

DETAILS

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Increased focus on youth and early warning capacity

New OSCE focuses after 17-18 March riots, labelled "a terrible blow" by OSCE's Head of Mission

by Arni Snaevarr

The OSCE Mission to Kosovo will introduce a major new policy area: Youth and Education, as a part of a review of its work as the Institution building pillar of the UNMIK administration in Kosovo. Announcing reforms to the OSCE Special Permanent Council of 30 March, Ambassador Pascal Fieschi, OSCE Head of Mission in Kosovo branded the 17-18-march violence a "terrible blow to the international community in Kosovo.

"Crowds of youth were the main actors in the recent events, but not the organizers" Ambassador Fieschi told the Council. "This youth reflects the future of Kosovo, and we urgently need to help it find a future and resist messages of hatred and intolerance. Greater focus upon education will no doubt form a major part of this new activity, but we need to address the more general question of civic education and the individual's place in society."



Young demonstrators during the mid-March riots in Mirtović / Mitrovica town/Kosovo. Photo UN.

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OSCE

Lack of results in media

OSCE's Head of mission told the permanent council that the crisis demanded changes in OSCE's work with the media and civil society. "We acknowledge that the results of our work in media development have been less than we had hoped" Ambassador Fieschi said and announced that the Mission would convene a conference of media donors to Kosovo to assess "why our collective results have not been better, and how to improve."

Noting that Kosovo NGOs had received a lot of attention from the Mission, Mr Fieschi acknowledged that the performance of civil society in the recent events was disappointing. "We will be re-examining our partners to see which of them should continue to receive support."

Mr Fieschi stressed that a democratic multi-ethnic Kosovo remained OSCE policy but it had to "reconsider a realistic strategy to promote this objective."

Early warning capacity

Finally the OSCE Head of Mission declared that its early warning capacity would be improved, by increasing media-monitoring, not least locally and strengthening of OSCE's presence in the field. "We will widen our circle of interlocutors and sources to include more negative voices in Kosovo society" Ambassador Fieschi said "and we will reallocate to reporting and monitoring some of the effort which we have been devoting to capacity building and advice. But early warning will never be perfect. No-one can predict the date and time when any particular society will lose control."

Mr Fieschi told the Permanent Council that these decisions had been taken after a preliminary assessment had been made, based among others on interviews with the population carried out in the field by the OSCE Mission in the week 22-26 March. These are the main points of the assessment:

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Dear Details readers,

In the March edition of "Details" we covered the return to Prishtinë / Priština of 68 year old Kosovo Serbian Vukosava Mitrovic who was able to celebrate her birthday at home for the first time in five years. At the time - less than two months ago - it was hoped that this would be followed by the returns of several others displaced Kosovo Serbs to the capital. Unfortunately this has now been put into question after the riots that began on 17 March.

This edition of "Details" is to a large extent devoted to the consequences of these events. The OSCE Mission in Kosovo admits that these events were a terrible blow to us and the entire International Community. We have started to analyse the causes and consequences and to take the first steps to reform our work in tune with our conclusions.

The articles you will read deal with different aspects of the events: The reforms of the work of the OSCE Mission, the role of the broadcast media, the plight of the internally displaced and other victims of the violence. We tell the stories of individuals: OSCE staff members tell us about their experience when violence struck. We witness how a multi ethnic winter camp in Brezovica ended when the children had to be brought back home through barricades under military escort.

Dear reader, The OSCE Mission in Kosovo will continue its work as the Institution Building Pillar of the UNMIK administration, despite this setback. We have been disappointed by the performance of some of our partners in Kosovo and we will have to re-evaluate and adjust our policies accordingly. We will learn from this bitter experience and redouble our efforts in helping the people of Kosovo to build a democratic and multi-ethnic Kosovo where people can live in peace and security regardless of their origin.

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Organised nationalism and the failure of reconciliation

Observers agree that, although the demonstrations began as a spontaneous emotional outburst, organisers rapidly appeared among the demonstrators to direct them. The organisers appear to be a small number of well-organised radicals. It was the effectiveness of the radicals, which allowed the protests to prolong the emotion of 17 March and continue as an organised effort on 18 and 19 March.

Unresolved status

One of the reasons often given for the public frustration was Kosovo's unresolved status. Local political leaders and commentators referred frequently to independence for Kosovo and the existence of parallel Serb structures as the two primary motives behind the protests. However, one has to look deeper for the root causes of the violence.

The youth, lack of suitable education and unemployment

With high unemployment levels, the Kosovo Albanian youth is naturally full of grievances against the current status quo. At home, many of the youths are told stories that present the Serb as the ancestral enemy. Mono-ethnic schools are also a poor preparation for multi-ethnic life.

In fact, initial findings indicate that many schools did nothing to stop their students from taking part in the demonstrations. There have also been reports of teachers encouraging students to join the protests.

Economic situation

GDP in 2003 was estimated to be 700 Euro per capita, and unemployment levels could be as high as 70 percent. Indicators are starting to suggest that in 2004 the economy will be in recession - domestic production is not increasing fast enough to compensate for falls

in remittances from the Diaspora and income from the declining international presence. The unhelpful economic situation has also led to searches for scapegoats - and minorities present a visible target.

The media

The handling of the Ibër/Ibar river drowning by the media could be considered as a direct contribution to the instigation of violence. Once the violence started, TV stations broadcast sensational reports and inflammatory interviews. This high-emotional reporting contributed to a deterioration of the situation.

The work and the unpopularity of the International Community

The international community in Kosovo has become hardened to a daily chorus of criticism from all parts of Kosovo society, but most loudly in the media. Causes of dissatisfaction include lack of jobs, a perception of political stagnation, tolerance of parallel structures for the Kosovo Serbs and recent high-profile controversies such as privatisation.

Disconnect between local authorities and general population

Many political leaders were surprised, shocked and powerless when the violence erupted. This inability of elected authorities to foresee, prevent or control the violence demonstrates a disconnect between the population and the political establishment. Local authorities and political parties are perceived as ineffective, unrepresentative, and not in touch with the population.

The feeling of impunity

Participants in the incidents were emboldened to take part in them by a feeling of "impunity" inherited from the events following 1999. Inter-ethnic crimes - or rather, crimes thought to be so - remain difficult to solve because witnesses do not come forward, and most of the Kosovo Serbs who left in 1999 have not come back.

Fear from the past

The Kosovo Albanians are collectively possessed by the fear that the conditions prevailing before 1999 will return. The Kosovo Serbs, who receive certain services from the state (generally described in Kosovo as 'parallel structures'), are as a result perceived as not accepting integration into Kosovo society.

