

## **Information on disposition of remains**

(Updated June 2015)

REF: [7 FAM 260](#)

The following information is submitted in accordance with the referenced requirements. Post has located only one mortuary service in this area. The laws cited are from the national law of Kosovo.

### **Part I. Name of Country**

**KOSOVO**

### **Part II. U.S. Embassy Information**

U.S. Embassy in Pristina, Kosovo

Nazim Hikmet 30,

10000 Pristina, Kosovo

Phone: +381 (0)38 5959-3000; Consular section +381 (0)38 5959-3119

Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

After Hours Phone: +381 (0)38 5959-3000

[Country Specific Information](#)

[Fact Sheet for Kosovo](#)

[Enroll with the U.S. Embassy](#)

### **Part III. Funeral Directors, Mortician and Related Services Available in Kosovo**

**DISCLAIMER: The U.S. Embassy Consular Section in Pristina, Kosovo assumes no responsibility or liability for the professional ability or reputation of, or the quality of services provided by, the following persons or firms. Professional credentials and areas of expertise are provided directly by the funeral directors, morticians, and other service providers. The U.S. Embassy is aware of only one funeral provider in Kosovo.**

#### **Funeral Service**

“Loti” Mortuary Services

Director: Bashkim Kameri

Ulpiana U3/H3 Nr.20, Pristina, 10000 Pristina, Kosovo,

phone +377 (0)44 113 641, +377 (0)44 379 802

email: [loti\\_company@yahoo.com](mailto:loti_company@yahoo.com)

### **Part IV. Profile of services available in the host country regarding preparation and shipment of remains**

Death is a time of crisis for one's family and friends no matter where it takes place. If death occurs overseas, the experience can be even more traumatic, especially if the procedures involved are not

clearly understood. The American Citizen Services Unit (ACS) can assist family and friends in the event of the death of an American in Kosovo. The ACS Unit can act as a liaison in arranging the disposition of remains and help with forwarding personal effects on your behalf if there is no one present to do so. Always reports deaths or medical emergencies to the local authorities (the 911 equivalent in Kosovo is 112).

When reporting a death to the Embassy, please convey the deceased person's name, date and place of birth, passport number, date and place of death, cause of death, and location of the remains, if possible. The Embassy also needs the full name and phone number of the next of kin if available, and information as to whether or not the next of kin has already been notified.

Even if no assistance is needed in making funeral arrangements, the death of an U.S. Citizen, whether resident or tourist, should be reported to the ACS Unit so that a “[Consular Report of Death of an American Citizen Abroad](#)” can be issued. This document is necessary to settle legal and estate matters in the United States.

In cases where the Embassy learns of the death of an American in Kosovo, we will determine as quickly as possible who is the next of kin of the deceased and contact that person by telephone immediately. The Embassy will seek to assist the next of kin in carrying out their wishes. Generally, the next of kin is the spouse, adult children, parent(s), or the siblings of the deceased.

Next of kin must complete an [Affidavit of Surviving Spouse or Next of Kin](#), have it notarized, and send both a color copy by email and the original by express mail if not present in Kosovo. If present in Kosovo, the next of kin may complete the form in the ACS Unit and have it notarized during business hours. This affidavit is for Embassy use in assisting with the disposition of remains and provisional disposition of effects. This affidavit does not serve in place of decisions made by a will, probate, and/or litigation in determining the final disposition of the deceased's effects, possessions, and/or funds.

Deaths of U.S. military members, including civilian, should be reported to the appropriate branch of service, not to the Consular Section. Please contact +381 (0)38 5959-3000 and ask to speak to the Defense Attaché Office during business hours or the Defense Attaché Duty Officer after hours. If the deceased was a retired member of the United States Armed Forces, please let the Embassy know so it can put you in touch with the appropriate service's Office of Mortuary Affairs in the United States. Burial flags are available from the Veteran's Administration for most veterans who were honorably discharged. Contact the VA for details.

