

UNMIK



United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo

PRESS BRIEFING

www.unmikonline.org

UNOFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT

Press Briefing Notes

21 March 2007

UNMIK Spokesperson Myriam Dessables
UNMIK Police Spokesperson Thomas E. Lee
KFOR Chief PIO Col. Michael Knop
OSCE Spokesperson Sven Lindholm
EU Pillar Spokesperson Angela Griep

UNMIK Spokesperson Myriam Dessables

Good morning,

The SRSG has wrapped up his visit to New York. In addition to addressing the Security Council, the SRSG met with the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, with other senior UN officials and with Ambassadors from Member States. He is now on his way to Germany where he will attend a conference on Kosovo in Bad Boll on the 23rd - 24th March.

Today at 14:15, the PDSRSG Steven Schook is meeting with a delegation of the Socialist International headed by Sergej Stanishev, Prime Minister of Bulgaria and Mr. George Papandreu - President of the Socialist International and former Foreign Minister of Greece. There will be a Photo-Op at the beginning of the meeting.

We have a new KPC Coordinator. Major General Chris Steirn CBE will depart Kosovo on Friday 23 March after 14 months in post as the KPC Coordinator. He will hand over his duties to Major General Matthew Sykes, from the United Kingdom, who arrived in Kosovo on Monday 19 March. General Sykes was commissioned into the British Royal Artillery in 1976. His most recent appointment was as Director Royal Artillery and his most recent tour of duty was in 2004 when he was the last Deputy Commander of the NATO Stabilization Force (SFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Let me take this opportunity to express UNMIK's sincere gratitude to General Steirn for all his hard work and significant achievements during his time as KPC Coordinator, and extend a warm welcome to General Sykes.

Mr. Philippe DOUSTE-BLAZY, French Foreign Minister will be in Pristina tomorrow. He will meet with PDSRSG Steven Schook and COMKFOR Roland Kather at 14.15.

There will be a photo Op at the beginning of the meeting and a press point at 15.00 hrs here at UNMIK Main HQ

In our countdown press release series we have today a press release on DOJ saying that the Department of Justice combines prosecutions with local capacity building.

The press release says that the Department of Justice (DOJ) has made great strides in the area of prosecuting serious crime, including cases of corruption, terrorism, war crimes and March 2004 riots cases.

The DOJ has also continued the transition of responsibilities to local institutions, the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) and the Kosovo Judicial Council (KJC), and has established the Kosovo Special Prosecutors Office (KSPO) to enable local prosecutors to take on more serious cases in the future, including corruption, organized crime and crimes against public office.

The press release provides statistics on cases being currently worked on by prosecutors. It also highlights what has been accomplished in the area of capacity-building with the Kosovo institutions.

UNMIK Police Spokesperson Thomas E. Lee

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen:

I have one announcement.

Today at 13:00 hours at the Kosovo Police Service Administration Building in Pristina, the new KPS website will be officially launched. The media is welcome to attend this event. This website will contain a great amount of information about the KPS organization which the public and the media will find particularly useful. The web address for this site will be www.kosovopolice.com.

KFOR Chief PIO Col. Michael Knop:

No announcement for today, thank you.

OSCE Spokesperson Sven Lindholm:

HRU Anniversary

One year ago yesterday, Prime Minister Ceku and Ambassador Werner Wnendt signed an agreement increasing OSCE support in the field of human rights to OPM and the ministries of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG). Since that time, the OSCE has provided technical assistance and built the capacity of Human Rights Units in the Office of the Prime Minister and each PISG ministry.

Two days ago, the Prime Minister signed a new Administrative Instruction to institutionalize these Human Rights Units. The AI specifies each ministry's obligations in committing human resources, and in developing the internal organizational structure, information exchange and reporting requirements.

We will celebrate this partnership – based on the principles of promoting human rights – tonight. Welcoming remarks will be delivered by Deputy Prime Minister, Lutfi Haziri, and the Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, Werner Wnendt.

The OSCE Mission in Kosovo will continue to support central and local institutions and the implementation of human rights now and after the status decision.

Media representatives are invited to attend the ceremony, beginning at 17.00, on Wednesday 21 March, at Restaurant Hani 2 Robertve in Prishtine/Pristina.

New Political Party

If no complaints are filed by the end of today, the Party of Democratic Integration (PDI), led by Dejan Veselinovic, will be the 39th party registered in Kosovo.

EU Pillar Spokesperson Angela Griep

Good morning. I have no announcements.

Myriam Dessables: Any questions?

Question: I am interested to know whether the certification rules for the political parties will change. What preparations are ongoing in this regard?

Sven Lindholm: You mean certification for running in elections, yes? Is that what you mean? This is an election rule that will come up when there is an election that is actually called. So, right now there are no certification rules.

Question: Two questions in relation to the events of the 10th of February. Is there any UNMIK Police officer suspended or dismissed from work? And secondly, what kind of additional evidence did the prosecution have when they extended his detention? Against Albin Kurti.

Myriam Dessables: Could you please repeat the second question? I only heard half of it.

Question: What kind of additional evidence did the prosecution have against Albin Kurti following the extension of his arrest for additional two months? Did the prosecution have any additional evidence against him, and which are those evidences?

