



United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo

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PDSRSG Welcomes IAC Members' Statements Against Violence

PRISTINA--- PDSRSG Mr. Jock Covey today congratulated the Kosovo Albanian representatives on the Interim Administrative Council for issuing very strong and timely statements against the recent violence in Kosovo. The statements by Mr. Hashim Thaci, Mr. Ibrahim Rugova and Mr. Rexhep Qosja, were sent to SRSG Mr. Bernard Kouchner in New York, before his meeting with the United Nations Security Council.

Speaking to journalists after the meeting, Mr. Covey said that he wanted to "commend" the excellent statements issued by the three members concerning the need to combat violence in Kosovo against minorities. "These statements, in a way, reflect the future of Kosovo and the kind of leadership that members of the IAC contribute to that future."

All three leaders acknowledge that interethnic violence has increased recently in Kosovo, that the Serb community has been targeted.

The IAC also endorsed the draft regulations on the privileges and immunities of liaison offices and on amending the excise tax regulation. The IAC agreed to continue the discussion on the regulation on print media in its next meeting. They also discussed the electoral system and the election modalities for the upcoming municipal elections.

The statements of Mr. Hashim Thaci, Mr. Ibrahim Rugova and Mr. Rexhep Qosja, are given below.

Mr. Hashim Thaci, Chairman, Democratic Party of Kosovo:

"The recent intensification of violence in Kosovo, especially against the Serb minority, is troubling for all citizens of Kosovo and for the Democratic Party of Kosovo, which is making efforts for the creation of a secure and tolerant climate for all citizens of Kosovo and in this framework also for the minorities---these efforts which are also of the mechanisms of the international community here. The rising wave of violence in Kosovo is not in the interest of the citizens of Kosovo and the future of Kosovo, but favours those who want to present Kosovo as a land of crisis, violence and insecurity.

"Therefore, I call on all citizens of Kosovo to refrain from and denounce all violent acts and to involve themselves for the growth of security for all citizens of Kosovo.

"The PDK condemns those acts of violence and seeks that this phenomenon disappear. The PDK will support all efforts and international mechanisms for the creation of a Kosovo that is safe for all of its citizens."

Mr.Ibrahim Rugova, President, Democratic League of Kosovo:

“Acts of violence in Kosovo over the past weeks, especially those targeting the Serb community are extremely disturbing. These acts, regardless of perpetrators, pose a serious threat to the hard won freedom, stability and peace in Kosovo and must stop immediately.

“A tolerant and democratic Kosovo, and equality for all its citizens, is our very goal. Therefore, it is the responsibility and an obligation of every citizen of Kosovo to vigorously engage in building up tolerance by assisting Kosovar police and judicial authorities to investigate those acts and bring the perpetrators in court.

“Likewise, repeated attacks against KFOR members are very disturbing. Any attack against even a single KFOR member is unacceptable, and we condemn those acts in the strongest possible terms.

“Continued acts of violence, especially on the first anniversary of freedom, may take away the moral and material support Kosovo has had in the international community. This must not happen and will not be allowed.”

Mr.Rexhep Qosja, President, United Democratic Movement:

“The inter-ethnic violence has increased recently in Kosovo.

“In most cases, the victims of this violence are members of the Serb ethnic community. The Belgrade regime is very interested in intensifying the inter-ethnic tensions in Kosovo. Inter-ethnic chaos is the only chance left for this criminal regime.

“But we are interested in peace and calm in Kosovo. The world is following with much interest what is going on in Kosovo. Everything that is done here is done in front of the whole world. We, Albanians are facing a big historical test. Our policy, culture and historical maturity are being tested.

“If we don’t prove to the world as soon as possible that we want and can live in tolerance with members of other ethnic communities; if we don’t prove to the world that we can create a democratic society, in which all members of ethnic communities can live safely with all human and democratic rights; if we, as the great majority who at last are taking in our hands the fate of Kosovo, don’t accept the political and moral responsibility for the other smaller ethnic communities---for national minorities, we will fail the test of democracy and humanism, and we will make an historic mistake with immeasurably grave consequences.

“This mustn’t happen!

“We must prove to the world, and above all the United States, the European Union and to NATO countries, that we defend the highest values of the modern civilization for which they fought in Kosovo.

“If we don’t do this decisively and as soon as possible we will lose the understanding, support and respect they have for us.

“And this mustn’t happen!

“We will not forget what we suffered as a consequence of the genocidal rage of the Serb state. Our grief is great for all the martyrs and all lives prematurely ended. But our heart must be wide and humanism must be our goal. We must have it clear: Kosovo more than anything else needs today peace instead of violence, and tolerance instead of hatred.

“If Kosovo’s freedom was deserved yesterday by a readiness for sacrifices, its independence today should be deserved by moral greatness. The more the creation of the awareness of this is delayed, the more will be delayed the things that represent the meaning of life in Kosovo: peace, reconstruction, development, European integration and independence.”