



INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

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Interviewee: Muhamet Musliu

Interviewer: Arthur Boutellis

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Innovations for Successful Societies, Bobst Center for Peace and Justice
Princeton University, 83 Prospect Avenue, Princeton, New Jersey, 08544, USA
www.princeton.edu/successfulsocieties

BOUTELLIS: Today is the 25th of July 2008 and I am now sitting with Muhamet Musliu who is Administrative and Language Assistant with the UNMIK Police, the United Nations Mission in Kosovo. We are now at the Kosovo Police main headquarters building in Prishtinë/Priština, Kosovo. First, thank you for your time and before we start I'd like you to please confirm that you've given your consent to the interview.

MUSLIU: Yes, that's true.

BOUTELLIS: I'd like to start by asking you about your personal background and how did you get involved in policing work?

MUSLIU: *I am Muhamet Musliu, 26 years old born on the 5th of February 1982 in Tripoli, Libya. I lived there with my parents until 1999. I have completed my secondary education. Currently, I am attending lectures at the faculty of political sciences in FAMA University, Prishtinë/Priština. I have been working with UNMIK police since 2000. Initially, I started working at the station level in a small station in Glllovoc, currently called Drenas municipality. There, I worked for six months.*

BOUTELLIS: Which region?

MUSLIU: *Prishtinë/Priština region. I worked in the capacity of language assistant and various positions since at that time there were no permanent positions for language assistant since it was the beginning of the mission. So I worked in patrol duty office, community policing, investigations and also from time to time I used to translate for the station commander. Six months later then upon my request, I was redeployed to Mitrovicë/Mitrovica South police station where I worked for 1-1/2 years within the station in the duty office and in the field on patrols.*

BOUTELLIS: This was in 2001?

MUSLIU: *This was in 2000. Then in 2001, I believe September I was redeployed to the office of the regional coordinator for Kosovo Police Service (KPS). I was assigned to the office of KPS Deputy Regional Commander who was a local. I used to help him in the language.*

BOUTELLIS: That is in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica?

MUSLIU: *In Mitrovicë/Mitrovica region. At the same time, I used to help the Regional Commander.*

BOUTELLIS: Who was UNMIK.

MUSLIU: *The UNMIK Regional Commander in meetings with the locals. I worked in this position until November 2004 and on the first of November 2004 I was redeployed to Prishtinë/Priština main headquarters to work with the KPS officer in charge of crime pillar in the capacity of administration and language assistant until February 2008. Presently I am working for the office of the police commissioner the UNMIK Police Commissioner as Administration and Language Assistant.*

BOUTELLIS: Which language are you fluent in?

MUSLIU: Albanian, mother tongue, English, Serbian, and Italian average, and Arabic less than average.

BOUTELLIS: You came back to Kosovo after going abroad in '99 and started working with the UNMIK police right in 2000 soon after the international police took over the executive mandate. Can you describe the mission, its mandate at the time and the status of public order and crime in the country, what was it like?

MUSLIU: Yes, as you may know UNMIK police started working here in, I believe, September 1999 and they had the executive role and mandate here. I believe in the beginning their main objective was to have or restore public peace and order, enforce the law and also create a new police service called the Kosovo Police Service. They tried to recruit, train and have an impact in the capacity building of the police. In the beginning the UNMIK police was responsible for all police tasks. They had all the executive powers. In the meantime while KPS was building up, receiving proper training and capacity building, they were slowly taking over some units at the station level, starting from station level, taking over police stations and then also taking over units at the regional level which also followed units at the main headquarters level.

BOUTELLIS: When did this start, the transitioning of responsibility from the international police to KPS at station level? Do you remember when you were in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica?

MUSLIU: As far as I know, the first station to be transitioned was Gracanica police station mostly inhabited by Serbs.

BOUTELLIS: Where is that located?

MUSLIU: In Prishtinë/Priština region. I believe it is not more than 10 km away. This was the first station to transition, I believe in 2001, then other stations followed. Currently all stations have transitioned, a total of 32 police stations. They are run by the local police and monitored by the internationals. From a total of six police regions, five have transitioned apart from the Mitrovicë/Mitrovica region.

BOUTELLIS: Which is still under a UNMIK regional commander?

MUSLIU: Yes.

BOUTELLIS: So when you first started working in the Mitrovicë/Mitrovica South police station in 2000, what was the balance between—how many international police officers were there and how many KPS?

MUSLIU: I think when I started working in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica we had a total of nine KPS classes that had graduated, so a relatively small number, or low number.

BOUTELLIS: How big were the classes?

MUSLIU: Usually one class comprised from 150 to a total of 300 or 350 cadets. Following the graduation they were distributed throughout the country. So the station I was working in, the shift I was working in had more international police officers than locals since there was still a low number of locals. I believe we had a total of 14 or 15 internationals in the beginning and about seven or eight locals. The internationals would patrol jointly with the local police and train them how to perform in the field.

BOUTELLIS: Can you describe a patrol? Was it in UNMIK cars?

