

**The United States Semiquincentennial:
250 Years as a Beacon of Democracy for the World**
Remarks by the Rector of the University of Prishtina
Professor Arben Hajrullahu
University of Prishtina, July 10, 2026

*Your Excellency, Mr. Albin Kurti, Acting Prime Minister,
Your Excellency, Ms. Wylita Bell, Deputy Chief of Mission, U.S. Embassy in Pristina,
Dear Prof. Justina Shiroka Pula, President of Kosovo Academy of Sciences and Arts,
Esteemed members of the University's Governing Council, Vice Rectors, Deans, Senators,
Professors, Students of the University of Prishtina and universities around the world,
Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished Guests,*

It is a privilege to join you today as we commemorate a truly historic milestone—the 250th anniversary of the independence of the United States of America. This anniversary is far more than the celebration of the birth of a nation; it is a moment to reflect on the ideas that have shaped democratic societies and continue to inspire generations in their pursuit of freedom, justice, and human dignity.

Two hundred and fifty years ago, the Declaration of Independence of the United States transformed not only the course of one nation's history, but also the global conversation about freedom, representation, and the relationship between citizens and those who govern them.

Guided by the enduring ideals of *life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness*, the United States embarked on a journey founded on a profound belief: that every person possesses inherent dignity, that freedom is a fundamental right, and that legitimate government derives its authority from the people it serves.

The call of “*No taxation without representation*” captured this deeper conviction. It was not merely a protest against taxation; it was an affirmation that people have the right to a voice in the decisions that shape their lives, that power must be accountable, and that institutions must be built on the trust and participation of citizens.

From this conviction emerged one of democracy's most enduring lessons: governments exist to serve their people, not the other way around. Freedom is not sustained by

declarations alone; it is protected through institutions that safeguard it, laws that uphold it, and citizens who exercise it responsibly.

This legacy resonates profoundly with the history of the Republic of Kosovo.

Our Declaration of Independence on 17 February 2008 was not the end of our state-building journey. It marked the beginning of a new constitutional era, a commitment to building democratic institutions founded on human dignity, fundamental rights and freedoms, the rule of law, the separation of powers, and the vision of a democratic and multi-ethnic society.

Throughout this historic process, the United States of America has been an exceptional partner of Kosovo. Its support extended beyond our aspiration for freedom and statehood. The United States contributed to the strengthening of our institutions, the development of our constitutional culture, and the consolidation of the democratic values upon which our Republic continues to build its future.

For this enduring friendship and partnership, we express our deepest gratitude.

Yet great anniversaries are not only moments to remember the past. They are moments to reflect on our responsibilities toward the future.

At the University of Pristina, we believe that democracy is strengthened not only in institutions of government, but also in institutions of knowledge. Universities do more than prepare professionals; they prepare citizens. They create spaces where ideas are questioned, knowledge is expanded, and future leaders develop the skills and values needed to serve society.

Every generation inherits the achievements and responsibilities of those who came before it. Every generation must decide how it will protect and advance the principles it has inherited.

Today, as our world faces new challenges, from artificial intelligence and technological transformation to global uncertainty and complex social challenges - the role of education has never been more important. The future will belong not only to those who innovate, but to those who innovate with responsibility, ethics, and a commitment to the common good.

Perhaps the greatest lesson of the American experience is that freedom is never a finished achievement. It is a continuous responsibility.

It is the responsibility of institutions to serve their citizens.

It is the responsibility of universities to cultivate knowledge and integrity.

It is the responsibility of every generation to protect the values that make democratic societies possible.

The future of Kosovo will not be written only in government offices. It is being written today in our classrooms, our laboratories, our communities, and in the minds of young people who will shape the next chapter of our Republic.

As we celebrate the 250th anniversary of American independence, we celebrate a friendship built on shared values and a common belief that freedom, democracy, education, and human dignity remain among humanity's greatest achievements.

May the partnership between Kosovo and the United States continue to inspire future generations to build societies that are more just, more inclusive, and more hopeful.

On behalf of the University of Pristina, I extend my warmest congratulations to the people of the United States of America on this historic anniversary.

Thank you.