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Mission in Kosovo

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Caught between a rock and a hard place

Kosovo's new IDPs ponder if to leave for an uncertain future or give Kosovo yet another chance

By Olja Stojanovic and Mustafa Skenderi

Kosovo: 17. March - 17. April 2004.

"How could I feel now?" Ilija Todorovic (53) answered our question with another question, when we met him as he was sitting smoking a cigarette outside the gray door of a refugee container, "You build a house and then you watch how it burns and disappears in only 15 minutes. Well, you can imagine how I feel," he explains.

With his wife and some 30 Kosovo Serbs from Prishtinë/Priština, Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, Obiliq/Obilic and Kisnica, is accommodated in one of 15 containers on the premises of the "Vocar" company in Gracanica/Gračanica. These improvised barracks, equipped with some beds; table and chairs are temporary shelters for these newly displaced people.

According to official police reports, announced on 31st March, estimated figures of the violent unrest are as follow: 19 dead, more than 900 people wounded, some 30 orthodox churches and monasteries and about 800 houses were burnt or destroyed.

During the recent violence the homes of these people were burnt and destroyed, or looted, and in some cases "because of the security reasons, the return is impossible".

Those who were displaced were offered accommodation in KFOR camps while a long-term solution was sought.

Depressing sights met Details' journalists in the aftermath of the violent events. Fires were still burning, smoke coming out of houses and farms. No sign of the inhabitants who had been transferred to makeshift camps.

"We were sleeping in the camp, jumping over one another on the floor. It was horrible. KFOR was giving us food. It was depressing for the children, there were babies too," IDPs told us on our first visit immediately after the events.

The atmosphere was not much different in neighbouring Serbian enclaves.

In, Laplje Selo and Preoce, most of the displaced persons accommodated were from Obiliq / Obilic and Caglavica. Srdjan (24) told us that few



"Barely surviving" in a IDP camp in Gracanica / Gračanica. Photo: Olja Stojanovic.

days ago he was sitting in Prishtinë / Priština with his Albanian friends and today he was in Preoce, homeless, having lost everything: "I can't believe this happened to me. I just want to get out of here, anywhere," he says. "I do not believe anyone, anymore."

Gracanica/Gračanica, the biggest enclave accommodated the highest number of displaced people. Those people spent their days visiting each other, yet "trying to figure out what really happened to them". "From one cage we were transported to another. I try to not think about it but pictures of a church in the flame, hiding and fleeing from home still go constantly through my mind," Ilija Todorovic told Details.

Ilija's wife interrupts the conversation from time to time: "I want to go back, just to see the church, it breaks my heart not to be able to go back," she said, noticeably upset.

Our visit was interrupted for a moment when someone shouted: "lunch is here"! People take their bowls and spontaneously go toward a parked truck. The back door of the truck opens and the smell of food comes out. Everyone gets a bowl of food and a piece of bread.

Humanitarian aid: food, clothes and shoes are distributed daily care off the Red Cross of Serbia. It is hard to judge about the quality of the aid. While some are satisfied "that at least something arrives, because unless we would be starving", others are angry and showing winter boots from the Red Cross the complain: "We went out in our slippers and now we got these boots. Is it possible to wear this now?"

In our subsequent visits to IDP's camps since last months events

we found out that more and more people wanted to returned to escape these conditions of "barely surviving."

"I wish to return to my apartment, I left everything there, I'm not afraid of return," says Zivorad Tonic from Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, who found refuge in the Gracanica/Gračanica camp, together with his spouse and mentally ill son.

However, his spouse thinks differently:

"I get sick just thinking about returning. The traumatic memories that I lived on 17 March, alone with an ill son in a demolished apartment will never leave me. We were hiding in the bathroom and I wrapped Dejan, my son, in a blanket so he could not reveal our position," explains Zivorad's wife, in tears.

Ljubisa Spasic from Obiliq/Obilic was displaced just one day after 17 March. Although his home was burned, he visits the ruins every day and intends to stay. "I survived earlier, thanks to Albanian neighbours who were bringing me food. I think I can live here. I'm sure that I can stay here now this time, too".

It is hard to bring final judgement about future plans of the presently displaced. According to what was said and heard, positions are different. While a number of people wishes to come back, others are determined to request reimbursement and leave Kosovo.

"After forty-eight years creating, building my property in Kisnica and living together with all people there, everything is destroyed. Now what I want is that some commission evaluates my property - I get paid and leave Kosovo forever," said elderly Ljubomir Milenkovic.

Nevertheless as Details is being printed, roughly a month after these events, a certain number of people is already getting ready for returning to refurbished homes, notably to the "Yu programme" building in the center of Prishtinë/Priština. A ray of hope, maybe.



Burning down the church: St. Nikola, Prishtinë / Priština. Photo: Olja Stojanovic

The second death of an artist

The widow of Agim Çavdarbasha talks about "the second death" of the internationally known Kosovo-Albanian sculptor whose gallery was burned down during the rioting

by Mevlyde Salihu



"This is my nightmare", Sebi, the widow of the sculptor Agim Çavdarbasha says: "Five years after the war, we experienced Agim's second death."

Photos: Hasan Sopa.



She opens the gate and sighs deeply from her soul. In front of us, appears what remains of four decades of work of the late sculptor, Agim Çavdarbasha, after the family house cum-atelier in Çagllavica, near Prishtina, was burned down during March riots.

"This is my nightmare," says Sebi, the widow of the sculptor. During these difficult days for Kosovo, when everybody lost something valuable, the Çavdarbasha family lost a truly valuable part of what they guarded with utmost care: Agim's sculptures. "Five years after the war, we experienced Agim's second death," she adds.

Agim Çavdarbasha was the first Kosovo Albanian sculptor. In 1995, the Academy of Science and Arts of Kosovo declared the studio of Academician Agim Çavdarbasha an open gallery. The gallery, which had welcomed many visitors from around the world, survived the most difficult times only to be burned to the ground in the spring of 2004.

Many of the masterpieces of the artist have been burned completely. One of the sculptures that has been turned into ashes is "Përçafimi", a roughly two meter high sculpture, made of wood. Those sculptures that survived the fire were mainly those made of marble, but luckily the fire did not engulf some sculptures in wood since they were exposed in the yard.

"Agim's masterpieces in wood, such as Përçafimi, Familja, Gruaja me Fryte and many others from miniature sizes to those bigger than two meters, were destroyed. There's only ashes left out of them," says Sebi and adds, "Sofra', the sculpture in plaster exposed on the balcony, a sculpture based on our tradition that Agim considered his masterpiece, is greatly damaged. I hope that with the help of our cultural institutions this sculpture will be repaired and put into bronze," she says while showing us what remains of Agim's favourite sculpture.