MUSLIU: *In the beginning the patrols were conducted by UNMIK police cars. The patrol would comprise from one or two internationals and one local police officer and the language assistant. So patrols, normal patrols, conducting vehicle check points, patrolling downtown and various villages, conducting foot patrols, and sometimes also teaching the local police officer how to make a vehicle stop and how to conduct a vehicle checkpoint. This was the beginning. In the meantime, after one year, in 2001, I believe that is when the first pure KPS patrol started going out on the streets by themselves. Sometimes by themselves, sometimes also having a language assistant in order to communicate by radio in English with the base of the police station reporting about the patrols and activities.*

BOUTELLIS: There were UN monitors with them or sometimes patrols were only KPS officers?

MUSLIU: *Usually just KPS in a KPS vehicle.*

BOUTELLIS: As a language assistant you would go on some of these patrols?

MUSLIU: *Yes.*

BOUTELLIS: Can you describe what was the daily routine like? What would you do? What were some of the challenges faced?

MUSLIU: *Usually we would report to the police station and attend the briefing. We had three shifts, morning, afternoon and late shift. We would be informed about the previous shifts, about their activities and what we have to do. We were given a duty roster and then we would go out on the field for mobile patrol by vehicle. We had also to patrol at least one hour during the shift for foot patrol and report the activities to the base of the police station. My main role here was to translate, to help in the language while internationals were speaking to the local police. If the local police would be on their own out on patrol I would be with them with an UNMIK handset, Motorola, to report activities to the base because the internationals were still running the communications with the base. So, we needed to have a local language assistant to help with communication.*

BOUTELLIS: What were the kind of incidents you were dealing with? Was the police receiving any calls from the population or were you going—were there crimes that you were trying to resolve? What were the typical challenges?

MUSLIU: *They were mainly police activities like attending to traffic accidents, attending to complaints made by people, attending to scenes of thefts or burglary or even robberies, and attending to scenes of attempted murder where officers would secure the crime scene and call for backup for the respective units like investigations and forensics.*

BOUTELLIS: So soon after, this was September 2001 you moved from the Mitrovicë/Mitrovica South police station to the Regional Coordinator's Office?

MUSLIU: *Yes.*

BOUTELLIS: Which is also based in South Mitrovicë/Mitrovica?

MUSLIU: *Yes.*

BOUTELLIS: And supervises all the police stations in the area. So how many police stations were there in the Mitrovicë/Mitrovica region?

MUSLIU: *There were a total of I believe six police stations: Leposavić, Zubin Potok, Zvečan/Zvecan, North Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, South Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, Vushtrri/Vučitrn and Skenderaj/Srbica. A total of seven, in fact. The office was mainly dealing with the training of police officers. It used to coordinate the training of police officers and also deal with the respect of KPS regulation. In fact, I was assigned to this office. I was a part of this office but assigned to the office of deputy regional commander for KPS who was a local in the rank of lieutenant colonel.*

BOUTELLIS: Then what were some of the major challenges that the police were facing in the Mitrovicë/Mitrovica region while you were there?

MUSLIU: *The main challenges were, in the beginning, lack of manpower, lack of training. Therefore this office had the responsibility as well to move officers from station to station and on the basis of rotation to go through various units like patrol, community policing, investigations, forensics, intelligence and officers had to go through this training. It was, I believe, in the beginning it was mandatory and the timeline to go through every unit would be from one month to three months in order to get the proper experience. I believe in the beginning KPS had a lack of vehicles so they had to be in joint vehicles with UNMIK police until the first vehicles started to arrive in the country where they could use them by themselves.*

BOUTELLIS: When did the first KPS vehicles come approximately?

MUSLIU: *I believe a small part came in 2000, late 2000 and then others followed.*

BOUTELLIS: In terms of other equipment like radios, uniforms, weapons, hand weapons, were they already equipped at the time?

MUSLIU: *Yes, I think every single police officer had the proper equipment: a handgun, handcuffs, a proper police belt, uniform, and vests. I believe they were all given the equipment at the KPS academy.*

BOUTELLIS: When they were graduating?

MUSLIU: *Yes, when they graduated.*

BOUTELLIS: In the Mitrovicë/Mitrovica region, it is one of the regions with the largest Serb ethnic minority, Kosovar Serb ethnic minority. Were there any areas at the time where the KPS and UNMIK were not patrolling or were they patrolling in the whole region?

MUSLIU: *It is true, the city of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica is in fact divided in two parts. There is the north station and the south station. In the north station mainly Serb KPS officers work there and in the south mainly Albanian KPS officers work. In fact the area was entirely patrolled by local and international police officers. Every police station in every municipality had local and international police officers patrolling the area.*

BOUTELLIS: You said mainly Serbian KP officers in the north, but there are also some Albanian ethnic KPS officers as well?

MUSLIU: Yes.

BOUTELLIS: There are some mixed patrols in both North Mitrovicë/Mitrovica and—?

MUSLIU: *Yes, because there are some neighborhoods with mixed population so there were some units formed there, comprised of local Serb, Albanian and Bosnian KPS officers that would patrol together in these ethnically-mixed areas on both sides.*

BOUTELLIS: How was the interaction with the population in both areas and in the mixed areas?

MUSLIU: *In fact I was working in the office but I also attended various meetings where officers would report their activities. Then, they did not have any kind of problems working together, communicating with the population, with the mixed population because they were also mixed police officers working together. So, in fact, they're talking to the people, listening to their problems and concerns and trying to solve the concerns of the population there.*

BOUTELLIS: What was the feedback? You were translating conversation—what was the perception, the feedback from the population, on both the international police that were there and the KPS progressively taking more of a role?

