

# **£BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA**

## **@ "You have no place here":**

### **Abuses in Bosnian Serb-controlled areas**

#### **Introduction**

International attention, both in terms of media coverage and diplomatic or peace-making initiatives, has most frequently focused on events in Bosnia-Herzegovina occurring around the areas of military confrontation. Although these areas of confrontation have frequently been the background to large-scale abuses of human rights, Amnesty International remains concerned that serious human rights abuses also continue to be perpetrated against minorities in areas firmly controlled by one side. These abuses are most evident in the areas controlled by the Bosnian Serb forces and appear to be aimed at causing members of the remaining minorities to seek to leave. The present report concerns abuses in Bosnian Serb-controlled towns such as Banja Luka, Prijedor, Bosanska Gradiška, Mrkonji-Grad, \_elinac, Mahovljani and others (see map in Appendix I). It is largely based on testimony that Amnesty International has collected from refugees in Croatia who left these areas in early 1994. However, the concerns are not limited to these towns and Amnesty International fears for the safety of members of the remaining minorities, principally Muslims, Croats and Roma, in all the areas under the control of the *de facto* Bosnian Serb authorities. Such concerns have also been expressed by international agencies working in the field, such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The Humanitarian Law Fund, an independent Yugoslav human rights organization based in Belgrade, has also documented and raised concerns about abuses against Muslims in the areas of eastern Bosnia under the control of the *de facto* Bosnian Serb authorities.<sup>1</sup>

Among the abuses which have been reported are torture and ill-treatment including rape, deliberate and arbitrary killings and arbitrary detention of civilians. They have frequently taken place in the context of bombing or shooting at people's houses or during violent attacks against people in their homes involving beatings, rape and knife attacks. While it is difficult to gauge the frequency and extent of such abuses it appears that they are a daily occurrence in some areas. For example, the UNHCR reported that at least 90 incidents of houses being shot at or grenades being thrown into Muslim or Croat homes had occurred in Banja Luka between October 1993 and January 1994. Eight Muslims and Croats were

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<sup>1</sup> Spotlight Report No.7, *Bijeljina in Black*, 15 September 1993.

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reported to have been killed by armed Serbs in the same period.<sup>2</sup> Physical attacks, frequent threats and other forms of intimidation, together have created an atmosphere of intense fear and psychological pressure that has caused large numbers of members of the remaining minorities to seek to leave. The incidents have often taken place at night, hindering the identification of perpetrators. However, where they have been seen, they are frequently reported to have been dressed in military uniforms. Amnesty International is concerned that while there is not hard evidence that Bosnian Serb civilian or military police have themselves recently perpetrated the human rights abuses, the protection they have offered to victims or potential victims appears to have been minimal. Moreover, there is a clear pattern of abuses, which shows that, in effect, the authorities condone them or even encourage Bosnian Serbs (principally those displaced from other areas of Bosnia-Herzegovina) who harass members of the remaining minorities. Those carrying out the harassment seek to take over the Muslims' or Croats' houses and other property and to force them to leave, while the authorities turn a blind eye to most of the abuses which are perpetrated with this aim. The pressure to force people to leave is reinforced by other acts, such as the reported destruction of almost all the mosques in the Banja Luka region.

Many Muslims, Croats and Roma have already left and others have appealed to the Bosnian Serb authorities for permission to leave and have sought help from international agencies to do so. In some areas, such as Prijedor, almost the whole remaining non-Serb population reportedly wants to leave. In addition to the abuses described above, refugees who have fled the areas concerned also complained of further hardships, such as loss of employment and inadequate food supplies (problems which must affect much of the population, including the Serbs). While economic hardship would obviously have contributed to their apparent desire to seek to leave, it does not appear to be the principal factor. In Amnesty International's view, almost all refugees felt forced to leave primarily because of the kind of human rights abuses described in this document.

From time to time these abuses are the subject of major international concern, partly in response to specific events in the areas concerned, such as the recent reports of a wave of killings of Muslims and Croats in Prijedor. Amnesty International believes, however, that for the remaining minorities in these areas abuses are an everyday occurrence and raise serious concerns for the safety of these people. Moreover, while the level of abuses varies with time in different areas, interviews with refugees who have fled these areas recently highlight the fact that many also felt the effects of cumulative psychological pressure. Many of those who fled in recent months were victims of human rights abuses in 1992 and 1993 and have had to wait until now to leave. In the meantime they have lived in a situation in which they and others like them have been the targets of threats or further actual abuses. Other recent refugees,

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<sup>2</sup> UNHCR spokesman Kris Janowsky quoted by *Reuters*, 21 January 1994. The UNHCR normally has field officers present in Banja Luka.

particularly those who had property, wished to stay, at least until they could arrange an orderly sale or exchange (perhaps after a political settlement in Bosnia-Herzegovina). Recent abuses perpetrated against them broke their resolve and caused them to seek to leave immediately.

