



PRESS STATEMENT

ALLEGED ZIMBABWEAN TORTURER WORKING FOR UNITED NATIONS IN KOSOVO:

14 JULY 2003

REDRESS, an international non-governmental organization which seeks justice for survivors of torture, has received reliable and credible information that a Zimbabwe police officer serving in the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) has tortured victims in Zimbabwe. Detective Inspector Dowa of the Central Investigation Department (CID), Law and Order Section, Harare Central Police Station, is believed to be based in Prizren, Kosovo. The torture allegations relate to incidents in Harare involving electric shocks and beatings with batons on the soles of the feet (“*falanga*”).

REDRESS sent a dossier to Amb. Michael Steiner, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and UNMIK Head of Mission which included a Memorandum of Law prepared by REDRESS entitled “The Obligation to Ensure That Alleged Perpetrators of Torture Face Justice.”

REDRESS calls upon the United Nations authorities to take all necessary steps to prevent Mr. Dowa from leaving UNMIK’s jurisdiction pending a full and thorough investigation and a determination as to how he can best be tried in accordance with the Convention against Torture. Amongst other things REDRESS stresses that if Mr. Dowa is allowed to return to Zimbabwe there is no reasonable prospect of him facing trial in that country.

UNMIK authorities have refused to pursue the criminal prosecution on the grounds of ‘scarce resources’ and have failed to state what, if any, other measures will be taken in respect of this alleged perpetrator. On 4 July 2003, REDRESS addressed an urgent letter to the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, urging him to use his good offices to resolve the matter at the very earliest opportunity.

REDRESS encourages the Secretary-General to require that the Department of Peace Keeping Operations and other UN departments accepting seconded personnel introduce the appropriate vetting procedures to ensure that each candidate fully respects the highest standards of the United Nations.

REDRESS hopes to see Mr. Dowa brought to account for the very serious allegations of torture made against him. REDRESS believes that the United Nations has a clear legal and moral duty to the alleged victims, and to the international community, to ensure that he is.

For further information, please contact:

Kevin Laue, Zimbabwe Justice Project Coordinator or
Carla Ferstman, Legal Director

at REDRESS Tel: +44 (0)207 793 1777; Fax: 44 (0)207 793 1719