



# INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

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Interviewee: Reshat Maliqi

Interviewer: Arthur Boutellis

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BOUTELLIS: Today is the 24<sup>th</sup> of July 2008 and I am now with General Reshat Maliqi who is Assistant Commissioner for Operations with the Kosovo Police and we are now at the Kosovo Police headquarters, main headquarters in Priština, Kosovo. First thank you for your time.

MALIQI: *Thank you too.*

BOUTELLIS: Before we start the interview I'd like you to confirm that you've given your consent to the interview.

MALIQI: *I'm happy you're here to interview me and I approve that I agreed for this interview and I don't see any problem to talk about the issues you will raise during our discussion about the development of the police.*

BOUTELLIS: I'd like to start the interview by learning a bit more about your personal background in police and your career.

MALIQI: *Thank you. As you mentioned, my name is Reshat Maliqi, I was born the 21<sup>st</sup> of April 1960 in village – Malishevo Municipality – of Gnjilane I grew up there and attended secondary school in the same area, same village for eight years. When I graduated then I was interested in a police job. In 1975 I applied at the police academy in Vushtrri to become a police officer and thank God I got that chance to be a cadet for four years at the police academy in Vushtrri. When I graduated in 1979, the first time I started to work as a police officer in main headquarters in Priština in the same place. In the beginning my job was patrolling at the train stations and we escorted the train from Kosovo to different areas in the former Yugoslavia, in Macedonia, Serbia and in different directions in Kosovo. Also at that time we had some kind of specialized unit. We went in rotation, one month I worked as a patrol officer at the train and the second month I was on stand-by and we were the unit which reacted and held all the police stations Kosovo-wide. The third month I did the security in front of government buildings, assembly building and also we did security in front of houses and apartments of VIPs at that time.*

*I worked as a police officer for 18 months and after 18 months I had a chance to apply in Belgrade in the Federal Police of the former Yugoslavia and I attended a course there for three months. When I graduated then I got the chance to go and work outside Yugoslavia and I worked for two years in California in San Francisco. I did the inside security of the building, as a security guard inside the building of the Yugoslav consulate. I worked there for two years. Time to time I worked as - I did close protection for the chief of the consulate.*

*After two years when I came back in Kosovo in the beginning I worked as patrol officer in the traffic unit. The reason why they transferred me from Priština to Ferizaj region was I was the only one at that time who spoke the English language and many tourists they crossed through the roads of Ferizaj to different areas in Macedonia. I worked there as a patrol officer for 2-1/2 years.*

*In 1986 I got the chance through service to go and study in Belgrade criminology. I did study there for two years and six months. In 1989 I graduated in Belgrade. When I came back my first job in Ferizaj was Deputy Station Commander for three months and after three months they appointed me as Regional Commander for Traffic Unit in Ferizaj and I worked there until 16<sup>th</sup> of July 1990.*

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*In March 1990 the decision was brought from Serbia, some of the police officers accepted and continued to work and some of them were terminated and they got pension. In the beginning I was accepted and I had the same position but after three months we had a political situation here which all the institutions of Kosovo were suspended and in some way we were occupied from Serbia. Voluntarily me and most of my colleagues we left the police, police career and police job.*

*At that time in 1990 we created the Syndicate Union I would say from the former police officers. I didn't live in Ferizaj, I lived about 36 km from Ferizaj in Gnjilane. I was the youngest senior officer in the area. But luckily they voted freely and they appointed me as head of the Syndicate Union. At the same time I got a position of that Syndicate Union in Kosovo-wide, which we had that union in Priština.*

*In 1992 from the previous President of Kosovo, from Mr. Rugova and the Prime Minister Bukoshi, they were interested to install the Kosovo institutions and they told us they formed the Ministry of Internal Affairs. I was appointed as the head of that organization for Ferizaj region and in 1994 I was arrested by the Serbian police and I was accused for "parallel police." They never confirmed that we created some kind of parallel police without weapons, without equipment, without buildings, without uniforms, without nothing. But anyway that was the accusation and for that reason I was punished for six years in jail.*

*In the beginning I spent eight months in jail here in Priština which is close to our building. After that nine months in Lipjan and two years and two months in Dubrova and the last year in Serbia in a place called Prokuplje. I was released from jail the fifth of May, 1999. From the 24<sup>th</sup> of March I didn't have any information about my family, about my relatives, about no one. I lost all the contacts with everyone. When I was released from the jail I had the information that the road between Kosovo in the direction of Priština and Serbia is blocked from the Serbian soldiers. The only solution was for me to go through Bujanovac and Presevo It was where the people could travel in that time.*

