

The report notes that the civilian component of UNPREDEP continued to play an important role in the implementation of the mandate of good offices of the Secretary-General's Special Representative, especially by conducting an active dialogue with the authorities and all other major political forces in the country. Activities included: monitoring possible areas of conflict and the status of application of international human rights standards; assistance in strengthening cross-party dialogue; and encouraging political and inter-ethnic communication with a view to easing potential tensions and promoting understanding among the various segments of the population. Assistance was also provided in training law enforcement officials.

Developments in areas with implications for human rights are noted as having included: an inter-party dialogue devoted to inter-ethnic relations; the adoption of the electoral law; preparations for the national elections scheduled for late 1998; objections raised by opposition parties and independent media with regard to the existing procedures for the distribution of radio and television frequencies and to the allocation of funds to support the printed media; the imprisonment of the ethnic Albanian Mayor of Gostivar, followed by a series of protest marches launched by the unregistered Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA), as well as the withdrawal or suspension of DPA mayors, municipal councillors and members of Parliament from the relevant state structures, noting these developments had added to the complexity of inter-ethnic relations.

The report of the Parliamentary Commission investigating the 9 July 1997 police action in Gostivar was submitted in March 1998 and concluded, *inter alia*, that some individuals and groups had exceeded their authority, and that excesses by certain police representatives who detained citizens during and after their action was indisputable. On the basis of the report, the National Assembly obligated the government to report, by 31 May 1998, on action taken to improve the ethnic structure of the police force, to enhance human rights training of the police, and to effect disciplinary measures against police officers who had overstepped their authority in connection with the Gostivar events.

The report states that peace and stability in Macedonia continued to depend largely on developments in other parts of the region and notes that developments in Kosovo had highlighted the danger of renewed violence in the area and the serious repercussions such violence can have upon external and internal security. Reference is also made to the slow progress in implementing some civilian aspects of the Dayton Peace Accords in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in initiating a comprehensive regional programme for the return of refugees and displaced persons. In addition to regional uncertainties, the report refers to the absence, internally, of a truly consistent trend towards an improvement in inter-ethnic tensions in a spirit of mutual understanding.

With these and other points in mind, the report concludes that it would be premature to proceed with a decision to withdraw UNPREDEP after 31 August 1998.

Annex I of the report sets out the findings and conclusions of a consultative meeting of the UN entities working in Macedonia. The challenges confronting the country in the short run were seen to include, *inter alia* a substantial reduction of productive capacity and growth in unemployment and its attendant social ills and drug trafficking, corruption and criminality — symptoms of deeper underlying social and economic problems. The consultative meeting agreed that the main components of a strategy, contributing to the preservation and further consolidation of peace, stability and sustainable development, should include: regional and international cooperation based on expanded trade, economic, political and cultural relations; confidence-building measures, including macroeconomic stability to attract investment and promote employment; measures to establish an enabling legislative framework for private sector development; structural reforms and modernization to prepare the ground for a competitive export-oriented economy; administrative reforms to strengthen public administration, corporate governance and transparency and professionalism in public sector management, including the promotion of human resources development and training; consolidation of an *état de droit* based on the rule of law, good governance, social dialogue, an active civil society and respect for human rights; upgrading of the physical infrastructure required for the development of industry, including that of civil aviation, roads and railroads and communication networks, tourism and trade; protection of the environment and health as well as the country's diversified cultural heritage; and promotion and facilitation of social service reform, notably education, social protection and security and health.

Resolution of the Security Council

In July 1998 the Security Council adopted a resolution (S/RES/1186) addressing concerns in Macedonia. The Council, *inter alia*: referred to previous resolutions 795/1992 and 1142/1997 on possible developments which could undermine confidence and stability in FYR Macedonia or threaten its territory; recalled resolutions 1101/1997 and 1114/1997 expressing concern over the situation in Albania and resolution 1160/1998 deciding that all states should prevent the sale or supply to FRY, including Kosovo, of arms and related matériel of all types and prevent arming and training for terrorist activities there; reiterated its appreciation for the important role played by the UN Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) in contributing to the maintenance of peace and stability, and paid tribute to its personnel in the performance of their mandate, and to the Force's work in deterring threats and preventing clashes, including monitoring and reporting on illicit arms flows within its area of responsibility; noted the request of the FYR government related to the extension of the mandate of UNPREDEP and endorsing the option of an increase in its troop strength; reaffirmed its commitment to the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the FYR Macedonia; authorized an increase in the troop strength of UNPREDEP and extended the mandate to 28 February 1999.