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**EDITORIAL**

## **Kosovo's New Chance**

The indictment of a prime minister on war crimes charges hardly seems like good news, but for troubled and bloodied Kosovo, that's what it is, or at least should be. When Ramush Haradinaj, who had been prime minister of the provincial government for only about three months, resigned yesterday after being informed of his indictment by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, it gave Kosovo's ethnic Albanians a new chance to show they deserve independence.

Choosing Mr. Haradinaj in the first place was one of several distressing signs that the Kosovo Albanians were not yet ready for running their own country, which would require them to guarantee the rights and security of the Serb minority. Less than a year ago, ethnic Albanians went on a rampage that left 19 Serbs dead and 900 wounded.

Mr. Haradinaj has been accused by the Serbs of committing atrocities in the Decani region of western Kosovo when he was a commander there of the Kosovo Liberation Army, the guerrilla army that battled Serb forces in the late 1990's. He has denied any wrongdoing, but K.L.A. fighters were reported to be responsible for killing Serbs and ethnic Albanians suspected of collaborating with Serb rule.

An international review this summer is supposed to determine whether Kosovo has met the standards of governance and interethnic harmony that would justify granting it independence under a timetable set by the Security Council. It's been clear lately that Kosovo's leaders have failed the test. But the Kosovo Albanians could take a big step toward countering that impression by choosing a new prime minister who is not tainted by his actions during the battles with the Serbs and who could serve as a moderating, uniting influence in the divided province.