## **The responses and commitments of the responsible authorities**

Amnesty International has repeatedly appealed to the *de facto* Bosnian Serb authorities to ensure that the remaining minorities under their control are protected. A response from the Banja Luka police in 1993 stated that "as far as possible, we do everything in our power to protect the safety of individuals and their property regardless of their ethnic, religious or other affiliations...". Testimony gathered from refugees who have recently fled Banja Luka indicates that this promised protection is severely lacking. Some individuals report being told by police officers to whom they appealed that "[i]t would be better for your safety to go. We cannot protect you", or similar statements.

In some instances, as for example in the case of the killings in Prijedor in March and April 1994 (see below), the *de facto* Bosnian Serb authorities have acknowledged the gravity of the situation, but have tried to attribute responsibility for the abuses to "uncontrolled elements" and have characterized the abuses as ordinary crimes unrelated to the authorities or armed forces.<sup>3</sup> Amnesty International reminds the Bosnian Serb authorities that on 27 August 1992 at the London Conference on the former Yugoslavia, Radovan Karadžić, as representative of the Bosnian Serbs, along with the Bosnian President, Alija Izetbegović and representatives of the Bosnian Croats, signed a Program of Action on Humanitarian Issues. The commitments in this program included respect for human rights and humanitarian law standards, the exercise of control over "undisciplined elements" and an end to "all practices involving forcible displacement, all forms of harassment, humiliation ... and all acts involved in the practice of ethnic cleansing". These commitments were also publicly supported by the President and Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Amnesty International concludes that the *de facto* Bosnian Serb authorities have failed to implement these commitments.<sup>4</sup> The organization does not consider that failures to respect such

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<sup>3</sup> In a move which may be related to recent events, the Bosnian Serb Army information service announced that strict controls would be introduced on the wearing of military uniforms. The reported reason for the move was the increasing number of cases of misuse of uniforms "by irresponsible individuals whose behaviour inflicts great damage on the Serbian Republic Army's reputation". *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, Central Europe and Balkans*, 12 May 1994.

<sup>4</sup> See the Amnesty International report *Rana u duši - A wound to the soul* (AI Index: EUR 63/03/93, January 1993) which documented the forced displacement of most of the Muslim population of the Bosnian Serb-controlled town of Bosanski Petrovac in September 1992, that is, immediately after the commitments were made.

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commitments on the part of the *de facto* Bosnian Croat authorities and the mainly Muslim Bosnian Government (to whom Amnesty International has also appealed) in any way diminish the responsibility of the Bosnian Serb authorities.<sup>5</sup>

#### **RESTRICTIONS ON THOSE SEEKING TO LEAVE**

It should also be noted that although there is a clear pressure to leave, there are also numerous obstacles facing those who finally opt to do so. Most of those who have left by their own means, rather than by being evacuated under international supervision, have had to pay exorbitant sums for one-way bus tickets, "transit" taxes or other spurious expenses. They have also frequently had to sign documents giving up rights to their property. Many of the Muslims and Croats have left via Croatia and have been required by the Croatian authorities to obtain guarantee letters for reception in a third country or from hosts in Croatia before being allowed into Croatia. In order to ensure that the individuals concerned are not turned back from Croatia, the Bosnian Serb authorities have insisted that these documents are obtained before leaving. The Bosnian Serb authorities (or individuals who probably act as their agents<sup>6</sup>) have also charged large sums for arranging the delivery of the visas and guarantee letters.

Amnesty International has in the past continually raised concerns about the restrictions which Croatia and many other European countries have imposed on the entry to their territories of people from Bosnia-Herzegovina. One European country after another has imposed a visa requirement on nationals of Bosnia-Herzegovina and to date all European Union member states except Italy, and many other European states, have such a visa requirement – in most cases imposed after the war started in Bosnia-Herzegovina and people started to flee. Such measures obviously add to the difficulties of those seeking to leave Bosnian Serb-controlled areas, particularly since they have been cited by the Croatian authorities as a justification for their own restrictions on the entry of refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina into Croatia.

Refugees report making typical total payments of between 300 and 600 German Marks per person, including children, in order to leave. Clearly, fewer and fewer of those remaining are able to raise what for them are large sums from diminishing resources. The predicament of some refugees was compounded by being robbed of money or saleable property by uniformed soldiers.

