

Re: DISCUSSION - Responses to the ICJ Opinion

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Text

this is a great starting point

Marko Papic wrote:

This research is in response to the Intelligence Guidance, which asked us to do a sweep of secessionist regions and see how they responded to the ruling. Not everyone responded to the ruling yet, but we did a sweep of most secessionist regions anyways.

This is not a proposal for an analysis. I want everyone to have access to the research we conducted. Especially the MONITORS and WOs because we want to make sure that we pick up on any statements from any region on the ICJ opinion (see the list of regions below).

If this were to lead to an analysis the only angle I can see it the fact

that the media is concentrating on the wrong regions. The media is concentrating on this story in terms of what it means for Nagorno-Kharabah, South Ossetia, Abkhazia, Transdniestria, etc. However, I think the focus on the FSU is misplaced. The ICJ opinion and legal legitimacy will have the least impact on regions in the FSU, where it is all about foreign patronage (Russia) and capacity (can you defend your sovereignty). It is in Western Europe and the Balkans that the decision will have the most impact. Balkans because of direct applicability for Republika Srpska in BiH and the Albanians in Macedonia, Western Europe because an ICJ opinion and legal legitimacy carries much more weight in Spain or UK than it does in Azerbaijan or Russia.

Classification of Secessionist Regions (example in brackets):

TIER I - Quietly Simmering - Yes, secessionism is an idea, but the region has no interest in pursuing it at this time. It could stir up at some point in the future if the conditions are right, or change.
(Serbian Krajina)

TIER II - Secessionism active, but weak - Secessionism is more than just a distant idea - if not the outright stated goal - but the region has no means of pursuing it, it is too weak. (Basque Region)

TIER III - Active Secessionism (without violence) - Secessionism is the stated goal, but the region will not use violence to pursue it.
(Catalonia)

TIER IV - Active Secessionism (with possible violence) - Secessionism is the stated goal and violence is potential (or active) means by which country will pursue it. (Republika Srpska)

TIER V - The region is de-facto independent (South Ossetia)

LIST OF EXAMINED REGIONS (* denotes that they did make a statement about ICJ Opinion)

TIER I

Croatia - Serbian Krajina

Spain - Galicia

Serbia - Vojvodina

Finland/Sweden/Norway - Sami-land

Italy - Lombardy

Russia - Tatarstan * (statement was not by anyone official)

TIER II

Bosnia - Western Herzegovina
Spain - Basque Country *
Ukraine - Carpathian Ruthenia
Serbia - Sandzak
Ukraine - Crimea
Romania - Szekler Land *

TIER III

Belgium (by which we mean both Flemish and Walloon regions, really the entire country)
Denmark - Greenland
Spain - Catalonia *
U.K. - Scotland *
Denmark - Faroe Islands

TIER IV

Bosnia - Republika Srpska *
Moldova - Transdnistria *
Macedonia - Albanian region*
Russia - Chechnya
Russia - Dagestan
Russia - Ingushetia
Russia - Kabardino-Balkaria
Russia - Bashkortostan
Russia - Adygea
Russia - Karachai-Cherkessia
Russia - North Ossetia
Serbia - North Kosovo *
Azerbaijan - Nagorno Karabakh *
Georgia - Adjara
Georgia - Samtskhe-Javaheti

TIER V (secession over, violence still possible)

Georgia - South Ossetia *
Georgia - Abkhazia *

TIER I

CROATIA - Serbian Krajina:

Population: Potentially 400,000 (based on figures from 1991-1995), but due to ethnic cleansing, forced expulsion/migration and difficulty in returning, less today. According to the Croatian 2001 census, there are around 201,631 Serbs in Croatia. (<http://www.dzs.hr/>)

Popular support for independence: Low. Serbs in Croatia today are trying to fight for return of around 200,000 refugees from BiH and Serbia. The main Serbian party in Croatia, the Independent Democratic Serbian Party (SDSS), is party of the center-right nationalist government, with Slobodan Uzelac a Croatian Vice PM.