#### **a. Disposition of Remains (general information)**

The following general information is provided to assist families in their initial decisions. Indicated costs are estimates based on deaths with no unusual circumstances and should be considered for guidance purposes only. U.S. funeral home costs will need to be added when repatriation is chosen. *Many regulatory and documentary procedures and requirements, including those outlined here, are still evolving in Kosovo and are subject to change without notice.*

Costs for all options will vary depending on from where the remains must be transported and the quality of casket desired. The varying exchange rate of the U.S. Dollar and the Euro will also affect these costs.

Please note that all costs listed here are estimates, and are subject to change. The ACS Unit will work with the funeral service to ensure proper documentation for shipment of remains to the United States if that is the instruction. Should you decide to have the burial take place in Kosovo, local officials will take every possible care to follow your wishes.

The costs for burial in Kosovo (not embalmed) are approximately \$1,500. Should you decide to have your loved one's remains returned to the United States for burial, the costs would be substantially greater due to the high cost of airfreight and embalming. The total cost for preparation and air shipment of the remains to the United States can start from \$8,000 to \$12,000 depending on final destination. For exchange rate information, please go to <http://web.gfs.state.gov/xrates.htm>.

## **b. Morgues**

If a U.S. citizen dies in Kosovo, the remains will normally be taken to the morgue at the Department of the Forensic Medicine in Pristina located within University Clinical Center complex. This facility is the sole morgue in Kosovo. There is no fee for these storage facilities. Tel: +381-(0)38-200-18-555.

## **c. Special circumstances**

In cases of death under suspicious circumstances, local law officials will make determination for further steps, including autopsy requirements. Based on [local law on infectious diseases](#), in case of deaths with infectious disease, the Kosovo Food and Veterinary Agency is required to issue certain certificates. Contact information is available at <http://www.auv-ks.net/?page=1,18> or by calling Mr. Ibrahim Tershnjaku at +381(0)38-200-38-358, +377-(0)44-160-700. The funeral home is responsible for coordinating issuance of the certificate with the Food and Veterinary Agency.

Many factors can affect how much time will be needed to prepare your loved one's remains for return to the United States. Because of these many variables, it is best not to make final plans for a ceremony until the Embassy and funeral home with which you are working can provide a firm timetable.

The Embassy cannot authorize any preparation of remains until funds are deposited. Therefore, it is imperative that the necessary funds and instructions are provided as soon as possible.

- **Direct Bank Wire Transfer to the Mortuary Service** If costs are to be borne by relatives or friends in the United States, the quickest means of transmission is to make an arrangement directly with the mortuary service to transfer funds electronically.
- **Telegraphic Transfer** If that is not possible, you can telegraphically send funds to the Office of Overseas Citizens Services (OCS), Department of State, Washington, D.C. for forwarding to the Embassy in Pristina and later to the mortuary service in Kosovo. Any unused funds will be returned after all bills have been paid.

To send funds via the Department of State, please call **1-888-407-4747** from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. EST weekdays. Funds sent during non-business hours may not be processed until the next business day. Also visit the [State Department's travel site, "Sending Money to U.S. Citizens Overseas."](#)

#### **d. Shipping**

In-country transportation by car is available. Please see funeral services for additional information, including costs. International shipping is available. Major airlines like Lufthansa, Turkish Airlines, and Adria offer flights, though they are limited in number route and subject to frequent cancelation and delays. Shipment costs are determined by the airline after the remains are accepted for shipment. However, the air shipment of remains alone can start from \$8,000 to \$12,000 depending on the final destination. This does not include cost for preparation and in-country transportation of remains. Please note that there are no direct flights from Pristina to the United States so there must be at least one stop in a third country, usually Austria, Germany, Slovenia, or Turkey. If the remains change airlines, they must enter quarantine and remain there for 24 hours; any associated costs will be included in the shipment expenses. Cargo services should be notified in advance about the transportation of remains.

#### **e. Local authorities responsible for making findings regarding the cause of death and for issuing death local certificates.**

Every death should be recorded in the Death Registry. According to the [Law on Civil Status](#), deaths should be registered in the municipality where death occurred no later than 30 days for deaths occurring within the territory of Kosovo.

