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PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

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Yesterday the roadblock-removal operation by KFOR went as planned. KFOR was executing its mandate to re-establish unconditional Freedom of Movement for all. The operation was successful and was completed without violence to the demonstrators.

Later on demonstrators attacked KFOR positions and inflicted injuries by using small arms fire, explosive devices and Molotov-Cocktails.

KFOR has always maintained the right of people in Northern Kosovo to protest to be legitimate as it would be and is anywhere else in the world.

However what was witnessed yesterday were acts of violence which has no part in a legitimate protest.

You do not demonstrate legitimately with the gun.

You do not protest legitimately with the pipe bomb.

You do not voice your opinion legitimately with a Molotov cocktail.

There are now 30 injured KFOR soldiers in hospital. They were not hospitalized because of a legitimate protest.

Gunshot wounds, shrapnel wounds, fractures and burns do not result from a legitimate demonstration.

Yesterday's violence has exposed evidence of the existence of a criminal hardcore minority amongst the demonstrators. KFOR understands that this minority does not represent the majority of the people in Northern Kosovo.

The continued use of violent acts by this hardcore element that threaten a safe and secure environment and the life of anyone is not acceptable. KFOR will take all appropriate measures to ensure the safety of all the people of Kosovo, but also of its soldiers.

KFOR will use all means available in a life threatening situation.

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