

UNMIK

PRESS RELEASE



United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo

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IAC Endorses Victim Recovery and Identification Commission

PRISTINA--The Interim Administrative Council today discussed and endorsed a regulation on the establishment of the Victim Recovery and Identification Commission.

The Victim Recovery and Identification Commission, which will be inaugurated on Thursday, 11 May, will play a key role in identifying missing persons who died during the recent conflict. While the lead agency in tracing the missing remains the International Committee of the Red Cross, the VRIC will recover, identify and dispose of the remains of bodies of war victims, in coordination with the exhumation and investigation work by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

The VRIC will also collect and maintain data relating to the recovery, identification and disposition of remains. It will provide assistance to the competent judicial authorities in addressing missing person issues.

Initial funding is to come from the International Commission on Missing Persons and the OSCE. By next year, the VRIC should be supported by the Kosovo Consolidated Budget.

The IAC also endorsed a regulation on the Stamps and Headings of Official Documents of Courts, Prosecutors' Offices and Penal Establishments.

The IAC was briefed on the status of the Joint Interim Administrative Structure departments, of which 12 have been officially established by regulation. Nearly all 40 co-heads have been named.

Dr. Michael Daxner, UNMIK co-head of the Department of Education and Science, updated the IAC on the situation of education. Following the resignation of the Kosovo co-head, the LBD is in the process of naming a Kosovo co-head.

There are currently 771 schools operating in Kosovo, Dr. Daxner noted, with reconstruction and rehabilitation of school buildings continuing. Some 22,500 teachers and 5,139 administrative staff will receive contracts in June. The school system budget for the year 2000 is 99 million DM.

At the University of Pristina, with a budget of 12.6 million DM, 22,500 students are enrolled, and 1,300 academic staff will receive contracts this month. The university's 30th anniversary will be celebrated on 16 May.

The IAC will consider two new regulations regarding education: one would lower the entry age of primary school students from seven to six years old and extend the compulsory years in school to nine. Another regulation would regulate admissions to higher education.

Dr. Daxner noted that professional and vocational education is still needed here, as well as a reform of the school and university curricula.

SRSG Bernard Kouchner announced that the Serb National Council of Gracanica had named Randjel Nojkic--member of the SNC-Gracanica Executive Board--as Kosovo co-head for the Department of Labour and Employment. The UNMIK co-head is Mr. Lajos Hethy, from Hungary.