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Bosnia-Herzegovina: Recommendations on the European Union Police Mission

Amnesty International urges the European Union Police Mission (EUPM) in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which will be officially launched in Sarajevo on 15 January, to give high priority to ensuring that the outstanding legacy of human rights violations committed during the war are investigated. As long as the impunity for such crimes pervades in the country, true respect for human rights remains elusive.

The organization is seriously concerned about the apparent lack of a human rights strategy of the international community in general in Bosnia-Herzegovina and has already raised its concerns and recommendations in a memorandum sent to Javier Solana in October 2002.

Recognizing that the investigation and prosecution of human rights violation is first and foremost the duty of the local Bosnian police force and judiciary, Amnesty International calls on the EUPM to play a leading role in supporting and supervising this daunting task. Amnesty International believes that police officers throughout the world should serve in the front line in protecting and promoting human rights, including by leading the battle against impunity for human rights violations. In this endeavour, the rights of the victims must be respected and perpetrators of these crimes must be brought to justice following impartial and thorough investigations. Today, over seven years after the end of the war, thousands of outstanding human rights violations remain to be properly investigated, and perpetrators still enjoy impunity. These unresolved crimes of the past continue to shape the present, acting as barriers to return, to justice and to enduring peace. The impending winding up of the work of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia additionally puts the onus on the Bosnian authorities to address the past and ensure justice for all citizens.

Responding to Amnesty International's recommendations, EU Council officials, have stated that human rights are to be mainstreamed into the mission's entire plan of work, and that in the EUPM's vision "every police officer is a human rights officer". However no specific measures have apparently been put in place to address the lack of local police investigations into past human rights violations. Amnesty International therefore urges the EUPM to ensure that "mainstreaming human rights" will mean in effect that the mission will use this unprecedented opportunity to contribute to the quest for justice awaited by thousands of people in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

For more information, please see:

**Bosnia-Herzegovina: Amnesty International's recommendations on the European Union Police Mission - Memorandum to Javier Solana, Secretary General of the Council of the European Union <http://web.amnesty.org/ai.nsf/index/eur630182003>
Standing up for human rights in Europe and throughout the world, Memorandum to the 2003**

**Greek Presidency, January 2003,
http://www.amnesty-eu.org/1/Greek_Presidency_Memorandum_cover_nologo.rtf
Standing up for human rights in Europe and throughout the world, Press release, 13 January
2003, <http://www.amnesty-eu.org>**

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