

Human Rights Report 23-24 March 97

Protection Of Minorities

Police Abuse Reported in Trnovo A Serb man reported to UN IPTF that he was beaten by police at the Trnovo (Fed) station while he was in detention there from 16-18 March. The man said that he was arrested at the home of a Bosniak man with whom he had been discussing the sale of some property. The Bosniak man and one of his friends were released after several hours, but the Serb man was detained at the station and reportedly beaten by several policemen, including a senior officer, until he lost consciousness. He was transferred to the hospital by the local police. UN IPTF is investigating the case.

Freedom Of Movement

Police Harass Bosniak Motorists A Bosniak couple travelling from Germany complained to human rights monitors that they were stopped by border police in Orasje (Fed) who demanded 500 DM for transit visas and confiscated their BiH passports when they refused to pay. International monitors are following up with the local authorities.

Threats To Liberty And Security

Police Abuses Reported in RS, Sarajevo UN IPTF received a complaint from a man who said he was beaten by a policeman in Dubica (RS) on 21 March, who also tried to extort 500 DM from him. The man was reportedly hospitalised for his injuries. A woman in Prnjavor (RS) told UN IPTF that two policemen forcibly entered her flat on 21 March, and threatened and slapped two of her friends who were in the house at the time. UN IPTF wrote to the chief of police to request an investigation of the incident and the suspension of the two policemen pending its outcome. UN IPTF received complaints from three men and two women who said that they were physically maltreated by two plainclothes officers at a Sarajevo (Fed) police station on 20 March. UN IPTF is following up on all of these cases.

Other Human Rights Issues

OHR Demands New Investigation and Proceedings in Mostar Cases The Principal Deputy High Representative Ambassador Steiner wrote to Federation President Soljic and Vice President Ganic to express his concern about the 20 March trial of five policemen in west Mostar, three of whom were identified in the UN IPTF report as having fired into a crowd of Bosniak cemetery visitors on 10 February. The three policemen were given suspended sentences of one year or less on charges of *"mistreatment in the discharge of duty,"* in summary proceedings which Ambassador Steiner said *"were not independent, impartial, or properly announced to the public."*

Steiner noted that by indicting the three men for a minor crime, the Public Prosecutor avoided judicial investigation of the case, and thus ensured that the proceedings did not address the fact that the events of 10 February, including the shooting by west Mostar policemen, resulted in the killing of one person and the wounding of at least 20 others. He also noted that the trial was *"seriously flawed"* in a number of ways, including by the fact that criminal investigators and participants in the intended visit were not questioned; the material evidence presented to the court did not include the findings of the UN IPTF report (including the photographs of two of the defendants firing at the backs of retreating marchers); and, the Prosecutor did not use any of this evidence to impeach the

obvious perjury by all three officers that they were not armed.

In view of the fact that prosecution of the three officers to the fullest extent of the law did not take place as required, Ambassador Steiner requested that Federation Government ensure that correct legal proceedings based on a new indictment take place, and that a proper criminal investigation is undertaken. As the UN Security Council decided on 11 March to remain actively seized of the matter, Ambassador Steiner asked the Federation President and Vice President to keep him informed of all steps taken to ensure compliance with his requests.

NOTE: *The HR Report is based on the most recent information available to the OHR from inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations. Questions on specific items should be directed to the reporting organisation or to the HRCC. Please send information for inclusion in the report to 387-71-447-420, attention Leah Melnick or by e-mail to leah.melnick@ohr.int.*

Office of the High Representative