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l'ex-Yougoslavie

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RAMUSH HARADINAJ GRANTED TEMPORARY PROVISIONAL RELEASE ON COMPASSIONATE GROUNDS

The Trial Chamber today granted temporary provisional release for Ramush Haradinaj to return to Kosovo on compassionate grounds. Haradinaj will be provisionally released for a period of four days, between 3 and 7 October, in order for him to attend the funeral and commemorations of a close family member.

His release is subject to specific terms and conditions as set out in the decision that provides for the release to be of a private family nature. It specifically rules out Haradinaj's engagement in any political activity, contacts with the media, as well as contacts with any national or international official not necessitated for security reasons.

Haradinaj, who surrendered to the Tribunal on 9 March 2005 upon learning of the indictment against him, was previously granted pre-trial provisional release from June 2005 to February 2007. The trial against Ramush Haradinaj and his co-accused commenced on 5 March 2007.

Earlier this year, on 20 July, a separate motion for Haradinaj's temporary provisional release for the duration of the Tribunal's summer recess from 20 July until 15 August, was denied. On that occasion the Prosecution argued that a climate of fear faced 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 further asserted that it had already encountered serious problems in ensuring witnesses appear before the Tribunal.

Haradinaj, a well known military figure from the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) 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.

Courtroom proceedings can be followed on the Tribunal's website www.un.org/icty.

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

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