

# UNMIK PRESS RELEASE



United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo

UNMIK/PR/447

14 December 2000

## **SRSG Inaugurates Supreme Court of Kosovo**

PRISTINA---SRSG Dr. Bernard Kouchner today inaugurated the Supreme Court of Kosovo.

The Supreme Court is the court of last appeal in Kosovo. It consists of 14 Kosovar judges and two international judges, one of whom, Mr. Antii Ruotsalainen, is already on the panel. All judges are appointed by the SRSG. Mr. Rexhep Haxhimusa is the President of the court.

Speaking to journalists after the opening ceremony, Dr. Kouchner who returned to Pristina this afternoon, said Kosovo had come a long way in the judicial sphere since UNMIK arrived here. "When we came there were no courts, no judges and no prosecutors. Never before in any peacekeeping operation a judicial system has been set up so fast". He cautioned that the justice system here wasn't perfect. There were complaints about it and everyone involved had to work to improve it, SRSG said.

Expressing his happiness that the court had returned to the building where it was located about 10 years ago, the President of the Supreme Court, Mr. Haxhimusa, pledged to abide by the principles laid down in the various international human rights declarations and conventions.

Earlier, co-head of the department of judicial affairs, Ms. Sylvie Pantz welcomed the assembled guests. Among those present were the Supreme Court Registrar, Mr. Rexhep Maqedonci and the five district court presidents. Prosecutors of the Supreme Court and district courts also participated, along with members of the Advisory Judicial Commission, which recommends the appointments to the courts in Kosovo to the SRSG.