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29 April 2010



ENGLISH only

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR MIROSLAVA BEHAM,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SERBIA,  
UNDER CURRENT ISSUES,  
AT THE 807<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL,  
ON THE REMOVAL OF SERBIAN MOBILE AND LANDLINE  
OPERATORS IN KOSOVO/ SERBIA**

29 April 2010

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation would like to draw the attention of the distinguished Permanent Council to ongoing disturbing events in Kosovo. As we could learn also from the reports prepared by the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, the authorities in Pristina disabled the phone networks in the areas south of the river Ibar – that is: in the enclaves inhabited predominantly by Serbs, but also by Roma and Gorani a week ago.

The removal of Serbian mobile and landline operators in Kosovo and Metohija – that is to say: mobile and landline operators registered in central Serbia – has a serious impact on the life of the concerned population. Allow me to quote OMIK's Activity Report 16/2010 from 19 to 26 April that states: "The disconnections have caused a significant disruption in the life of the Kosovo Serb and other affected communities south of the Ibar. These communities are largely dependent on Serbian mobile phone operators and are now unable to establish basic internal communication. This includes calling emergency services, such as health centres, the police or fire departments."

Let me be clear, Mr. Chairman: To bereave someone of any possibility for communication is not only a humanitarian issue, but represents a flagrant violation of Human Rights – the right to free and unhindered communication, that is: the right "to seek, receive and impart information (...) through any media", as it is guaranteed in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, among others.

Let me remind you, Mr. Chairman, that the Serbian mobile and landline operators in Kosovo and Metohija worked without interference throughout the conflict in 1999 and afterwards. Even after the UDI their operation was not put into question.

What is the most disturbing feature of the recent events is the way this action of disrupting the communication of almost 100.000 people was performed: it was carried out unilaterally, brutally, hastily and forcibly by Kosovo special police units. This secret attack reminds alarmingly of the events of 17 March 2004 and represents an outright act of intimidation. The interruption of all types of communication caused a serious security problem for the Serbian and other non-Albanian communities and created an atmosphere of uneasiness and fear from ethnic cleansing in the enclaves. – I believe that everybody in this hall is able to imagine how frightening the feeling of total isolation and the lack of any communication must be under circumstances, as they prevail in the enclaves in Kosovo, where the freedom of movement is considerably restricted anyway.

This is why these events had a straight impact on the decision of a number of Serbs living in the enclaves to leave Kosovo. At the same time it immediately discouraged internally displaced persons to return to their homes, the present act of intimidation being only one in a long series of similar occurrences. I would just like to remind that not so long ago, in the middle of winter, the Serbian population, in particular in the enclaves, was cut off from electricity. And it was only a few days ago that the busses and tents of Serbian returnees to the village Žač close to Istok were stoned. In this and other enclaves communication is vital, it is literally a matter of survival, and the contact to the outside world was possible only through mobile and landline operators registered in central Serbia.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me point out our firm belief that this issue, if it had to be opened at all, should have been solved by dialogue and negotiations through status neutral actions of the international organizations and for the benefit of all communities in Kosovo. If it is not possible to find a speedy and constructive solution to this problem, it is hard to imagine how there can be progress in resolving other open issues.

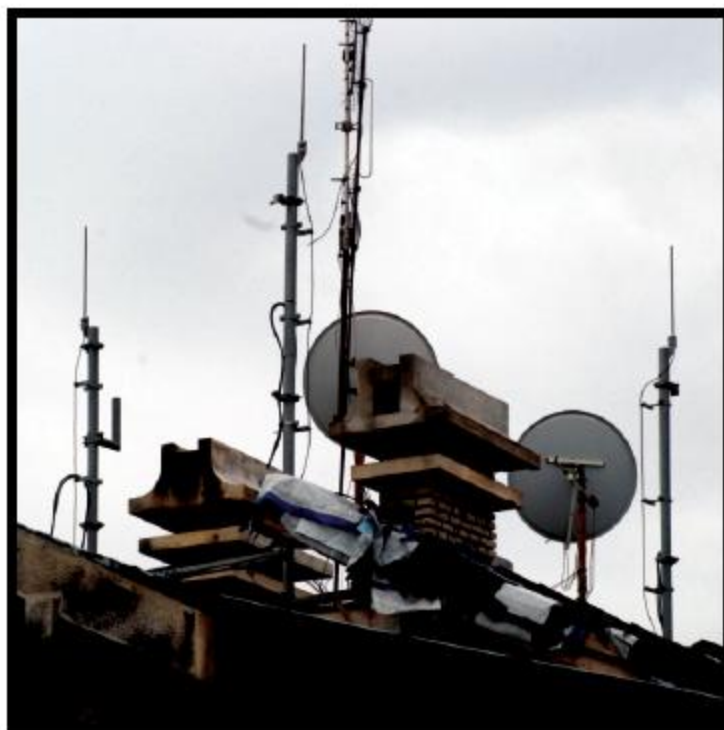
We regret to have to state that this is another confirmation of the threat to our sovereignty and that this threat is aimed at the presently most endangered community in Europe – the Serbian community in Kosovo and Metohija.

