blocked several main roads throughout the country. Most strikes were calm and well organised and took place without serious incident.[2]

People Trafficking

6.32 A new anti-trafficking law that went into effect on 25 January (2002), criminalizes trafficking in persons and actions associated with trafficking in persons; however, trafficking of women and girls for the purposes of prostitution and pornography remained a problem. **[2a]**

6.33 In December (2002) the Interior Ministry signed a statement of commitment to legalise the status of trafficked persons that promoted a shift from an exclusive arrest orientated approach to a victim centred approach. The Government devoted resources to anti-trafficking programs, including an inter-ministerial working group devoted to legal reform, a special police unit dedicated to anti-trafficking efforts and the maintenance of a shelter for victims. **[2a]**

6.34 Trafficking in persons for the purpose of illegal immigration was not prohibited specifically by law but is covered by immigration regulations. Victims were encouraged to provide information about their traffickers for criminal prosecution; however there was no witness protection legislation to protect victims. Victims could be subject to violence, including rape, assault and intimidation. **[2]**

6.35 The country is a transit country and a destination country for trafficking persons. Traffickers recruit women from other countries, especially Moldova, Romania, Bulgaria and Ukraine, **[2]** to work as prostitutes in several Macedonian towns. Women are also trafficked through the country on their way to Albania and Kosovo, and then on to Italy and other European countries. **[2]**

6.36 The Government routinely co-operated with neighbouring governments in trafficking cases. Despite budgetary limitations, the Government has devoted significant resources to anti-trafficking programs, including an inter-ministerial working group devoted to legal reform, the creation of a special police unit dedicated to anti-trafficking efforts and the establishment of a shelter for victims. **[2]** The Interior Ministry's Department on Organised Crime has the lead on anti-trafficking efforts and devotes two persons to the issue full time. **[2]**

6.37 Traditionally victims of trafficking were detained, fined and deported, and police insensitivity was a problem; however, sensitivity training for police was slowly changing attitudes. **[2]** The Government does not provide funding to NGO's to support victims services. Most services are provided by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) through foreign donors. **[2]** The Government co-operates with IOM to provide shelter and limited medical and psychological assistance to trafficked women on an ad hoc basis. **[2]**

Freedom of Movement

6.38 The law provides for the freedom of movement, but during the internal crisis the Government restricted freedom of movement. **[2]** The army and the police set up many checkpoints on roads and in villages in the northern and eastern parts of the country, which restricted freedom of movement for some persons, especially

young ethnic Albanian males. [2] Police at times harassed and assaulted ethnic Albanian civilians at checkpoints or arbitrarily detained them, police also at times harassed international monitors and journalists at checkpoints. [2]

6.39 At numerous times during and after the conflict, ethnic Macedonian civilians blocked roads, preventing ethnic Albanians from returning to their homes. Ethnic Albanian civilians also constructed roadblocks on several occasions during and after the conflict. [2]

6.40 On several occasions, the NLA detained or kidnapped persons, particularly ethnic Macedonians at illegal roadblocks, mainly in towns around Tetovo. [2] In July 2001, the NLA detained up to six armed ethnic Macedonian civilians as they attempted to return to their homes, from which they had been forced by the NLA in an "ethnic cleansing" campaign. [2] The NLA released the civilians shortly thereafter, but did not permit them to return to their homes. There were reports that the NLA charged ethnic Albanians fleeing the town of Slupcane a "departure tax." [2]

6.41 According to NATO, of the 130 military checkpoints deployed in January (2002), in the former crisis area, only twenty-five existed at year's end. Police in former crisis areas gradually resumed policing duties. Nearly all villages in the former crisis region had created village police liaison commissions involved in encouraging citizens to accept police authority. [2a]

6.B. Human Rights - Specific Groups

Ethnic Groups

6.42 According to the census of 1994, ethnic Macedonians accounted for 66.6% of the national population and ethnic Albanians for 22.7%. The Macedonians are a southern Slav people, closely related to Bulgarians. However, the separate existence of a Macedonian ethnic group was acknowledged neither by Bulgaria or Greece. [1]

6.43 Most Albanians were concentrated in the west of the country, particularly the northwest, where they tended to live in distinct communities, mostly in the countryside. [1] The other ethnic groups consist of, Turks, 4.0%, Roma, 2.3%, Serbs, 2.1%, Slav Muslims 0.8%. There are also approximately 8,601 Vlahs or Vlaches. [1]