*When I arrived in that bus, I was the only one Albanian, no one had information but someone advised me to buy some newspapers in the Serbian language. Thank God during my study in Belgrade I speak very fluent Serbian language and it is very hard for someone to know which nationality I belong and that helped me in that time because they were very frustrated and they accused the natalians a lot and something like that.*

*I would like to mention the day that I was released during the time I was in jail I had a book with 150 lessons Croatian – English language. I was afraid to take that book when I was released from the jail. There was one old person from Serbia, from the same place, from Prokuplje and he told me his daughter studied the English language in the University of Priština here. I wrote a short note to her. I told her I'm afraid to take with me this book because if the police or Serbian soldiers will stop me and find that book with me they will accuse me as a spy with natalians or something like that and maybe that would be a reason to kill me or to arrest me. She accepted that book and later in 2002 I heard the same female, she is now here in Kosovo as a language assistant and she is married with one also from Canada.*

*She saw my picture and picture of my colleagues they have in all the regions because we were the first senior managers in the Kosovo police service and she asked one KPS (Kosovo Police Service) officer about me and then she got my phone number and she visited me and my children. When she came in Gnjilane*

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*the first day she was afraid to freely go somewhere, I invited her for coffee at the hotel in front of the police building. I told her until you are with me, don't be afraid. All the people you are seeing here in Gnjilane, Gnjilane was a good example for freedom of movement for everyone. I told her you see here some Serbs in national dress, they're walking freely here and don't be afraid, nothing will happen because as a police officer I'm trying to guarantee freedom of movement for anyone and especially for friends, I will do my best.*

*We went to my house and she called her father. I told her, "Tell him you are in my house." She had a chance just to say she is at Reshat's house and nothing more because he started to cry. She was very happy to visit me.*

*When I was released from jail in some way I arrived to Presevo which is populated 97% with Albanians, but that is part of Serbia. My niece was married there and I was interested to go and visit her and stay at her house and also I was interested to get some information from her about my family, about my parents, brothers, my wife and children. But she was not there. Her husband also left, they left together. The reason was because the military service from Serbia, they were interested to invite all Albanians at the age between 25 and 55 years to work for them. That was the reason they left Presevo.*

*Anyway, I found the people who helped me in the beginning there and I got information about my family. They were in a refugee camp in Macedonia. After two days I got the information some guys, through the mountain area, they helped some citizens to cross the border between Serbia and Macedonia. I was released from jail and I didn't have any ID card and I didn't have the chance to cross at any legal crossing point at the border. I contacted the guys and I asked them how I could go through that area. They asked me to pay 50 deutschmark at that time. I told them the money will not be a problem. We were in a group about 70 of us, males, females, children, from different parts of Kosovo. We started from the house of one of those guys to walk 8 o'clock in the evening. At 11:30 when we arrived somewhere in the mountain area we just heard the voice STOP and they started to shoot. The guy who was in front of me and behind me, both of them were killed. Also there were killed some others in that area, five of them. Three of them got injured.*

*I had in mind if I stopped – I stopped my body - I was not attacked from the bullets. I said if I stay here they will kill me anyway and I used the chance to escape from that area. At the same time following me one guy asked me "are you Albanian?" I told him, "yes I am." We started to go without knowing where we were going. We started to work through the mountain. It was very dark and all the time raining. Some time at 3 o'clock in the morning we saw two other guys from the same group. They came down, we went up. We told them do we know what direction how we can go to Macedonia. We walked until 12 o'clock in the afternoon of the next day. In one area there were four soldiers. They stopped us. They told us put down all your weapons. We told them we don't have anything. One of them came in and searched us; they didn't find anything. Then we walked about 9 kilometers, they brought five other soldiers ready any time to kill us.*

*In the beginning they stopped us at one private house which belonged to someone - Albanian in Presevo. When they got the first information about everyone, from who we are and our names and something like that, we found twelve others who were stopped by the soldiers in the same place. We asked them "what's happened?" because we saw some of them were lightly injured in the face area. They told us they found the place where they killed them. I told them "did they kill someone?" They said, "yes, there were bodies of five people*