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<sup>5</sup> See the Amnesty International report *Central and southwest Bosnia-Herzegovina: civilian population trapped in a cycle of violence* (AI Index: EUR 63/01/94, January 1994), which focuses on human rights abuses committed by the mainly Muslim Bosnian Government forces and Bosnian Croat forces in 1993.

<sup>6</sup> Refugees from one town who had departed by this method named a lawyer who had obtained the letters and visas for them.

In some cases the departures were as part of exchanges for smaller numbers of Serbs from Croatia or Bosnian Government- or Bosnian Croat-controlled areas of Bosnia.

A number of Serbs who have been actual or potential victims of human rights violations, including those who feared for their own security because of their opposition to the Serbian Democratic Party (*Srpska Demokratska Stranka* - SDS)-led authorities or because of conscientiously held objections to fighting in the Bosnian Serb forces, have been able to leave with less difficulty by travelling to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY). However, most have had to remain in the FRY where they may be at risk of being identified as draft evaders and returned to Bosnian Serb-controlled areas.<sup>7</sup> Some Muslims succeeded in leaving via the FRY in 1993. Large numbers were expelled from eastern Bosnia-Herzegovina by this route in 1992.

#### **THE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE LEFT**

Until 1992 the total non-Serb population of the areas of western Bosnia-Herzegovina under Bosnian Serb control was around 537,000 people. There are no accurate figures available of the current population. The UNHCR gave an indicative figure, based on various sources, of around 70,000 remaining non-Serbs in March 1994.<sup>8</sup> The equivalent figures for the area of eastern Bosnia under Bosnian Serb control shows an even more dramatic reduction from 302,000 to 10,000. The Bosnian Serb authorities are not known to have published their own figures.<sup>9</sup>

Systematic records have been kept of refugees departing to Croatia through the UN-Protected Area in Croatia, Sector West, since July 1992.<sup>10</sup> This and a route to Travnik, in the area of central Bosnia under the control of the Bosnian Government, have become the principal routes of departure for refugees from Banja Luka and other towns in the area.

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<sup>7</sup> In early 1994 the Yugoslav authorities cooperated in the mobilization and return of male Bosnian refugees, largely Serbs, from Serbia and Montenegro.

<sup>8</sup> UNHCR Information Notes 4/94, April 1994, page 10.

<sup>9</sup> In an radio interview reported in the Belgrade newspaper, *Borba*, of 12 April 1994, the President of the Prijedor commune, Dušan Kurnoga, refused to reveal how many Muslims and Croats had left the Prijedor commune.

<sup>10</sup> The UNHCR reported that 26,951 departed via Sector West between July 1992 and March 1993 and 23,226 between April 1993 and April 1994. Between July and December 1993 between 1,000 and 2,000 people departed each month by this route. *UNHCR Information Notes*, 5/94, May 1994, p24.

Besides forcible expulsions and those fleeing the fighting, part of the drop in the Muslim and Croat populations of the Bosnian Serb-controlled areas may be accounted for by victims of deliberate and arbitrary killings, "disappearances" or war casualties.

Hundreds of thousands of Bosnian Serbs have also been displaced from areas of Bosnia-Herzegovina under the control of the mainly Muslim Bosnian Government and the Bosnian Croat forces. Many of these remain inside Bosnia-Herzegovina, although many are refugees in the FRY.<sup>11</sup>

## **Recent abuses**

With the exception of the killings in Prijedor between the 29 March and 1 April 1994, the following information is largely based on testimony gathered by Amnesty International in Croatia in March and April 1994. Several dozen recent arrivals from Bosnian Serb-controlled territory were interviewed. Where possible, statements were corroborated by interviews with other witnesses or victims in separate interviews. Almost all of those interviewed were concerned for the safety of relatives remaining in areas in Bosnian Serb control and requested that their names or details by which either they or their relatives might be identified should not be revealed. For this reason only limited details of individual incidents are given here to illustrate the general picture. In addition, dates and places of the interviews, the locations and dates of the abuses and, in some cases the nationality of the victims, have also been withheld. All names are pseudonyms. The names and other personal details of all the interviewees are known to Amnesty International.

Despite their recent experiences of insecurity, intimidation or worse, the refugees interviewed appeared generally to be anxious to give a truthful and realistic account of events. For example, the victim of one shooting incident acknowledged the fact that it arose out of personal quarrel. He did not try to represent the incident as a human rights abuse. However, in that incident the victim reported that on this occasion the police were swift to act to arrest the perpetrator, whereas in all the other incidents described to Amnesty International where the perpetrators were allegedly Serbs and the victims non-Serbs, victims or witnesses complained that the reaction of the police was usually slow and the investigations superficial.

