

UNMIK PRESS RELEASE



United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo

UNMIK/PR/354

15 September 2000

IAC Meets Media on Violence

PRISTINA---Members of the Interim Administrative Council today met some 20 editors and directors of Kosova media to discuss violence in Kosovo. Media representatives presented their 15-point petition of 13 September called "Kosovo Media Against Violence", which had been published and broadcast yesterday.

SRSG Bernard Kouchner told journalists after the meeting that the media should play a role in calming the level of violence by not reporting in ways that fuel antagonisms, and he called for a "moratorium" on inflammatory reporting.

"We cannot impose it. It has to come from the media themselves, as freedom of press is one of UNMIK's best achievements", he said. "This way, we can go together to fair and democratic elections and then change the whole picture of Kosovo".

Kouchner also told reporters that local citizens must assist the police and judiciary in reporting crime and serving as witnesses: "It is unfair to blame UNMIK police or the international community for the violence which comes from the roots of this society...Given that the UNMIK police come from 49 nations without any knowledge of the ground or language, they are doing an extremely good job".

Describing today's meeting the SRSG said that it had been a very positive discussion and that, even if they could not agree on everything, they all agreed on the essential: fighting the violence. In that regard, the SRSG was happy to report that the media representatives were willing to implement the first point of their 15-point petition which asks for the freedom of movement, meaning that the media was in favour of the Serbs, the Romas or anybody walking freely in the streets? "Today's meeting was an important milestone on the road leading to tolerance", Kouchner said.

The IAC members and media directors agreed to meet again to see how collaboration can be implemented. At its next meeting, the IAC will discuss the draft regulation on construction, to be named after Rexhep Luci. IAC members had no objection to SRSG's proposal that the IAC and joint Administration continue the mission of Luci, the late Pristina Director of planning, Reconstruction and Development, who had been implementing rules against illegal construction. IAC members have also agreed that, until the election date, they will meet only once a week on Tuesdays.