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*they just brought here.” Then they transported us to one private motel which belonged to an Albanian. During the NATO bombing, they left the police station and they were located in a private house because they were afraid maybe that the buildings will be attacked.*

*We spent about three hours there and they found release papers about me and they said why you were in jail for four years and six months. In the beginning I told them I was there for theft. In a very short time they contacted the jail in Prokuplje and they got the real information who I am and why I was there. Six soldiers, every one of them beat me in the face area. I was really injured. Then they sent us to Vranje District Court and we were punished with money, 150 deutschmark at that time. None of us had money; everything we had, watch, rings, anything gold, money, they took from us.*

*Then the citizens they collected some money in different shops, in different coffee bars and they paid because they wouldn't release us before we paid for that. We were lucky because a few days before they arrested about 100 Albanians and they sent them to a detention center in Vranje. They didn't have space for more people; that was the reason we were punished with the money. After that they released us. I got medical help for 16 days in a private house. Illegally one doctor came with a nurse and they helped me. After 16 days, some Albanians helped me. They found one Serbian citizen who drove me to the border between Serbia and Macedonia.*

*When I arrived there I ran away and after twenty minutes I arrived at one Albanian village. Then I went to Kumanovo and the first thing I did I went to the International Red Cross. During the time when I was in jail the International Red Cross many times visited me as a prisoner and they issued us ID. When they opened the log, they found my name. They helped me in the beginning. They brought me to a private house and they told me they will find my family and the next day they will come to take me from that area at 11 o'clock. They did as they promised.*

*On the 21<sup>st</sup> of May I had the chance to find my family in a refugee camp in Stenkovec near Skopje. I was in very bad condition at that time but the friends in the army were responsible for that camp. The next day they came and they visited me and they offered me food and I started to get better and I was very happy also with my family. When they signed the agreement in Kumanovo, the second day I took the truck with some other people. We paid, every one of us 150 deutschmark and I arrived at my house where I was born and I continued to live in the same area.*

*In the beginning I worked for one private company in my village for six months. After six months I was invited to attend the police academy in Vushtrri.*

BOUTELLIS: So that is in 1999 at the end of the NATO campaign?

MALIQI: *That is in 2000 I was invited to attend the police academy, in third class. I graduated on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. In the beginning I started to work as a patrol officer in the Gnjilanee region. I worked as a patrol officer until the 21<sup>st</sup> of January, 2001. From the 21<sup>st</sup> of January 2001 I was appointed as advisor to the regional commander. Then the same year—.*

BOUTELLIS: The regional commander was a UNPOL international?

*MALIQI: Yes, he was from the United States, from Minnesota. Then I was invited from the main headquarters from Priština to attend upper management course at the police academy. We were in two groups - 32 of us. When we went there the first day they told us from 32 the best six during the course, who show the best skills will be appointed and get the rank of lieutenant colonel.*

**BOUTELLIS:** How did the 32 get selected? They got appointed by ...?

*MALIQI: They appointed from each region five to six candidates. From my region, from Gnjilane were six of us. In the end we had an exam and I think the six best were appointed for that. On the 17<sup>th</sup> of August 2001 we got the rank of lieutenant colonel. I continued to work and do the same job until 2003 as Advisor to Regional Commander and then in 2003 I was appointed as Deputy Regional Commander and in 2004, in October, I got the rank of Colonel. In March 2005 I became a Regional Commander. It was the first region in Kosovo which was transitioned to KPS, now Kosovo Police. I worked in that position as Regional Commander in Gnjilane until September 2005. Then I was appointed as the head of Border Police in Priština here.*

*After two days I went to Germany, at the George Marshall European Center for Security Studies. I was there for three months. When I came back I got a task from Commissioner Kai Vittrup, he was from UNMIK police. He told me during one week I need to do the structure, KPS structure for Border Police. With the help of my colleagues I did that and they continued to work with the same structure which I did at that time. That was the beginning, the first steps for Kosovo Police to have our own Border Police – to have our own structure for Border Police.*

*In April 2006 there was a vacancy announcement and we had a right to apply, all the colonels and lieutenant colonels to get the position that I have now for Deputy Commissioner and Assistant to Deputy Commissioner. At that time I filled out two applications. I was interested to continue to work for the Border Police and Operations. I was selected for Operations. Then I started with new challenges. I had very good cooperation with UNMIK officers, all the time, with everyone. I will say some of them were professionals and I had the chance to learn from some of them a lot of things for my future career. But at the same time I will say what they said, some of them, they learned something from us.*