MUSLIU: *I believe that the local population was happy to see—for instance, in areas inhabited by mixed ethnicities people were happy to see that they could also talk to the officers that were from the same ethnicity. So, I believe they were feeling comfortable by then, by seeing officers of their own ethnicity, also of other ethnicities and internationals working together to provide safety to all people there.*

BOUTELLIS: You stayed in the regional commander's office in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica until November 2004. How did the situation evolve from 2001 to 2004?

MUSLIU: *As far as I can remember, since it is a long time until now, in the beginning KPS had less roles, less authorities, taking over from UNMIK police, but I believe until November 2004 some police stations there transitioned. They were run only by KPS officers and monitored by internationals who would present time to time reports about the activities of the KPS. Also some units at the regional level transitioned. KPS, while having more people, while getting more training and building their capacities, they were also taking over authorities from the UNMIK police.*

BOUTELLIS: Was the incident of the two children drowning—were you there when this happened?

MUSLIU: Yes.

BOUTELLIS: Can you describe it? Was it in 2004?

MUSLIU: *In 2004—March 2004.*

BOUTELLIS: Can you describe what happened and what was the impact on the policing work?

MUSLIU: *At that time I was in the office when I heard the news, and in the beginning it was sketchy, not clear what really had happened. People were saying that before the*

children drowned they saw their Serbian neighbors nearby and suspected that their Serbian neighbors forced the children to the river because of some dogs owned by the Serbs. They were afraid, so they were forced to jump. This sparked anger following the reports made on the press. Then some protests were held in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, and as you may know the protests turned violent. At that time I was in the office. The police had to be engaged mainly at the main bridge—at the East Bridge to try and calm the situation and keep both communities, Albanian and Serb, from confronting each other. As a result of some confrontations, people were hurt, injured, and killed as well.

BOUTELLIS: Civilians or police?

MUSLIU: *There were civilians, there were also some police officers injured. I believe mostly from throwing stones or maybe even from tear gas coming from all parts—from KFOR (Kosovo Force) and from the police as well.*

BOUTELLIS: In trying to appease the crowd there were KPS officers, international UNMIK and KFOR as well?

MUSLIU: *Yes. I believe from things I heard KFOR at that time had the regular VCPs (vehicle check points) in the north in some mixed neighborhoods. They were not that prepared. People were saying that when KFOR soldiers heard shots fired, probably from both sides, they had their machine guns empty. They had no magazines and they did not have the proper equipment to react and stop people from fighting each other.*

BOUTELLIS: Was it the first main incident in the Mitrovicë/Mitrovica region?

MUSLIU: *It was one of the major incidents that I can remember from serving there.*

BOUTELLIS: What were the consequences after that in terms of how police work was done? Because already the police stations had been transitioned to KPS already?

MUSLIU: *I believe most of them. At this period of time I was serving in the building of the regional headquarters. I believe that same day or the next day, international officers starting pulling out from most of the police stations and moved to the north, to the northern part of the city.*

BOUTELLIS: The Serbian ethnic areas?

MUSLIU: *International officers. I believe the reason was for safety reasons. Most of them evacuated to the north and the south side was entirely left for policing to local police officers. So in one way the local police officers had a huge challenge in front of them because there were also comments made that the local police should go home and no policing to be done and KFOR to take over. The population was concerned, the police officers were concerned and they finally organized themselves. They were given duties entirely by the local police management level to do policing work.*

BOUTELLIS: Did the international regional commander stay in post at the time?

MUSLIU: No.

BOUTELLIS: It was completely handed over to the KPS?

MUSLIU: *Most of them just evacuated and left the buildings in the south to the local police. So the local policemen were doing work there alone for some days to come until the internationals started coming back in numbers slowly and gradually.*

BOUTELLIS: After how many days?

MUSLIU: *I believe they started coming back after three or four days as far as I can remember. Then they started taking over their positions as before and working in the same way. During the March riots in the south, the local police did the work on their own with a very small number of international officers.*

BOUTELLIS: That was only specific to the Mitrovicë/Mitrovica area. In the rest of Kosovo the situation remained normal?

MUSLIU: *I think there were also protests in other regions and riots in other regions but I'm not sure about the policing what took place over there. I was not informed but I was more aware about Mitrovicë/Mitrovica since I was there myself.*

BOUTELLIS: So how was this whole incident and the evacuation of most of the international officers perceived by the Kosovo Police Service at the time. Were they able to handle the regular policing duties? What were sort of the lessons from this incident and KPS having to do the policing for a few days without internationals?

MUSLIU: *In the beginning there was a lot of confusion, people did not know what to do. There were comments coming from one side that all officers should go home, abandon their posts. On the other hand the officers are locals, they're a part of the population and they had to care for the population, not to leave a kind of security gap or anarchy to take place. So I believe their main tasks over this period of time, four or five days, or one week was just to try and keep security at a level, maintain public peace and order and not let the situation deteriorate further. I believe after a period of time maybe four or five days then things started to settle down and the situation I believe was then back to normal.*

BOUTELLIS: Do you know what happened in North Mitrovicë/Mitrovica in the meantime?

MUSLIU: *I'm not very sure, but I think that most of the internationals evacuated to the north police station, and Zvečan/Zvecan police station, which is five minutes away by vehicle. Serb KPS officers were working in the north. Albanian KPS officers in the south. So Serb KPS officers were working, patrolling together I believe with internationals in North Mitrovicë/Mitrovica.*

BOUTELLIS: Because most of the protests in South Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, up to the bridge.

