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l'ex-Yougoslavie

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REGISTRY

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RAMUSH HARADINAJ DENIED TEMPORARY PROVISIONAL RELEASE

The Trial Chamber today denied temporary provisional release for Ramush Haradinaj to return to Kosovo.

In its decision the Trial Chamber noted that many Prosecution witnesses in the Haradinaj *et al.* case have indicated that they are not willing to testify before the Tribunal claiming fear as a prominent reason for their reluctance to give evidence. The Chamber identified the risk that that the proposed release would contribute to the atmosphere where witnesses feel unsafe and where serious problems arise in ensuring that they testify before the Tribunal.

The defence for Haradinaj filed a motion on his behalf for temporary provisional release on 29 June requesting he be permitted to return from 20 July until 15 August to his family home in Priština/ Prishtinë and to visit his parents in Glodjane/Gllogjan. On 11 July, the Prosecution filed its response to the motion asking the Trial Chamber to deny the request.

The Prosecution contended that Haradinaj's temporary release would pose a danger to victims and witnesses. They argued that a climate of fear faces many Prosecution witnesses and that Haradinaj's release would be a high-profile media event that would add to the climate of fear and intimidation in Kosovo. The Prosecution asserted that they have already encountered serious problems in ensuring witnesses appear before the Tribunal in this case.

Haradinaj was previously granted pre-trial provisional release from June 2005 to February 2007. The trial commenced on 5 March 2007. The trial is scheduled to continue with the Prosecution's case on 20 August.

Haradinaj, a well known military figure from the Kosovo Liberation Army during the 1998-99 conflict in Kosovo with Serb forces, was after the conflict the leader of a minority political party and briefly served as Prime Minister of Kosovo. He is accused of participating in a joint criminal enterprise aimed at asserting full control in the KLA operational zone of Dukagjin which allegedly was carried out by the unlawful removal and mistreatment of Serb civilians, Kosovar Albanians, Kosovar Roma and other civilians, who were, or were perceived to have been, collaborating with Serb forces or not supporting the KLA.

The full text of the Trial Chamber's decision can be found on the Tribunal's website at www.un.org/icty.

Internet address: <http://www.un.org/icty>

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