

Human Rights Report 16-17 March 97

PROTECTION OF MINORITIES

Mosque in Central Bosnia Damaged by Explosives UN IPTF reported that on 15 March, an explosive device badly damaged a mosque in the village of Stipanici, 8 km from Tomislavgrad (Fed). The blast completely destroyed the mosque's minaret and caused damage to a nearby house. International human rights monitors have also recently received a number of complaints from Bosniaks in the area who say that the Tomislavgrad authorities have tried to expropriate privately-owned farm land from them for municipal use. International organisations are following up on both of these matters.

Serb Man Allegedly Assaulted in Bihac According to UN IPTF, a Serb man in Bihac (Fed) reported that he was badly beaten by several ABiH soldiers on 6 March and had to be hospitalised for fractures to both hands and damage to his left kidney. The man told UN IPTF that he left the Bihac hospital to seek medical attention in the RS after he was harassed by patients there.

FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

Robberies Continue in "Anvil" Region UN IPTF received a complaint from a group of Bosniaks who said that they were held up at gun point by two men near Jezero (RS) on 14 March while travelling from Jajce (Fed) to Mrkonjic Grad (RS) and robbed of money, valuables, and identification documents. In a similar incident near Mrkonjic Grad (RS) on 8 March, UN IPTF reported that two Bosniaks were stopped by three men who allegedly assaulted them and robbed them of 1000 DM and some leather jackets. The victims said that at least one of the perpetrators was wearing a police uniform, and another was in military uniform. UN IPTF is monitoring the local police's investigations into both cases.

INSTITUTIONAL AND POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

MEC Issues Three Rulings The Media Experts Commission (MEC) met on 11 March to discuss several recent incidents of harassment of journalists, including physical assaults and confiscation of professional materials such as notebooks and recording equipment. The MEC concluded that the authorities need to take additional steps to protect journalists and investigate illegal acts committed against them, and also issued a general statement calling upon them to fulfil their commitments to support and assist in the development of independent media. In response to a number of cases that have come before the MEC in which radio and television talk show hosts have allowed speakers to use discriminatory and inflammatory language on their programmes, the MEC issued guidelines on “call-in” shows for use by media organisations. Among other measures, the guidelines advise hosts to refrain from using inflammatory and discriminatory language and to actively discourage this behaviour in others by immediately interrupting callers making such statements and by screening guests before they go on the air.

Human Rights Education Offered in Sarajevo Schools The Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in BiH announced on 17 March that it will be continuing its human rights training courses for high school students in Sarajevo in its ongoing efforts to further human rights education in the country. The courses, taught by lawyers and others Helsinki Committee members, provide students with an overview of their basic human rights and the role of domestic and international human rights institutions in promoting and protecting them. Students are also given guidance on mediating human rights violations. The Helsinki Committee BiH has been offering the seminars in two Sarajevo high schools since November and plans to expand the programme to include schools in other parts of the country.

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.*

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