MUSLIU: *Some to the north as well.*

BOUTELLIS: Were there some protests to the north as well?

MUSLIU: Yes.

BOUTELLIS: After that you moved back in November 2004, you moved back to Prishtinë/Priština and that's when the pillars started to be transitioned to the KPS police?

MUSLIU: *In fact, that was the time when KPS pillars started to be established at the level of main headquarters, starting from the crime pillar, operations pillar, border*

police, and administration. The administration was already established and functioning with KPS officers.

BOUTELLIS: Before there were the same pillars but only for internationals as there were at the executive levels—?

MUSLIU: *Mainly led by internationals and had some locals as well.*

BOUTELLIS: The KPS was established in parallel, modeled after the pillars that were run by the internationals prior—?

MUSLIU: *Yes. I was redeployed to a crime pillar to work with the same KPS officer who was in charge of KPS in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica region. In the beginning the crime pillar had only a few, not even a dozen local police officers. There were only a few, maybe seven or eight working in the directorate of organized crime. In the meantime KPS were also building or involving the locals, started involving locals and other departments that were investigating crime like Directorate of Major Crime, Forensics, Organized Crime and Intelligence. That is the period when the head of crime pillar started to recruit senior officers to lead their respective directorates and advertise vacancy announcements to hire officers to fill in positions and get the training of expert international investigators and forensics officers and experts on organized crime and various investigative fields.*

In the meantime, when most positions were filled and when most of the officers got proper training and office space, because space was shared with internationals, proper vehicles and equipment, that's when the directorates started to be transitioned. I believe the first directorate to transition in the crime pillar was the directorate of forensics followed by the directorate of major crime, then the directorate of crime analysis, which is the successor of the directorate of intelligence. Currently the directorate of organized crime is still not transitioned.

BOUTELLIS: So it is still under the internationals?

MUSLIU: *I believe most of the units have already transitioned apart from the top level of the directorate.*

BOUTELLIS: At the time how was the transitioning presented to the Kosovo Police Service? What were the expectations and was there a target date for handing over, until the withdrawing of the international police?

MUSLIU: *In order to transition units and directorates KPS and crime pillar had to meet some criteria set by the international police respectively by the transition unit or later on called the Handover Department. I believe some of the criteria and conditions to be transitioned were personnel training, equipment including vehicles, office space, ranked—having sufficient ranked police officers and being able to deal with cases, deal with the work on their own. So in order to reach the stage of transition, to be fully transitioned, they had to meet these criteria. There could be some more but these are the ones that I can remember right now.*

In order to do this I was also part of the planning, because of my participating in various meetings between local and international police. In the beginning they had to make a kind of plan, what they want to do, what they want to achieve in a certain period of time. I believe some dates were mentioned, ideal dates in order to try and reach the full transition date which included the items that I mentioned before: try to get a sufficient number of personnel and try to provide them with

the proper training related to their field of work, office space, equipment and others.

At the same time they used to receive on-ground training by international officers, even by giving them lectures or showing them how to do the work or by working together in various cases.

BOUTELLIS: In February of this year, February 2008, there was the Declaration of Independence in Kosovo, right?

MUSLIU: Yes.

BOUTELLIS: What was the impact of this on the police work, if any? Was there any impact of the decision on the police work?

MUSLIU: *I believe prior to the Declaration of Independence the local police with the help of international police made their plan. They anticipated the use of police officers throughout the territory of Kosovo. They would have officers on the ground and also officers on standby in order to react to any possible or eventual situation. I believe that during that day, on the 17th of February, on the occasion of the Declaration of Independence, I could say maybe all police officers were engaged and involved in various duties and tasks.*

BOUTELLIS: How did the day go?

MUSLIU: *I believe that the day went perfectly well. That same day was very, very cold. I can remember the day. I think it went perfectly well. The organization was good in every municipality and there were a lot of celebrations. In reality I think there were no incidents on that particular day as far as I can remember.*

BOUTELLIS: Following the Declaration of Independence there was a Constitution. There was a new police law that creates the Kosovo Police. The KPS became the KP. Did this make any concrete change of what you're seeing in terms of the way things were going and the way police work was done?

MUSLIU: Yes.

BOUTELLIS: The responsibility of the KP versus the internationals?

MUSLIU: *Following the independence and the Constitution entered into force, also some laws were passed, laws proposed by President Ahtisaari and laws that were already drafted before and approved after the Constitution entered into force. One of the laws passed by the Parliament was the police law. It anticipated a certain period of time when it would enter into force. I believe the law entered into force in the beginning of this month. I can now notice some changes. For instance, the police before were called the Kosovo Police Service and now according to the new police law it is called KP, Kosovo Police.*

Now due to this, the local police will have to use a different logo with the logo of our new flag, which also says Kosovo Police and no longer has Kosovo Police Service because now the local police have to respect the police law. But at the same time, due to the circumstances they still have and are working and cooperating with UNMIK police as well as with the new EULEX mission, which is being deployed to Kosovo. Maybe it is too soon to see a lot of changes but I believe in the near future Kosovo Police will take all the responsibilities from the

UNMIK police apart from some specific fields of investigations, which will be, I believe, retained by the coming mission of EULEX. But the Kosovo Police will have ownership and be assisted by the coming EULEX mission. Also I believe in capacity building, they will be monitored, mentored, and advised by the EULEX mission. They will help to join the international police organizations and meet the international policing standards of the European Union.