Background: Krajina Serbs rebelled against Croatia in 1990 because the new Croatian constitution removed Serbs as a "constitutive nation" of Croatia and made them just one of the national minorities, along with Italians and Hungarians. The rebellion ended with Operation "Storm" in 1995 when majority of Krajina Serbs fled from the region along with the retreating Serbian army.

Current Status: Dissolved. "Government in exile" in Serbia. The government in exile was most active in 2005-2006 period. It was formulated in 2005, largely it seems as a PR stunt by the Serbian Radical Party (SRS). It has since issued statements here or there, such as recognizing South Ossetia and Abkhazia in 2008. However, their website and forum are largely dormant, certainly since 2007. (<http://www.vladarsk.com/>)

Comments on ICJ opinion: None

Serbia Vojvodina

Population: Just over 2 million, with about 290,000 Hungarians (14% of the province). (<http://web.stratfor.com/images/europe/Hungarians-800.jpg?fn=5116103054>)

Popular support for independence: Very low. Hungarians make up just 14 percent of the population. However, there is support for autonomy. Serbs in Vojvodina feel that with autonomy they have greater opportunities. Vojvodina is the richest part of Serbia.

Current status: The adoption of the Vojvodina Statute on Autonomy at the end of 2009 satisfied the Serbs and to large extent Hungarians in Vojvodina. The statute returns Vojvodina the autonomy that was taken from it by Milosevic in the 1990. Hungarians are still interested in a possible autonomy within Vojvodina, but there are no plans to push for

it at this moment.

Comments on ICJ opinion: None

SPAIN - Galicia

Population: Approximately 10 millions of Galician people worldwide, including 2.796.089 in Galicia (6-7% of the Spanish population).

Popular support for independence: Low. According to a recent poll, 75% of the Galicians feel more Spanish than Galicians. Source Galicia has partial self-governance, in the form of a devolved government, established on 16 March 1978 and reinforced by the Galician Statute of Autonomy, ratified on 28 April 1981.

>From 1990 BNG has gradually abandoned the secessionist discourse and claims for self-determination are rarely produced, especially since the regionalist party Unidade Galega (Galician Unity) joined the coalition.

FINLAND/NORWAY/SWEDEN/RUSSIA - Sami people

Population: Between 60,000 and 100,000 in Norway. 14,600 in Sweden. 9350 in Finland. 2000 in Russia.

Popular support for independence: Difficult to evaluate. There is a growing self-consciousness and the Sami people are asking for more rights, but still not to a point of secessionism.

The Sami are politically organized through Sami Parliaments (one for each country) which sometimes work together. Most of their work is however related to preserving the Sami languages and culture. Disputes over the ownership of land and natural resources continue in these countries, which could potentially lead to a rise in their desire to be independent.

The Sami Council is a transnational organization (ONG statute), which aims at promoting Saami rights and interests in the four countries where the Saami are living, to consolidate the feeling of affinity among the Saami people, to attain recognition for the Saami as a nation and to maintain the economic, social and cultural rights of the Saami in the legislation of the four states.

Overall, the risk of secession is very low.

ITALY - Lombardy:

Population: 9,821,270. Italy's richest region.

Support for independence: extremely low. Instead, the Lombards want more autonomy. In the 2010 regional election the party Lega Lombarda (which wants to increase autonomy) gained 26.2%, its best result ever. The Lega Nord has pretty much abandoned its idea to create a State of Padania and is instead asking for more autonomy as well (the goal is a federal state).

No statement on Kosovo found.

RUSSIA - Tatarstan

Population: 3.8 million people

Comments on ICJ opinion: No official comments in Tatarstan about the ICJ opinion. But the chairwoman of the Milli Medjilis, self-proclaimed pan-Tatar national assembly, has said that she hopes Tatarstan follows the same path as Kosovo. She, however, does not have much support in Tatarstan,

TIER II

BiH: Herzeg Bosna - Western Herzegovina

Population: There are about 700,000 Croats in BiH today.

Popular support for independence: Very low. The Croats as part of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina want their own ethnic political entity. They have expressed this desire a numerous times and tensions between Bosniaks and Croats have been rising, especially around the city of Mostar.

