

PUBLIC

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Fear for safety/forcible displacement

KOSOVO  
(SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO)

Up to 47 Ashkali displaced persons

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Forty-seven members of the Ashkali ethnic minority group, who have been sheltering in a French peacekeepers' base since they were driven from their homes by Albanian demonstrators, are to be evicted from the base on 12 August. Amnesty International fears their lives will be in danger unless they are given asylum in another country.

Some 260 Ashkali had been living in the Kosovan town of Vucitrn (in Serbian; in Albanian it is called Vushtrri). On 18 March they were forced out by Albanian demonstrators, who burned their houses. They took shelter at the French KFOR (international peacekeeping force) base at Selo Madjunsko/Maxhunaj. So far, 30 have moved to the proposed alternative accommodation at a motel near their former homes. Others have gone to stay with relatives elsewhere in Kosovo, or have fled the country to seek asylum. The rest, among them elderly people and children, as well as community leaders who have been attacked in the past and reportedly ill-treated by the Kosovo Police Service, fear they will be in danger if they stay in Kosovo, and have asked for asylum abroad. However, no European Union state has offered them even temporary protection. Instead they have been offered accommodation in the refurbished Vicianum motel, just outside Vucitrn/Vushtrri, from where their burned-out houses can be seen, and which Amnesty International does not believe will provide a safe and secure environment for them.

The attack that forced the Ashkali to seek shelter at the KFOR base took place during two days of violence in which 4,100 members of minority communities were driven from their homes. In Vucitrn/Vushtrri the Kosovo Police Service failed to protect the Ashkali, and may have been complicit in the attacks. None of the attackers has been brought to justice.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English (UNMIK) French (French Ministry of Defence) or your own language:**

**To both authorities:**

- expressing concern for the safety of the Ashkali people scheduled to be evicted from the French KFOR camp at Selo Madjunsko/Maxhunaj on 12 August;
- pointing out that they have the right to be protected from forcible return or resettlement in any place where their life or safety would be at risk;
- expressing concern that moving the Ashkali to a place so close to the homes they have been driven out of, by attackers who have not yet been brought to justice, would expose them to unnecessary danger;

**To the Acting Special Representative to the UN Secretary General (SRSG):**

- urging the SRSG to negotiate with the French office in Pristina, to ensure that the Ashkali may remain at the KFOR base until the UNMIK Office of Returns and Communities can find a durable solution, in consultation with the Ashkali and relevant agencies;
- urging the SRSG to again ask EU governments to accept the remaining 47 members of the Ashkali community living at the KFOR base as refugees.

**To the French Ministry of Defence:**

- urging the Ministry of Defence to instruct the Commander of the French KFOR to stop pressuring the Ashkali to leave the base, and to allow them to remain there until the UNMIK Office of Returns and Communities, in consultation with the Ashkali and relevant agencies, find a durable solution;

- urging the French government to accept the remaining 47 members of the Ashkali community as refugees.

**APPEALS TO:**

Acting Special Representative of the UN Secretary General  
Charles Brayshaw  
UNMIK Main HQ  
Pristina  
Kosovo

**Fax:** + 39 0831 444019

**Email:** brayshaw@un.org

**Salutation:** Dear Acting Special Representative

French Ministry of Defence

Madame Michèle Alliot-Marie, Ministre de la Défense  
Ministère de la Défense, 14 rue Saint-Dominique  
Paris F - 75700, France

**Fax:** + 33 147 054091

**Email:** courrier\_defense@defense.gouv.fr

**Salutation:** Dear Minister

**COPIES TO:**

Director of the UNMIK Office of Returns and Communities

**Fax:** +381 38 504 604 Ext 5592

**E-mail:** hicksp@un.org

UMCOR United Methodist Committee on Relief

**Fax:** +381 38 243 807

and to diplomatic representatives of France accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 17 September 2004.