

# Kosovo – six centuries of conflict



Mediaeval Kosovo is viewed by Serb nationalists as their ancestral homeland. The golden era of the Orthodox Christian Nemanje dynasty (1169-1355) ended in defeat at the epic battle of Kosovo Polje, heralding 500 years of Turkish Ottoman rule

■ **1974:** Yugoslav constitution recognises autonomous status of Kosovo, giving province de facto self-government

■ **1990:** Ethnic Albanian legislators declare Kosovo independent. Belgrade dissolves Kosovo's autonomous assembly

■ **Mar 1999:** Peace talks in France end in failure. NATO begins bombing Yugoslavia

■ **May:** Milosevic indicted for war crimes and crimes against humanity

■ **Jun:** After 72 days of NATO bombing Milosevic pulls forces out of Kosovo. Thousands of Serb civilians flee Kosovo during wave of revenge attacks

■ **2001:** Kosovo holds first general election. Rugova elected president

■ **2005:** UN Security Council talks on Kosovo's future are mediated by former Finnish president **Martti Ahtisaari**

■ **2006:** Milosevic dies from heart attack during war crimes trial at The Hague

■ **2007:** Ahtisaari proposes Kosovo independence, supervised by European Union – talks end in deadlock

■ **Jan 9, 2008:** Ex-guerrilla commander **Hashim Thaci** elected premier – promises independence for Kosovo



■ **Feb 17:** Kosovo declares independence, recognised by U.S., UK and others. Belgrade, supported by Russia, denounces declaration as illegal

■ **1389:** Turks defeat Serb Prince Lazar at **Kosovo Polje – Field of the Blackbirds**. Over next hundred years religious and ethnic balance tips in favour of Muslims and Albanians



■ **1690-1738:** Brutal Turkish suppression of Serbian rebellions results in waves of Serbs abandoning Kosovo



■ **1912, Balkan Wars:** Serbia regains control of Kosovo from Turks, recognised by 1913 **Treaty of London**

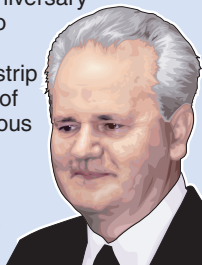
■ **1918:** After World War I Kosovo integrated into new nation – **Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes**, in 1929 renamed **Yugoslavia**

■ **1941-45, World War II:** Most of Kosovo becomes part of Italian-controlled **Greater Albania** which sides with Nazi Germany. **Josip Broz Tito** – a Croat – leads guerrilla fighters against Germans. After victory, Tito heads Communist government in Yugoslavia until his death in 1980



■ **1981-89:** Following death of Tito, Albanian militants drive many Serbs from Kosovo. **Albanian majority rises to 90%**

■ **1989:** Yugoslav President **Slobodan Milosevic** uses 600th anniversary of Kosovo Polje to begin to strip province of autonomous status, declaring Albanian language unofficial



■ **1992:** Academic **Ibrahim Rugova** is elected president of break-away republic

■ **1998:** Separatist **Kosovo Liberation Army** seizes control of 40% of Kosovo. Milosevic mounts campaign of ethnic cleansing against Kosovar Albanians

