

UNMIK PRESS RELEASE



United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo

UNMIK/PR/553

4 April 2001

NAC Warns Albanians Not to Foment Further Trouble In the Region

PRISTINA---NATO Secretary-General Lord Robertson and members of the North Atlantic Council today delivered a stern warning against any further activities by Albanian extremists in Kosovo, FYROM and the Presevo Valley in Serbia.

Lord Robertson and representatives of the 19 countries on the Council drove home the point that the recent violence was to be deplored and that it undermined the support of the international community for the reconstruction and development of Kosovo.

The NATO chief and the NAC members all participated in meetings today with UNMIK, and with members of the Interim Administrative Council and the Kosovo Transitional Council.

The US ambassador Alexander Vershbow was particularly blunt in speaking at the IAC session, saying there was no parallel between the experiences of the Albanians in Kosovo over the last 10 years and those in Macedonia. He added that the Presevo Valley was a little different but with a new democratic government in Belgrade, to continue the violence would cost the support of donors who would ask "why spend money on people who refuse to play by democratic rules".

Speaking directly to the Kosovo Albanian members of IAC, Mr. Vershbow said the "choice is yours....don't blow it".

In reply, all IAC members said they condemned the violence and expressed their support for the forthcoming visit of SRSR Hans Haekkerup to Belgrade in moving forward with the finalisation of the legal framework for provisional self-government and the release of Kosovo Albanian detainees.

Rada Trajkovic, the Serb member, supported the release of all Albanian political detainees in Serbia and said that those convicted of criminal offences should be handed over to the UNMIK authorities.

Lord Robertson revealed that he had invited Mr. Haekkerup and a delegation representing all Kosovo communities to visit Brussels on April 26 for further talks.

-2/.....

Earlier during a briefing to the visiting delegation, Mr. Haekkerup touched on the issues of the security situation in and around Kosovo, the legal framework and the elections. He said that, unfortunately, the security situation in Kosovo had not improved and the developments in FYROM and Presevo Valley, along with the frustrations of those Kosovars looking for independence, was having a negative impact.

Speaking on the legal framework, the SRSG said it would form the basis for the future provisional self-government and substantial autonomy in which most departments would be transferred to the local authorities. As soon as the draft was submitted to him, he would hold consultations with the interested countries, Belgrade and the international community and also fix the date for the elections.

Mr. Haekkerup said the elections would be held this year, adding that the OSCE was speeding up its work, besides collecting money. He said while there was a question mark on whether Kosovo Serbs would participate in the elections, he was hopeful they would as there were indications to that effect and that they would soon return to the Joint Working Group on the Legal Framework.

Police Commissioner Christopher Albiston briefed the delegation about the crime situation in Kosovo and urged members to use their influence for more exchange of intelligence information between UNMIK Police and KFOR.

DSRSG Andy Bearpark answered questions about the economic prospects of Kosovo, saying they would be as successful as in FYROM or Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, private capital was unwilling to come to Kosovo because of the security situation.