1. Information

Situation in general remained more or less stable over the past week, though isolated incidents continued to occur almost on a daily basis. Meanwhile the international pressure on starting peace talks has been increasing.

Incidents:
* On Thursday night 22/1, five Serb villagers (Vucitrn municipality) were kidnapped by KLA, but released on Saturday 23/1 after mediation of OSCE/KVM. Nine Albanians were released from Serb prison the same day.
* On Friday 23/1, 3 Albanian were killed and three more wounded near Orahovac.
* On Monday 26/1, bodies of 5 ethnic Albanians, including a woman and a child, were found on the Rakovina-Jablanica road (UCK controlled territory). They were killed by heavy machine guns while they were travelling by tractor on the road. Serb forces have been accused for the incident, but Serb authorities refer to the killings as to a "traffic accident".
* On Monday night 26/1, one man died and his son was severely injured, after their car was ambushed by masked terrorists, between Gornja and Donja Luka villages in the municipality of Decan.
* On Tuesday 27/1, one Serbian was wounded during an attack of LDK on the village of Beo Polje in Istok municipality.
* On Wednesday 28/1, new fighting broke out between KLA and Serb forces in several villages near Podujevo (North of Kosovo). It is not clear what kind of provocation there was and on which side, neither on the number of casualties. The fightings seem to continue up to this date.

According the Serb sources, the objective of the police action near Podujevo was to secure the road between Podujevo and Pristina (main connection road to Belgrade). According Albanian sources, Serbian forces try to cleanse northern part of Kosovo, a part that could become easily a part of Serbia in case of a division.

LDK opened fire on several Serb houses in a village south of Vucitrn on Wednesday and one Serb body was found on the outskirts of Mitrovica.

UNHCR stated that about 20000 persons had been displaced by the fightings in Decan, Podujevo, Suva Reka and Stimlje since December. Most of them are Albanians, but also about 1500 Serbs had to leave their homes. The number of IDP's in Kosovo is still
Mines:
A worrying thing is the increasing number of new mine strikes and reports on mines. On Saturday 24/1, a new mine exploded north west Stimlje (in an area not previously known to have had a mine threat), destroying one battle tank and one fighting vehicle of Serb forces and injuring tree soldiers. The mine exploded near a military base, and it is almost certain it was placed by LDK. It is the second mine strike in 15 days. Another mine has been reported in the village Musavic Manala (Pristina municipality) near Serb Force position (they confirmed KVM to have protected their position with mines). Mines have been reported in Donja Lapastija (Podujevo municipality) and UCK have confirmed they have 3-6 anti tank mines which they will use in the area when threatened by Serb forces. Also in Pnis (village in Prizren municipality) mines have been reported around a former Serb position.

MSF:
Not much media "publicity" over the past week. On Friday 22/1, Tim and me went to see Dr. Andric (regional health secretary of the temporary executive council of Kosovo; the guy who accused us in the press). He repeated the accusations, but stated that the info came from other sources and it would be checked out and if incorrect we would receive an apology. He complained about our one side, but said that we are still welcome and that our collaboration should continue..

Yesterday, Wednesday 28/1, the MSF office in Pristina was visited by two police officers demanding a detailed report on our medical and non medical distributions in 1998, stating they would ask the same to all agencies. They refused to be clear on from who came the order and did not have an official document. The incident was reported to UNHCR. For the moment we will not respond to their demand, stating that we give all info to MOH authorities, who is our partner.

OSCE / Racak massacre:
The decision on the expulsion of OSCE chief William Walker, has been put on hold on Friday 23/1, but he remains persona non grata. William Walker maintained his accusation that the Serb forces are responsible for the massacre of 45 ethnic Albanians in Racak. On Wednesday he accused Belgrade of not keeping its promise to withdraw army and police from Kosovo. Chief Prosecutor of the Hague Tribunal Louise Arbour asked for visa for her and her team to investigate crimes in the village of Racak. FRY authorities refuse to recognise the authority of the Hague Tribunal in international crime investigation, saying it is a national matter, submitted to national investigation/jurisdiction. FRY authorities asked though a forensic Finnish team to participate in the examination of the Racak bodies. On Tuesday 27/1, the head of the Finnish team of pathologists, hinted that her experts might not be able to establish the circumstances in which the 45 Albanians had been killed, because the evidence might have been tampered with. Anyway, they do not want to make preliminary reports and the final report will not be made public but be submitted to the Pristina authorities.

International community:
On international level, pressure on both sides to start peace talks is increasing. It is likely that NATO will exert military pressure to start negotiations and/or get the negotiations accepted. There has been several talks between Christopher Hill and Belgrade as well as