Agim Çavdarbasha was an internationally known sculptor. Apart from Kosovo and the region, his work was welcomed in many other parts of the world. Agim represented

the art world of Kosovo in America, Germany, Japan and even Australia and New Zealand.

Mrs. Çavdarbasha believes, the house was set on fire on the 19, i.e. two days after the main riots, while KFOR had regained control over the village. During a visit to her house on the 20th, the house was still on smoke. "According to the inhabitants who had a chance to see, the house was not set on fire on the 17th, on the night of euphoria and spontaneity and when the other houses were burned, but later" says Sebi, full of rancour. However, she wants to have an official explanation from KFOR. "I am really interested to contact KFOR and see what they have to say."

Sebi had fulfilled Agim's will by bringing the sculptures back to where they belonged - in Çagllavica - in 2001. Agim's sculptures were in Albania since 1993, after an individual exhibition as part of the "Days of Kosovo's Culture" there. Their return in 2001 was made possible with the help of the Academy of Science and Art of Kosovo and Albania and the Gallery of Arts. She had never thought that the sculptures of her husband would be burned in their home, where Agim had sculpted them. "I never believed such a thing could happen, but it did."

Nothing can bring back the destroyed work of Agim. But, there is hope that the remaining sculptures that survived the fire can stay where they have always been and will have a better supervision.

Sebi looks back at her husband's sculpture "Sofra" which has been cut in half, while she closes the gate of the burnt-down gallery.



The Artist's home was burned down during the riots: "I never imagined such a thing could happen..."

Photo: Hasan Sopa.

“What now...?”

by Bernard Vrban

The spring season has a dark and sobering recent history in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica. The divided town on the Ibër/Ibar has witnessed some of the most harrowing events in Kosovo since the conflict drew to a close. This spring/late winter has once again shown that the animosities between the Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb populations are strong, despite the best efforts of the international community to bring about reconciliation between ethnic communities here.

Harbinger of troubles to come.

There was a hint of possible trouble on Wednesday, March 17th when I walked into the OSCE's office early that morning and was asked by the guards if I had heard about the deaths of three Kosovo Albanian children in the Serb-majority municipality of Zubin Potok. According to the guards, RTK (the public broadcaster) had reported the previous evening that Serbs chased the children with a dog into the river, with the most dire consequences. Despite the fact that there was no confirmation from the police that this happened as reported, the story was believed as true.

A little while later, I went into town and sat down along the pedestrian mall in the southern half of town. At about 9:15, school children with placards, accompanied by the teachers slowly paced through town in silent protest over what they believed to have been another inter-communal crime. Not long after, international Special Police Units came roaring through the “Confidence Zone”—as it known here—and parked close to the bridge leading to the north.

A group began to gather at the bridge, waving the Albanian flag, threatening to cross the bridge, which they did as they broke the ranks of the police on the southern side. What ensued was a short street battle on the northern side with awaiting Kosovo Serbs. Rocks and punches were thrown, but the two sides were physically separated to their sides of the bridge. Had it all stopped after “rocks and punches”, few people outside of Kosovo would have heard about it. However, everyone has now heard of the semi-automatic gunfire and grenades, which left seven people dead in this former mining town.

The OSCE's staff could only watch in shock the violence through the window of the top floor of the office. We were witnessing yet another conflict, one that we had all hoped, or believed, would not happen again.

Police units were also attacked by Albanian youths, who tried to stop their advance through the pedestrian mall. Molotov cocktails were thrown, garbage cans were put across the path of the police and attempts were made to light a fire around them. We watched all of this from our 6th floor vantage point.

Watching a village dying

The following day, Thursday, was spent in expectation. Would there be more clashes, would things return to “normal” and we could all get on with our work? Thankfully, the day passed with no turmoil since KFOR had taken control of the town and established a curfew. Still, reports of a another major clash that evening forced KFOR to “relocate” all internationals (from the OSCE, UN, UNHCR and other agencies) to the French KFOR base on the southern outskirts of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica town.

However, once we arrived at the KFOR camp, we all wished that we had remained in town. That way, we would not have had to witness what happened in the village of Svinjare/Frashër, which was half-Albanian and half-Serb. The village was just below us, about a kilometer away. From the camp we saw the fires emanating from the houses of Kosovo Serbs, and we heard the gunfire. The people of the village had been evacuated soon before the Kosovo Albanian mobs came in by bus (as we were later told by KFOR). We were horrified to see this village burning and dying.

The people of the village were placed in the mess hall of the French KFOR base. They ate and slept in the little space allotted them. They smoked and talked. They commiserated and called relatives in the Serb-majority areas. They slowly began to move to the crest of the hill overlooking their village, and they saw their worst fears. Svinjare/Frashër was no more.

Destruction of memories and dreams

For years I've worked in the humanitarian field and with the “internally displaced”, but one never gets used to the sadness, the loneliness, the desperation that can be seen in the eyes of an old woman that knows that she will never see her home again. All that will remain is the indelible image of flame destroying memories, dreams, happiness. One never gets used to that. It was obvious that one of my colleagues, who works closely with many ethnic communities, was greatly shaken by the events--as were we all.

The Kosovo violence was widespread. Practically no municipality with a minority Kosovo Serb population was left untouched. Orthodox churches that had remained even during the time of the Turkish occupation were destroyed with no less thought than the houses of the Kosovo Serbs who attended mass and celebrated baptisms and weddings there.

“What now?”

We remained on the camp for a total of 6 days, listening to radio broadcasts for information. We could do nothing but sit there and wait for our release. However, we all knew that with our release--which came a week after the rioting and violence--we would all be faced with a Kosovo that was drastically different than the one which we left prior to sanctuary in the walls of the bomb shelter on the first night. We were and are all asking ourselves - “What now?”



Svinjare/Frashër: half-Albanian and half-Serb. We were horrified to see this village burning and dying. Photo: UN.

I want to wake up from this nightmare!

The month of March used to evoke bad memories in me from the past even though this year I had started to crush this fear. Events that happened last month were the best proof I was badly mistaken.

By Edita Buçaj

I had gone through worst experiences one can imagine and had survived. God knows how - but I did, as a student here in Prishtinë / Priština. Alone. Five years on, an invisible hand would send me back to that time. And I had no power to stop it.

