

EXTERNAL

AI Index: EUR 63/24/95

This is a limited action. Please restrict appeals to 15 per Section

12 October 1995

Further information on EXTRA 91/95 (EUR 63/17/95, 8 August 1995) and follow-up (EUR 63/21/95, 15 August) - Fear for Safety

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

Despite moves towards a comprehensive ceasefire throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina, human rights abuses in areas away from the frontline continue. Recently reported abuses against Muslims and Croats in areas of northwest Bosnia-Herzegovina under Bosnian-Serb control include ill-treatment, forcible expulsions, arbitrary detention of men of military age, abductions, as well as allegations of unlawful killings and rape.

There is particular concern for the safety of the remaining non-Serb population in northwest Bosnia-Herzegovina following the recent arrival in the area of paramilitary troops organized by _eljko Rznatovi_ (known as "Arkan"). Serbian paramilitaries have been accused of committing some of the most brutal human rights abuses in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia, particularly in 1991-2. Representatives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have expressed concern that the remaining non-Serb population in these regions may be expelled in the next few days.

The UNHCR reports that since 4 October 1995, approximately 4,000 Muslims have been expelled from the towns of Sanski Most, Bosanski Novi, and Prijedor. Displaced persons report that before their expulsion, they were detained for 11 days in a place called Sovci, near Sanski Most. There have been allegations that women, including a 17-year-old girl, have been raped. Men were separated from the group and allegedly taken to a cement plant. Those who were expelled were forced to walk along or ford a river, and displaced persons claim that some who were not able to swim or otherwise were in poor physical condition were swept away by the current and drowned. Displaced persons report that men of military age were separated from the group and taken away, allegedly to detention centres.

According to the UNHCR, an additional group of about 1,000 Muslims and 97 Croats were expelled from Tesli_ in central Bosnia-Herzegovina on 9 October. They report that they were Bosnian Serbs charged a "fee" for their expulsion, and that draft-aged men were separated from the group. There are reports that these men have been taken to Mount Ozren in central Bosnia, an area which is currently militarily active, where they are being engaged in forced labour for the Bosnian Serb Army.

An earlier group of 1,241 people, primarily Muslims, were expelled from Dobo_ in central Bosnia around 20 September, when allegations first surfaced that paramilitaries were active in the region. The displaced said that they were ordered to collect in a stadium, from which they were taken to a rural area near Mount Ozren and forced to walk to Bosnian Government-controlled territory. Refugees reported that several died of exhaustion along the way. UNHCR reported that some of the displaced persons showed physical signs of ill-treatment, including an 80-year-old woman who had cuts on her wrists and face which corresponded with her allegations that she had been bound and gagged with wire.

Amnesty International is further concerned about the safety of Muslims from Bosanski Novi. In that town, it has been reported that the president of the local branch of Merhamet, an Islamic humanitarian aid organization, has been abducted.

In July 1995, the non-Serb population in the Banja Luka area was reported to number around 40,000. UNHCR reports that since the summer, when over 150,000 displaced Serbs fled into northwest Bosnia-Herzegovina from areas captured by Bosnian and Croatian troops, over 25,000 non-Serbs have been expelled from the Banja Luka area. On 11 October, an additional 40,000 Serbs were displaced from Sanski Most to Prijedor and Banja Luka.

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

- urging that the highest level of discipline be maintained among members of armed forces and ensuring that chains of command are maintained or strengthened and that all soldiers suspected of perpetrating human rights abuses are removed from any situation where they may come into contact with non-Serb civilians or others at risk of human rights abuses;
- calling for all paramilitaries to be brought quickly under control;
- urging for urgent steps to be taken to protect non-Serbs from acts of reprisal in the current tense atmosphere following the arrival of tens of thousands of newly displaced persons in northwest Bosnia;
- urging that places of detention of men of military age be made public, and that access to them be granted to international organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross;
- calling for any perpetrators of human rights abuses to be held to account.

APPEALS TO:

Representative of the Bosnian Serb de facto authorities

Dr Radovan Karad_i_

Faxes: +381 71 783 566; + 381 71 783 497

Salutation: Dear Dr Karad_i_

Commander of the Bosnian Serb Army

Col-Gen General Ratko Mladi_

Faxes: +381 71 783 324

Salutation: Dear General

President of the Republic of Serbia

Slobodan Miloševi_

Predsednik Republike Srbije

Andri_ev venac 1

11000 Beograd, Yugoslavia

Faxes: +381 11 682 167 or 656 862

Telegrams: Slobodan Miloševi_, Beograd, Yugoslavia

Salutation: Dear President

COPIES TO:

Office of de facto Bosnian Serb authorities in Belgrade

Biroa Republike Srpske

Moše Pijade 8

11000 Beograd

Yugoslavia

Not to diplomatic representatives

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 15 November 1995.