Dear Ciara,

sorry i'm been so late in sending you news, but we (in Kukes) were not connected to the cc-mail until today and i've only just returned from Tirana.

Here is the short statement i made this morning at the press conference:
"In the course of extensive and lengthy interviews with Kosovar refugees, MSF field staff in Albania have received consistent reports of actions taken by the Serb forces which support the conclusion that a systematic policy of population expulsion has been & continues to be pursued.
The majority of refugees who have arrived in Northern Albania come from villages. Refugees report that police, military and/or paramilitary forces systematically approached houses, told occupants to "go to Albania/NATO/Clinton!" and that they were never to come back or they would be killed: "Kosovo is not your country". Serb forces burned or otherwise destroyed houses left behind by fleeing families. People who were unable to move rapidly enough, due to age or infirmity, are still reported missing.
After people were expelled from their homes, they were frequently demanded cash (DM) and valuables in return for 'safe' passage. All along the road there were surrounded by paramilitaries who directed them to the border. There, officials confiscated all forms of identification cards, passports and automobile license plates.
Families were often separated during the chaos of this organized expulsion and there are numerous reports of elderly people and young children dying from exhaustion along the way.
There are widespread cases of missing persons and irregular but frequent reports of beatings, abductions, of individuals run over by cars or tanks and massacres with mass graves (on the scale of several dozens of people or more).
The new refugees who have crossed the border in the past two days confirm these reports and we fear the worst for the million people still retained in Kosovo."

Did you get the PRESS RELEASE from Amaia ("Silence over One million") with refugee quotes?

Do not hesitate to contact me at this cc-mail address if you have any further question. i will get back to you within a couple of days anyway.

kind regards,

DP (Diane PLESSIA, Human Rights Officer)