I had even started to forget those memories. Now I laugh at my naivety, desires and hopes. It must have been some miscalculation in my head.

When the conflict came in 1999 I was in a similar state. I had many hopes that after marathon talks would hold off the worst and give me hope that we would move ahead. What I do not understand is the mistakes a young student, optimistic that things would change.

What followed was months-long hiding in surroundings and basements of Prishtinë / Priština with my roommates. Most of the time hungry and with evil forces chasing us. But how can I explain this now?

Blitz-voyage to the past

Spring was in full bloom and everything seemed normal that day when we heard the news that one Kosovo Serb youth was injured in a drive-by-shooting in Caglavica/Çagllavicë, a village 5 km south of Prishtinë / Priština.

In protest, local Kosovo-Serbs blocked the main road that links central and eastern Kosovo as well as with Macedonia. The incident was to be deplored, even though police are "still investigating" for possible perpetrators. On the other hand, protests were no news as it was a recurring reaction whenever such incidents happened.

To make matters worse, we heard about an incident in the village of Çabër / Cabra, northern Kosovo, in which three Kosovo Albanian children drowned in unexplained circumstances. One of the survivors claimed they were chased into river with a dog by children from the neighbouring Serb-inhabited village of Zubce/Zubç.

All of a sudden the situation erupted in an unseen violence. News was coming from all sides on protests, torching, killing. Where was I living?

The target was not clear to me. Everyone? There was so much confusion. Out there. In the air. In my head. And no one stopped it...

History will be the best judge.

On the spot

With all those events, it is logical that we were not able to do much. I called one of my office colleagues, member of the Serb community,



"Spring was in full bloom and everything seemed normal that day when we heard the news..."
Photo: UN

and was happy to learn that he and his family were safe and sound.

My international colleagues were rightly concerned for their own fate and for minorities. We were receiving reports of burning UN cars and the stoning of UNMIK Headquarters. What I didn't like was the attitude I met. Some of the internationals looked at me as if I was happy about all this; and that really hurt. I was used to hear that there is no such thing as collective blame. Now I was tasting it and it was bitter.

I decided to get out of the office and see what was going out in the field. With an OSCE ID card I would not see any problem. I took the opportunity of travelling with some international journalists.

Together with a Swedish crew we tried the first bridge which divides the flashpoint town of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica. French soldiers would not let us pass, but it was also clear they did not know whom to contact for clearance.

The town was dead. After rioting of a few days ago, the place was covered by a dead silence. Crossing the bridge, and numerous checkpoints, we had a feeling it was the year 1942 or so.

The Danish were more helpful and they left us move north. Çabër/Cabra is a small hamlet inhabited by Kosovo Albanians. Just like Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, the river again divides it from the neighbouring village of Zubce/Zubç.

Are children guilty?

One day before, this village had buried two of three drowned children and the third child

was still missing. Fresh flowers tried to cover the pain.

We interviewed the father of one of the victims and also the survivor. He was convinced his son (the survivor) had told the truth. "Serbs did it. This is planned by the Serb secret service, which operated freely in the northern Kosovo," he said.

As convinced as him were their Serb neighbours from Zubce/Zubç who said that everything was an invention.

One of the passers-by who was going to a wedding told us that the Albanians of Zubce/Zubç should leave this village and move to Kosovo Albanian areas as this was the only Albanian settlement and they did not want to live together anymore.

As many of the villagers were in this wedding we decide to go back. Especially since we had a dog after us.

The next day we went to the enclaves of Gorazdevac/Gorazhdec and Belo Polje/Bellopojë. A similar incident involving Kosovo Serbian children had happened last summer in Gorazdevac/Gorazhdec when 2 were shot and killed.

Again we had no difficulties, despite the fact that KFOR had increased its presence around this village. People were very friendly to us and were waiting for the usual delivery of newspapers by our mission. Most importantly, the village did not suffer any damage.

'Radio Gorazdevac' is a low-power station in this enclave. This is where we met the father of one of the Kosovo Serb children killed in

another river in again unexplained circumstances.

"Siptars ('Siptar' is a derogatory term for Albanians used by the Serbian language speakers) are to be blamed. They killed my son Panta," he was saying. Dressed in black and visibly angry, I had an impression he would burst any minute.

Traces of anger and flames

The last destination was the village of Belo Polje/Bellopojë in western Kosovo. This village was a new returns site with some 24 heads of families who had returned from Serbia last summer. They had left their families there until they rebuilt their houses.

With the help of the international community, twenty-four houses were reconstructed and nearly ready for the tenants. Sadly, during the rioting, only three houses survived, together with the church.

Villagers were evacuated by the Italian KFOR to its base. They were talking to some ten journalists who had managed to enter the heavily-guarded base in the outskirts of Peja/Pec town.

"We decided to return because this is home," said the community leader from this village. "Rents are expensive in Serbia and we want to come back".

Looking at me with not much confidence, he obviously understood I was not a native speaker, he was afraid that I was interpreting everything he was saying. He was even accusing one of our OSCE colleagues of being a spy.

"You don't need to interpret. He (pointing at my colleague Stuart from OSCE office in Peja/Pec) speaks Serbian."

In an effort to calm him down I said "I have nothing to gain whatsoever from misinterpreting your words and Stuart is British. You can trust me. I'm from the neighbouring municipality of Istog (only 25 km away)."

"Did you hear that the Kosovo-Serb settlement in my municipality were not touched at all?" I asked him trying to win his trust.

"Yes I heard everyone is fine," he said and continued to talk.

Trust in Balkan mentality

Bloody wars in the Balkans have destroyed families and killed many people. Some of the damage can be repaired. Some not. Lives lost seem to speak to us urging to be the last ones. Building trust and confidence will be the most difficult task. It has to come from both sides. Unilateral efforts will fail.

The international community will be gone one day and we will have to learn to live together because this is where we belong. Our new home will have room for all. Let's build it together. Differently - for our own sake.

Multi-ethnic media:

'Radio K' in the line of crossfire

by Arni Snaevarr

On the square in front of the premises of Radio K there is a monument to fallen KLA soldiers. A couple of hundred meters away one can see burned down houses of Kosovo Serbian residents. Both are quiet but powerful symbols of the violence, which has shaken Fushë Kosovë / Kosovo Polje in recent and earlier conflicts.

Multi-ethnic broadcasting is never an easy matter in Kosovo, and certainly not in this Municipality, where some of the worst riots took place on the 17 and 18 March.