*As you know the full responsibility, the head of UNMIK police, but when we show good skills and our professionalism, they let us do a lot of things. Before they started officially to work as monitors, I'm saying for myself they let me do a lot of things and they just observed. Maybe it's not good to say but when I started in the beginning in 2000 to work as a patrol officer, the officer with whom I worked for three months was from Ghana and he had only two years experience as a police officer.*

**BOUTELLIS:** At home.

*MALIQI: Yes. And my previous experience was 11 years as a police officer in different places, in different positions. The first day there was a burglary case where I was partnered together with him, and with a Nigerian officer. We started the evening shift at 3 o'clock. After fifteen minutes when we arrived at the crime scene I had the chance to talk with local citizens and I told them don't be afraid to report a case if something happened to your neighbor today, it will happen maybe tomorrow to you. If you know who did that, tell me that. He had a small shop and he said, "the guys who did that they're sitting there," but he was afraid. I told him,*

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*"Okay, take one ice cream for you, give me one." I paid for that and they can see I came here to buy ice cream and not to ask you about the burglaries.*

*For a very short time we made a plan how to catch them. One of them I caught, another one my friend from Ghana told me he would do that; he didn't, he had the chance, he escaped. Immediately I searched the guy, I found a weapon on him and then I arrested him and sent him to the police station. I started to interview him and I did the police report and I filled out the applications we had there. I asked for language assistant but my police report was different from the others because I did one full page and the language assistant they used in the previous time maybe two or three words to translate and they told me that is a huge for them, they cannot translate them.*

*I said, "if you are paid for that you can do your job and don't teach me how to do my police job, I know what to do." The next day he told me "I will follow you and I will observe you. Do your job because you know better than me."*

*We had a lot of operations here in Priština. For some of the operations I was fully responsible. I will say we never had complaints from citizens from their treatment. I think we did a great job. We tolerated their protests, by the law they had the right to protest. Sometimes with the UNMIK police, I was not agreed when they insist to block part of the road. In democratic associations the citizens had more rights than police. I was interested all the time to let them freely to use the roads, to protest. The police will observe and if something doing against the law, catch them and arrest them.*

*In the beginning we had long discussions about that. They didn't accept my idea but later on they said well, I had it right. With self determination here most of the process they did. It was interesting to go and talk with them. They never asked for protests by the law, which they need to do that. We never had information about their scenario, what they were going to do, what time they will start, which street they will use. We get information through their press conferences. As a provisional officer, I said that is not enough information, we need to get some more information to plan and to do something more.*

**MALIQI:** *Yes. Later on they announced another protest on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March.*

**BOUTELLIS:** *The second protest was on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March.*

**MALIQI:** *Yes, then I was asked by the commissioner, he told me 'Go and talk with them.'*

**BOUTELLIS:** *The new commissioner.*

**MALIQI:** *I did that. All the citizens and all the institutions they appreciated that. I will say many times thanks to the UNMIK police with OSCE in the beginning they created, they developed, and they brought to this stage the Kosovo Police. Many of them they did a great job here. I don't have any experience to complain against anyone. Some of them they had very good attitudes, they were very well behaved, they had a very good education. Many of us will remember them for a long time. We became close friends, good friends, we will continue to keep our friendly relation and also we will change from time to time our ideas about performance of the police job. I think that was a great benefit for everyone. Maybe I'll answer in some of the answers you will have.*

**BOUTELLIS:** *Definitely, before we go into more technical areas of policing maybe I'd like to ask you. You were a police officer prior to the birth of Kosovo in '99. Can you*

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give us a brief overview of the situation of crime and public order from the onset in '99 towards now? What are the major challenges you face as operations?