6.44 All citizens are equal under the law, the Constitution provides for the enhanced protection of the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of minorities; including state support education in minority languages through secondary school. The Frame Work Agreement (FWA) [4] reaffirms these rights and mandates several explicit rights related to the use of minority languages, including access for ethnic Albanians to state-funded higher education in their language. [2a] However, ethnic tensions and prejudices remained problems. [2a]

Albanians

6.45 The majority of Albanians are Muslims and a large number are followers of the Bektashi dervish religion. There are a few Albanian Eastern Orthodox villages around Lake Ohrid and a small number of Albanian Catholics in Skopje. [15]

6.46 Although Albanians suffered discrimination in the interwar period, they generally benefited from collective educational and cultural rights under communist rule. During the late 1980's, Albanian protests grew in Macedonia in response to the worsening conditions in neighbouring Kosovo. The reaction of the republican authorities was to clamp down on Albanian educational facilities and other alleged vehicles of Albanian nationalism. Albanian civil servants and teachers were dismissed and a number of Albanian language schools closed. [15]

6.47 Albanian dissatisfaction with the terms of the 1991 constitution, which failed to define Albanians as a constitutive nation, led to confrontation with the new democratically elected government. In 1992, an unofficial referendum among Albanians showed 95 per cent of voters favoured political and cultural autonomy in Albanian areas in western Macedonia. [15]

6.48 During 1994-5, tension gathered around the issue of the Albanian university in Tetovo. Previously, Albanians from Macedonia had attended the University of Pristina, but after 1990 their participation declined on account of the deteriorating conditions in Kosovo. No alternative facilities were arranged in Macedonia, where higher education continued almost exclusively in the Macedonian language. An

attempt to establish a private Albanian language university in Tetovo was blocked by the authorities. In response to these pressures an Albanian language department of teacher training was opened in the University of Skopje and a 10 per cent quota system for Albanians instituted throughout the university as a whole.

[15]

6.49 Under-representation of ethnic Albanians in the military and police was a major grievance in the ethnic Albanian community. During 2002, the authorities actively began to address the problem with the assistance of the international community. **[2a]**

6.50 The constitutional amendments mandated by the FWA provide that Albanians is to be recognised as a second, official language in areas in which it spoken by more than 20 per cent of the population. The FWA stipulated that the Albanian language would be used officially in Parliament for the first time in October 2002, by MP's newly elected in September, with interpretation in the Macedonian language provided for ethnic Macedonians. **[2a]**

6.51 The FWA called for citizens to be able to communicate with local offices of the central Government in Albanian and receive responses in the same language. In addition, Albanian speaking citizens are supposed to be able to receive personal documents in Albanian and those accused of crimes have the right to translation at state expense of all relevant judicial proceedings and documents. **[2a]**

Turks

6.52 According to the 1994 census, there were 77,000 Turks in Macedonia, who were dispersed throughout the country. Turks were recognised in the former Yugoslavia as a nationality and were allowed educational and cultural rights. The Democratic Party of Turks, established in 1992, alleges discrimination against Turks and has called for an increase in educational facilities and for proportional representation of Turks in government service. **[15]**

6.53 Ethnic Turks main concerns centred on the lack of Turkish language education and media. One continuing dispute has been over the desire of parents who consider themselves Turkish to educate their children in Turkish despite the fact that they do not speak Turkish at home. **[2a]**

Roma

6.54 The 1994 census listed 44,000 Roma. This represents a substantial decline from the 56,000 recorded in the 1991 census, and may reflect a growing tendency among Roma to identify with other national groups, particularly the Albanian. It is thought that 80 per cent of Roma have Romani dialect as their mother tongue, although many also speak Albanian. The majority of Roma are Muslims. From 1983, the Roma language has been taught in some state schools. **[15]**

6.55 Optional Romani language education has been offered at several primary schools since 1996, but there has been limited demand and no pressure for a more extensive curriculum. There is some Romani language broadcasting. **[2]**

6.56 There were incidents of societal violence against Roma during the conflict. In 1999 approximately 6,000 Roma fled Kosovo and took up residence in the country in response to both the Kosovo conflict and the hostility of ethnic Albanian Kosovars. These Albanian Kosovars widely considered the Roma to have supported the Serbs and to have committed theft and other crimes against ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. **[2]**

Serbs

6.57 The 1994 census recorded 39,000 Serbs in Macedonia, most of whom live in villages in the north of the country in the Kumanovo valley and Skopska Crna Gora. The Serbs are not specifically recognised as a national minority in the 1991 constitution, and as a consequence, they had been denied the right to separate language instruction and to their own television and radio media.