Current status: All of the Croatian parties in BiH support the creation of a third political entity. The Muslims are vehemently opposed to this, since it would leave them isolated in the most populous, and territorially smallest, entity. However, the Croats do not want independence largely because Zagreb has made it clear that it would not support them. Croatia is trying to get into the EU and supporting Bosnian Croats in independence would be a problem.

Comments on the ICJ opinion: None

Ukraine Crimea

Population: Crimea has about 2 million people. According to the latest Ukrainian census, the population is 58.32 percent Russian, 24.32 percent Ukrainian, 12.1 percent Crimean Tatar, 1.44 percent Belarus. (http://www.ukrcensus.gov.ua/eng/regions/reg_crym/) The population speaks mainly Russian.

Popular support for independence:

Background: Crimea never considered itself part of Ukraine, which is why the collapse of the Soviet Union was a shock for the republic. It is the only Autonomous Republic in Ukraine today, but it very nearly sought independence in the early 1990s. The idea was eventually abandoned and it has a special autonomous status now.

Current Status: With change in government in Kyiv, Crimean independence is not something that is expected to come to the forefront again. The pro-Moscow government has signed an extension with Russia for the Black Sea Fleet to stay in Sevastopol until 2042. With tensions between Russia and Ukraine reduced, Crimea no longer can rely on Russia supporting it against Kyiv. Under Yuschenko, however, Russians were giving Russian passports to the ethnic Russians in Crimea (<http://www.kyivpost.com/news/politics/detail/75601/>) during Yuschenko's rule and this is definitely a potential flash point between Russia and Ukraine if Kyiv ever decides to play with the West again.

Comments on ICJ opinion: None

Ukraine: Carpathian Ruthenia

Population: About 1 to 1.5 million, most living in Zakarpattia in Ukraine

Popular support for independence: Difficult to gauge, but it exists. At least according to the intelligence we have from the region.

Current Status: Moscow was making moves to influence the Ruthenians to ask for independence in late 2008. The Ruthenians live on the Western side of the Carpathians and are therefore geographically separated from Ukraine to an extent. However, with Kyiv firmly under Moscow's control, it does not seem that Ruthenians would have the international support for their independence.

Comments on ICJ opinion: none thus far.
SERBIA - Sandzak

Population: About 150,000 Muslims living in a region where they make up about 55-60 percent of total population.

Popular support for independence: Unclear because the Bosniak community is split between Muamer Zukorlic and Sulejman Ugljanin. Ugljanin supports a different mufti against Zukoerlic. There is therefore considerable internal dissent in the region.

Current Status: Muamer Zukorlic's group is pretty mad that the votes for the Bosniak Council were deemed illegal by the government (LINK: <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/main/analysis/29484/>). There is talk in the region of parallel institutions being imposed. This is very reminiscent of what happened in Kosovo before the uprising by Albanians against Serbs. However, the Bosniak's are divided, which means that there is no unity by the Muslims against Serbs.

Comments on ICJ opinion: None, however there has been talk in Sandzak of adopting parallel institutions to Serbian government, which is what Kosovars did in Kosovo in the 1980s.

SPAIN - Basque Country

Population: 1,850,500 in the Spanish part of the Basque country, 230,020 in the French part.

Support for independence: Low/moderate.

Since 2009, the President of the Basque country is Juan Jose Ibarretxe, a Socialist, but still fairly in favor of a wider autonomy (Proposed for example in 2003 Ibarretxe Plan, which foresees a future Basque country 'freely associated' with Spain, with its own separate legal system and European Union (EU) representation.) Thus, politically, the secessionist movement is relatively strong. In regard to popular support to independence, a poll in 2002 showed that 32% of the people living in the Basque region would be in favor of a statu quo; 31% are in favor of a wider autonomy and 31% would support the independence.

Comments on ICJ opinion:

PNV [Basque Nationalist Party]

"It is a victory for common sense," Inigo Urkullu [leader of PNV] said.

Inaki Anasagasti [PNV member of Parliament] urged the government to stop

"scaring" Catalonia and the Basque Country.