*MALIQI: That is a big difference between the policing from 1999 and after that. Comparing my previous experience which I had and what I get now in the Kosovo Police to working together with many officers from different countries. As I told you from my previous experience most of the time I spent for my education. I had just three or four years when I worked as a police officer. But I had a chance to see how they worked my older colleagues and how they performed their duty.*

*The citizens also now they say that sometimes it was good to have the previous police because they were happy. The police used force against the citizens in many cases. Most of the cases were investigated by the force. They had to accomplish that. Now we implement here most of the European laws and European standards and democratic rules about treatment, equally and the same way every citizen. I don't see any chance where we could accuse someone without very good evidence. The prosecutor doesn't approve the wishes of the police officers or someone from a high politician to say "arrest that person, he's not my friend" or something. He belongs to another religion or something like that. We were very happy to work with everyone, to work with everyone here. We were very happy to work with our Serbian colleagues.*

*I came from the region which is most populated with the mixed citizens, Serbs and Albanians. The Gnjilane region was used as an example for living together. You heard that from the citizens and Serbian KPS officers. Until I was in Gnjilane I never had someone in my office who complained about behavior or relations between a Serbian officer and an Albanian. They were together on patrol, they worked together; they spoke with each other. They visited the families of each one, they went for coffee, for lunch, for dinner. Then the Kosovo government announced the Declaration of Independence of Kosovo the 17<sup>th</sup> of February this year. Two days later some of the Serbian key base officers, I would say they were under high pressure of politics from Serbia and at the same time they offered them better salary, better treatment, better social welfare, better pension in the end. They realized that to convince them to leave the Kosovo Police but not all of them, just I will say 40% of them.*

*For the moment they are suspended by pay. We will be happy to have them back. We are ready to continue to live and work together with them. Every KPS Albanian will feel better when we visit and we have to deal with the Serbs, of course that is the truth. Seeing the positive steps which they are taking, the new government in Serbia for the moment, I hope in a very short time they will be back and continue to work with us. The request was they are ready to work with the UNMIK police and they're ready to recognize the chain of command of the UNMIK police but we were forward – we cannot go back.*

**BOUTELLIS:** Police stations and regional commanders had already been transitioned to the KPS.

*MALIQI: Yes. We started the transition phase in January 2003 and now all the stations, regions and departments are transitioned. The only non-transitioned region is Mitrovica regional headquarters. We have there only a UNMIK Regional Commander and also all the stations and units are transitioned there. We have only one person and only one position which is not transitioned to the Kosovo Police.*



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- BOUTELLIS: Now let's talk about transition. In terms of the pillars, the different units, the headquarters, only the administration side, training and personnel has been fully transitioned. In operations you still work in tandem with the UNMIK officers, how does it work?
- MALIQI: *The transition is only administration. Under the operation pillar it is not transitioned yet, only the position of head of the department for specialized units and public order and my position. We spoke with the head of the department of UNMIK police and they promised us very soon, they already accomplished all the paper work and they sent their proposal to the Acting Commissioner and if possible, maybe next week, we'll become fully transitioned.*
- BOUTELLIS: What are the criteria for transitioning?
- MALIQI: *The criteria was we need to have the unit, we need to have all the equipment, we need to have a building, we need to have the trained officers. We need to have a chief of the unit who is trained, who has the rank.*
- BOUTELLIS: So yourself.
- MALIQI: *Yes, that's no problem for us to have fully transitioned.*
- BOUTELLIS: So all the criteria have been met.
- MALIQI: *Yes.*
- BOUTELLIS: Can you describe, so just prior to transition what is your regular day work and how does your work with UNMIK function; on a daily basis how does this function?
- MALIQI: *After transition?*
- BOUTELLIS: No now, currently, in the last couple of years as you were head of operations.
- MALIQI: *I would say daily we work closely with UNMIK police. In the pillar that I am responsible for we have a joint meeting, EULEX, UNMIK, and Kosovo Police. Twice a week we have a meeting in my office here. I lead the meeting and from the UNMIK police they are just monitors. I will say we have all the responsibility but only by the paper we can get the - we are transitioned.*
- BOUTELLIS: So in terms of the planning or operations, etc., it is KP.
- MALIQI: *Yes, we have our unit for permanent planning of operation. The UNMIK police, they have their own unit, but in the final we have full agreement about the operation. We are responsible for the operation until stage one we need to engage in operation FPU.*
- BOUTELLIS: Which are UN FPUs.
- MALIQI: *Yes. So if you needed a level of threat assessment is high, just for high level of threat assessment, then in the beginning our reaction is for normal patrol unit, then we will engage. Our ROS unit, Regional Operation Support Unit and we have a first intervention team and if the end we need the help and we engage to that level, I am responsible to run the operation. We have the SOP and we have some kind of memorandum with the UNMIK police. Then the commissioner, when we engage the FPUs, the commissioner will lead the operation or the*

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*person who is designated from him to lead that but just for the time until they react. When they finish then I will continue to lead the operation.*

BOUTELLIS: So what are the types of operations do you do regularly? What types of crime do you face?

