

UNMIK



United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo

PRESS BRIEFING

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Press Briefing Notes

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UNMIK Spokesperson Neeraj Singh
UNMIK Police Spokesperson Carolee Martin
KFOR Chief PIO Col. Rainer Senger
OSCE Spokesperson Sven Lindholm
EU Pillar Spokesperson Mechthild Henneke

UNMIK Spokesperson Neeraj Singh

Good morning.

Attack on UN vehicles

UNMIK condemns the explosion that damaged 3 UN vehicles as well as a civilian vehicle and other property on Monday.

We do not know yet who is behind this act, or what objective they hope to achieve. What we do know is that no just cause can be advanced by violence.

At this determining stage of the status process, when Kosovo is seeking to achieve its aspirations, attacks on UN property or personnel can only undermine Kosovo's interests.

What is encouraging is that the large majority of the people of Kosovo have shown a clear commitment to democratic and peaceful means for finding their rightful place in the world order. It is important that fringe elements that choose the path of violence are isolated, exposed and brought to justice. We remain determined to achieve that in cooperation with the people and institutions of Kosovo.

An update on the February 10th investigation

24 investigators are assigned to the case. A special Task Force was established to investigate the deaths of two persons and serious wounding of others on 10 February. The task force is multinational and includes investigators from the Kosovo Police Service (KPS). It is headed by an independent special prosecutor Robert Dean from the US. Mr. Dean has 28 years of experience as a prosecutor in the State of Maryland where he has investigated hundreds of murders and secured many convictions. His last job before joining the Department of Justice was as Deputy States Attorney in Prince George's County, Maryland, which borders Washington, D.C.

Forensic investigations have taken place with the KPS crime laboratory and additional expertise is being discussed with one of the EU member-states.

The Police Inspectorate of Kosovo, an independent Kosovar Agency, is fully embedded in the Task Force and has access to the Task Force files.

Viti/Vitina town hall meeting tomorrow

The SRSG will address a town hall meeting in Viti/Vitina tomorrow from 11:00 hours. This is part of ongoing outreach efforts to address public concerns about the status proposal, its implications and the way forward for Kosovo.

UNMIK Countdown

The UNMIK Countdown press release this week is about culture, youth affairs and sports. Copies are available for you in the gallery.

UNMIK Police Spokesperson: Carolee Martin

Good morning ladies and gentlemen,

This morning I would like to give you a brief biography on the Interim Police Commissioner. Trygve Kalleberg comes from Oslo, Norway. He is 49 years old and has been a police officer for 27 years. His most recent assignment was as Chief Constable in Oslo.

Regarding previous missions for the UN, he has been assigned as the regional commander in Bosnia. In 2004-2005 he was assigned to the Deputy Commissioner of Crime as the Advisor of Policy and Strategy in Kosovo and he also served with OSCE in Slavonia.

Also at approximately 2100-hours on Feb 19th, three UN vehicles and one civilian vehicle were damaged, by one explosion placed under one of the UN vehicles. International Police Officers, KPS, KFOR EOD team, and KPS forensics are currently assigned to investigate this case. We have no further updates at this time. Thank you.

KFOR Chief PIO Col. Rainer Senger

During a regularly scheduled meeting today in Nis, Commander of KFOR, Lieutenant General Roland Kather, met with Republic of Serbia Armed Forces Chief of Staff, Lieutenant General Zdravko Ponos, and Senior Officials. COMKFOR noted the excellent cooperation that exists between them and he expressed his commitment to maintain an open, professional and constructive relationship with the Republic of Serbia and their Joint Security Forces at every level.

High Level Meetings are official technical discussions about security arrangements between the KFOR Commander and designated officials.

OSCE Spokesperson Sven Lindholm

Visit of OSCE Chairman in Office

Next Tuesday, the OSCE Chairman in Office, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos, will visit Belgrade and Pristina. We will send out his agenda – with media opportunities – as soon as it becomes available.

For more information on the CiO and its priorities, please go to the OSCE website at <http://www.osce.org/cio>.

Public debate

A public debate where inhabitants will be able to express their concerns to their municipal representatives will take place tomorrow in the village of Besni/Besinje. This debate is part of the Kosovo-wide OSCE project *Bridges of Friendship* whose aim is to improve the communication between municipal authorities and the people of Kosovo.

Prior to the debate, Henry McGowen, Director of the OSCE Mission Human Rights, Decentralisation and Communities Department, will hold a press conference on the project with a special focus on decentralization, good governance and transparency in Kosovo municipalities.

Media representatives are invited to attend the press conference and the debate at 11:30 on Thursday, 22 February in Besni/Besinje school, Prishtinë/Pristina municipality.

OSCE-sponsored photo contest

The Spanish OSCE Chairmanship have announced a photo contest under the theme "Land and water, protecting our fragile environment". The contest is open to all photographers living and working in the OSCE region. The photographs should reflect on environmental issues relating to land and water within one of the 56 OSCE participating States and should have been taken after the year 2000. The main prize for a single photo (or series) will be an Canon EOS-30D camera kit. Several runners-up will receive cash prizes of \$500 each. Entry forms and rules for the Photo Contest are available on this page or can be downloaded from: <http://www.osce.org/item/23220.html>.

The deadline for submitting photographs is 31 March 2007.

EU Pillar Spokesperson Mechthild Henneke

No statement.

Reuters: Fatos Bytyqi from Reuters. Question to the Police. How serious is Police taking the claims for this group KLA that they have the responsibility or is it just something that someone is good on Internet?

Carolee: We have to investigate all claims seriously until we can either confirm or deny that this is actually KLA.

AP: To KFOR and Police: Have you established what type of device was used on Monday blast against the UN cars and the amount of this device?