Source: La Vanguardia website, Barcelona, in Spanish 24 Jul 10

El portavoz del Partido Nacionalista Vasco en la Comisión Mixta para la Unión Europea, Inaki Anasagasti, ha declarado que esta decisión del CIJ no hace sino confirmar que la postura que España ha mantenido hasta ahora sobre este tema es "incomprensible y más propia del franquismo" que de un sistema democrático, y le ha pedido al Gobierno que deje de "meter miedo" a Cataluña y Euzkadi. Además, ha arremetido contra el ministro de Exteriores, al que acusa de tener "mucho afecto por Serbia". Anasagasti ha apostillado que los nacionalistas vascos van a continuar reclamando en las Cortes Generales en su derecho de la voluntad popular "por encima de cualquier otra consideración".

Google Translate: The Basque Nationalist Party spokesman in the Joint Commission for the European Union, Inaki Anasagasti, said that the decision of the ICJ if it does confirm that the position that Spain has maintained so far on this issue is "incomprehensible and more typical of Franco" than a democratic system, and has asked the government to stop the "scare" in Catalonia and Euzkadi. He has also lashed out at foreign minister, which he accuses of having "a lot of fondness for Serbia." Anasagasti has Apostilled that Basque nationalists will continue calling on the Parliament in the right of the popular will "above any other consideration."

ROMANIA - Szekler Land

Population: 786.573 according to census in 2002. Composition: Szekler-Hungarians 75.65%; Romanians: 20%; Others: 4.35% (<http://freeszekelyland.uw.hu/population.html>; http://www.sznt.eu/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=210%3Athe-szeklers-and-their-struggle-for-autonomy&catid=4%3Aa-szekelyseg&Itemid=6&lang=en)

Popular support for independence: high. They say however that they want autonomy and argue that it is different from independence.

Foreign backing: Hungary (depending on government - now they've got backing for instance)

Current status: It has no formal independent political organization; there are 3 counties that are organized following the Romanian laws. There is no leadership for the region as the political representation is no longer formed by one party; there are 2 main parties: Tokes one and

UDMR and some other small organizations that are basically fighting each other to get the Seklers' support in the respective counties and in Transylvania's regions where Hungarians live. There has been something called "Szekle's Assembly" backed by the Hungarian parties that wrote a manifesto in 2006 - with no success. <http://freeszekelyland.uw.hu/>)

EP Vice President Laszlo Tokes - and a legend in Hungarian Romanian lore - said that Kosovo and Hungarians in Romania are similar, but he then changed his mind, saying that he was not talking of independence, but rather autonomy.

TIER III

DENMARK - Greenland:

Population: 57,000. 88% Inuit (including Inuit-Danish mixed, 12% Europeans, mostly Danish.

Referendum for more autonomy in 2008: Just over 75% of voters had supported the plan, which gives Greenland a say in foreign policy and a more definite split of future oil revenue, and make Greenlandic the sole official language (among other things). Greenland gained self-rule in 1979, after previously being a colony and then a province of Denmark.
Source

No statements on Kosovo.

SPAIN - Catalonia:

Population: 4,664,675 of Catalans in Catalonia (7,504,881 is the total population of Catalonia).

Popular support: 37% of pro-independence, 41% of unionists (highest support of independence it has ever been) Source

1979: Autonomy recovered. A new statute was approved in 2006 by referendum. However, important articles of the statute were declared unconstitutional in July 2010. The Catalan Statute of Autonomy (1979) established a Catalan Parliament, the Presidency of the Generalitat, the Government or Executive Council and the other institutions created by the Parliament. Symbolic referendum on independence are sometimes organized.

Comments on ICJ opinion:

Por su parte, Esquerra Republicana, a través de su eurodiputado, Oriol Junqueras, se mostro "satisfecho de que la democracia haya vencido". ERC se propone presentar una propuesta no de ley pidiendo el reconocimiento con todos sus efectos de la Republica de Kosovo.

Google Translate: For its part, Esquerra Republicana, through its MEP, Oriol Junqueras, was "satisfied that democracy has prevailed." ERC intends to present a law proposal calling for the recognition for all purposes of the Republic of Kosovo.