BOUTELLIS: I'd like now to touch on a few technical areas of policing. You're not a police officer yourself but you worked closely with them for the last seven years. If you don't have any particular comment we'll just move to the next one. The first one is recruitment. Have you witnessed recruitment? Were you ever part of—?

MUSLIU: *I think I was once a part of this recruitment. I was not personally working for the office but I had to help them on one occasion. As far as I know the police service before advertised vacancy announcements for Kosovo Police Service and published this in local newspapers, maybe also on TV and radio. The local population had the possibility to apply. They had to show up to police stations, to regional headquarters to fill in the forms. Then the next step would be to select individuals and call them for the exercise test.*

BOUTELLIS: The written test?

MUSLIU: *Yes, the exercise test and the written test.*

BOUTELLIS: A physical—?

MUSLIU: *Yes, a physical test and the written test. If they pass these two tests they would be potential candidates also pending background investigations. After that they would be invited and told that they were hired for the police service and sent to Vushtrri/Vučitrn Police Academy to attend three months of training, basic training.*

BOUTELLIS: At the time there were huge turnouts of applicants?

MUSLIU: *Yes.*

BOUTELLIS: Who were the people applying to the police and why was it so attractive?

MUSLIU: *On the occasion that I attended the written test and the physical test I could see a huge number of people there but I did not have a chance to talk to them and ask them why they had applied. I believe, it is my personal opinion that they like the service. It could also be that somebody wanted just to get employed because of the unemployment rate and that's why they wanted to join the service. So a part them really like it and part them wanted to be employed, to have a position somewhere.*

BOUTELLIS: You've been working with the police for many years so you've seen the results of the recruitment. Do you have any—how successful do you think the recruitment strategies were?

MUSLIU: *I think the recruitment gave equal opportunities to everybody, to every individual, also to minorities, to females. If we take into consideration the percentage of the minorities in Kosovo, it is overly represented in the service. I believe by 16% represented in the service. So 16% of the service is comprised of minorities. Also they represent the overall population by 8%.*

BOUTELLIS: Sixteen percent, the ethnic minorities represent 16%.

MUSLIU: *In the service. Of the service. They represent about 8 or 10% of the overall population. Gender, I believe, is represented by 14%, which I think is higher than the representation of females in the neighboring countries and even many countries of the EU. I think that the recruitment process was a proper one but sometimes there were cases when officers would be employed, they pass the physical, the written and the background examination and in the meantime it would turn out that they were former convicted people. Also, people without a clear background during the previous wars or people who had not, in fact, graduated in the secondary school. So, officers were conducting inquiries and only finding this out in the meantime.*

BOUTELLIS: During the recruitment or were they already in training?

MUSLIU: *Sometimes they would find out more about these persons while in training or while working. Maybe even years would pass before they found out that that the person in fact did not finish the secondary school. I believe that the drawback of this or the deficiency was that officers working in background examinations were mostly internationals. In the beginning with a very, very small involvement of the local police. I think internationals would go to the neighbors, talk to the neighbors and ask about their neighbor. Usually the neighbors would say good words about their neighbor. But in fact I think if locals were involved in the beginning they would have known more things about people. They would know people. People would be willing to speak to them more freely rather than to the internationals. But I believe in general the process was a good process, there are really good officers working in the service.*

BOUTELLIS: What would happen once they found out, as the background investigation was going, that the person really didn't graduate from secondary school or so on? Were they dismissed or were they given the chance to reintegrate?

MUSLIU: *I was not directly involved in this but from what I could see and understand is that they would initially be dismissed from the service and I think they would be given the chance to complete that year, the final years, or the remaining part of their secondary school education and then return back to the service. I saw some of the people that were terminated from the service because of not reporting this or giving false diploma. Then, after six months or one year or two years, I would see them back in the service. So I think they were enabled to do this.*

BOUTELLIS: To your knowledge were there many former police officers, officers who had served prior to '99 in the Yugoslavian police who were in the new Kosovo Police Service?

MUSLIU: *Yes. I met some of them that used to work in the former police force and that were hired by the Kosovo Police Service. I think they had the same opportunities like other people to apply and join the service. But I also know that some others that were older by age they were not able to join the service, maybe from their health condition or maybe because they were not able to pass the written examination.*

BOUTELLIS: Now moving to training and professionalization. You witnessed, of course, field training because you were in the field while this was taking place. Do you have any knowledge of the training in the academy?

MUSLIU: *I think in the academy officers would get only basic training: saluting, marching, learning about the regulations, about basic investigations. They would be told about human rights, community policing, just the basic three months training in the academy. In the beginning of the program it was said that after the officers graduate they would be distributed throughout Kosovo to police stations and start initial work in the patrol unit where they would get the training from the international police officers: like the way they're supposed to conduct patrols, vehicle check points, the way they should interact with the population, the way they should behave, the way they should receive parties' complaints, witnesses.*

Also, when they finished the period of training in patrol they would then be temporarily assigned to other units like, for example, one to three months in the unit of investigations, community policing, intelligence and the other units also in the role of security officers for the police station. Then—I think it was mandatory to do this. After they did this they would have the right to apply for a permanent position wherever they see that they fit.