Carolee: The investigation is still looking into what type and amount that was used.

Rainer: I have not more to comment on that. I am in line with our statement, thank you very much.

KTV: After that explosion, did UNMIK make more forces and after that press release where that group calls itself KLA, did UNMIK take more security measures for the UNMIK personnel that are here in Kosovo?

Neeraj: In fact as you would know there is a particular department within UNMIK, that is the UN Security, which all the time takes measures to ensure proper security for UN property and personnel in accordance with their assessment of the threat perception. That is not something that they like to discuss publicly.

Koha Ditore: Can you tell us Neeraj, is still AKSH considered as a terrorist group?

Neeraj: I think there was a press announcement that was made back in 2003 and I am not aware of any change in that position.

Koha Ditore: So AKSH is still considered a terrorist group?

Neeraj: I would think so.

Blic: Mr. Singh, according to your statements your priority is to protect UN property and UN staff. The bomb attack the day before last night, not only three UN vehicles have been destroyed but also one civilian vehicle. In your estimation to what extent is civilian population endangered especially bearing in mind that the message was sent by the alleged dismantled KLA. And the second question, could you and Mr. Senger claim even after seven years that KLA has been disarmed and demilitarized?

Neeraj: I don't think I can really answer your second question. As far as your first question is concerned, let me clarify that protection of UN property and personnel is not our only priority. What I said was that there is a particular department within UNMIK, that is UN Security, which in fact is part of the UN security establishment for all of the UN around the world, whose mandate is to protect UN property and personnel. There was indeed the damage, as I mentioned also in my statement, that was caused to a civilian

vehicle as well as some other surrounding properties – some shops windows were damaged – that is a matter for the police to investigate which they are doing.

Rainer: Okay let me give a statement to your second part of the question. As stated several times before, KFOR has no evidence about any so-called paramilitary activities in Kosovo and we are very much convinced that should that be the case, KFOR together with UNMIK and KPS will act very vigilantly against such individuals or groups of individuals. That is quite clear.

AP: Neeraj has UNMIK put an order relating to February the 10th clashes with the Police? Have you put an order in place for the units that were involved that day, to stay in Kosovo and not to leave until the investigation is over?

Neeraj: Those individuals, those individual police officers, who were involved in the operations that day, and who are required for the investigation, naturally need to be in Kosovo during the course of the investigation and they will stay.

Beta: Question for Mr. Singh: does UNMIK consider the political message of the bomb attack against cars. Would not this represent sort of a pressure against Negotiation Team in Vienna or do you think this is just a criminal act?

Neeraj: I don't think we are in the position at this time to go into the possible motives of whoever committed those criminal acts. And, indeed, we see it as an act of violent crime.

Question: Mr. Singh, experience from 10th February, will the killing of two people during the protest in Pristina, will it influence the change of tactics especially of UNMIK and the Police against the demonstrators? Do you have information that on March 3rd during the announced protest will be a similar violence or an attempt to break into the UNMIK institutions or attacks against UNMIK or PISG buildings?

Neeraj: We are indeed aware of an announcement for a demonstration on the 3rd of March. As for the Police tactics I would defer to Carolee.

Carolee: As far as any protest, we have to maintain flexible operational plans, we cannot pre-plan as obviously these are ever changing as they even progress themselves. So, we adapt the situations to fit the needs as they progress.

Question: A question for OSCE and maybe for UNMIK as well. How do you comment the publication of the Auditor General on the political parties, the financial reporting of the political parties?

Sven: As you know, by law, registered political parties are supposed to submit financial reports, annual financial reports. The Auditor General simply stressed the point in her report that a number of parties have not and that is a fact. This is as we know true. Audits are a demonstration of transparency to the public.

Neeraj: Just one point on audits. We have seen some reports recently alleging various kinds of conspiracy theories relating to audits. Let me just make this one point here that the very purpose of audit is to ensure that a mechanism is in place to check how the financial management is being done in various departments or enterprises. The document is made public when it is finalized. There is a process through which the audit goes, where the Auditor General, after making the report has to send the report to the auditee, to the audited agency; the auditee is then required to respond to the Auditor General, only after that the audit is considered to be final and only after that it is made public. In the course of this I understand that as journalists – of course you are doing your job which is fair enough – you do get some information regarding the content of the audit. Now first you should not expect us to comment on audits that have not yet been made public. When the audit is made public you are free to make your own assessment. Before that I can only advise you to be cautious in making your assessment based on whatever little information you get from various sources. And there have also been some media reports suggesting that one or the other audit is being stopped by the SRSG. Neither this SRSG nor his predecessors have ever stopped any audit from being made public. UNMIK also does not have the authority to make any changes in the contents of the audit, another allegation that we saw made in the media. The Auditor General's office is an independent office. It works independently to produce its audit reports. So you have to be a little bit patient for those audits that are still in process.

Question: Question for Sven again: Which is the responsibility or mechanism, penalty mechanism, if it is concluded that the political parties have mismanaged the funds? So, which are the sanctions to be imposed or the mechanisms in place?

Sven: We call that election. If you don't think the party has been transparent enough, don't vote for them. Get them out of power.

Question: One question for UNMIK. Why visits are not allowed to be paid to Albin Kurti by the internationals because the local courts have now announced that this is under the competence of the international judges? And because demonstrations have been announced, will the police again intend to block the roads if they are to march on the roads again and which ammunition shall be used?

Neeraj: Okay, I think the first question is for me. As you know Mr. Kurti is on 30 days pre-trial detention, investigations are going on. I am not aware as to what visitors regime really is in place, I can check with the penal management division and get back to you on that.

Carolee: And as far as ammunition that falls under the flexible operational plans, it depends on the situation.

Neeraj: Okay, if there are no more questions, thank you very much.