Radio K's broadcasting is divided equally into Albanian and Serbian language programmes. Two hours every week are also devoted to broadcasts for Roma and Ashkali-listeners. Like most Kosovo's broadcasters, Radio K covered the events of "Black Wednesday" and the following days, in its 24 hour program. Powercuts hampered its broadcasting but bilingual broadcasting continued around the clock, from the beginning of the riots until the Serbian staff had to be evacuated for security reasons.

Reporting from both sides

Radio K seems to have been one of the very few broadcasters in Kosovo who has had a multi-ethnic approach to reporting the ethnic riots. "We tried to cover the events in an unbiased way," says station manager Naim Breznica. "We tried as best as we could to verify information before broadcasting it," says Mr. Breznica and points out some Serbian media reports, stating that the streets were lined with dead and injured people. "Fortunately this was not true, and I hope we contributed to calm the situation by giving the correct information." One person died and twelve were injured, three of them with gun shot wounds, during recent violence in Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje.

News reporting did not rely on one ethnic source only, as most Kosovo-media on both sides of the ethnical divide did. The multi-ethnicity of the staff clearly helped Radio K to balance its news reporting.

At one point, rumours spread in town, that Radio K had been burnt down and that its staff had been severely beaten up. This also turned out not to be true: "There was not a single incident involving the radio" says Mr. Breznica, "on the contrary we had a record breaking number of phone-calls from listeners, who wanted to express their gratitude for this type of reporting."

Uphill battle

Nevertheless, it is not a secret that a multi-ethnic radio has its opponents in Fushë Kosovë/

Kosovo Polje. Radio K will have to move out of the premises of the Community Centre when it will be handed over to a local NGO, because of the opposition from the Municipality, which is the legal owner of the building.

Radio K employee's 12 staff members; 4 Kosovo Albanians, 3 Kosovo Serbs, 2 Roma, 1 Ashkali, a Macedonian and a Turk.

Did the events have an adverse effect on staff relations? Mr. Breznica is adamant: "Absolutely not. The kind of relationship we have here, is not spoiled by a couple of days of rioting!"

Financially, Radio K has had to rely heavily on subsidies from the International Community, including the OSCE. Apparently businesses are not keen to be seen advertising in multi ethnic media.

Not let five years be spoiled...

Despite all, Mr. Breznica is cautiously optimistic on the future of a multi ethnic Kosovo. "I visited Serbian leaders in the municipality and begged them to show the same sympathy and patience as they did after the conflict in 1999. I asked them to take part in Kosovo's institutions and not let five years of building up a new society be destroyed in 2 days. My analysis is that with good will and hard work we can in a relatively short time come close to were we were before."

Outside Radio K, physical scars bear silent witness to the enormous task that lies ahead - with uncertain results.



"We tried to cover the events in an unbiased way," says station manager Naim Breznica of Radio K.

Photo: Hanns-Christian Klasing

Kosovo erupts... live on TV

How Kosovo's broadcasters covered the 17-18 March riots

by Arni Snaevarr

Most commentators agree that it was a news story about the tragic death of three Kosovo Albanian Children in Ibër/Ibar River, which at least partly ignited the flames of ethnic violence that cost 19, their lives in the rioting that started 17 March.

The first news of the incident on the night of 16 March was reported in the main evening news of RTK, the public broadcaster, at 19.30. The RTK anchorman read a brief text saying that police were searching for three missing boys in the Ibër/Ibar river. Their disappearance might have been related to a quarrel between Serbs and Albanians. In this report RTK ignored a request from UNMIK police who had specifically asked RTK journalists not to use reference to Serbs, "as it would increase ethnic tension", in the words of Tracy Becker, UNMIK Police spokesperson.

RTK started from 20.45 to show a border on the screen announcing further news in its late evening news show "Blic". At 22:00 RTV 21 the private broadcaster, published the first full TV story on the incident, setting the tone by reporting without any reservations that 3 children had drowned after: "Two Serbs ... chased four Albanian children ... and while trying to escape them, the Albanian children jumped into the Iber river."

A call to the Prime Minister

The story of the Çabër/Cabra incident broke at a time of heightened ethnic tensions in Kosovo. A hand grenade had recently been thrown at President Ibrahim Rugova's residence; Serbs had put up roadblocks to protest drive by shooting of a teenager in Caglavica/Çagllavicë. This did not escape the attention of RTK's directors and about 22.00 - an hour before "Blic" was on the air- Mufail Limani, chief news editor of RTK, called Prime Minister Bajram Rexhepi to warn him about the situation and possible repercussions in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica.

In the "Blic" report RTK reported the three missing children were: "... victims of an attack by a group of Serbs." A 12 second soundbite from UNMIK police spokesperson Becker warning that this was unconfirmed fell in the shadow of a sensational interview with a surviving 13 year old boy.

"... We went close to the river... when some Serbs with a dog swore at us from the house... and we tried to escape but we couldn't as we were close to the river."

His account of the incident underwent some changes in the next couple of days and has not yet been corroborated by police. What stands out is the fact that the boy never said himself that the children were "chased by Serbs and a dog."

RTK followed up with a live interview with Halit Barani, a controversial human rights activist interview where he blamed the drowning of the boys on "Serbian bandits" and claimed it was in retaliation for the wounding of the young Serb in Caglavica/Çagllavicë.

While UNMIK Police cautionary statement got 12 seconds of airtime, Mr. Barani got 1.46 minute.

Earlier a RTK correspondent in a live report from Mitrovicë/Mitrovica claimed that after "the attack" on the children "almost all citizens" were heading toward Çabër/Cabra.

"I went back to the media, specifically RTK and KTV, and gave them an on-camera interview" said Tracy Becker, spokesperson of UNMIK Police: "I appealed for people to stay calm and stay home so that police can focus on finding the children rather than deploying manpower to handle crowds. I again emphasized that we had no evidence to support the rumour of Serbians killing Albanian children." Neither station aired Becker's appeal, according to an interview published in a report by OSCE's Representative on Freedom of the Media.

"During that evening it did not seem to matter to the journalists what we said. They seemed to have made their conclusions before. Whatever we said, it was disregarded", Georgy Kakuk, the regional UNMIK spokesperson said in the same report."

Kosovo erupts... live on TV

Riots broke out in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica and subsequently throughout Kosovo the morning after and RTK and other broadcasters, TV and Radio; national and local were soon on the air live from the scenes of violent demonstration.

Throughout the afternoon television stations were showing dramatic footage of violence including close ups of wounded and shocked victims. In Mitrovicë/Mitrovica private Albanian station was showing live shots of the violence accompanied by patriotic Albanian music. Bernard Urban, OSCE's Media officer in the Munic-

ipality says: "I called the director of the station about this unacceptable behaviour and the songs stopped. A Serb station was no better... That night the station went ahead with a film depicting the Ottoman Empire's treatment of Serbs. This also only fueled passions on the Serb side."

