

EXTERNAL

AI Index: EUR 63/21/95

This is a limited action. 15 appeals per Section.

15 August 1995

Further information on EXTRA 91/95 (EUR 63/17/95, 8 August 1995) - Fear for safety

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA Non-Serbs in Bosnian Serb-controlled areas

Amnesty International continues to be concerned for the safety of non-Serbs in the Bosnian Serb-controlled area centering on Banja Luka. The situation in the Banja Luka area is particularly tense following the recent arrival of tens of thousands of Serbian refugees displaced after the Croatian Army action to take control of the Serb-held *Krajina* region of Croatia. Smaller numbers of displaced Serbs have also arrived from the area around Glamo_ and Grahovo in Bosnia-Herzegovina after Croatian forces captured the towns prior to the offensive against the *Krajina*.

Soldiers from the *Krajina* or the Glamo_/Grahovo area have reportedly perpetrated a number of abuses in recent days including killings, beatings and threats of violence. In almost all the cases it appears that the soldiers wanted to take over the homes of Croats or Muslims. Many of the incidents known to Amnesty International were reported to the Bosnian Serb civilian or military police. The police do not appear to have intervened to assist the Croats or Muslims in any of the incidents.

The following are among recent incidents known to Amnesty International which illustrate the concerns. Since many of the victims are extremely frightened, it is probable that many other incidents have not been reported. For the same reason some details of the incidents are being withheld by Amnesty International.

On 11 August, a Croatian woman, Anica Mijatovi_, was killed by unidentified assailants in her house in the village of Šargovac. The local police are reported not to have offered any protection to other Croats in the village and implied that they remained at risk. Others in the village received threats and were told to leave. One elderly couple left almost immediately after being threatened by two men who they feared were the killers of Anica Mijatovi_.

Last week a Croatian Serb soldier reportedly shot dead a Croat man after he tried to assist some neighbours. Croatian Serb refugees were trying to take over part of the neighbour's house. The widow of the dead man was reportedly evicted by other Serbian refugees the day after her husband's funeral.

On 4 August, Serbian soldiers, who the victims believed to be from Glamo_, evicted a Croatian couple (aged in their 50s and 60s) from their home in a village near Banja Luka. The soldiers had come the previous day, hit the husband in the face and threatened that they would kill them if they did not leave by the next day. The following day (4 August) the soldiers returned and again hit the husband in the face, kicked him as he lay on the ground, and then slapped his wife in the face and held a knife to her throat. The couple abandoned their house that day.

Other reports allege that Bosnian Serb police have directly participated in expulsions around Banja Luka.

These incidents are in addition to numerous others which have occurred recently (See EXTRA 51/95 [EUR 63/09/95, 5 May and follow-ups EUR 63/11/95, 19 May and EUR 63/12/95, 31 May]).

On 14 August around 600 Croats and Muslims crossed into Croatia. They were made to pay 100 German Marks each immediately before crossing. Larger numbers are expected to cross in the coming days. Muslims have also crossed into government-controlled central Bosnia after seeking to leave.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Human rights abuses against non-Serbs have been widespread and frequent in the region since the area came under the control of the Bosnian Serb *de facto* authorities in 1992. Most of these abuses appear to be part of a systematic pattern aimed at forcibly expelling the non-Serb population in the area.

Although the pressure on non-Serbs in the region appears to have been more or less continuous, this pressure has increased at times, usually when Serbian forces have suffered defeats, and angry soldiers and sometimes new groups of Serbian refugees have arrived in the area. A new wave of Serbian refugees arrived in the area in May following the taking of the Western Slavonia area of Croatia by the Croatian Army. Their arrival was followed by an upsurge in pressure against Croats in the area.

Although most of the Serbian refugees fled in advance of the Croatian Army advance, Amnesty International is aware of some incidents in which Serbs were forcibly expelled from their homes. There were also serious incidents in which Croatian civilians attacked Serbs who were being evacuated to Serbia. Croatian military and civilian police are reported to have intervened to protect the Serbs only after called on to do so by United Nations civilian police monitors (See EXTRA 93/95 [EUR 64/02/95, 10 August 1995]).

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English, German, French or in your own language:

- reiterating concern that the harassment of non-Serbs continues in the Banja Luka and other areas and that there have been further reports of attempted forcible expulsions, deliberate and arbitrary killings and ill-treatment;
- stating that the authorities have a duty to protect civilians of all nationalities from abuses perpetrated by soldiers regardless of the military formation to which they belong;
- calling for urgent and decisive action to be taken the civilian authorities, civilian and military police to give protection to non-Serbs in the area.

APPEALS TO:

1) Representative of the Bosnian Serb *de facto* authorities (**faxes only**)

Radovan Karad_i_

Pale

Bosnia-Herzegovina

Faxes : * 381 71 783 497 or * 381 71 783 566 or * 381 71 783 324

Salutation: Dear Dr Karad_i_

Please note that the international telephone code given is for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (381). The code for Bosnia-Herzegovina (387) should not be used. Connections may be difficult to obtain and persistence may be

necessary. If there is recorded message in German saying "no connection under this area code", please try later.

2) President of the Republic of Serbia
Slobodan Miloševi_
Predsednik Republike Srbije
Andri_ev venac 1
11000 Beograd, Yugoslavia
Faxes: * 381 11 682 167 or * 381 11 656 862
Salutation: Dear President

Although the Serbian and Yugoslav Governments have officially placed an embargo against the *de facto* Bosnian Serb authorities, recent events confirm that the Serbian President has control of, or strong influence over, the Bosnian and Croatian Serb military commanders.

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 22 September 1995.