Entre los catalanes, el partido de Artur Mas ha felicitado al pueblo kosovar, y considera que esta ha sido una sentencia logica. Además, insta al Gobierno español a "reconocer definitivamente al nuevo Estado europeo". Source

Google Translate: Among the Catalans, the party of Artur Mas (Convergencia i Unio) has congratulated the people of Kosovo, and considers that this was a logical decision. It also urges the Spanish government to "finally recognize the new European state."

>From the President of Catalonia, Jose Montilla

El presidente de la Generalitat, Jose Montilla, ha destacado que Catalunya y Kosovo tienen "pocas cosas en comun", por lo que ha rechazado que puedan establecerse paralelismos. "No tiene nada que ver el regimen opresivo de la Serbia de Milosevic con la Catalunya y la España de 2010". Responde así a las declaraciones de ERC. Para los independentistas, la decision de la ONU de declarar legal la independencia de Kosovo se podría aplicar a una hipotetica independencia de Catalunya.

Google Translate: The President of the Generalitat, Jose Montilla, Catalonia and stressed that Kosovo have "little in common, so has rejected parallels can be established. "It has nothing to do with the oppressive regime of Milosevic's Serbia and Spain in Catalonia in 2010." Responds to the statements of ERC. For independence, the UN decision to declare the independence of Kosovo law could be applied to a hypothetical independence of Catalonia.

DENMARK - Faroe Islands:

Population: 48,760 , 91.7% Faroese and 5.8% Danish.

Desire for independence is old. In 1946 a referendum was held in the Faroes about complete independence or continued presence within the Danish state. There was a majority in favor of complete independence but

the Danish government overruled the result, claiming the margin was too small. They have been an autonomous region of the kingdom of Denmark since 1948 and have, over the years, taken control of most matters, except defense and foreign affairs. Source

Support for independence is high, about 50%

Moderate / High risk of secession in the long term (high support + economically viable since companies invest in Faroese oil).

No statements about Kosovo.

U.K. - Scotland:

Population: 5,194,000. 89% Scottish, 7% English, Irish, Welsh, 4% other.

Scotland has partial self-government within the United Kingdom as well as representation in the UK Parliament. The United Kingdom Parliament retains power over a set list of areas explicitly specified in the Scotland Act 1998 as reserved matters, including, for example, levels of UK taxes, social security, defense, international relations. The Scottish Parliament has legislative authority for all other areas relating to Scotland, as well as limited power to vary income tax, a power it has yet to exercise.

The largest party is the Scottish National Party which campaigns for Scottish independence and which won 32.9% of the votes at the 2007 Scottish Parliament election. The Scottish National Party formed the Scottish government, which comprises only SNP members.

Popular support: Surveys show only 27 per cent of Scots would support independence in a referendum compared to 55 per cent who are opposed. (March 2010 - Source). Overall, the percentage of people supporting Scottish independence is decreasing.

"It is crucial ... that neighbouring governments, especially Serbia, recognise that not only is Kosovan independence legal, it is a necessary step in building the stability of the region," said Alyn Smith from the Scottish National Party. Source (More details: <http://www.snp.org/node/17177>)

LEVEL IV

MOLDOVA - Transdnistria:

Population: 555,347 based on Transnistrian census in 2004. Composition: Moldovans 31.9%; Russians 30.4%, Ukrainians 28.8%, Others: 8.9%.
(<http://pridnestrovie.net/facts.html>;
<http://www.olvia.idknet.com/ol37-09-05.htm>)

Popular support for independence: presumably high, they are organized as a de-facto republic with own organization

Foreign backing - Russia

Current status: Transnistria is a presidential republic, with the president being also head of government. In theory there is also a parliament that has legislative power. In practice, the region is controlled by the president - Igor Smirnov and his family which has key posts in the econ/political life.

Attitudes on Kosovo ICJ ruling:

The foreign ministry of Moldova's breakaway Dniester region has welcomed the ruling of the International Court of Justice on Kosovo and said that it means "international legitimization of a settlement model based on priority of a nation's right to self-determination". In a statement posted on the Dniester region official Olvia-press website on 27 July, the ministry said that the UN decision is an obvious move "towards reformatting the outdated Helsinki mechanism applied to the entire Europe in accordance with the demands of the 21st century". The Dniester foreign ministry said that the ruling of the International Court of Justice "has international legal meaning as it cancels out any unilateral attempts by other states to hamper expression of the people's will through adoption of their own laws", Olvia-press reported. [bbcmon - see the whole article below]

BOSNIA - Republika Srpska

Population: 1.5 million of which nearly 90 percent are Serb (up from 55 percent before the war due to ethnic cleansing).

