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Subject: Kosovo Serbs call referendum on recognising Pristina (Reuters)

KOSOVSKA MITROVICA (Reuters) - Three out of four Serb-run municipalities in Kosovo's tense north decided to hold a referendum in early 2012 to decide whether to recognise Pristina's Kosovo Albanian-dominated government, a local official said on Thursday.

Kosovo, 90 percent ethnic Albanian, declared independence from Serbia in 2008. Serbs dominate in a small swathe of the north bordering Serbia and pledge allegiance to Belgrade, resisting efforts by the Kosovo government to extend authority.

Municipal councils from Kosovska Mitrovica, Zubin Potok and Zvecan run by Serb nationalists scheduled the vote for Feb. 15, but the council of Leposavic, dominated by Democrats loyal to Serbia's President Boris Tadic remained undecided, said Branko Ninic, Leposavic's mayor.

"The Serbian constitution clearly stipulates that Kosovo is part of Serbia and a referendum is not necessary, especially if the move is not coordinated with the government in Belgrade," Ninic said.

The largely lawless region saw outbursts of violence this year after Kosovo authorities, the EU's police mission (EULEX) and NATO peacekeepers (KFOR) tried to take over two border crossings with Serbia in July.

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