Muslim Macedonians

6.58 The Muslim Macedonians minority, variously known as Torbeshi, Pomaks and Poturs, comprises Macedonian speakers who embraced Islam during the period of Turkish rule. The Muslim population is thought to have been swollen by the arrival of between 30,000 and 50,000 Muslim refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Sanjak in Serbia. **[15]**

Other Minorities

6.59 Recent census indicate approximately 8,000 Vlachs in Macedonia, living mainly in and around Bitola, Resen and Krusevo. Vlachs are historically shepherds and merchants. Their numbers are in decline mainly because of assimilation into the Macedonian Slav population. Recently, a small renaissance has been evident, led by the League of Vlachs. The league has undertaken steps to complete a Vlach language grammar book and to republish the Vlach language journal Feniks. **[15]**

Women

6.60 The Constitution extends the same legal rights to women as it does to men; however, society in both Muslim and Christian communities, is patriarchal and the advancement of women into non-traditional roles was limited. Women from some parts of the ethnic Albanian community do not have equal opportunities for employment and education, primarily due to traditional and religious constraints on their full participation in society and schools. **[2]**

6.61 Domestic and other violence against women was a persistent and common problem. Legal recourse is available to rape victims, including victims of marital rape. Public concern about violence against women was not evident in the media, although some women's groups were working to raise awareness of the issue. Shelters for victims of spousal abuse were operated by NGO's. The Government offers some limited support for victims of domestic violence but relies heavily on international donor support to maintain a hot line and shelter. **[2a]**

6.62 Sexual harassment of women in the workplace is still a problem. The Constitution extends the same legal rights to women as it does to men; however, society in both the Muslim and Christian communities is patriarchal and the advancement of women into non-traditional roles is limited. **[2a]**

6.63 Women's advocacy groups include the Humanitarian Association for the Emancipation, Solidarity, and Equality of Women; the Union of Associations of Macedonian Women; and the League of Albanian Women. **[2]**

Children

6.64 The Government is committed to the rights and welfare of children, but it is limited by resource constraints. The Office of the Ombudsman contains a special unit for children, partially funded by UNICEF. Primary and secondary education is free, although students must provide their own books and other materials. At both the primary and the secondary levels, girls in some ethnic Albanian communities remained underrepresented in schools, and only approximately half of ethnic minority students go on to high school. This is due in part to lack of available classes in minority languages at the secondary level, and part to many rural, ethnic Albanian families' conviction that girls should be withdrawn from school at 14 years of age. **[2]**

6.65 According to Romani community leaders, up to 10 per cent of Romani children never enrol in school, and of those that do, 50 per cent drop out by fifth grade, and only 30 to 40 per cent finish in the eighth grade. The Ministry of Education encourages ethnic minority students to enrol in secondary schools. **[2]**

6.66 Medical care for children is adequate but is hampered by the generally difficult economic circumstances of the country and by the weak national medical system. **[2]** Day care centres for children with special needs are supported by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy with funds from the Humanitarian Aid Office of the European Commission (ECHO), UNICEF and the Dutch Foundation HFNM. **[17]**

6.67 In 1999 the Ombudsman's Office for Children was established and empowered to investigate complaints about violations of children's rights. New legislation addressing shortfalls in the juvenile justice system and reforming the existing law to meet international standards was put forward in December 2001, but was still pending by year-end 2002. **[2a]**

Homosexuals

6.68 Under the penal code of 30 June 1959, sex between men was illegal in all of the former Yugoslavia. During the first half of the 1970's the power over penal legislation was devolved from the Federal Republic to the eight states and provinces. Macedonia chose to retain the ban, with Section 101.2 of the criminal law, effective from 1997, making male homosexual conduct ("unnatural debauchery") illegal and subject of up to one year's imprisonment. There were no references to lesbian relationships. **[18]**

6.69 In September 1997, the Council of Europe confirmed that “as far as the new articles 187-195 of the present FYROM Penal Code are concerned, that the provisions on sexual offences don not distinguish between homosexual and heterosexual acts, thus being in accordance with recent legislation in most members states of the Council of Europe”. **[19]**

Political Activists

6.70 During the conflict and the run up to the September election there was some difficulties for political activists, but on the whole the Macedonian record for political freedom is fair.