**The law generally requires that registration of death is carried out by members of the family of the deceased. When the registration takes place, the person applying for registration of the deceased should present a medical report confirming the death of the person. After receiving a medical declaration of death, the civil status office at the municipality provides the burial permit.**

Kosovo law requires disposition of remains as soon as the permit is issued by the municipal registrar unless the remains are to be shipped outside the country. If unable to get the permit for local disposition of remains, then the municipal registrar should be notified no later than within three working days.

**NOTICE: Please note that if the death registration procedure is not carried out, the law requires the imposition of a fine.**

#### Contact Information

- Municipality web site in Kosovo: <https://kk.rks-gov.net/>
- Department of the Forensic Medicine  
Dr. Arsim Gerxhaliu at +377-44-333-111, +386-49-333-111  
office +381-38-200-18-555.  
Email: [Arsim.Gerxhaliu@rks-gov.net](mailto:Arsim.Gerxhaliu@rks-gov.net)  
<http://www.md-ks.org/?page=1,26> (Albanian only)

#### ***(1) Maximum Period Before Burial***

Kosovo law does not specify maximum period before burial. However disposition of remains can be carried out as soon as the burial permit is issued by the municipal registrar unless the remains are to be shipped outside the country. Remains can be preserved at a morgue's cold storage facilities until repatriated to the United States.

Local burial is available in all municipalities in Kosovo. Fees are governed by local city halls. The example below is applicable for the Pristina municipality.

### ***Burial in Pristina***

Fees include the casket, preparation, and burial. A plot in the local cemetery (located in the Dragodan area of Pristina) currently costs 60 Euros, and 30 Euro charge is levied for the site work. Transportation costs of approximately 1.5€~ (approx. \$2) per kilometer each way should be added to the above total.

The local cemetery in Pristina is run by “Hortikultura.” Its telephone number is: +381-(0)38-248-071, +381-(0)38-229-171. Email: [hortikultura@hotmail.com](mailto:hortikultura@hotmail.com)

### ***(2) Embalming***

Both superficial embalming and full embalming is performed upon request (preferably within 10 hours) and after paying the appropriate fees to the funeral service.

### ***(3) Cremation***

Cremations are not performed in Kosovo; the only options for disposition of remains are local burial or repatriation to the United States.

### ***(4) Caskets and Containers***

The funeral service “Loti” provides caskets; the cost varies by quality.

### ***(5) Exportation of Remains***

For repatriating remains to the United States, it is necessary to have your loved one’s remains prepared for shipment, make shipping arrangements with an airline, and obtain certain documents. The funeral service can provide a zinc coffin and wooden packing crate for shipping.

Your loved one's remains will need to be received in the United States by a licensed funeral home. You will need to make arrangements for receipt with the funeral director of your choice. Preparation and air shipment are carried out in accordance with the laws of and facilities available in Kosovo; in some cases, the services fall short of those expected in the United States. We recommend that you ask the U.S. funeral director of your choice to determine the advisability of viewing the remains. In addition, caskets are generally welded shut prior to shipping.

### ***The following documents should accompany the remains:***

#### ***A. Consular Mortuary Certificate***

This document is designed to control the expeditious shipment of the remains and facilitate U.S. customs clearance. The certificate indicates how the shipment is marked, the method of transport to the United States, and the specific place and scheduled time of arrival of the remains at the port of entry (POE). The accompanying documents should be affixed to the consular mortuary certificate, and must be signed by the consular officer and impressed with the consular seal.

### ***B. Certificate of Death***

The appropriate municipality issues a death certificate only after the Medical Report of Death is registered by the family member or designated representative. Because this document is required for burial, shipping, and preparation of the Consular Report of Death Abroad, it is essential that the Medical Report of Death be filed immediately upon receipt.

### ***C. Affidavit by the Local Funeral Director.***

The affidavit or sworn declaration of the funeral director or person responsible for preparing the remains for shipment must state that the casket contains only the remains of the deceased and the necessary clothing and/or packing. When necessary to comply with any state regulations, the affidavit should also contain a statement that the body has been embalmed or otherwise prepared. It should be executed before a consular officer.

