

**Statement by Ambassador Koonjul on the situation in Kosovo -**  
**21 Jan. 2002**

We would like to join previous speakers in thanking Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno for introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and for his comprehensive and very useful briefing this morning.

We congratulate the people of Kosovo on the successful organization of the elections in their province. We hope that the Assembly members will soon elect their President and that the provisional institutions of self-government can assume full responsibility over areas under their authority. This is a very crucial moment, when members of the Assembly need to work constructively in a spirit of patriotism. We call on them to show a stronger sense of compromise and dialogue and to agree on the choice of the President of Kosovo. The sooner the President is appointed, the better it will be, because the institutions of provisional self-government have to start operating soon. Long and arduous work lies ahead of the Assembly members to shape the future of their province.

We commend UNMIK for the excellent work it is doing to support the Assembly in avoiding any legislative vacuum. We encourage the team for the efficient manner in which it is operating. We also understand that, once the provisional self-government is in place, UNMIK will hand over authority to it, while retaining some competencies for the Special Representative, as specified in resolution 1244 (1999).

The issue of the security of minority communities remains a priority at this point in time so as to encourage them to return to their homeland. It is noted that only 2,432 out of the 229,900 registered internally displaced persons have returned to their homes in Kosovo. Much work needs to be done to activate the return and reintegration of these displaced persons. While UNMIK and KFOR are carrying out their duties of ensuring the safe return of the internally displaced persons and refugees, we call on the political leaders to create the

necessary conditions to accelerate the return of the minority communities to the province.

The return of internally displaced persons and refugees will also depend on the availability of the proper infrastructures and the restoration of public utilities and community services in the province. This will no doubt need further assistance from donors and, in that regard, we urge donor communities to enhance their support for the various projects that are being carried out in Kosovo. The region, which is one of the poorest in Europe, urgently needs investment for sustained economic recovery.

Mauritius has repeatedly highlighted in its previous statements that the security situation in the Mitrovica region remains a challenge which should be tackled with great care if we do not want a crumbling of the whole process of peacemaking in Kosovo. UNMIK has still not been able to fully enforce its authority in that area, where the security situation continues to be fragile. It is also a matter of concern that KFOR members continue to be assaulted while on duty in that part of the province. We reiterate our call on the Serb political leaders to bring their influence to bear on their supporters for the unhindered operations of UNMIK and KFOR in the Mitrovica region. We also encourage the posting of Kosovo Serb officers of the Kosovo Police Service to the northern part of the province so that the people of Mitrovica will show less hostility to the police force and allow the proper enforcement of law and order.

Mauritius welcomes the setting up of the specialized units by UNMIK pillar I (police and justice) to combat organized criminal activities and terrorism in the province. We encourage UNMIK and KFOR to step up search operations, especially along the borders, so as to limit the smuggling of weapons to armed groups. We hope that the re-entry of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia into Interpol will ensure closer police cooperation between Pristina, Belgrade and other States in the region in order to bring down the level of crime and other illegal activities and contribute towards regional stability.

Like other speakers before us, we condemn the murder of the Democratic League of Kosovo member of the Assembly and we equally condemn the bomb attack on the home of a Kosovo Albanian,

injuring a pregnant woman and a child. These irresponsible acts must be reprehended and those responsible must be brought to justice.

The problem of detainees and missing persons is a crucial factor in the building of confidence between Albanians and Serbs. This seems to have achieved some progress, especially following the signing of the Common Document between UNMIK and Belgrade. We note with satisfaction that UNMIK will soon open a sub-office of the Missing Persons Unit in Belgrade and that it will be granted full access to post-mortem data collected by the Serbian police. We also consider the protocol on joint verification teams on hidden prisons, though still in the drafting stage, to be a very positive step forward. The handing over of Albanian detainees from Serbia to UNMIK will further help to build confidence in the relations between Pristine and Belgrade.

It is up to the new Government of Kosovo to rise to the challenge of building a democratic, secure and multi-ethnic Kosovar society, in accordance with resolution 1244 (1999). I should like to echo the words of the representatives of Mexico and Singapore when they mentioned the importance of education in trying to build a multi-ethnic society. Mauritius is another multi-ethnic society where education has certainly helped to establish better harmony between the different ethnic groups.

Finally, we would like to pay tribute to the important work carried out by Mr. Hans Haekkerup as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo. We would like to express our best wishes to his successor, Mr. Michael Steiner. I now resume my function as President of the Security Council.