Medecins Sans Frontieres provides medical aid to the first official UNHCR refugee convoy to Kosovo.

Skopje, Macedonia June 28th - The international medical aid agency Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) today (June 28th) provided emergency medical support for the first official convoy for Kosovo-Albanians to returning to Pristina. UNHCR who organized the seven bus convoy, personally asked MSF for a medical escort.

Timony Pitt, MSF Head of Mission in Macedonia, who traveled with the convoy said, "MSF participated in this convoy to provide medical support to the refugees who are returning home. We are delighted to have taken part and to have been able to provide assistance. However, MSF still remains concerned about the overall security situation in Kosovo and the danger posed by land mines for the returnees."

MSF selected a special medical team to provide emergency kits and water for the entire journey between Stenkovec I (Brazda) refugee camp and Pristina. Prior to departing MSF medical and mental health workers checked all the coaches to ensure those returning were fit to travel.

A total of 250 refugees boarded the buses at 7.30am (0530 GMT) this morning. Upon arriving in Pristina the refugees MSF staff helped the refugees leave the coaches and were given a final medical check. All the refugees reached Pristina safely.

MSF which has strongly advocated voluntary repatriation for all Kosovo refugees in Macedonia, Albania and Montenegro welcomed the opportunity to provide medical assistance to this the first UNHCR sponsored convoy.

Approximately 400,000 Albanian refugees have already returned home to Kosovo over the last two weeks. Many of those traveling today were returning to Kosovo to be reunited with their families.

MSF was the first international medical aid agency to re-enter Kosovo on X June. Since then MSF has been operating four mobile medical clinics to outlining villages, distributing medicines and non-medical supplies including baby food, soap, washing powder, blankets to both Serbs and Albanian communities and has provided crucial medical supplies to the main hospitals in Pristina and Prizren. Working in Pec, Prizren, Djakovica, Mitrovica, Leposavic and Pristina MSF medical teams have started a mine awareness programme providing information on the dangers posed by mines, booby traps and unexploded ordinance in Kosovo.

MSF is an independent international medical aid organization committed to providing emergency medical assistance regardless of race, religion, ethnicity or political affiliation.

For more information and to arrange interview in Kosovo or Macedonia with MSF please call Simon Trevarthen in Skopje +00 389 070 252 810 or Marc Joly in Pristina +99 316 222 04 677