MALIQI: *I will say all types of crime here. We have the counterterrorist unit in our service but that is under the crime pillar. I cannot say a lot about that unit. But we have the department here for crime analysis. All the intel operation from each station, each region they send here. That department they do the crime analysis. Usually before we plan any operation we ask them to provide us for information that they got about that operation, if they got any information then we do the threat assessment on that and we engage our personnel. It depends on the threat assessment. We engage the specialized unit, observers and different equipment, everything.*

BOUTELLIS: The first area I'd like to ask you about is recruitment. You were part of the third class recruited in the early stages of the KP. At the time everyone was recruited at the same level however you had already twelve years of policing experience. How many applicants were in the same situation you were and had previous experience? Do you know approximately?

MALIQI: *By percentage I cannot say but I think with previous experience we were about 17 to 20%.*

BOUTELLIS: What is your reflection on the way recruitment was done at the beginning?

MALIQI: *As I told you I worked for a private company and at that time being far away from family - four years and six months - I was interested in getting some kind of job and do something for my children. I was well paid at that time to be honest, 1000 deutschmarks. At the police academy in Vushtrri I was paid 300 deutschmarks but as I told you in the beginning, I like the police job by heart. When I was a child, I was 15 years old when I wore the uniform for the first time. All the time I'm trying to do my best for citizens. If the citizens are happy with my job, I'm more than happy. I'm not in this thing to be a rich man and to think only about myself. To see citizens are happy with the service you're doing for them.*

BOUTELLIS: Do you think the standards for recruitment were appropriate and were there a lot of candidates for the police at the time?

MALIQI: *I think in the future, it is not good to let someone for a long time to work in the same position. Maybe for a very short time in small states such as Kosovo, he'll be known after six months by most of the citizens. Everyone was interested to get his phone number, to invite him for different things. Then it is possible to become corrupted or to do something else which is jar from citizens.*

*In the beginning when the UNMIK officers, they came here, me and some of my colleagues with previous experience were interested to meet them and we met them in the beginning before the process of recruiting started. In the first meeting every one of us, we represented one region. Then when we came to the stage to talk about how many officers they will enroll in the first class, the second class and third class, I saw some of them they were interested to recruit most of them from Priština. I told them this was my first time to attend this meeting and my last time and I never was interested any more to attend a meeting like that.*

BOUTELLIS: What was the reason?

MALIQI: *I saw that they didn't treat the same all the people. I told them—.*

BOUTELLIS: Why did they want to recruit most of the people from Priština?

MALIQI: *I don't know what were their priorities for that. Some of the people then in the name of the trade union, the Syndicate Union, many times they visited the police academy and they were on these lists, different lists of people, can you recruit that one or that one or something like that. Some of them they were recruited as USCE members, some of them with fake documents and something like that. I didn't want to put my nose—to be part of that process.*

BOUTELLIS: So when you first got to the training, it was the very beginning of the training, how long was the training in the academy and what did you think of it as a former police officer who had already received a four year training a while back but of a different kind?

MALIQI: *To be honest I was in a mixed class. We had Serbs, Bosnians in the class. I met some people I didn't know before. That was the basic training for three months. Talking about the tactics there was not a big difference between the education I got before and the level of education which they gave, different instructors from different states of Europe. The only difference was how we implement the law in the field. It was very interesting for me also and I was very happy to hear the different experiences.*

BOUTELLIS: So that was three months in the academy and then that was followed by what they called field training.

MALIQI: *Yes field training they had at the station when we started to work there. It depends, there was some evaluation, all the classes graduated and then they had the same. Later on the basic training was six months, sometimes it was eight weeks.*

BOUTELLIS: So the length of training increased over time.

MALIQI: *Yes. But I think the best idea for training is six months. Before six months, if they finish the basic training I think that is a short time. We should have basic training for six months and then field training for one year and also the different levels of training later on to prepare real professionals for the future.*

BOUTELLIS: How prepared did you think your colleagues who were coming out of the academy were who hadn't had any previous police experience?

MALIQI: *Well everyone who was interested, to get good knowledge about the police job, they had the chance because we offer them a chance. You can see our officers, every one of them, they were at the police academy maybe a minimum of five times for different trainings there. Some of them it was twenty times, some of them they spent more time at the police academy to get different training than in the field as patrol officers. If someone is interested to get good knowledge they had a real chance.*

BOUTELLIS: I'd like now to look at internal management. By that we mean like the promotion system, disciplinary system, etc. What are the main challenges for the former KPS and now the KP in terms of internal management, the promotion system and so on. How was this done and do you think the system was fair and competitive?

