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IAC Discusses Progress Toward Self Government

PRISTINA---Interim Administrative Council members heard a lengthy report today from Johan Van Lamoen, Chairman of the Joint Working Group on the Legal Framework for Provisional Self-Government, and later joined the 25th session of the Group, which plans to produce a draft document by Friday.

Mr. Van Lamoen said that further sessions of the Group, and perhaps extraordinary meetings, would be held next week to finalise the Legal Framework. He said some points still had to be clarified, such as the name of the document---which Kosovo Albanians want called the “interim constitution”, the question of the institution of the Presidency, whether there would be an elected President or the President of an Assembly, and the issue of a constitutional court.

He regretted the non-participation of any Kosovo Serb representatives in all but one of the Working Group meetings but welcomed their announced return for the final sessions. Mr. Van Lamoen added, however, it would be difficult to go “back to page 1 and start all over again.” The Serb IAC member Rada Trajkovic apologized for the absence of the Serb member.

The Kosovo Albanian members Hashim Thaci, Ibrahim Rugova and Ramush Haradinaj, all favoured use of the term “interim constitution” and supported an elected President, parliament and government.

In answer to questions from members, Mr. Van Lamoen said there was no question of the legal framework changing the present boundaries of Kosovo and that any symbols for Kosovo would be regulated by the SRSG. IAC members later joined the ongoing session of the Working Group and congratulated them on the progress made so far.

The SRSG, Hans Haekkerup, also briefed IAC on his visit to Belgrade last week and his talks with Yugoslav President Vojislav Kostunica. He repeated earlier remarks that, in reply to requests regarding the release of Albanian detainees, President Kostunica had stated the question of the Gjakove/Dakovica detainees would be resolved “very soon.”

Mr. Haekkerup also reported he had raised the issue of the 3,000 persons of all communities reported missing in Kosovo – including 1,300 Serbs who disappeared after the arrival of NATO forces. He mentioned the recent request of the Chief Prosecutor of the International War Crimes Tribunal in the Hague, Carla del Ponte, for the cooperation of UNMIK and KFOR in her investigations into possible war crimes committed at that time.