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IAC URGES DIALOGUE TO SOLVE CONFLICT IN MACEDONIA

PRISTINA – Members of the IAC expressed concern today over the conflict around Tetovo in Macedonia and called for pressure on the FYROM government to quickly begin a dialogue with ethnic Albanians to resolve the crisis.

Ibrahim Rugova, leader of the LDK, Hashim Thaci, PDK and Ramush Haradinaj, AAK, all spoke on the need for talks to take place as soon as possible. They also were concerned at the plight of some 30,000 refugees from the conflict, more than 5,000 of whom have crossed into Kosovo.

UNHCR Deputy Special Envoy Saber Azam supported the need for dialogue, adding that the solution to the crisis would have to be at the political level. He also declared UNHCR had contingency plans to face the situation in Macedonia. All refugees who had arrived in Kosovo were being cared for and that no one had been denied entry.

Rada Trajkovic of the SNC supported the need for care of all persons who are homeless – those from Macedonia and those from Kosovo. She referred to those Albanians who had been forced to flee their homes which were burned during the war in Kosovo and to the 200,000 “innocent Serb civilians” who are now living as refugees.

She called on the Albanian leaders to make every effort to ensure that Serbs be allowed to live normally in this region.