

Kosovo to pick a state flag


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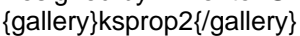
Kosovo has no provincial flag. Whenever an official flag is used, the United Nations' flag is flown. Most ethnic-Albanians will display the Albanian state flag, whilst Serbs will use the Serbian state flag. There is no current or historic national, provincial or regional flag that represents Kosovo's territory.

Ibrahim Rugova, the first president of Kosovo introduced the "flag of Dardania" on October 29, 2000. The flag with the Albanian eagle bears the legend "Dardania", the ancient word for Kosovo, but is not officially recognized by any international power. This flag didn't gain much popularity.

When Kosovo gains independence from Serbia as a result of the UN-sponsored talks, the new state will require national symbols including a new flag. A competition was held in June 2007 which received 993 entries for a design for any new flag. Under the terms of UN talks, all such symbols would have to reflect the multi-ethnic nature of Kosovo, avoiding the use of the Albanian or Serbian double-headed eagles or the use of solely red and black or red, blue and white colour schemes. Additionally, all entries have to be rectangular and have a 2:3 proportion. A total of 700 proposals met these criteria. A group of Kosovo politicians and experts known as the "Unity Team" selected three designs which would go forward for a vote by the Assembly of Kosovo (with a two-thirds majority required for approval).

The three proposals selected were forwarded to the Assembly on 4 February 2008.

The proposals:  Blue field with a white map of kosovo surrounded by 5 stars. The stars vary in size and represent the different ethnic groups that reside in Kosovo. The largest star would represent ethnic Albanians. Designed by Mentor Shala and Besnik Nuli.

 A vertical tricolour of black, white and red. Designed by Valon Sylja.

 A vertical tricolour of black, white and red with a spiral symbol in the center of the white strip.