



KFOR

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Commanders KFOR and KSF together for delivering gifts and best wishes on the occasion of the holiday season

Last week Commander KFOR, Major General Erhard Bühler, together with Commander KSF Lieutenant General Sylejman Selimi, paid a visit to the Host Family “Caritas–Umbria” in Radulovac in Klina municipality. They have already demonstrated their personal interest about the living conditions and the needs of the children in Kosovo on several occasions.

The association “Caritas–Umbria”, which action started in FYROM during the war, has been operating in Kosovo since June 1999, when it was founded by a couple of Italian volunteers, Mr. Massimo Mazzali and his wife. They currently host and provide assistance to 38 children that permanently live in the house, while others join them only for daily activities. To do so, they are supported by six local aides.

The Generals were guided through the whole compound by Mr. Mazzali, who showed them the kitchen, the living rooms, the laundry, the small chapel and the courtyard where they saw the traditional straw-made Christmas crib that had been built by the children. They met the former KFOR general, Brigadier General Salvatore Polimeno, who came from Italy with his wife to share their solidarity with these children of Kosovo for a couple of days in the holiday season.

The children were happy to perform local dances to honor their guests. At the end of the show, they received some presents by Major General Erhard Bühler and Lieutenant General Sylejman Selimi, who also conveyed their best wishes for the coming year.



The children and all the personnel of the Host Family were very grateful and expressed all their joy and deep appreciation for the visit. Both Generals were then given the opportunity to visit the building site where the construction of new installations and facilities has recently started, those will allow to take care of more children in the future.

After leaving the Host Family, COM KFOR and the KSF Commander headed towards the villages of Zallq/Zalc and Dragolevc/Dragolevac, in Istog/k municipality, to meet some returned Serbian families and Mrs. Malikovic, the Serbian Representative of the Returnees Office in the Istok Municipality.

In Zallq/Zalc they visited one family with three children that recently moved to its new house after eleven years. Both commanders wanted to see with their own eyes how the people live, what their needs are and what can be done to support them in various aspects of life in order to offer them a worthy return. Two of their neighbours, who still live alone in their new houses, explained to the Generals their intention to move the rest of the family at the end of the school year, next summer, in order to definitely re-settle in there.

General Bühler, who already met the family some weeks ago when KFOR brought generators and heaters to ease a little bit the life conditions when they were still living in tents, was glad to present a personally dedicated picture to Jovanna and Dusan, the two youngest children of the family. General Bühler and General Selimi presented gifts to the children and their parents and could then enjoy typical Kosovar hospitality around a generous lunch prepared by the lady of the house.

The informal and hearty atmosphere allowed free and open discussions where mutual emotion was manifest. Despite the tragic events of the past, this is the place that these returning families call "home".

After the visit in Zallq/Zalc both the Commanders moved to Dragolec/Dragoljevac where they had the opportunity to meet a dozen returnees, mostly male family



heads. These also explained their plans to gather their complete families after the school year closure in summer. They also expressed all their satisfaction and gratitude for the excellent cooperation KFOR and KSF offered them in the reconstruction of part of the road that links their houses to the main road. And they were very glad that since two days they were all able to make the definitive move to the newly built houses: no one is anymore living in tents, which is an achievement that concludes the year 2010 in the best manner.

At the end of the visit General Bühler and General Selimi conveyed also their best wishes for the holiday season to the new residents of Dragolec/Dragoljevac.

This visit confirms their commitment and dedication for all the people in Kosovo, regardless of their ethnicity, religion or gender.