

Human Rights Report 25 March 97

Protection Of Minorities

Harassment in Western Bosnia UN IPTF received a complaint from a Serb man in Drvar (Fed) whose house was damaged after someone threw a grenade in his yard on 20 March. International organisations are following up. A Bosniak man in Prijedor (RS) told UN IPTF that he was attacked by a group of men who hit him with a wooden stick while he was riding his bicycle on 21 March. The man said that his assailants threatened to kill him, allegedly because he had witnessed a crime in which they were involved.

Freedom Of Movement

Police Charge "Tax" Near IEBL Market International monitors report that local police in Stolac (Fed) are charging a 30 kuna (about 9 DM) fee on weekends to cross the IEBL to Berkovici (RS), the site of a weekend market that draws about 1000 cars per day from the Federation, RS, Croatia, and Montenegro. Local Stolac officials claim that the fees are used to pay for maintenance of the area, but given the amount of traffic, monitors estimate that revenues for the Stolac authorities could be at least 10,000 DM each weekend. Receipts for the fees are reportedly stamped with the seal of Stolac municipality and the "CRHB" logo, which is not recognised by the international community. Monitors note that all traffic must pay this "tax", regardless of whether they stop at the market, thereby inhibiting freedom of movement at this inter-entity transit point. In a separate incident, a Bosniak man reported to UN IPTF that he was stopped by Croat police near the Mostar (Fed) airport who threatened him to assault him after he refused to give them money for drinks on 22 March.

RS Police Detain Bosniak Visitor A Bosniak man visiting his Serb relatives near Novi Grad (RS) on 22 March was reportedly detained by local police who accused him of taking video footage of strategic sites such as bus and railway stations.

Local police checked the tapes and then returned them to the man, who they released the same day.

Right To Return

House of Potential Returnee Destroyed UN IPTF was informed that a Croat man who had been cleaning up his damaged house in the village of Krupa (RS) in preparation for return found that it had been destroyed by an explosive on 23 March. UN IPTF is following up.

Other Human Rights Issues

Chamber Holds Hearing The Human Rights Chamber of BiH continued its first public hearing on 18 and 19 March on the case of the Roman Catholic priest Tomislav Matanovic, which was referred to the Chamber by the BiH Ombudsperson. The case concerns the alleged detention by the RS authorities of Matanovic and his parents, whom the Ombudsperson's investigation found had been offered in exchange for other prisoners after the Peace Agreement came into force. In its second set of hearings, the Chamber heard evidence of four witnesses, but decided to postpone a decision in order to review more information.

HR Conference Held in Una-Sana Canton On 15 March, the President and the Secretary of the Bihac Cantonal Assembly organised a human rights seminar in Bihac. Twenty attendees from throughout the Canton discussed individual and collective rights, human rights in Islam, and the history of human rights. The president of the cantonal assembly plans to hold such events once a month for representatives of political parties, the press, police and members of the judiciary, who will then train others in their respective municipalities.

The organisers plan to broadcast the lectures on local radio and television.

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