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## **PUBLIC STATEMENT**

### **KOSOVO**

#### **Clarification into police functions undertaken by KFOR crucial**

The fatal shooting of two ethnic Albanians on 3 July by British troops under the command of the International Security Force in Kosovo clearly illustrates the challenges facing KFOR in its law enforcement capacity -- and reinforces the need for KFOR to operate, and be seen to operate, according to clear international human rights standards -- Amnesty International said today in a letter to the Chief Commander of KFOR.

In its letter to General Sir Michael Jackson, the human rights organization is seeking clarification about the policing functions being undertaken by KFOR. In particular, it is seeking to know what mechanism is in place to ensure that the KFOR's actions meet the highest international human rights standards and what training these forces are required to receive.

"The fatal shooting on 3 July raises worrying questions about the instructions issued to KFOR soldiers relative to their police functions," Amnesty International said. "This is particularly crucial in the light of at least six earlier incidents involving the use of lethal force by KFOR troops."

Specifically, Amnesty International asked General Sir Michael Jackson to clarify a number of questions:

Have soldiers been ordered to give clear verbal warnings before firing their weapons?

Have they been instructed in how to issue warnings in the local languages?

Have KFOR troops been given instructions about dealing with local customs, such as firing in the air in celebration?

There is at present, according to Amnesty International's information, no mechanism to ensure that complaints by the local population against the international security force of any possible violations of human rights obligations are promptly and independently investigated and effectively dealt with in an impartial manner, or for the victims to receive adequate compensation.

Amnesty International welcomes the proposal of the UN Secretary General, set forth in his 12 July report, on the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) to establish a human rights ombudsperson institution in Kosovo. It understands that this institution will have the authority to investigate allegations of abuses by KFOR troops.

Amnesty International would welcome confirmation that KFOR will fully cooperate with such an institution and will ensure that troop-contributing countries recall from duty any of their personnel against whom the above mechanism has found evidence of human rights violations and that they are brought to justice in accordance with international standards.

In respect of anyone arrested by KFOR in the course of its operations, Amnesty International sought the following assurances from General Sir Michael Jackson:

That provisions exist to provide access to human rights monitors as well as the International Committee of the Red Cross when they so request.

All those arrested should be guaranteed, as a minimum, the safeguards provided in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights while in temporary custody of KFOR and should be handed over to the local judicial authorities as soon as these have again become operational.

KFOR troops should be instructed to search for and arrest all those indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia for responsibility for crimes under international law.

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