BOUTELLIS: How was the field training functioning with the international CIVPOL or UN police? Did everything have to be translated and how well did the system function?

MUSLIU: *I think in most occasions, everything had to be translated from English to Albanian. The thing is that we had, at the station level, international officers coming from all around the world. I think the training was not unique uniform training. It was different training given by officers coming from different countries, the EU, the US, Asia and Africa. I think UNMIK did not have a uniform training for the KPS officers so officers were trained in different ways, the ways officers are trained in the US, the EU countries, Africa and Asia so the training was not the same for all of them. Sometimes they had different supervisors from different countries. They had to get used to different ways of policing. At the same time while getting this field training officers were sent from time to time to the police academy to get training on investigations again, basic investigations, advanced investigations, courses on human rights, courses on first line supervisory level, courses of management, middle management.*

While time was passing, Vushtrri/Vučitrn Academy was providing this to the local police officers. I believe most of them had the occasion and chance to attend the training and advance themselves in the profession.

BOUTELLIS: How is the promotion system functioning because all officers regardless of their background level of education, whether they were former police or not were recruited at the same level, right?

MUSLIU: *Yes, regardless of their background history, I believe officers had to apply. If they were ordinary officers they had to apply for the rank of sergeant. If then there was a vacancy for lieutenant, all sergeants were eligible. But I believe that before they had the chance or opportunity to apply for higher rank, they must have gone through a period of time to serve in that certain rank. So all had the possibility to apply. They would have a written test and then also a verbal test. And also at the same time they had to pass the background test.*

BOUTELLIS: Was the system of promotion perceived as fair by the KPS officers?

MUSLIU: *I can just relate to comments made. I did not experience something myself. I didn't see something myself. According to comments made by officers, some of*

them said that they had good relationship with some internationals working in some positions of recruitment and promotion. Then they would get a higher rank much easier. Then later on when KPS was taking over these responsibilities people were saying that the key people in the promotion process had friends. They would favor their own friends. My personal opinion is that these things have taken place. I think that there are some ranked officers—in general the ranked officers are fine, they're good, but some have taken high ranks and do not have the intellectual capacity to keep the position or they do not have much to contribute to the position and to their officers and to the overall public.

BOUTELLIS: In terms of accountability, oversight for these kinds of issues and also violations committed by police. What are the mechanisms and are they functioning, the mechanisms of internal oversight or external oversight to the police. What are the mechanisms that exist?

MUSLIU: *To oversee what the police are doing?*

BOUTELLIS: Yes.

MUSLIU: *I think until recently we did not have a local oversight unit—like I would refer to the Police Inspectorate of Kosovo (PIK), which is a part of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, established very lately, I believe in 2006 or 2007. This PIK is still going like the KPS went in the beginning. They are being established. They are also training their own people how to do the work, how to oversee or monitor the performance of KPS. The PIK is responsible to look also at the conduct of the police, the police performance. They can also oversee the internal investigations made by KPS or even criminal investigations to make sure that the investigations are going properly. Also with the new law and the KPS regulations and the regulation of the PIK they will be dealing from now on with cases, I believe, more serious cases of police misconduct.*

BOUTELLIS: There are not police officers staffing the police inspectorate, they're civilians?

MUSLIU: *I believe they are an independent body, which is a part of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. They are all civilians.*

BOUTELLIS: And they're civil servants, they're not appointed politically?

MUSLIU: *I think they are civil servants, yes.*

BOUTELLIS: Aside from the PIK are there other organizations like NGOs or others that also monitor what the police are doing and maybe also advise?

MUSLIU: *Yes, I believe OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) is also monitoring the performance of KPS, I think more specifically in respect to human rights of individuals. I believe OSCE makes reports from time to time about their opinion and findings of KPS performance in different station levels, in different regions, and make some kinds of reports and present them to the police and other concerned agencies or stakeholders.*

We have the local Council for the Protection of Human Rights. They also take care that human rights are respected, rights of protestors, rights of suspects, imprisoned persons. As a result of this, the Kosovo Police Service in 2006 has enabled members of the local Council for the Protection of Human Rights to visit detention cells. They were provided with ID cards that need to be renewed every

six months or every year. They have the right to go to every police station, to every detention center, visit persons in prison and speak to them and ask them if they're treated well or if they have any complaint against the police. These are the organizations and I believe there could be some others, which I can't remember right now.

BOUTELLIS: Is the Council for the Protection of Human Rights a Kosovo organization?

MUSLIU: *Yes it is a Kosovo organization. An NGO.*

BOUTELLIS: The next area is the politicization. Are there any concerns of the political influence in the KPS, the politicization or potential politicization?

MUSLIU: *In the beginning, the Kosovo Police Service and now the Kosovo Police is a nonpolitical agency, it is apolitical. It is like an objective service that has no—that is not supposed to have any links with the politics or economics. It is an independent agency, which is under the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The Minister of Internal Affairs does not have any operational rights over the service but I believe it manages, has some impact on the budget of the service when the service makes requests every year for the budget.*

I believe that until now there was very little or maybe no political interference or impact on the work of the service but I cannot say whether there were attempts made to have this interference on officers, low ranked or high ranked. Of course officers may have their preferences on politics but I think that they're doing their job in an objective manner without speaking to each other on politically related things. Maybe in private, yes, but until now I did not hear any conversation or see something that was political amongst officers.