Finally, Mr.Chairman, let me reiterate what we have outlined on so many occasions – that Serbia is firmly dedicated to solving the Kosovo issue by diplomatic and peaceful means. This is why we believe that any unilateral, in

particular violent action does not contribute to strengthening the overall security, particularly that of the non-Albanian and Serbian population in Kosovo.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

LOKACIJA: PEĆ - Centar  
LOCATION: PEJA - Center



Opis : Sem antenskih stubova sve otalo je uništeno, polupano, izrezano i pokrađeno sa strane RAT-a (ART)  
Description: Antenna towers are the only things left. Everything else is broken, destroyed, cut and stolen by TRA, (ART)

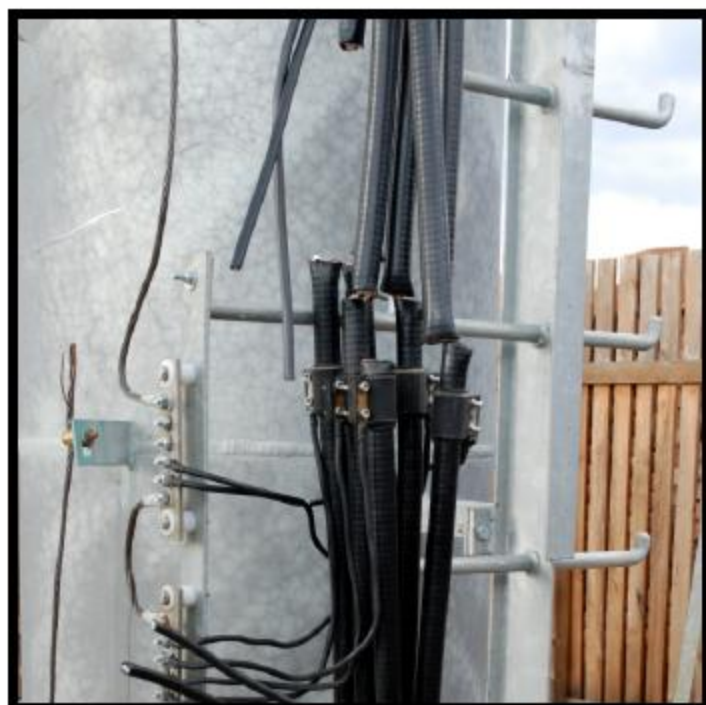
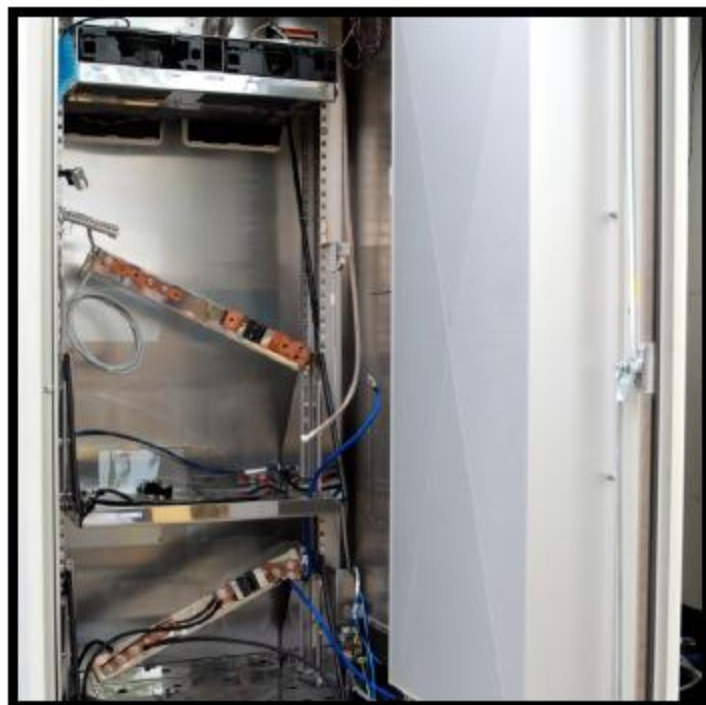
**LOKACIJA: PRIZREN - Novo Sello**  
**LOCATION: PRIZREN - Novo Sello**



