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KTC Discusses Mitrovica

PRISTINA---The Kosovo Transitional Council today discussed the situation in Mitrovica and Presevo Valley, with many members expressing support for the Joint Declaration signed between UNMIK, KFOR and Kosovo Albanian leaders.

SRSR Mr. Hans Haekkerup said UNMIK and KFOR were determined to protect communities on both sides of Mitrovica and continue building a secure environment for all of Kosovo. He said UNMIK and KFOR were looking into ways in which the Joint Declaration would be implemented. Additional UNMIK Police, KFOR and KPS officers had already been deployed. He said he has had discussions with representatives of Kosovo Serb community to pave the way for a political process aimed at resolving the tensions in Mitrovica.

After the meeting, Mr. Haekkerup told the media that there were lot of inputs from the members of the KTC on how they see the situation in Mitrovica and mostly support for the line taken in the declaration. He said first and foremost the situation in Mitrovica has to be addressed politically and "I underlined that it was very important that the Kosovo Serbs or relevant representatives of the Kosovo Serbs were behind what we are doing". It was important for the "Kosovo Serbs in Northern Mitrovica to feel secure even if we change the confidence zone as said in the Joint Declaration".

The issue of the lack of KPS officers in supervisory positions was also raised. Others expressed concern about alleged discrimination against members of the former Kosovo Liberation Army in recruitment to the KPS. UNMIK Police Commissioner Christopher Albiston responded that KPS will be run by the KPS after the international community leaves, and a process has already started to develop its supervising structures.

Responding to questions about the detained and the missing, Mr. Haekkerup said that this subject is high on his priority list but all the international community can do is to put pressure on Belgrade. He mentioned the amnesty law, which, he said, will not solve the whole problem. He reiterated that UNMIK had urged the Belgrade authorities to transfer those detainees who are not covered by the amnesty law for their cases to be reviewed by UNMIK. Regarding the missing, he said that UNMIK has to be in contact with Belgrade for as much information as possible that can be had from there.

KTC was informed that the UNMIK travel document had not yet been accepted by the Former Yugoslavia Republic of Macedonia and UNMIK was discussing it with FYROM authorities. EU countries, barring Portugal and the Benelux countries, had all accepted it. As DSRSG Tom Koenigs explained, the travel document does not state nationality but only facilitates travel. KTC members were also able to apply for travel documents, as an exceptional measure.