

AI INDEX: EUR 70/01/00

Embargoed for 0001 GMT 6 January 2000

Kosovo: Amnesty urges accountability in KFOR

Amnesty International today wrote to the Commander of the international security presence in Kosovo (KFOR), General Reinhardt, urging him to establish a transparent and independent mechanism for dealing with complaints against KFOR troops in Kosovo.

The international civil and security presences, UNMIK and KFOR, should show adherence to the highest human rights standards and be held accountable for any human rights violations they commit in Kosovo, Amnesty International stated in the letter.

The UN Secretary-General has stated that human rights are a priority in every UN mission and the protection and promotion of human rights is one of the main responsibilities of the UN presence in Kosovo, as mandated in Security Council Resolution 1244.

KFOR's conduct will set an example in Kosovo and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia as a whole, for the manner in which security forces charged with maintaining public safety and order should exercise their duties, Amnesty International said in the letter.

Amnesty International further urged the Commander to ensure that compensation is available to victims in any cases where it is demonstrated that KFOR troops acted in violation of internationally recognized human rights standards.

Amnesty International believes that the establishment of an independent and transparent complaints mechanism is important in ensuring that KFOR treats its human rights commitments with the seriousness they deserve.

ENDS.../

For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on 44 171 413 5566 or visit our website at <http://www.amnesty.org>