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Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) / Kosovo: OSCE reports should be applauded

The release of two reports on Kosovo (Kosova) today by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) is a welcome development and could serve as a precedent to strengthen the OSCE's effectiveness in protecting human rights, Amnesty International said today.

The reports, *Kosovo/Kosova: As Seen, As Told, Parts I and II*, provide a revealing analysis of human rights violations and abuses in the region over the last year.

"The horrific human rights violations described in the two reports underscore the need to ensure that international organizations cannot be silent witnesses to human rights violations in any situation", Amnesty International said.

The OSCE identifies serious problems with the administration of justice in Kosovo, in particular confusion over which law should be applied and allegations of bias in the judiciary, conclusions which Amnesty International shares. The United Nations (UN), with the support of the international community, must increase its efforts to establish an independent and impartial judicial system in Kosovo, Amnesty International said.

Amnesty International supports the OSCE's call for an end to impunity and urges the FRY to transfer all indicted suspects to the Hague to face trial for crimes committed before and during the armed conflict.

Amnesty International also supports the OSCE's call for all states contributing to the UN presence to immediately provide personnel and resources necessary for effective policing and human rights investigations," Amnesty International stated. "It must not be forgotten that the international presence is ultimately responsible for the protection of human rights in Kosovo."

"As the 22 murders over the past week demonstrate, the international community is struggling to fulfil its mandate. Amnesty International urges the international presence led by the UN and NATO to redouble efforts to control and disarm all armed groups, regardless of their political affiliation, and ensure that current applicants to the civil defence force are not engaging in unauthorized activities", the organization said.

The reports are available on the OSCE website:<http://www.osce.org/kosovo/reports/hr/index.htm>.

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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>