Human Rights Activists

6.71 Human rights activists and NGO’s have been able to move around freely. Only during the conflict were their movements restricted due to centres of violence.

6.C. Human Rights - Other Issues

Internally Displaced Persons

6.72 The major outbreaks of violence between February and August in 2001 resulted in the forced displacement of approximately 175,000 Macedonians during the year. By year’s end, however, most had returned to their homes and only 43,500 remained uprooted. **[20]**

6.73 The number of Macedonian refugees in neighbouring countries had fallen from about 100,000 at the height of the displacement to about 22,500 by year’s end. According to the Macedonian Red Cross, another 21,000 people remained internally displaced, while about 55,000 internally displaced persons had returned to their homes by the end of 2001. **[20]**

Chronology of major events

Annex A

- 1991** - Macedonia gains independence from Yugoslavia. [1]
- 1992** - The UN Security Council authorised the dispatch of troops, civilian police and military observers to Macedonia in order to monitor the inter-ethnic tensions, following an increase in sometimes violent unrest. [1]
- 1993** - Macedonia was admitted to the United Nations. A new currency, the new Macedonian denar, was introduced. [1] Negotiations between Macedonia and Greece, held in New York (USA) under UN auspices, failed to resolve the dispute over the former Yugoslav republic's name. [1]
- 1994** - A third round of legislative elections was held in some constituencies, owing to irregularities in earlier rounds. Final results confirmed that the Alliance for Macedonia had won the majority of seats. The Subranje subsequently approved an SDAM led administration, again headed by Branko Crvenkovski and including the PDP. [1]
- 1995** - Violent disturbances occurred in Tetovo, following the opening of an 'illegal' Albanian language university. [1] President Gligorov was seriously injured in a car bomb attack. [1] Macedonia was accepted into the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). [1]
- 1996** - Parliamentary and popular protests were made by ethnic Albanian deputies over the status of the Albanian language university at Tetovo. [1] The outbreak of an unidentified illness in Tetovo, to which hundreds ethnic Albanian children succumbed, provoked Albanian demonstrations and allegations of deliberate poisoning by the Macedonian government. [1]
- 1997** - **January**, Government proposals to adopt Albanian as the language instruction at the teacher training faculty of the University of Skopje provoked outrage among Macedonian students. [1] However, parliament refused to provide for the use of Albanian in the legislature, leading to pressure from within the PDP to withdraw from the ruling coalition. [1]
- May**, The Constitutional Court forbade the use of the Albania flag in Macedonia, causing protests by ethnic Albanians. [1]
- July**, The Sobranje adopted legislation stipulating that the use of the Albanian flag, and flags of other nationalities, would only be permitted on national holidays, with the Macedonian flag being displayed at the same time; government officials forcibly removed Albanian flags displayed at some municipal buildings, leading to violent clashes between protesting Albanians and security forces. This resulted in three deaths and the arrest of 500 protesters. [1]

1998 - 5-6 March, 50,000 ethnic Albanians attended a rally in Skopje in support of the ethnic Albanians in neighbouring Kosovo to demand international intervention in the region. [1] At the demonstration an Albanian flag was hoisted and the Albanian national anthem was played, ethnic Albanian leaders were later charged with inciting ethnic unrest. [1]

August, The PDP and DPA announced the establishment of a political co-operation agreement, including an electoral alliance, to promote the cause of ethnic Albanians in Macedonia. [1]

November, After a second round of voting, Georgievski was invited to form a coalition Government. [1]

December, The Sobranje approved legislation providing for the early release of some 8,000 prisoners, however on 5 January 1999 President Gligorov refused to approve the amnesty, claiming it was unconstitutional. [1]

1999 - February, The legislature approved the amnesty law for a second time, overriding the presidential vote. [1]

April, Following an escalation in the conflict in neighbouring Kosovo, about 14,000 further NATO troops were deployed near the Macedonian-Serbian border; the number of forces was further increased to 16,000 in June, when the border was repeatedly closed to prevent further influxes of refugees. [1]

June, Following the FRY Government's acceptance of a peace plan ending NATO's air campaign, the return of refugees from Macedonia to Kosovo began. [1]