Popular support for independence: High, of course most would want to join Serbia post-independence.

Current Status: Republika Srpska is a separate political entity in BiH created by the Dayton Peace Accord. It is ethnically more Serbian than Serbia itself. BiH is currently trying to go through constitutional reforms that would make it possible to apply to the EU. Republika Srpska is rejecting much of these reforms because it does not want to give up

any of its power to Sarajevo. Its Premier, Milorad Dodik, has made threats that he would secede from BiH in that case.

Comments on ICJ opinion: Dodik said that Serbs in RS could "hypothetically" take Kosovo's example. "Until now, the practice was different, because we were always told that cannot be our path," Dodik said in an interview conducted after The International Court of Justice (ICJ) said this week that the Albanian majority in Kosovo broke no law by splitting from Serbia. This ICJ opinion, which was backed by the most powerful countries in the world ... says it is a possible practice. "Why would it then be a problem if somebody, let's say hypothetically even the Serb Republic, was to do the same in the future?", he asked, adding that the ruling "will not be without consequences in Bosnia." Dodik also said that the issue would be taken up after elections on October 3.

Dodik went on to say:

"An additional fight for a status that does not breach international law, in line with the [World Court's] opinion, is not excluded," Mr Dodik said, after condemning a verdict that he claimed sent "a new message to the Serbs that the politics of violence is successful". "It would be interesting to see the reaction of the international community if we declared independence."

"For a long time, we in the Republika Srpska have not been happy in Bosnia-Herzegovina," Dodik told reporters in Banja Luka late on July 22.

"We respect the Dayton agreement [that ended the war in Bosnia], but the ICJ decision can serve us as guidance for our continuing fight over our status and our future."

SERBIA - North Kosovo
Population - Around 100,000

Current status: The Serbs are largely concentrated North of the River Ibar and are resisting all integration with Kosovo. Most recently Kosovo has offered negotiations with the Serbs about a wide-ranging autonomy. The ICJ opinion has encouraged Albanians to therefore make the first move on getting the Serbs to accept Pristina's sovereignty.

Comments on ICJ opinion: Negative. Obviously the ICJ opinion potentially opens up the idea of Northern Kosovo joining up with Serbia by seceding from Kosovo. But that would mean accepting the rest of Kosovo being independent. Belgrade would not support that.

RUSSIA - Chechnya/Dagestan/Ingushetia/Kabardino-Balkaria

The ICJ opinion on Kosovo is not going to change the reality on the ground in the Russian Caucasus. After Kosovo's independence in 2008, Chechen rebels hailed the decision by Kosovo to declare independence. However, the only factor standing in between Caucus regions and independence is capacity (military), not motivation or legal legitimacy. Therefore, it is not clear how the ICJ opinion will have any bearing on the Caucasus. The militants in the region are not holding back from launching another wide scale war because they were waiting for the ICJ opinion to come out.

GEORGIA - Adjara

Population: 375,000

Background: Adjara has long been considered "Muslim Georgia," though presently only about 35 percent of the region is Muslim. Most Adjarans still back their region's 1993 secession from Georgia, though the region was pulled back under central control in 2004. Adjara's uprisings have failed thus far because it lacks strong foreign support - Adjara has some Russian backing, but not as much as Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Popular support for independence: High

Current Status: Autonomous Republic of Georgia

Response to ICJ Kosovo Opinion: None
GEORGIA - Samtskhe-Javakheti

Population: 208,000

Background: Closely tied to and borders Armenia.

Popular support for independence: High

Current Status: Autonomous Republic of

Response to ICJ Kosovo Opinion: None

AZERBAIJAN - Nagorno-Karabakh:

Population: About 140,000.

