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BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CALL ON PARTIES TO ENSURE HUMAN RIGHTS GUARANTEES

Amnesty International calls on all parties to the Bosnia-Herzegovina peace negotiations in Dayton, Ohio, USA to ensure that the peace agreement contains strong human rights guarantees and effective ways to implement those guarantees.

Last Sunday's agreement between the Croatian and Serbian authorities over eastern Slavonia contained only a few brief references to human rights and no indications as to how they would be implemented.

"We fear that the final agreement on Bosnia-Herzegovina might resemble the Eastern Slavonia agreement and may not adequately protect human rights," Amnesty International said.

*The preliminary agreement, the Agreed Basic Principles, adopted by the parties to these negotiations in respect of Bosnia-Herzegovina in September 1995 refers to the protection of human rights (mainly in connection with democratic elections) and to a Human Rights Commission and provisions for international monitoring of the parties' compliance with the Principles.*

*"The final Bosnia-Herzegovina peace agreement should incorporate concrete human rights guarantees covering the whole territory of the country and effective mechanisms to implement them," the human rights organization said.*

*The agreement should help end impunity by reconstituting the police forces in line with United Nations law enforcement standards, rebuilding the judicial system to ensure fair trials without the death penalty and bringing those responsible for grave human rights violations to justice, including commitments to cooperate with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.*

*The agreement should also provide for the establishment of national institutions to implement and monitor human rights, stronger guarantees concerning the safe return for displaced persons and compensation for house destruction and an effective international human rights monitoring presence.*

*Amnesty International calls upon the international community to give full financial and political assistance to the proposed international civilian human rights monitoring presence and to ensure that this international presence acts in accordance with Amnesty International's 15-Point Program for Implementing Human Rights in Peace-keeping Operations.*

*The organization has brought these recommendations to the attention of all UN member states in various ways, including statements to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw on 18 October 1995, and in testimony before the United States House of Representatives Committee on International Relations on Wednesday, 15 November 1995.*

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