August, The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) agreed to give Macedonia US \$4m. in compensation for expenses incurred during the Kosovo crisis. [1]

December, After two rounds of elections and claims of irregularities by the SDAM, Boris Trajkovski was inaugurated as President. [1]

2000 - February, Macedonian troops were put on alert at the border with Kosovo, owing to concern over increasing violence in the region. [1]

April, The Sobranje approved legislation making compulsory the return of property expropriated under the Communist regime. [1]

November, After first agreeing to increased participation in negotiations, earlier in the month, the DA formally withdrew from the coalition with the IMRO-DPMNU. The President of the Sobranje, Savo Klimovski, a member of the DA, resigned, and Stojan Andov was elected to succeed him. [1]

2001 - February, Violent clashes between Macedonian security forces and ethnic Albanian rebels, identified as members of the self styled National Liberation Army, erupted near the Macedonian border village of Tanusevci. The Government appealed to NATO for assistance in combating the rebels. [1]

March, The UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1345, condemning extremist violence in Macedonia, which constituted a threat to the stability in the region. [1]

May, Following inter-party discussions, a new Government of national unity, which included the SDAM, the DPA and the PDP, was formed and approved by the Sobranje. [1]

June, NATO formally approved a plan to dispatch a 3,000 member force to Macedonia to assist in the disarmament of ethnic Albanian rebels, which was, however, conditional on a lasting peace agreement in the country. [1]

July, The cease-fire agreement that was mediated by NATO on the 5 July was only to collapse on 22 July. The cease-fire was re-instated on 26 July between government forces and ethnic Albanian rebels, who had agreed to withdraw from newly captured territory. [1]

August, A draft peace settlement was announced after the negotiating parties agreed to proposals for increased ethnic Albanian representation in the security forces. However, the finalisation of the accord was suspended, after the Government presented further demands, requiring the rebels to comply with a timetable for disarmament. [1]

September, Operation Essential Harvest, NATO's 30 day plan to disarm the ethnic Albanian National Liberation Army, came to a formal end on 26 September, after collecting 3,875 weapons. [21] Ali Ahmeti, the political leader of the NLA, announced on 27 September that the NLA had formally disbanded and that members of the group had become ordinary citizens of Macedonia. [21]

October, Throughout October hard line ethnic Macedonians hampered efforts to implement the peace agreement reached with ethnic Albanian parties. Following the September 11 attacks on the USA, Macedonian hard liners had sought to justify the delays by associating the activities of the disbanded NLA with international terrorism. [21a]

November, On 16 November the Sobranje finally approved a package of constitutional reforms providing minority ethnic Albanians with greater rights. However, approval of the amendments had proved difficult as factions argued over individual amendments. [21b]

December, 7 December NATO announced that following a request by President Trajkovski, the North Atlantic Council had authorised the

extension of Amber Fox until March 2002. [21c] Between 12-19 December ethnically mixed police forces, accompanied by NATO troops and monitors from the OSCE, were successfully deployed in 15 villages formerly held by ethnic Albanian guerrillas. [21c]

2002 - January, Dosta Dimovska resigned as Deputy Prime Minister and head of the government's crisis committee. [21d]

February, Prime Minister Georgievski made a formal request to NATO to extend the mandate of Operation Amber Fox. NATO stated that it was ready to extend its mandate for up to a further six months. [21e]

March, A donors' conference for Macedonia under the sponsorship of the EU and the World Bank was held on 12 March. Donors pledged a total of US \$515 million, with the largest share set aside to support the state budget. Donors linked their pledges to progress in implementing the peace agreement. [21f]

April-May, After discussions, NATO member countries agreed on 21 May to extend Operation Amber Fox until 26 October 2002. [21g]

June, The former political leader of the disbanded ethnic Albanian NLA, Ali Ahmeti, was elected as chairman of a new political party, the Democratic Union for Integration. [21h] On June 19, the Sobranje approved a package of nine language laws aimed at making Albanian an official language. [21h]

July

August

September, Parliamentary elections held on 15 September brought a change in government. The leader of the Social Democrats coalition, Crvenkovski, won 41 per cent of the vote. [6] There were incidents of violence and of irregularities at polling stations. [9]

October, Following last month's elections, the Social Democratic Alliance for Macedonia and the ethnic Albanian Democratic Union for Integration announced on 18 October that they had formed a coalition government and divided the 14 ministries between them. [21i]

November, Early on 1 November the new Macedonian government headed by Branko Crvenkovski, was formally approved by the Sobranje (the unicameral legislature). [21j] Please refer to the 'Political System' section for fuller details.