**MALIQI:** *If I compared the previous experience and now, in previous time it was not possible for someone to get a rank of captain before they had university education. Now we have colonels with secondary education. In the beginning the process was very good. Later on when they involved in the process many people, then there were some complaints. To be honest in the beginning for the first promotion for majors I was the only one from the Kosovo Police who was a member of the board when we promoted majors. All those majors now are lieutenant colonels and colonels. When we had some of my colleagues they complained, they said "well, why only Reshat is on the board, we would like also to be a part of the board." Someone in the main headquarters here they created six different boards. It was a very big mistake from my feeling, that is my opinion also.*

**BOUTELLIS:** How do the six different boards work?

**MALIQI:** *Two years ago, when I was involved in the process we had one board and we had a chance to compare the candidates - we gave better answer - and less answer is not good. When they created the six different boards I had a chance to compare only for three candidates, not all of them.*

**BOUTELLIS:** They each do the promotion of different candidates, they don't look at the same candidates.

**MALIQI:** Yes.

**BOUTELLIS:** So each board still has UNMIK and KP officers?

**MALIQI:** *We had UNMIK in that time just as monitors-the third time. The first two times we had one representative from the Kosovo Police and two others were from UNMIK. I remember when I was on the board with my colleagues we had a candidate in from Dragaš and one of the members of the board he started to read the newspaper. When I saw that he offended me a lot by that behavior. I told him we have a candidate here who is interested in his future, for his career and you read a magazine? How can you assess him? I was not happy with that.*

*Many of them they complain with reasons or without reasons. I never had a chance to investigate that and to know the truth if they really had a reason or not. Under the pillar now we have from time to time vacancy announcement for different positions here and we create the boards. But if we have a complaint from someone I deal with that very seriously and I see if I find something and I try to damage no one. A real and thorough process. If someone is better they can get the position; if not, maybe next time they can be better prepared and get that. I don't like to let someone get something if they are not ready for that.*

**BOUTELLIS:** What are the mechanisms for accountability to the communities and oversight and are they effective right now, the current oversight mechanisms?

**MALIQI:** *I'm very happy. Under the operation pillar we have the public order, we have the specialized unit and also we had the Department for Community Affairs here. We have the first time that department in Kosovo Police. We don't have a long tradition or any tradition about that department but I attempted to appoint in that position as the head of that department the best officer I know with the best behavior, the best education. I told him in the beginning feel and treat the citizens as Mother Theresa did. We use that example. We have also the Community Police. They go in and visit all the community.*

BOUTELLIS: How does the community affairs function?

*MALIQI: Very well. In the field they don't have the units, only here in the main headquarters. On the field they are my responsibility. Whenever we get information about any frustration of the community we send that unit. They get in the beginning the information about the case. They do some kind of analysis and then they're coming with recommendations which they send to me. Then through the respective chain of command that suggestion will be sent to the government of Kosovo, to different ministries or municipalities and from our perspective we're saying you need to react and do something for the community.*

BOUTELLIS: Is this a mixed department, the community affairs? Are there some minorities represented?

*MALIQI: No we don't have. Three times we opened a vacancy announcement for Serbs, none of them were interested. Especially now we don't have the Serbian police officers in the Priština region at main headquarters, all of them worked until the 17<sup>th</sup> of February. They are suspended for the moment. We are very interested in getting someone in the structure.*

BOUTELLIS: How big is the unit?

*MALIQI: They have just five officers.*

BOUTELLIS: So what is the kind of feedback you get from communities and what are the perceptions of the police in general?

*MALIQI: We have the trust of the citizens. Citizens like us. They appreciate our job. We will continue to have their trust and accountability. It is possible to receive that only by treating them in the same way and through our professionalism and enforce the law -*

BOUTELLIS: The Kosovo Police works all over the territory of Kosovo. There is no area where it does not.

*MALIQI: Yes, in all the areas of Kosovo.*

BOUTELLIS: Including in the Serbian villages as well there are patrols?