BOUTELLIS: After the Declaration of Independence of Kosovo earlier this year, a number of Serbian ethnic KPS officers did not show up at work. Can you describe what happened and the impact? You were here at the headquarters level so how did it impact the organization at headquarters level?

MUSLIU: *Following the Declaration of Independence of course there was joy on the part of the majority but the opposite on the minority because they did not accept the new reality that was created for over eight years in Kosovo.*

BOUTELLIS: Just to clarify, there are other minorities in Kosovo than the Serbian minority?

MUSLIU: *Yes, Bosnians, Gorans, Egyptians, Turks. I believe most of them celebrated. Most of them apart from the Serbs because they did not accept the new reality here, the new reality that was created with the building of agencies, building of local institutions, the government, the properly elected government, parliament, the entire new reality.*

In the beginning officers were not happy with this. I believe their intention was not to report any longer to the local police force but to report to the international police force, because by reporting to the local police force then they would recognize themselves the new reality, the independence of Kosovo. They still wanted to be within or under the international police force in order to say that they are still under Resolution 1244. By that, then they would say they wouldn't accept the reality. I think that many of them want, to still be a part of the new reality of the new service, but having in consideration that the overall Serb population has boycotted the institutions, that they don't recognize the

institutions, the new reality. They are under pressure from the people because they are a part of the people. They are under their pressure, under the pressure of parallel structures, which definitely exist in Kosovo and everybody knows that. They are under huge pressure of structures from Serbia itself and the government.

They were also promised to have salaries from Serbia and I believe until now some of them were constantly receiving salaries even from the past. Although they are KPS officers, they also received salaries from Serbia.

BOUTELLIS: Were there some Serbian KP officers here at headquarters level?

MUSLIU: *Most of them boycotted the service.*

BOUTELLIS: Prior to the declaration, were there some at headquarters level of the KP?

MUSLIU: *Yes, Serb KPS were represented at the main headquarters.*

BOUTELLIS: At all levels.

MUSLIU: *At all levels. Station level, regional level, and HQ level.*

BOUTELLIS: What were some of the highest ranking Serbian officers, what were their positions?

MUSLIU: *Station commander, station commanders in areas inhabited mostly by Serbs and also in some areas with mixed population where Albanians were the majority. I think still in Kamenica there was a Serb station commander in charge. Kamenica is mostly inhabited by Albanians. They had the rank of colonel in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica region, Deputy Regional Commander for KPS in administration and operations. The Director of Traffic for all Kosovo is a Serb Lieutenant Colonel, and I think also some other units within the police service.*

BOUTELLIS: These do not turn up at work any more, the Director of Traffic, the Deputy Regional Commander.

MUSLIU: *Yes, the Director of Traffic and some other officers that used to work in the office of the main headquarters have not turned up to work. I think only a very, very small number of them, while the KPS colonel that used to work in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica I think he is still working there because officers in the north have not boycotted the service. They are still working because Mitrovicë/Mitrovica region has not transitioned and they report to UNMIK police. But Serb KPS, they have boycotted the KPS in areas where KPS had already transitioned. They no longer wanted to report to the local service but they wanted to report to internationals.*

BOUTELLIS: What is the position of the KP now and how is the situation addressed and the position of the international police on this issue? Are they encouraging them to return to the police service?

MUSLIU: *Yes, in fact KPS have their own rules and regulations apart from UNMIK. They clearly state that if you have such situations, similar situations, officers have to be suspended for a certain period of time pending the result of investigations. Usually the suspension should be without pay, but in this case, having into consideration the situation, the circumstances, and that local Serb police officers*

are under huge pressure either by the population, political structures, or the Serbian government. The local police along with the Minister of Internal Affairs have decided, made the decision to extend the suspension but with pay. So officers although they're not showing up to work, are still getting their salaries. International police along with the local police have met these individuals a few times, maybe too often. They have asked them to come back to the service and also, if they boycotted the service, even if they return back they would go back to their previous positions and previous ranks and there would be no consequences for them, just for them to return back. They did this on TV, on radio, and in the written press as well, asking all of them to return back. It is the will and desire of the management level of the KP to have these officers back and continue working together.

BOUTELLIS: So their positions are remaining open?

MUSLIU: *Still, yes, but of course this thing cannot go on for an indefinite period of time. The decision is that it still continues like this and the service is still open for them.*

BOUTELLIS: Now we've talked about a number of different areas. I'd like to look at the broader process of building the Kosovo Police. What do you think are now the priorities, the main priorities that remain in terms of having the Kosovo Police being able to work on its own?

MUSLIU: *One challenge remains, the return of Serb KPS officers back to the service, to patrol in the proper manner in the north of the country, to have control over all other staff throughout the country. Currently the Kosovo Police have their own strategic plan for 2008-2010 where every individual pillar, concerned pillar, presented their own strategic plans and objectives that they are supposed to fulfill during this period of time. They reflected their strategic plans and objectives according to the overall strategic plan and objectives plan of the police—of the Kosovo Police.*

Within these plans they have some objectives which I have not read personally, but I believe that their strategic plans are to have a vision for the future to complete the staff of the police, to have proper training for police, proper equipment and also try to join other police organizations like Europol, Interpol and some other important police centers and organizations of the world, which is not easy of course.

