

UNMIK PRESS RELEASE



United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo

UNMIK/PR/550

3 April 2001

SRSG to Visit Belgrade on Thursday

PRISTINA---SRSG Hans Haekkerup today informed the Interim Administrative Council that he would be visiting Belgrade on Thursday to meet with the Yugoslav President Vojislav Kostunica.

Mr. Haekkerup said he would hold talks with Mr. Kostunica on the legal framework, and would press for the release of all Kosovo Albanian detainees held in Serbia. He would also discuss the participation of Kosovo Serbs in the administration and the elections to be held later this year.

He said he would also visit Albania next week, where he would meet Prime Minister Ilir Meta, and discuss the legal framework, on which work had been progressing steadily.

SRSG also reported on his trip to FYROM last week, where he had gained a promise of border opening and said he was pleased to inform the members that the border had indeed opened to all traffic this morning. This would alleviate the problems that the people of Kosovo were facing and ensure supplies of essential goods and medicines to Kosovo.

The Albanian IAC members welcomed Mr. Haekkerup's proposed visit to Belgrade, adding that it was of paramount importance to not only discuss the issue of the detainees, but also achieve concrete results.

The Serb member Rada Trajkovic also supported the idea of Mr. Haekkerup visiting Belgrade, saying that if all the detainees were released it would result in a good atmosphere, conducive to the return of displaced Serbs to Kosovo.

SRSG said it was time that the Belgrade government starts delivering on the various offers of cooperation. "Many people in the Belgrade government say the right things but very little has happened in concrete terms".

COMKFOR Lieutenant General Carlo Cabigiosu, making his final appearance in IAC today, spoke of the Krivenik incident and said that a joint US and Polish KFOR investigation team had gathered evidence on the sequence of events, the type of weapons used, the position from which they would have been fired and the position of the various units in the area at the time. The results of this investigation may be available as early as tomorrow, he stated.

-2/.....

On the joint investigation with the FYROM government, COMKFOR said while KFOR was prepared to help, this was not in place and the FYROM authorities were proceeding with their own investigation. He also informed the members that KFOR had increased its troop levels by nearly two battalions on the Kosovo-FYROM border.

Regarding allegations of KPC involvement in FYROM, Lt. General Cabigiosu said that a check of 4,600 KPC personnel had shown that about 10 per cent were absent, either because they were sick or for other personal reasons. Further checks on those absent had not raised any particular problems.

He further said that of the 44 persons arrested by KFOR while crossing over into Kosovo, 38 had proved to be FYROM citizens and six Kosovars.

The UN Under Secretary-General and head of peacekeeping operations Jean-Marie Guehenno also attended the meeting and he congratulated IAC members on their courage and political conviction and said that IAC provided the type of cooperation that would move Kosovo forward.

The members also discussed the draft regulation on a social welfare scheme for Kosovo. IAC also briefly heard from DSRSG Andy Bearpark on the introduction of the Euro in Kosovo at the end of the year. He said the "EU had two objectives. One to ensure there was a smooth transition and that poor people were not disadvantaged and second the installation of proper controls to avoid such problems as money laundering".

Speaking to journalists after the meeting, SRSG while answering a question on Slobodan Milosevic's arrest said "I think it's very good. Of course, the UN wishes that he should be taken to The Hague. The fact that he has been arrested now is a step in the right direction. This case belongs to the ICTY in The Hague".