December, Operation Amber Fox ended on 14 December and was succeeded by a new operation called Allied Harmony. The new mission

would focus on advising the Macedonian military and helping prepare the country for NATO membership. [21k]

2003

January, The Lions (a special police unit set up by a former interior minister – belonging to a nationalist party – to fight ethnic Albanian insurgents in 2001) ended a two day blockade in protest of being dismissed. [22]

February, A group calling themselves the Albanian National Army (ANA) has threatened renewed conflict. The ANA made a similar threat last year, but did not carry it out. [23] A big increase of ethnic Albanians in the Macedonian police force encourages trust between rival communities. [24]

March, 31 March, the European Union's first military force named as "Operation Concordia" begins its peacekeeping duties today. [25]

Main Political Organisations

Annex B

During and after the conflict and up to the September 2002 elections there were several new parties and coalitions created. The first part will show the main parties and the second part will show all the parties involved in the election and their coalitions, with party leader.

Part 1 [Part 2](#)

Democratic Alliance: Skopje; formed 2000; Chair Asllan Selmani. [1]

Democratic Alliance of Serbs in Macedonia (Demokratski Savez Srba u Makedoniji – **DSSM**): Skopje; formed 1994; Chair Borivoje Ristic. [1]

Democratic Alternative (Demokratska Alternativa – **DA**): Skopje; formed 1998; formed an electoral alliance with the **IMRO-DPMNU**; Chair Vasil Tupurkovski. [1]

Democratic League – Liberal Party: Skopje; Leader Xhemil Idrizi. [1]

Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA): Tetovo, formed July 1997 by a merger of the Party of Democratic Prosperity of Albanians in Macedonia (f. 1994) and the National Democratic Party (f. 1990); Chair Arben Xhaferi. [1]

Democratic Party of Serbs in Macedonia (DPSM); Skopje; formed 1996; President Dragisa Miletic. [1]

Democratic Party of Turks in Macedonia (DPTM); (Demokratska Partija na Turcite va Makedonija); Skopje; Leader Erdogan Sarach. [1]

Democratic Party of Yugoslavs of Macedonia (DPYM); (Demokratska Partija Jugoslavena Makedonije – DPJM) Skopje; formed 1993; Chair Zivko Lekoski; Gen. Secretary Bogdan Mickoski. [1]

Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (IMRO – DPMNU) (Vnatresno-Makedonska Revolucionerna Organizacija – Demokratska Partija za Makedonsko Nacionalno Edinstvo, VMRO – DPMNE); Skopje; nationalist; formed an electoral alliance with the Democratic Alternative; Pres. Prof. Ljubco Gerogievski. [1]

Liberal – Democratic Party (LDP) (Liberalno – Demokratska Partija); Skopje; formed 1996 by a merger of the Liberal Party and the Democratic Party; Leader Risto Gusterov. [1]

Macedonian Democratic Party: Tetovo; Leader Tomislav Stojanovski. [1]

Movement for all - Macedonian Action (MAAK) – Conservative Party: Skopje; formed 1996; right-wing nationalist; Leader Straso Angelovski. [1]

Party of Democratic Action – Islamic Way: (Stranka Democratske Akcije – Islamski Put); Tetovo; Leader Mazlam Kenan. [1]

Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP) (Partija za Demokratski Prosperitet): Tetovo; formed 1990, split 1994; predominantly ethnic Albanian and Muslim party; Chair Dr Ymer Ymeri; Sec-Gen. Mahi Nesimi. [1]

Party for the Full Emancipation of Romanies in Macedonia (Demokratska Progresivna Partija na Romite od Makedonija): Skopje; Leader Faik Abdic. [1]

Social Democratic Alliance of Macedonia (SDAM) (Socijaldemokratski Sojuz na Makedonije – SDSM): Skopje; formed 1943; name changed from League of Communists of Macedonia – Party of Democratic Reform in 1991; Chair Branko Crvenkovski; Gen-Sec. Georgi Spasov. [1]

Social Democratic Party of Macedonia (Socijaldemofratska Partija na Makedonije): Skopje; Leader Aleksandar Donev. [1]

