

# UNMIK PRESS RELEASE



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## KTC Debates Belgrade Developments

PRISTINA—The Kosovo Transitional Council today had an exhaustive discussion on the changes in Belgrade and their impact on Kosovo. While welcoming these changes, the Kosovo Albanian members strongly urged a cautious approach to the new government in Belgrade, warning against any hasty decisions. A change in Belgrade, they felt, does not mean an automatic solution to the problems of Kosovo.

Final status talks, according to some of them, should be preceded by an agreement on an interim constitution, general elections and a referendum on self-determination. Only then should an international conference be held to determine the final status of Kosovo. Many stressed the principle of self-determination for Kosovo.

Kosovo Albanian members expressed reservations about the lifting of sanctions against FRY, especially without linking it to the release of all Kosovo Albanians in Serbian jails and information on the missing persons. The members said President Kostunica should have made a gesture of goodwill by releasing Kosovar Albanians immediately, especially Flora Brovina. Some of them questioned the new Yugoslav President's democratic credentials, saying he hadn't distanced him from the crimes committed by the Serbian forces in Kosovo.

The Kosovo Albanian members welcomed Dr. Kouchner's speech in Luxembourg on Monday, where he called for linking the lifting of sanctions against Yugoslavia to concrete progress on the issue of the missing and the detained.

Serb representatives felt that Dr. Kouchner's speech had failed to reflect the feelings of the other communities, especially about the high level of discrimination against non-Albanian communities, like Serbs and Romas.

They opposed the linkage between lifting of sanctions and release of prisoners, saying they fully supported the release of Kosovo Albanian prisoners, but the sanctions were inhuman, hurting the ordinary citizens. They said while the Albanian prisoners must be released, at the same time something should be done about the Serbs missing or detained in Kosovo.

They stated that SNC leader Bishop Artemije met President Kostunica yesterday and the latter had expressed a desire to visit Kosovo and come to Gracanica in the future.

They urged Kosovo Albanian leaders to initiate a dialogue with Belgrade in support of the Security Council resolution 1244. They supported handing over Serbian war criminals, including Milosevic, to ICTY.

Responding to the debate, SRSK Kouchner clarified that every time he mentions the missing persons, he means both the Albanians and the Serbs. But as far as the detained persons are

concerned, he said it was obvious that he was seeking the release of Kosovo Albanians held in Serbian prisons. He once again emphasised that Resolution 1244 only speaks of autonomy for Kosovo and does not outline its future status. He said that the change in Belgrade does not represent a solution to all problems.

Dr. Kouchner also briefed the KTC about his visit to FYROM yesterday.

The KTC also received an update on election preparations by OSCE's head of Election Operations, Mr. Jeff Fischer.