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PUBLIC STATEMENT

Kosovo: murder of 14 ethnic Serbs -- UN civilian police must be deployed immediately

Amnesty International condemns the murders of 14 ethnic Serbs in the village of Gra_ko on 23 July 1999.

The human rights organization believes the incident clearly illustrates the challenges facing KFOR in Kosovo province in its efforts to “ensure public safety and order”.

While Amnesty International welcomes the fact that KFOR and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia have announced their intention to carry out investigations into the killings, the organization is concerned that those states contributing to KFOR have been slow in committing to the civilian police component of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).

So far, out of the required 3,100 civilian police, only 156 have been deployed in Kosovo province.

Amnesty International urges all states contributing to KFOR to deploy personnel to the UN civilian police force in Kosovo province as a matter of urgency. In addition, the organization asks that all civilian police should receive training in human rights and adhere to relevant human rights standards when carrying out their duties.

ENDS.../