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## **TURKEY URGES MUSLIM COUNTRIES TO RECOGNIZE KOSOVO**

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Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Numan Kurtulmus called Friday for the recognition of Kosovo by Muslim countries.

Kurtulmus was on an official visit to Kosovo's capital Pristina to hold a number of meetings and to participate in the April 23 Kosovo Turks National Day reception.

"Kosovo's recognition would add strength to the Islamic world," he said after a meeting with President Hashim Thaci and Parliament Speaker Kadri Veseli.

"We see Kosovo as one of the countries with which Turkey has emotional bonds, said Kurtulmus. Here we are once again calling on all Islamic countries to recognize the independence of Kosovo as soon as possible."

"Kosovo is a European country which at the same time has a great Islamic culture, therefore it is one of the most important islamic countries in the western world," said Kurtulmus.

Kurtulmus also emphasized that people of Turkey and the countrys institutions had always supported Kosovo.

"We are using all the facilities we have for development of Kosovo, revitalization of the Ottoman heritage, development of our common cultural values," said Kurtulmus.

Kurtulmus on Saturday will participate the opening ceremony of a mosque that was renovated by TİKA [Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency] in Janjevo in southeastern Kosovo before attending an event organized for the April 23 Kosovo Turks national holiday.

Kosovo is a former Serbian province populated by nearly 1.8 million people, over 90 percent of whom are Kosovo Albanians.

It declared independence on Feb. 17, 2008, and is recognized by over 100 countries, including the U.S., the U.K, France, Germany and Turkey.

Serbia, Russia and China are among countries that have not yet recognized the Kosovos independence.

Algeria, Azerbaijan, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Morocco, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Palestine are some of the Islamic countries that have not recognized Kosovo's independence mostly because of their political

ties with Russia via Serbia or the U.S.'s direct support to Kosovo's breaking away from Serbia.

<http://aa.com.tr/en/turkey/turkey-urges-muslim-countries-to-recognize-kosovo/559724>

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