*MALIQI: We have 24 substations and also we just sent a proposal to the UNMIK commissioner to approve that we are ready to open one substation in the north part of Mitrovica where we had only Serb officers. There are three villages—.*

BOUTELLIS: Right now in Mitrovica there is only one police station for the whole of Mitrovica.

*MALIQI: Yes. There are three villages where Albanians live and they requested to open a substation there and to take care of their security in the future.*

BOUTELLIS: In the northern region of Mitrovica.

*MALIQI: Yes, for the future. We have the agreement of the Serbian community also, they agree to open the substation. I hope very soon we will do that.*

BOUTELLIS: This substation, would this still be manned by mixed KP, both Albanian ethnic and Serbian ethnic?

- MALIQI:** *Eighteen of those substations are in minority areas where the Serbs live. In the beginning we used officers from the same area, from the same village. Our priority was we involve the Serbs. They were part of the nearest police station, they report to nearest police station for anything they need and any help. Also we created a local safety committee in those areas and they had very close connection, the community was involved on that local safety committee and they worked together.*
- BOUTELLIS:** So the local safety committee is KP officers and community representatives?
- MALIQI:** *We had the police officers on that committee, they were part of that committee, but the head of that committee was the civilian citizens.*
- BOUTELLIS:** There are mixed patrols in some areas.
- MALIQI:** *Yes, in some areas we have mixed patrols with Serbs and Albanians and they worked together.*
- BOUTELLIS:** But not in North Mitrovica.
- MALIQI:** *For the moment in North Mitrovica no.*
- BOUTELLIS:** So it is only Serb ethnic KP officers who are patrolling there.
- MALIQI:** Yes.
- BOUTELLIS:** We talked a little bit about the politics since the Declaration of Independence and outside influences from Belgrade but what is the risk of politicization of the KP or are there some?
- MALIQI:** *Well, for the moment I cannot say there will be any risk of politicization for Albanians. Time to time there are some worries from politics. They request from us something for which they are not responsible, but in most of the cases they get answers from us, they let us do our police job, be responsible for operation and investigation and also in Article V of the law of the Kosovo Police it is written the Minister of Internal Affairs cannot interfere in operations and investigation. If they forget about that we will remind them and say we are doing our job according to the law.*
- BOUTELLIS:** Now we have touched on a number of different areas. If we look at the broader challenges, what do you think are the priorities for the KP now in your areas or just generally in the Kosovo Police as a whole.
- MALIQI:** *In the future we need to take care more about investigation. We need to have more training for our investigators and also for the specialized units. We need to have more equipment and better equipment and also at the same time to have better training for them in the future.*
- BOUTELLIS:** Specialized like forensics?
- MALIQI:** *Yes I'm thinking of Forensics, I'm thinking of the ROS units, for CPU, Close Protection Unit. Also I think it would be good and I just sent a proposal to the training department to train all our officers about the Code of Ethics, European Convention for Human Treatment for every citizen.*

BOUTELLIS: You mentioned the Department for Community Affairs and Community Police as interesting innovations of the Kosovo Police, are there other innovations you want to point out as interesting that merit attention you think?

MALIQI: *Not for the moment.*

BOUTELLIS: For the last question I'd like to turn now looking at the international community, the UN, OSCE, other organizations that have been involved in policing and supporting the Kosovo Police. Are there some—we talked already about a couple you mentioned, the quality of the officers, etc. Are there other things that we haven't mentioned that you'd like to talk about either on the policies of the international organizations or the relationship they have with the local country personnel? Any suggestions, lessons?

MALIQI: *As you know for the moment we have here the UN mission and also we have EULEX, the new mission. They are not fully operational. As a young police organization we need in the future to get more training, more equipment and also to become part of police organizations such as Interpol, Europol, and some other police organizations. Through that we will have better cooperation in the region, we will share information and we will be more successful in our jobs.*

BOUTELLIS: The very last question. What are the biggest challenges you think the Kosovo Police will face when the international community withdraws, when UNMIK leaves and then EULEX leaves, what do you think the major challenges are going to be as an independent police?

MALIQI: *The major challenge will be to feel we are responsible for everything because we used those years in some of the cases to have someone do our job and they did, the UNMIK police. We need to think as real police officers with real responsibilities.*

BOUTELLIS: Any final comments?

MALIQI: *No, I think if I have anything later I will have the material and maybe then I will say something more because I will be better prepared. I promise I will do my best to have a real interview.*

BOUTELLIS: Well Reshat Maliqi, thank you very much.