RTK as the only public broadcaster deserves special attention. On 17 March it broadcasted, interview after interview where both reporters and their interlocutors expressed understanding of the outbreak of violence. In RTK's "Special edition" the following exchange took place between a reporter and LDK Member of Parliament and former senior Human Rights activist, Nekibe Kelmendi.

"RTK: Some say the revolt is understandable ...

N.K.: Of course it is understandable. There have been many things going wrong here (...)

RTK: How do you see this? The police is using force and teargas against Albanian protestors, while the Serbs are allowed to block roads for days?

N.K.: This is a clear double standard practice that UNMIK has applied from the beginning. This is the effect of so-called "positive discrimination"..."

Other interviews of similar content and suggestive questioning by the journalists continued to be aired throughout the day

While PDK MP Arsim Bajrami branded the rioting "...a legitimate revolt by the Albanian population... a lesson for the international Community", appeals for calm from the president and prime minister where only broadcasted in the latter half of the evening's newshour which was dominated by violent, dramatic pictures.

OSCE warns broadcasters

In the early afternoon of 17 March, Robert Gillette, the Temporary Media Commissioner issued an urgent appeal to broadcasters in an e-mail asking them to minimize "the emotional content of broadcasts so as to inform but not inflame the audience." The Media Commissioner visited all three Kosovo wide television stations to emphasize this message. Later that day the Association for Professional Journalists in Kosovo issued a statement where it accused the TMC of attempting to censor the news.

In the late afternoon 17 March Ambassador Pascal Fieschi, the head of Mission of the OSCE in Kosovo summoned the directors of the three Kosovo-wide stations and reminded them of the lesson of Rwanda where journalists were held legally accountable for inciting violence in war crimes trials.

According to OSCE reports the excited tone of the electronic media's coverage changed noticeably only towards the end of the crisis.

(Based on reports by the OSCE's Department of Democratisation, The TMC and The Representative of the Freedom of the Media)



The hotspot: Protesters face UN and KFOR on the Mitrovicë / Mitrovica bridge. Photo: UN

TMC accuses RTK of propaganda during riots

Robert Gillette, the Temporary Media Commissioner (TMC) accuses the directors of RTK, Kosovo's public TV of allowing "a distorted sense of patriotism to overwhelm professionalism". In his 60-page report on Kosovo's media handling of the March riots the TMC says: "For nearly 24 hours from the evening of 16 March, journalism at RTK became propaganda."

Although finding some fault with other media, Mr. Gillette reserves the harshest criticism for RTK for the reporting of the tragic drowning of three Albanian boys on 16 March. "RTK ... alone among the other three Kosovo-wide television broadcasters... created an emotional and politicized context for the story by interviews that categorically attributed the boys' deaths to 'Serb bandits' and 'Serb Chetnik hordes,' based on no factual evidence whatsoever."

TMC notes that RTK kept the story almost constantly in front of viewers with scrolling texts and special newscasts, "generating an explosive atmosphere of patriotic hysteria around this tragedy". Mr. Gillette concludes that: "RTK was chiefly if not exclusively responsible among the three Kosovo-wide television broadcasters for transforming the deaths of three boys from a tragic news story into dangerous political theater".

Not only does TMC criticize RTK's news reporting. When rioting broke out on 17 March, RTK announced a 'special edition' in a text message while showing a video of a concert last summer in Prishtinë/Priština in tribute to Fatmir Limaj, a KLA veteran currently awaiting trial in The Hague accused of war crimes. As the text message reporting violence in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica

crawled across the screen, Mr. Limaj's face appeared beneath it with the words, "Your Freedom, Our Freedom," followed by children singing and other musical salutes to Limaj for the next 22 minutes. Mr. Gillette concludes: "This was RTK's introduction to its first news special of the day covering the violence in Mitrovica. Underneath this text message, RTK editors chose to air a video of high political symbolism, as if to invite the viewing public across Kosovo to remember its patriotism at this particular moment."

RTK gets the lion's share of criticism and TMC says that its main private competitor KTV "did nothing to politicize the story or to place it in an emotional, patriotic context that recklessly risked fueling public outrage and exacerbating the situation as RTK did." However some KTV correspondents are accused of filing "grossly biased reports" that were not challenged or corrected. The third broadcaster, TV 21 is said to have "failed completely to communicate to its audience the crucial element of uncertainty" by ignor-

ing UNMIK police's statements on the drowning of the three boys.

It is not surprising that the TMC, who has served as a regulatory body for Kosovo's broadcast media, makes several recommendations for the broadcasters, especially RTK. While recommending a review of RTK's Corporate Governance and active Implementation of the RTK Code of Conduct, renewed international aid and a reintroduction of senior international adviser, The TMC warns RTK to resist scapegoating or "single out lower-ranking individuals for blame rather than candidly examining processes of management and implementation of standards."

AS



TMC concludes that RTK was chiefly if not exclusively responsible among the three Kosovo-wide television broadcasters for transforming the deaths of three boys from a tragic news story into dangerous political theater. Photo: Olja Stojanovic

Report lambasts broadcasters

The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media investigated independently the Kosovo Media's behaviour. In his report the Representative, Mr. Miklos Haraszti criticized the reporting on the drowning of the children in the Kosovo Media as a "categorical spin... (that) ... seems to have not been supported by any journalistically valid accounts."

"Without the reckless and sensationalist reporting" Mr. Haraszti concluded, "the events could have taken a different turn. They would have not reached the intensity and level of

brutality we all witnessed or would not have taken place at all for that matter."

While criticizing the Kosovo media, specifically the broadcasting sector for displaying "an unacceptable level of emotion, bias, carelessness, and wrongly understood "patriotic" zeal," Mr. Haraszti does not accuse it of "intentionally instigating violence." The reporting on the evening of 16 March on the three main Kosovan TV channels, RTK the only public broadcaster is in particular singled out for criticism.

The mainstream print media, "with some unfortunate exceptions" did display rather constructive behavior according to the report. Editorials and most of the reporting in the dailies "Koha Ditore" and "Zeri" are said to have helped decrease tension.

The report was based on on location fact finding by an expert, Mr. Dardan Gashi who is a journalist and author of two books on the Balkans.