### ***D. Transit permit***

Kosovo Food and Veterinary Agency is responsible for issuance of required certificate which serves as a transit permit. Contact information is available at <http://www.auv-ks.net/?page=1,18> or by calling Mr. Ibrahim Tershnjaku at +381(0)38-200-38-358, +377-(0)44-160-700. The funeral home is responsible for coordinating issuance of the certificate with the Food and Veterinary Agency.

### ***(6) Costs***

Preparation of remains charges by Funeral Home "Loti":

* Washing, cleaning and disinfection of the deceased	75 €~ (approx. \$150)
* Superficial embalming	150 €~ (approx. \$300)
* Full embalming	970 €~ (approx. \$1940)
* Dressing and makeup of the deceased	90 €~ (approx. \$180)
* Wooden coffin	500 €~ (approx. \$1000)
* Closing of the wooden coffin and wrapping up	75 €~ (approx. \$150)
* Metallic coffin	210 €~ (approx. \$420)
* Hermetical closing of the metallic coffin	50 €~ (approx. \$100)
* Box (Crates) for international transport	330 €~ (approx. \$660)
* Exhumation	1200 €~ (approx. \$2400)
* Transport	(each way) 2x1.5 €~ (approx. \$3)

NOTICE: The funeral service company does not observe official exchange rate, rather than has its own exchange rate of 1€= \$2. For this reason, it is most beneficial for the next of kin (NOK) or legal representative to pay the services in Euros.

For reference exchange rate information, please go to <http://web.gfs.state.gov/xrates.htm> . All fees and exchange rates are approximate and subject to change without notice.

### ***Cargo Services – airfreight charges***

An airline transportation bill can be obtained through the one of the companies below offering cargo services. The airline determines shipment costs after the remains are accepted for shipment. The approximate weight of a casket prepared for shipment is 200 kilos for an adult and 100 kilos for a child. Please note that there are no direct flights from Pristina to the United States so there must be at least one

stop in a Western European country. If the remains change airlines, they must enter quarantine and remain there for 24 hours; any associated costs are included in the shipment expenses. Cargo services should be notified in advance for the transportation of remains.

General Pristina Airport Cargo support contact person is:

Mr. Edmond Misini, +377-(0)44-176-047, email: [emisini@limakkosovo.aero](mailto:emisini@limakkosovo.aero).

***(a) Turkish Airlines:***

Mr. Armend Sheholli, Cargo Support

Tel. +377-(0)44-466-266, office. +381-(0)38-548-435, e-mail: [cargo@inter.travel](mailto:cargo@inter.travel).

Gross rate per kg from Pristina via Turkish Airlines is between 18.78€-26.14€ (approx. \$25-\$35) plus 10€ (approx. \$14) per airway bill, plus a surcharge of 0.07€ per piece.

***(b) Lufthansa:***

Mr. Armend Sheholli, Cargo Support

Tel. +377-44-466-266, office. +381-38-594-000, e-mail: [mcmcargo@mcm.travel](mailto:mcmcargo@mcm.travel).

Gross rate per kg from Pristina via Lufthansa is 24,22€-34.84€ (approx. \$33-\$47).

Additional charges are: fuel charges 1.20€/kg, security charges 0.20€/kg, agent charge 1.20€/kg plus 0.07€ per piece, HUM charges 95€ (approx. \$130), air waybill 5€ (approx. \$7)

***(c) Adria Airways***

Taib Mehmeti, Cargo Sales and Forwarding Agent

Tel.+377-44-130-072, +381-38-544-742, email: [Taip.Mehmeti@intereuropa.si](mailto:Taip.Mehmeti@intereuropa.si)

The gross rate per kg from Pristina is between 19.55€ - 24.50€ (approx. \$26-\$33). Additional charges are: fuel charges 0.66€/kg, security charges 0.15€/kg, warehouse charges at Pristina airport 0.40€/kg, HUM charges 150€ (approx. \$200), air waybill 30€ (approx. \$40)

***(7) Exhumation and shipment***

Disinterment and shipment to the United States of remains which have already been interred locally is possible. The request can be made to funeral home, which in turn must seek permission with the Kosovo Food and Veterinary Agency. Estimated costs for exhumation, preparation and air shipment of the remains to the United States can run approximately from \$12,500 to \$16,500 depending on final destination.

