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### **News Flash**

## **Bosnia-Herzegovina: Freedom of worship at risk amidst climate of impunity**

Amnesty International is extremely concerned by the violent demonstrations which have broken out today in Banja Luka during a ceremony to lay the foundation stone at the Ferhadiija mosque in Banja Luka.

Clashes have broken out between hundreds of Bosnian Serbs demonstrators and the Bosnian Serb police, who had been deployed today with the aim of preventing a last month's violence. Similar riots on 7 May prevented the recurrence of first ceremony to lay the foundation stone of the mosque from taking place, and left one Bosnian Muslim man dead and 30 others injured.

Recognizing the attempts of the Republika Srpska police to protect those attending today's ceremony, Amnesty International believes that the Republika Srpska authorities have failed to prevent the repetition of such organized violence by their failure to fully investigate last month's events and to bring more than a handful of the perpetrators to justice.

"The Republika Srpska authorities have - in their failure to act - created a climate of impunity for those who threaten the right of the Muslim community in the Republika Srpska to freedom of religious worship," Amnesty International said.

Amnesty International is also reiterating its concern - raised last month following the violence in Banja Luka and Trebinje - that the special SFOR unit tasked to deal with crowd control was not deployed on the streets of Banja Luka today. According to information available to the organization, the NATO led-Stabilization Forces, (SFOR), are merely observing the violence. The human rights organization calls on SFOR to respond appropriately to prevent such incidents of violence against life and person, as they have been mandated to do under Annexe 1 of the Dayton Peace Agreement.

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