Nagorno-Karabakh Republic: Territory internationally recognized as part

of Azerbaijan, which has not exercised power over most of the region since 1991. Three solutions: the region as part of Azerbaijan, the region as part of Armenia and an independent region. The election that took place in May showed a massive support for pro-independence parties. The Free Motherland party, led by the region's prime minister Ara Harutiunyan, received 46 percent of the vote and the pro-government Democratic Party of Artsakh 30 percent.

Bako Sahakyan is currently the president of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Comments on ICJ opinion:

According to Sahakyan the advisory ruling by the International Court of Justice over the legality of Kosovo's independence will bring about new geopolitical situation.

Further he said he did not think that ICJ's ruling over Kosovo will seriously affect the works by OSCE MG, but even if it does, Karabakh will only welcome it. Source

If the recognition of Kosovo's independence facilitates the international recognition of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, we will certainly welcome this, President of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic Bako Sahakyan said during a press-conference in Stepanakert July 23.

MACEDONIA - Albanians:

Population: 509,000 Albanians, 22% of the country (EU sponsored census). They are mainly in the north-west of the country.

A civil war was fought between government and ethnic Albanian insurgents, mostly in the north and west of the country, between March and June 2001. The war ended with the intervention of a NATO ceasefire monitoring force. Under the terms of the Ohrid Agreement, the government agreed to devolve greater political power and cultural recognition to the Albanian minority. The Albanian side agreed to abandon separatist demands and to fully recognise all Macedonian institutions. In addition, according to this accord, the Albanian National Liberation Army (NLA) were to disarm and hand over their weapons to a NATO force. It has stayed quiet since then, but weapon caches have been found this year.

Democratic Union for Integration (among which many members of the NLA) and Democratic Party of Albanians are the two main Albanian parties in Macedonia. Albanian political parties in Macedonia are active in the pursuit of even greater political and national rights for the Albanian

minority of Macedonia such as the official use of the Albanian language in local administration, proportional representation in the government and the right to higher education in mother-tongue.

The Albanians in Macedonia are still very angry with the Macedonian government, as their situation has not drastically improved. There is a better political representation of the Albanians, but there are still tensions between the two ethnicities.

Albanians in Macedonia / PP: Rafiz Haliti of the DUI [Democratic Union for Integration - BDI in Albanian] believes that the verdict will have a positive effect on the whole region.

The verdict has shown that the court is not under any political influence, Haliti says.

The DPA [Democratic Party of Albanians - PDSH in Albanian] shares a similar view.

The International Court verdict is historic not only for the Albanians, but the entire region, as well. I hope that it will bring stabilization and peace to the region, DPA Chairman Menduh Thaci says.

TIER V

GEORGIA - Abkhazia
Population: ~200,000

Background: Sporadic conflict and violence between ethnic Abkhaz and Georgians since the the fall of the Soviet Union. Fully seceded from Georgia and established independence following the August 2008 Russia-Georgia war

Popular support for independence: High

Current Status: Effectively seceded, recognized as independent by Russia, Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Nauru. Russia is of course the primary patron, with 1-5,000 troops stationed in a military base in the breakaway territory.

Response to ICJ Kosovo Opinion: The conclusion of The Hague International Court of Justice that Kosovo's declaration of independence does not contradict international law confirms the right of nations to self-determination, de facto Abkhazian Prime Minister Sergey Shamba said on July 23. "This [the conclusion] gives the arguments of the Abkhazian

side more weight," Apsnypress quoted Shamba as saying. However the de facto Prime Minister said that "considering the double standards of Western politicians, even if Abkhazia applies to The Hague International Court I am not sure that the same kind of decision would be made."
http://www.messenger.com.ge/issues/2156_july_26_2010/2156_mzia.html

GEORGIA - South Ossetia

Population: 70,000

Background: Sporadic conflict and violence between ethnic Ossetians and Georgians since the the fall of the Soviet Union. Fully seceded from Georgia and established independence following the August 2008 Russia-Georgia war

Popular support for independence: High

Current Status: Effectively seceded, recognized as indepedent by Russia, Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Naura. Russia is of course the primary patron, with 1-5,000 troops stationed in a military base in the breakaway territory.

Response to ICJ Kosovo Opinion: None

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