**Opis : Sem antenskog stuba sve otalo je uništeno, polupano, izrezano i pokrađeno sa strane RAT-a (ART)**  
**Description: Antenna towers are the only things left. Everything else is broken, destroyed, cut and stolen by TRA, (ART)**

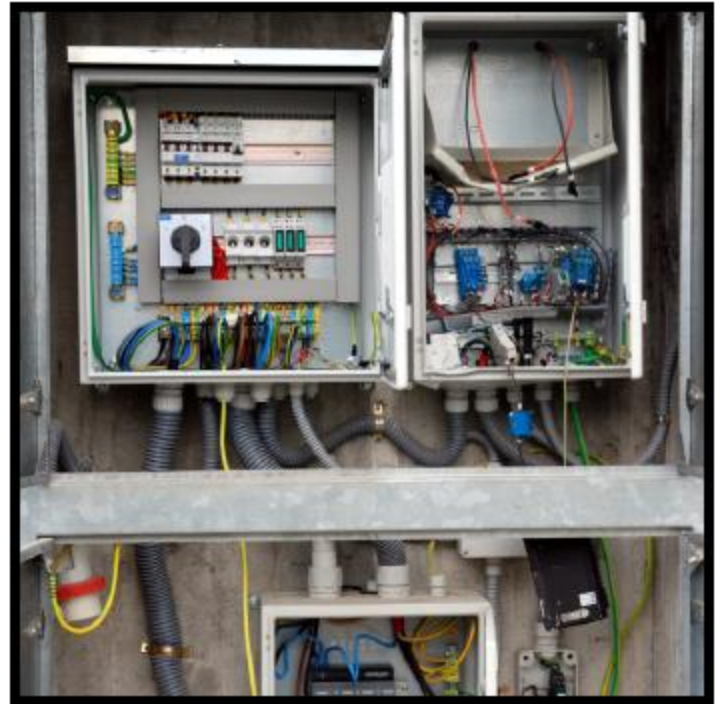
LOKACIJA: GRAČANICA - Donja Gušterica

LOCATION: GRACANICA - Donja Gušterica



Opis : Sem antenskog stuba i demoliranih ormara sve otalo je uništeno, polupano, izrezano i pokrađeno sa strane RAT-a (ART)  
Description: Antenna tower and destroyed cabinets are the only things left. Everything else is broken, destroyed, cut and stolen by TRA, (ART)

**LOKACIJA: PRIŠTINA - Vranjevac**  
**LOCATION: PRISHTINA - Vranjevac**



**Opis : Sem antenskog stuba i demoliranih ormana sve otalo je uništeno, polupano, izrezano i pokrađeno sa strane RAT-a (ART)**  
**Description: Antenna tower and destroyed cabinets are the only things left. Everything else is broken, destroyed, cut and stolen by TRA, (ART)**

**LOKACIJA: PRIŠTINA - Prugovac, Put Priština - Podujevo**  
**LOCATION: PRISHTINA - Prugovac, Road Prishtina - Podujevo**



**Opis : Sem antenskog stuba sve otalo je uništeno, polupano, izrezano i pokrađeno sa strane RAT-a (ART)**  
**Description: Antenna tower is the only thing left. Everything else is broken, destroyed, cut and stolen by TRA, (ART)**