BOUTELLIS: Are there any innovations or experiments that you know about in the Kosovo Police? Things that have been tried or specific units or specific policies that have been particularly successful and you think merit more attention that we could learn from for other police services?

MUSLIU: *The Kosovo Police is a relatively new police force and over this period of time of more than eight years, they have managed to build a new police force that has over 7200 police officers and another 1500 civilian personnel that help the police officers in administrative issues. I think that the KPS has achieved a lot over this period of time knowing that it is a relatively new police service. In some areas, they are even more developed than the police forces of the neighboring countries. I think that the police service has done a lot in the training of its people, of people working in sensitive and special fields of work like investigations, organized crime, financial crime, economic crime and corruption. There are some police officers there that received in-service training at Vushtrri/Vučitrn Academy and training abroad like the US, EU and Turkey.*

I think that it is also the overall perception and some services that were made that the police service is not corrupt at the management level. But there are comments and some services have said there is some small corruption, minor corruption with the traffic police. They are given cash in order not to give traffic tickets. So there is minor corruption at the low level, on the field level mainly with traffic, but no other corruption.

BOUTELLIS: Now I'd like to turn to the international community. You've been working for several years for UNMIK together with the Kosovo Police.

MUSLIU: Yes.

BOUTELLIS: Are there particularly UN management or policies that you think could be better, that could be changed to help you and the UN police do their job more effectively, that could have helped them do a better job? Do you have suggestions?

MUSLIU: *I can't remember anything that I could propose at this moment. I just think related to the police that UNMIK police should have had a uniform training program for the Kosovo Police Service, now the Kosovo Police, so that all officers received the same training. For example, in the school the officers received uniform training but when they went out in the field the training was much different. They had to adapt to the training on the field and they became accustomed to that. This is one point about the training of the local police. Also I think the most successful story of UNMIK mission here is the Kosovo Police Service, which is multiethnic, multi-gender, I believe free from corruption, apart from some deficiencies as I said before in the promotion process. The other thing would be for instance sometimes officers would come here and serve for a period of six months, many of them for a period of one year. Still there are a few that have served here for 1-1/2 years, even two years, maybe even three years. Why I'm saying this is that, in the beginning UNMIK police had executive powers. For example, in sensitive fields like crime, including general crime you had international investigators working in very serious cases like murders of high profile politicians, murders of police officers, local police officers who were investigators for example. When the internationals took over cases to investigate they started conducting the investigations. When they reached a certain point of the investigations their time came up, they had to leave the mission so new ones had to come and it took them maybe three or four months to get familiar with the case. So they were for six months here they had to work only another two months actively in the case so their time would be over, the new ones had to come in.*

I think that's why some of their cases have failed because of this and because we did not have officers for a longer period of time to investigate the case. Whenever we would have a new officer coming they would conduct the same procedures, they would call the victims again, the witnesses again. Even four or five times in a row. Even victims and witnesses would feel tired of that. They would say, "I gave the same statement over three or four times." Then finally the cases would be handed over to the local police, some of them, not all of them, which in my personal view is a bit late and maybe less facts and less possibility to solve and detect, perpetrators.

At least there are other things for example, we had officers here that were experts in the field of investigations, close protection or special police units and did not work in these fields. For example, an investigator because of his or her

own CV or in order to have better possibilities and opportunities in the future would apply in the post of close protection unit, an investigator working there. They wouldn't give the contribution they're supposed to give but they would just come here to gain something. Maybe you would have a close protection officer teaching the local police investigative work, which I think is not the proper thing instead of giving the proper lectures. These would be some points that I have.

BOUTELLIS: A last question, what do you think as UNMIK is drawing down, transitioning to EULEX but EULEX has a lighter mandate and they will progressively transition, what do you think would be the biggest challenges the Kosovo Police will face when the UN and the international community withdraw?

MUSLIU: *I think until now there were about 2000 or 2500 international police officers and 7200 local police officers. So I think until now UNMIK police in one way recently helped the local police by taking some of the tasks. I think that when UNMIK police downsize and fully withdraw, in the meantime the local police have to take over more responsibilities. I believe in the beginning it will be a burden for them because maybe they're not used to dealing with a huge overload of work and just in the meantime would get used to that. On the other hand EULEX is here to help the local authorities, the police, justice and the customs service. I'm speaking on the police side, they will have around 1400 or 1500 internationals and maybe half the number of internationals would be, about 500, would be locals. That would help the internationals. Their main activity would be to monitor, mentor, and advise the local police, help them in their work and also have some executive powers on the other hand on investigations and also use corrective powers when they see local police not respecting regulations or not doing the work properly.*

I think EULEX will still be helping the local police, helping in capacity building, helping in training, also providing advice to the local police when they do not know what to do or perform in a certain case or situation. I think they will benefit from EULEX to meet the EU policing standards, human rights and other possible standards and also join more easily Europol, Interpol and some other organizations.

BOUTELLIS: Do you have any final comments?

MUSLIU: *I would like to thank you for the interview, it was my pleasure and I hope also in the capacity of language assistant, because as language assistant, I'm talking about myself—when I translate something usually I just translate it, but I don't keep it in my mind because that's my job, just to translate. But, I hope I contributed somehow with what I could remember. Also, this is my first interview.*

BOUTELLIS: Muhamet, thank you very much.