Myriam Dessables: I don't have details on what the prosecutors had in terms of evidence and I don't know whether these are public but I can check for you and get back to you on this. And I will also check to what extent the information you have asked about the Police is known. I don't have that information; I know that they are still continuing with the investigation. They told me that just last week they interviewed well over one hundred witnesses, but as far as Police is concerned, maybe Tom has more on that.

Thomas Lee: Your question was whether any UNMIK Police officers have been suspended, is that correct? That is no.

Question: Question for Sven. In some municipalities a new political coalition is being created. In the meantime we know that the admin direction for the postponement of local elections has been issued last year. Can we have local elections during this year, following these clashes in local governments that are ongoing?

Sven Lindholm: Regarding the local government, this is a parliamentary system. If the coalition, if the leadership of the parties decide to change it, that is up to them. That is within the rules of the parliamentary system. But as to elections, that of course is going to be determined by what will happen when there is a new Resolution. And I will reread again what was in the proposal for the status settlement, which about elections says no later than nine months from entry into force of the settlement Kosovo shall organize general and municipal elections in accordance with the terms of this settlement and in new municipal boundaries, so we will have to wait and see.

Question: In relation to the 10th February events, I am interested to know: Does UNMIK have any regulation that regulates the way of intervention of international forces in Kosovo? Units from one country have used rubber bullets some others are saying that these rubber bullets are prohibited. Does UNMIK regulate this issue with certain regulation or each and every unit coming from different country works according to their own standard operating procedures?

Thomas Lee: Let me say this. In relation to what occurred on February 10th, we are not in liberty to discuss specifics or the investigation, which is ongoing. All UN Police work under regulations that are set down here for the UNMIK Police, and they are standard.

Question: Just a brief clarification. Thomas said that they have not been suspended but what is the status of police officers that are under investigation related to February 10th events?

Thomas Lee: Those officers that are being looked at have not left the mission, nor have they been suspended. So they are here in the mission area.

Question: But are they active in duty? Do they work as police officers?

Thomas Lee: I don't have that information.

Question: Again in relation to the protest of the 10th of February. Head of Police, Commissioner Curtis stated that the investigation will be concluded, actually not concluded but following two weeks the police would come up with the report on this event. Why hasn't this report been drafted yet?

Thomas Lee: First of all, I do not believe that such statement was ever made by Mr. Curtis. There was a follow up, the Department of Justice was here and told you about how this investigation is progressing. I would direct any questions that you have about the investigation to the Department of Justice.

Myriam Dessables: As you remember you had a quite extensive briefing by the Department of Justice and by the prosecutor who is in charge of the investigation, and he has promised to keep us all informed. This investigation is going on. It is very thorough and very detailed investigation and the Department of Justice has promised that in due course the findings will be announced.

Question: How long will this take?

Myriam Dessables: We don't know. I mean, this is an investigation that is ongoing, and I suppose everybody would agree that we have to give it the time and the thoroughness that it requires.

Question: Romania has actually announced that they will send a police contingent in Kosovo. Is this a replacement of the current police contingent of Romania, which is working here, or what is this about?

Myriam Dessables: I don't have any information on that.

Thomas Lee: I don't either. If the Romanian government has stated that you need to talk to them.

Question: One question for Miss Myriam. Does UNMIK have any official stance concerning the incident at the Security Council session when the Russian ambassador Mr. Churkin left the session following the presentation of the SRSG. Does UNMIK have any stance or announcement concerning this event?

Myriam Dessables: Well if you remember the SRSG was asked that question himself, when he exited the Security Council Chamber so I can only repeat what he said. He said that he totally kept to his mandate in his briefing, that he did not describe nor prejudge the nature of the status but that he did describe the perception on the ground of course with regard to the status process. As you know, he said, and he has been saying, that there are "concerns about the potentially destabilizing effect of any delay in the process that could make a sustainable solution impossible," and I quote the press release that was sent to you on Monday. And he said that, from UNMIK's perspective, it is very important that the momentum of the status process is kept and there is a necessity to bring this matter to a conclusion and that comes from our perspective on the ground.

Question: I think this question is directed to Mr. Lee and KFOR spokesperson. You haven't told us about your enhancement in the information part of the mission because we have noticed that some people who have left Kosovo, returned to the mission. Do you have any information on the actions of Wahhabist movement in Kosovo, and I would like to remind you about the recent statement of minister Rexhepi at the Kosovo Assembly, saying that there are some Wahhabist cells in Kosovo and that Wahhabists are a possible threat to stability in Kosovo.

Thomas Lee: I don't want to comment on what a politician has said anywhere. If there is information about this, I think it is probably raw intelligence information. From time to time we hear reports that various, different and sundry groups trying to destabilize Kosovo. Rest assured, each and every report is looked at very carefully and we have not seen any overt movement by any of these groups.

Michael Knop: So I can immediately follow up on that and say that if we have some things like that we would investigate it and we will take our proper measures due to this. And regarding our mission to create a safe and secure environment, I think that all missions we would take are on this mission we generally have for that area.

Myriam Dessables: Thank you.