***(8) Autopsies***

An autopsy is required only by the order of prosecutor. Contact information is available at <http://www.psh-ks.net/?page=2,2>. The U.S. Embassy cannot prevent the authorities from conducting an autopsy when required, nor can it require one when not required under local law.

***(9) Remarks: Airport Service to/from Kosovo***

The Pristina airport is subject to frequent unannounced closures during the months of October, November, December, January, and February due to thick fog and delays and cancellations during other months of the year. In these cases, flights sometimes arrive at Skopje, Macedonia (130km from Pristina) or Tirana, Albania (about 250km from Pristina).

### ***(10). Consular Report of Death of an American Citizen Abroad***

The “[Consular Report of Death of an American Citizen Abroad](#)” is an official report that provides the essential facts concerning the death of a U.S. citizen, and is based on the Kosovo death certificate.

In order to assist you with legal matters that may arise as a result of the death of your relative, certified copies of the “[Consular Report of Death of an American Citizen Abroad](#)” prepared by the U.S. Embassy will be forwarded to you as soon as possible. This document is in English and can generally be used in U.S. courts to help settle estate matters, bank accounts, insurance policies, and similar matters.

To complete the Report of the Death Abroad, the next of kin or legal representative must complete and submit information, which is sent by the Embassy to the next of kin by email. To obtain a duplicate of this information, please send an email to [consularpristina@state.gov](mailto:consularpristina@state.gov) or call the office. Upon receipt of this information and the local Death Certificate, the ACS unit will prepare the “[Consular Report of Death of an American Citizen Abroad](#)” and send originals to the next of kin and/or legal representative. Up to twenty certified copies of the Report of Death are normally issued at the time of death, and will be provided free of charge.

If in the future you find that you need additional copies, please review the information available at the “[Request a copy of a Consular Report of Death Abroad.](#)”

### **Part V. Profile of Religions of the Host Country and Religious Services available to visitors.**

The U.S. government estimates the total population at 1.85 million (July 2013 estimate). Local census data identifies 95.6 percent of the population as Muslim, 2.2 percent as Roman Catholic, and 1.4 percent as Serbian Orthodox. Census categories for “other,” “none,” or “no response” each constitute less than 1 percent. The largest Catholic communities are in Gjakove/Djakovica, Kline/Klina, Prizren, Janjevo, and Prishtine/Pristina. Most Serbian Orthodox Church members reside in ethnically Serb towns and enclaves. Small Protestant populations live in most cities, with the largest concentration located in Prishtine/Pristina. The Jewish community resides primarily in Prizren. The majority of the Muslim population belongs to the Hanafi school. Religion and ethnicity are often linked, with Kosovo Serbs generally belonging to the Serbian Orthodox Church, while the majority of religiously active citizens of Albanian descent identify themselves as Muslim.

*(FROM <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/222443.pdf>. See Background Notes for additional information: <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/100931.htm>)*

Catholic Mass is offered in English every Saturday evening, Sunday morning, and Monday evening at the Catholic Church in Ulpiana (a Pristina neighborhood). A Protestant church called the Fellowship of the Lord’s People is active in Pristina and offers activities organized by the church, as well as English-language services on Sunday mornings. There are also multi-denominational services (including LDS and earth-based religions) at KFOR HQ and at Camp Bondsteel, the American military installation, about 45 minutes south of Pristina. There is no Jewish synagogue in Kosovo, but there is an active community in Skopje, about 75 minutes south of Pristina. Numerous mosques are located in the city, usually opened only for services or tours. *(FROM Post Reports online as of December 8, 2014)*