AS

Kosovo Police Service rescues Ashkali Community in Vushtrri/Vucitrn

The Events of the 17 and 18 March in Kosovo were tragic for the Ashkali Community in Vushtrri/VuFitrn, and a challenge and an experience for the Kosovo Police Service (KPS).

by Hasan Sopa

The students of The Kosovo Police Service School had an unexpected baptism by fire during the riots of 17-18 March when the Ashkali community that lived next to the KPS School was attacked.

Lessons started normally that day, but suddenly detonations were heard near the School. "At that moment we tried to be calm. Of course, the situation was tense, but professionalism prevailed, because even in mid of crises every one of us was thinking as a police officer and not as members of our respective communities," says KPS first lieutenant Aferdita Mikullovc.

Our task was to rescue lives of people in danger

The regional police station in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica asked KPSS to help evacuate the Ashkali community who lived next to the school.

"We got to the spot very fast and this might have helped prevent the worst scenario," says the first lieutenant of the school Veton Elshani. "The mob was heading towards the Ashkali settlement and we were supposed to stop them. It was not easy to be in the line of crossfire. But, we were well prepared physically and also well equipped with protection, which helped us a lot. Our primary task was to rescue lives of people in danger and we did it very successfully."

The KPS officer in charge of the operation, first lieutenant Mikullovc asked for permission to open an emergency gate at the back of the school fence to facilitate the evacuation

of the Ashkalis. The directorate of the school approved this without any hesitation.

"Among the evacuated there were elderly people, women and children as well as disabled people and there was no time to go around to the main entrance," explains first lieutenant Mikullovc.

The situation would have been worse

Once all were in safety they were accommodated at the large gymnasium and were given food, water, blankets and mattresses and medicine.

"Most of the women and children were frightened and some of the members of the community were angry of the lack of the protection that they've been given," said Timothy Wilson, Chief of Planning at the KPSS. "This is an understandable reaction, but the fact is that if we had done nothing the situation would have been much worse."

The Ashkali remained at the KPS gymnasium until midnight that night, when French KFOR came and took them to their compound.

The tragic events in Kosovo, especially the one in Vushtrri/VuFitrn, was a challenge but also an experience for KPS. It was the moment where they could show themselves and ultimately they did.

"We are very proud for the KPS, as they have come an awful long way and I hope that some of our training has to do something with that. The fact is that they are still a young police service and are still learning," says Timothy Wilson who has been with the KPSS right from the start.

Lesson learned

There is not a slightest doubt that these events, first and foremost, have damaged Kosovo. They challenged local and international institutions. Above all, inter-ethnic relations were damaged. But at least, their impact on the KPS looks to have been positive.

"Recent events has strengthened our ethnic relations, I am talking here about KPS. That day we all acted together and this should be a lesson for the decision-making institutions, which means that KPS is capable of managing crisis situations and take more responsibilities in the future," concludes first lieutenant Veton Elshani.



"Recent events have strengthened ... ethnic relations" within KPS say officers at KPSS.

Photo: Hasan Sopa

Personality and process: Kosovo Albanian return to Štrpce/Shtërpçë

Two charismatic characters are involved in the relative success of Kosovo Albanian returns to Gornja Bitinja/Biti e Eperme in Štrpce/Shtërpçë. Michael Kirby met Elez Fejzullahu and Zoran Popovic.

By Michael Kirby

After more than four years in displacement, in 2003 fifty-six Kosovo Albanian heads of household returned to Gornja Bitinja/Biti e Eperme in Štrpce/Shtërpçë. Returning to ones home after an extended absence is not an overnight operation, and this particular community re-integration initiative was the culmination of protracted negotiations among International Community representatives, municipal offi-

cial, and somewhat unwelcoming village neighbours.

Two of the most charismatic characters involved in the Gornja Bitinja/Biti e Eperme return are Elez Fejzullahu and Zoran Popovic. Both men feel strong connections to the land and chart their family histories' in relation to Gornja Bitinja/Biti e Eperme. Also, I would say Zoran and Elez are family men first, and community rep-

resentatives by default rather than individual desire.

At age 69, a seasoned farmer and Lek Dukagjini Kanun conflict mediator, Elez approaches his twilight years as a man half his age looks toward the future. In spite of a series of heart problems and orders from his doctor to "reduce activity," the soft-spoken Mr. Fejzullahu continues to be an active proponent for inter-ethnic



Two of the most charismatic characters involved in the Gornja Bitinja/Biti e Eperme return are Elez Fejzullahu....

tolerance and understanding between communities.

"The place where you're born is the sweetest place of all," Elez told me calmly over a cup of coffee recently. "I've been a family mediator for more than 30 years now and I know that the first thing we need to do is to build trust between our communities. I was born in Biti e Eperme; my Serbian neighbours were born in Biti e Eperme. We need to live together, and the truth is that we cannot live without each other." As a man more than half Elez's age, I appreciate his words of wisdom and admire his level-headed persistence in the face of adversity.

Zoran Popovic, a 43 year old carpenter by trade, is an expressive and vocal advocate for his community. Although Zoran sees the situation differently and feels that the return of his Kosovo Albanian neighbours has been forced upon the village, nevertheless he has been willing to discuss matters candidly and openly with everyone.

"The International Community is showing milk and honey to the world, but the reality is quite different," Popovic stated in his quaint living room on a cold march day. "I have a wife and three children, and all we have in this village are our televisions and a small shop. There are no

cafes, and there certainly are no cafeterias."

Zoran is quite emphatic about community relations and his involvement in the return process. "The return process requires tolerance on both sides. We should listen more to each other and less to Belgrade or Pristina."

When queried about current developments, Zoran raised his hands, "Look it's cold outside and the roads are catastrophic. I have tried to communicate these concerns to the International Community, but not one of my suggestions has been accepted by the Štrpce/Shtërpçë Municipal Working Group on Returns or the municipality."



and Zoran Popovic. Here with OSCE's Oliver McCoy. Photo: OSCE

Although Zoran remains an active voice in the community, he has resigned officially from Return Working Group involvement in order to focus more on family and entrepreneurial endeavors.

It has been an unpredictable winter in the Štrpce/Shtërpçë hills. At times it has been so cold only two jackets and a roaring fire offer solace. Other times it seems as the spring thaw happened overnight as the glowing sun, blue sky, and melting snow had ushered in a new era. Change happens whether we welcome it or not, and that too is a process.

We should be dancin' Yeah!

By Michael Kirby

The first time I mentioned dance and aerobic fitness as vehicle for multi-ethnic tolerance building and reconciliation to my supervisors, the reaction was less than positive. There are people who speak about democratic principles and egalitarian norms as theoretical concepts, and there are those who are actually charged with creating local initiatives that embody those ideals. Maybe a roundtable discussion involving long-winded political leaders representing various ethnic communities sounds appealing to few people in Kosovo, but for the majority of Kosovo's youth this is about as interesting as a 7th period economics class.

