



PRIME MINISTER

53/92

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING, MP
SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO - IMPOSITION OF MANDATORY UN
SANCTIONS

Australia welcomes the decision by the United Nations Security Council in Resolution 757 to impose a range of mandatory sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro. These sanctions include a trade embargo excluding food and humanitarian items but including oil, restrictions on the movement of financial assets, a ban on cultural, sporting and scientific cooperation, a ban on air links and a reduction in Belgrade's diplomatic representation.

The UN has taken this decision in view of the failure of Serbia and Montenegro to abide by earlier Security Council demands to cease interference in the internal affairs of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The international community has been appalled at the senseless loss of life and suffering resulting from those actions.

The Government is moving expeditiously to implement the UN decision. Ministers and departments are now working on the details of implementation, with decisions to go before the Executive Council tomorrow.

The Yugoslav national airline, JAT, which flies out of Australia twice a week, will have its services suspended from this week. Australia has already downgraded its own diplomatic representation in Belgrade. Cuts to the Yugoslav diplomatic and consular presence in Australia will be introduced.

Since the beginning of the break-up of the old Yugoslav federation last year, Australia has consistently called for all the disputing parties to exercise maximum restraint and work towards a negotiated settlement. Regrettably, the fighting has continued. The attacks on civilians in Sarajevo have led to the further tragic loss of innocent life.

The imposition of sanctions is intended to make Belgrade and its allies modify their behaviour. We hope this will open the way to a resolution of territorial and communal differences, thereby bringing to an end the suffering of all involved in the conflict, including the Serbian people themselves.

The Government is aware of the anguish and uncertainty felt by all those in Australia who have relatives and friends in the areas affected by the fighting. The Government commends the restraint shown by local communities in Australia, and urges them to maintain their patience. I assure these communities that Australia will continue to work with other countries towards a lasting and just resolution of the Balkan conflict.

CANBERRA

1 June 1992