Human Rights Report 30 June – 06 July 97

PROTECTION OF MINORITIES

Missing Man Found Dead Near FRY Border
The body of Bosniak man who had been reported as missing on 20 June after he boarded a bus from Sarajevo to the FRY was found by local police in a river in Rudo (RS) on 27 June. The HRCC and UN IPTF are closely monitoring investigations into this case.

Violations Reported in Federation Towns
A Bosniak man told UN IPTF that three Croat men forcibly entered his west Mostar (Fed) apartment on 2 July and assaulted him in an attempt to evict him from the premises. Local police arrested one of the men at the scene and prevented the illegal eviction. Another Bosniak man reported that the locks of his apartment door in west Mostar had been changed on 29 June while he was out of the house. He was reportedly reinstated with UN IPTF, SFOR and local police assistance the following day. A Bosniak couple complained to UN IPTF that they were assaulted by several people in Kiseljak (Fed) on 25 June, and a Serb woman living in Grbavica (Fed) told UN IPTF that a Bosniak man broke into her house on 29 June and left some of his belongings there, presumably because he is trying to take over the apartment. A Croat woman also reported to UN IPTF that she was assaulted by an unidentified person while visiting her son's grave in Bugojno (Fed) on 29 June. UN IPTF is monitoring the local police's investigations in all of these cases.

Minorities Harassed in RS Towns
UN IPTF reported that a Bosniak man was badly beaten by two policemen at his home in Banja Luka (RS) on 20 June. Monitors found him in his flat and arranged for an ambulance to take him to the hospital where he was treated for a broken jaw and

a head laceration. The local police were unable to explain how the man had been injured, but alleged that he had attacked some policemen with a knife. International monitors are following up. A Bosniak man in Teslic (RS) was reportedly hit and kicked on 29 June by an unidentified man who also told him that he should go live in the Federation. Local police reportedly did not take any action in the case. UN IPTF also reported that a Catholic priest in Gradiska (RS) discovered several freshly-planted mines outside of his house on 29 June. Police removed the mines and are conducting an investigation.

FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

FOM Violations Continue in Mostar, Doboj Area
A Bosniak man was reportedly assaulted and briefly detained by RS police in the Sapna (RS) area after he failed to produce identification when stopped on 26 June. A Croat man told UN IPTF that his car was stoned while he passed through a Bosniak-majority part of Mostar (Fed) on 27 June. A similar incident reportedly occurred on 19 June. A Croat couple's windscreen was smashed and the woman injured by broken glass on 15 June after their car was stoned in Doboj (RS). On 23 June, a funeral procession transporting the body of a Bosniak woman heading from the Federation side to Teslic (RS) was stopped by police and forced to turn around. The woman was to be buried in the family graveyard in Teslic. UN IPTF is raising the issue with the local police.

RIGHT TO RETURN

Returnees Unable to Re-enter Homes
A Bosniak woman and her three children who were recently forced to return to Bosnia and Herzegovina from Germany told UN IPTF that on 26 June, local police in Livno (Fed) refused to assist her when she tried to go back to her home there, which is currently occupied by a Croat family. The Federation Ombudsmen's office is helping the woman to prepare the necessary documents to enable the court to consider her case. International monitors have received similar reports from other returnees, including individuals who have been forced to return from Germany, many of whom do not have suitable

accommodation because their homes are being occupied by displaced persons.

OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES

EASC Issues Capljina and Zepce Decisions

On 25 June, the Election Appeals Sub-Commission (EASC) issued a judgement in the matter of alleged registration irregularities in two Federation municipalities. In Zepce, municipal authorities under the control of the HDZ attempted to manipulate the voter registration process by issuing false residency documents to persons living outside the municipality. The EASC decided to strike the first two names from the HDZ candidates list for Zepce and also removed two members of the Local Election Commission implicated in these attempts. In Capljina, the EASC determined that municipal authorities under the control of the HDZ brought improper pressure to bear on displaced persons to register in the municipality, in particular by refusing to renew their displaced persons cards. The EASC decided to strike the second and fourth names from the HDZ candidates list for Capljina, and instructed municipal authorities to renew the displaced persons cards of all persons affected by the manipulation within 14 days. The EASC will consider further penalities in the case of default.

Hrvcevic Sentenced to 15 Years

On 27 June, the Sarajevo Canton Court convicted Milan Hrvacevic of war crimes under Article 142 of the Criminal Code. Hrvacevic was arrested on 14 March 1996, and his file was sent by the Federation authorities to ICTY for review several weeks later. In May 1996, ICTY responded that there was sufficient evidence for Hrvacevic to be detained and investigated for war crimes. Hrvacevic, who served as a Deputy Commander of a Bosnian Serb batallion during the war, was sentenced to 15 years in prison for the destruction of two buildings (Loris and Invest-Banka) in the Sarajevo suburb of Grbavica in 1993 and 1994. The conviction was based on the defendant’s statement, as well as on three expert reports forwarded by the Federation Ministry of the Interior, the ABiH and the Municipality, stating that at the time in question,

both buildings had accommodated civilians, and therefore were considered to be civilian targets. Hrvacevic was acquitted on additional charges relating to sniper activities and shelling of civilians. An appeal will be filed. The trials of Miodrag Andric (which began 20 January) and Veselin Cancar (since 11 June), both charged with war crimes, are also currently before the Sarajevo Cantonal Court and are being monitored by international human rights officers.

INSTITUTIONAL AND POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

"Room for Conversation" Held in Mostar

The Helsinki Citizens' Assembly (HCA), an international coalition of civic initiatives and social and political groups, and the Mostar Youth Center, an organization working to help children to overcome war trauma, hosted a women's conference entitled "Room for Conversation" in Mostar from 3-6 July. Conference workshops, which were attended by about 50 NGO representatives from both entities, discussed political, social, and cultural tolerance. The session on political and cultural tolerance identified strategies for women activists to promote return of refugees and displaced persons. In particular, participants noted the need to address conflicts between local residents and returnees, since these groups often compete for limited resources in communities. They noted that women from all ethnic groups must come together to pressure local authorities to implement Annex 7 of the Peace Agreement, and also decided to proactively inform the media about return initiatives to ensure coverage of these issues, and to lobby women politicians to support legislative changes necessary for return. The "Room for Conversation" conference series began in June 1996 in Zenica and the second conference was held in Banja Luka in December 1996. The next conference will be held in Livno in December. HCA will publish the results of the conference and make them available to the public.

Initiative to Improve NGO Capacity Launched

In a collaborative effort, Bosnian non-governmental organizations, the Open Society Fund of BiH, the International Rescue Committee, the World Bank, and the International

Council of Voluntary Agencies have launched an 18-month project to provide financial and technical support to Bosnian NGOs and lawyers in both entities and assist them in the creation of a healthy legal framework. It will also conduct a country-wide public information and education campaign on the nature and value of NGOs. The project, entitled "Law, Education and Advocacy (LEA)/LINK", aims to strengthen NGO collaboration and collective advocacy in view of the fact while the Bosnian NGO community continues to grow, the environment in which they must operate is far from ideal. The project hopes to address obstacles impeding the performance and development of NGOs, including restrictive and often times ambiguous legal requirements; lack of public knowledge as to the workings of the non-governmental, non-profit sector; inconsistent or non-existent mechanisms for joint consultation and collective action; and, the inability to effectively articulate the value of NGO assistance efforts to both governmental and public audiences.

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 (leah.melnick@ohr.int), Kristina Koch (kristina.koch@ohr.int), or Vladimir Stanisic(vladimir.stanisic@ohr.int).*

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