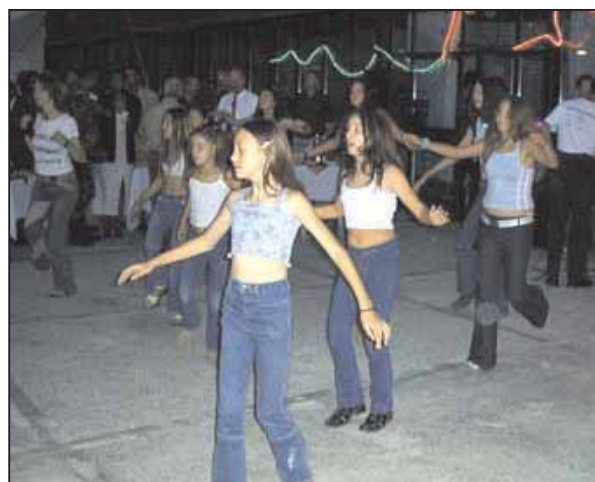
As a person interested in different perspectives, I often try to imagine the world through the eyes of a 13-year old. When I am not deluding myself with childhood daydreams, I ask myself, "In terms of inter-community tolerance, how can the OSCE affect the status quo without creating an overtly artificial environment?" I have learned through experience with youth that initiatives such as basketball tournaments, youth camps, and creative educational activities are more conducive to the desired result: respect, understanding, and identification.

Thus, despite the initial reluctance, I took on

the Dance and Aerobic Fitness Confidence-building initiative and the project's rather hyperactive co-ordinator, Ljubisha Racicevic, known affectionately as Pota. Apart from being the Sveti Sava Cultural Center Director, Ljubisa is able to communicate with people without speaking a common language. And most importantly, regardless of ethnic or religious persuasion, youth are magnetized by Pota's positive, energetic approach to life. The more I thought about it the more I realized that Pota was the right person to help bridge the gap between youth in the Štrpce/Shtërpçë Municipality.

The Štrpce/Shtërpçë Dance and Aerobic Fitness Confidence-Building Project is a year long initiative in which the OSCE Mission supports the Štrpce/Shtërpçë Municipality offer extra-curricular cultural and fitness activities in both Kosovo Alba-

nian and Kosovo Serbian areas. Already 110 local youth participate in the project. The Štrpce/Shtërpçë youth do not realize that this is a reconciliation and tolerance-building endeavor, all they know is that dancing is freeing and fun.



Maybe a roundtable discussion involving long-winded political sounds appealing to few people in Kosovo, but for the majority of Kosovo's youth this is about as interesting as a 7th period economics class. Photo: Oliver McCoy.

Multi ethnic children camp disrupted by ethnic violence

OSCE organised winter camp in Brezovica ends in KFOR evacuation due to 17-18 March riots

by Arni Snaevarr

It surely looked like a peaceful Wednesday morning in Brezovica/Brezovicë, 17 March. The sun was shining and the snow was melting, announcing the approach of spring. Some fifty children were assembled in a multi-ethnic KPS Capacity Building Camp winter camp at Hotel Molika. Who would have thought that during the night the children would have to be evacuated and escorted under police protection to their homes? Sure there was bombing, but it was "friendly fire": participating American KFOR soldiers throwing snow balls at each other.

"We used sign language"

51 children aged ten to fifteen from Feri-zaj/Uroševac, Kačanik/Kacanik, and Štrpce/Shtërpçë municipalities attended the camp together with six KPS officers, two local teachers and a local Doctor as well as KFOR representatives.

Twelve of the children were of Serbian origin, six RAE, the remainder Albanian. One of the aims of the 5-day winter camp, which builds on the success of a previous summer camp, was to improve the image of the KPS and bring together underprivileged children from most of Kosovo's ethnic groups.

On Wednesday, the third day of the camp, US KFOR conducted a sports day, which was

attended by local political leaders, parents and family members of the Camp attendees.

The Camp proceeded well, with all children mixing and co-operating. "It's very good" thirteen year old Agran Ademi told Details. "The games are fun. I could not understand the Serbian children but we try to communicate, using sign language." It was also the first time Stojadinka Djoric, 12 and Jovana Milosavljevic, 13 played with Albanian kids. "We liked the company but the competition even better" they told Details.

Waiting for Miss Kosovo

Gregory Boatwright and other KFOR played with the children and it was hard to say who was having most fun, the kids, the KPS or the soldiers in the beautiful surroundings of Brezovica. The men were looking forward to seeing and hearing Miss Kosovo who was due to visit the winter camp. "Maybe she will give a speech about World peace..." someone commented. But we never knew if Miss Kosovo would have talked about world peace. While children from all ethnic groups participated in a tug of war with KFOR and KPS, teenagers just a few years older were fighting a real war with Kosovo Serbs, police and KFOR in Mitrovicë / Mitrovica and soon in most of Kosovo's municipalities.



US KFOR in action.
Photo: Hasan Sopa.

Evacuation in the dead of night

It is always a huge responsibility to be entrusted with other people's children and though the camp commanders put on a brave face, it must have been a huge burden to see to that the children, all 51 of them from different origin, arrived safely home. As soon as the gravity of the situation became clear a decision was taken to close the Camp during the afternoon of the 17 March. But no civilian bus was available and a driver willing to cross the ethnic boundary in Drajkovce/Drajkoc, was even harder to find.

"It was at time a hair-raising experience," acknowledges Alexandra Simpson, OSCE's main organiser of the event, "but everyone kept a cool head".

It was not until the early hours of the morning that a solution was found to evacuate the children who had to be woken up for departure at 6.20. Finally KFOR escorted the children to Ferizaj/Uroševac, and Kačanik/ Kacanik, where the parents collected their children. Alexandra Simpson was relieved when all the children had arrived safely home. Despite the dramatic and unexpected end she concluded: "The aim of the KPS Camp was capacity building, and this was achieved, albeit in unfortunate circumstances. The leading KPS officers from Ferizaj/Uroševac, and Štrpce/Shtërpçë must be commended for their cool-headedness and efficiency in dealing with the situation, and evacuating the Camp members without spreading panic to the children."



An innocent tug of war in Brezovica/Brezovicë at the exact moment of the outbreak of ethnic violence in Mitrovicë / Mitrovica.

Photo: Hasan Sopa.