Socialist Party of Macedonia (SPM) (Socijalistiska Partija na Makedonije): Skopje; formed 1990; left wing; Chair Ljubisav Ivanov; Vice Chair Blagoje Filipovski. [1]

Union of Ethnic Croats: Skopje; formed 1996; President Marija Damjanovska. [1]

Union of Roma in Macedonia (Sojuz na Romite od Makedonija): Skopje. [1]

Part 2 Election Parties and Coalitions September 2002

1. **Progressive Party** – Peter Bochvarov [8]
2. **Union of Romas from Macedonia** – Gjunesht Mustafa [8]
3. **New Democracy** – Evushaka Elezovich [8]
4. **All Macedonian Workers' Party** – Kostadin Lukarski [8]
5. **Republican Party of Macedonia** – Milan Shareski [8]
6. **Democratic Party of Albanians** – Menduh Thaqi [8]
7. **Macedonian Alliance** – Vladimir Setanovski [8]
Macedonian People's Party
8. **Democratic Union** – Pavle Trajanov [8]
9. **Democratic Union for Integration (DUI)** – Ali Ahmeti [8]

10. **Movement for Reconstruction of Macedonia – Ljubica Ruben [8]**
Party of Pensioners of the Republic of Macedonia
11. **Party of Vlachs – Mite Kostov [8]**
League for Democracy
Democratic Union of Serbs in Macedonia
Democratic Muslim Party
Party for Democratic Movement of Egyptians in Maedonia
Party of Democratic Action in Macedonia
12. **Group of Voters – Igor Dzambazov [8]**
13. **Party for Full Emancipation of Romas in Macedonia – Zoran [8]**
Dimov
14. **Socialist Party of Macedonia – Jovan Lazarev [8]**
15. **National Democratic Party – Muzafer Haruni [8]**
16. **VMRO-Real Macedonian Reform Option – Milancho Cherkezov [8]**
Democratic Party for Orthodox Unity of Serbs and Macedonians
Macedonian Christian Party
17. **National Will – Nikola Stojanov [8]**
18. **Party of Justice – Ivica Maksimoski [8]**
19. **VMRO-DPMNE – Nikola Gruevski [8]**
Liberal Party of Macedonia
20. **People’s Movement of Macedonia – Toni Gichevski [8]**
21. **MAAK-The Only Macedonian Option – Milan Ruzhinovski [8]**
22. **VMRO-Macedonian – Borislav Stomjmenov [8]**
23. **Party Democratic Prosperity – Naser Ziberi [8]**
24. **Social Democratic Union of Macedonia – Branko Crvenkovski [8]**
Liberal Democratic Party
Democratic League of Bosniaks in the Rebuplic of Macedonia
United Party or Romas in Macedonia
Democratic Party of Serbs in Macedonia
Democratic Party of Turks in Macedonia
Democratic Union of Vlachs from Macedonia
Labor-Agricultrial Party of Macedonia
Socialist-Christian Party of Macedonia

Green Party of Macedonia

25. **Renaissance and Unification of Macedonian National Interests – Nestor Oginar [8]**
26. **Communist Party of Macedonia – Nadezhada Dukovska [8]**
27. **Democratic Alternative – Vasil Tupurkovski [8]**
28. **VMRO-United – Atanas Aleksovski [8]**
29. **Democratic Center – Radomir Karangeleski [8]
Party of the Greens**
30. **Social Democratic Party of Macedonia – Aleksandar Donev [8]**
31. **Democratic Party “Macedonia Ahead – Forza” – Todor Lazarov[8]**

Prominent People

Annex C

Ali Ahmeti: President of the DUI and former member of the National Liberation Army.

Ljube Boskovski: Former Minister of Internal Affairs.

Agron Buxhaku: Deputy President of the DUI.

Branko Crvenkovski: Prime Minister, voted in at the September 2002 elections, leader of the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia.

Ljubco Georgievski: Former Prime Minister, voted out in September 2002 elections, president of the IMRO-DPMNU (VMRO-DPMNE).

Gzim Ostreni: Member of the DUI and former member of the National Liberation Army.

Semri Qamili: Chief of the Tetovo Police.

Radmila Sekerinska: Deputy President of the SDSM.

Boris Trajkovski: President of Macedonia.

Fasli Veliu: Member of the DUI and former member of the National Liberation Army.

Musa Xhaferi: Member of the DUI and former member of the National Liberation Army.

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