Many refugees described abuses committed against them in 1992 or early 1993. Some also reported being victims of more recent incidents. In preparing this report Amnesty International has focused on abuses committed in the second half of 1993 and, more particularly, early in 1994.

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<sup>11</sup> The UNHCR estimates the increase in the Serbian population in western Bosnia at around 250,000 and in eastern Bosnia at around 150,000. *UNHCR Information Notes*, 4/94, April 1994, p10.

### **SYSTEMATIC EVICTIONS WITH THE USE OR THREAT OR VIOLENCE**

Large numbers of displaced Bosnian Serbs have moved to the Bosnian Serb-controlled areas, where the local authorities in the major towns have organized their accommodation in houses and flats. It is disturbing that the officials charged with this task have reportedly not only accommodated refugees in empty properties but have also encouraged the eviction of Muslims, Croats or Roma from their homes. Although only two of the refugees interviewed recently by Amnesty International had seen documents issued in connection with their evictions, many others spoke of receiving visits from unknown men, mostly wearing military uniforms, who appeared to have obtained their personal details, and who threatened them that they would suffer if they did not leave.

Such cases are illustrated by the statement of one woman, Rasema, who described receiving several threatening visits from small groups of uniformed soldiers in January 1994. After protesting to the local authorities, who then came and inspected her house and proposed that she should share it with a refugee family, she received another visit:

"They came again the next day. They knew that I had gone to the authorities. I asked who had the right to send people to my house five or six times without addressing me personally. One said, 'I am [the one]' ... He said that he had heard of all my problems [her husband had been detained in 1992 and then evacuated abroad]. He said that he had a friend who had told him about my house. He said, 'I did not want to come directly to you, but I went to the communal authorities and saw that the house was not promised to anybody and that you had not signed over your authority. So I persisted in order to get a decision from you. You did not want to [go], so I sent some people.' He said that he did not have time to do it himself because he was on the battlefield."

Rasema could no longer endure the threats and sought evacuation shortly after the last visit. She also gave a detailed account of being raped by a drunken Serbian policeman in April 1992.

In another case, in mid-1993, Ifeta, a middle-aged woman, received a notice from the company which owned her flat (for which she had a long-term tenancy) telling her that she had eight days in which to quit the flat. The same day that the notice was delivered, a Serbian man, S (a resident of her town, not a displaced person), came to her flat with a letter of his own telling him that he had been assigned her flat and that Ifeta would be rehoused in a smaller flat. She later discovered that the flat that she was supposed to move to was uninhabitable. Ifeta went to complain to the authorities. One official received her courteously, but told her, "It's up to you to defend yourself against the bands". In the following days she received telephone threats from various unknown men and women. A few days later the man who had been assigned her flat came to the door in the evening. He

and a large group of men in military uniforms tried to break down the door when she refused to let him in. A Serbian neighbour who was with her in the flat called the military police. Before the military police arrived the men broke into the flat. One pointed a gun at her head and another struck her in the face with a rifle butt, causing her to lose consciousness.

The military police arrived and arrested S and two of the soldiers. She learned, however, that S, and probably the other two, had been released by the next day. An officer in the military police told Ifeta the next day that she must hand over the key of the flat voluntarily or she would not get any further protection from the military police. She gave S the key of the flat a few days later when he came again, accompanied by four men in military uniforms, and threatened her.

Although many refugees from Banja Luka and other towns stated that the pressure came mostly from displaced Serbs who had been mobilized after crossing into Bosnian Serb-controlled territory (and frequently had to serve several months in the Bosnian Serb forces before being assigned a flat), refugees from the smaller towns, for example, Mrkonji-Grad, believed that incidents were also being perpetrated by Serbs from outlying parts of the towns or surrounding villages who wished to move to better houses or houses nearer the town centres.

#### **VIOLENT ROBBERY**

Many of the most violent incidents involved robbery. All of the incidents reinforced the victims' feelings of fear and insecurity. In some cases the perpetrators explicitly threatened the victims.

One man, Ivan, described a violent attack against him at around 11pm one night in January 1994:

"When they burst in, one of them immediately hit me with a rifle here by the eye [he pointed to his face]. He started beating me, shouted, "*Ustaša*<sup>12</sup>, where's your money?". Then another went into the kitchen. I called to Nevenka "Flee!". My girlfriend jumped through the window. He opened fire with a sub-machine gun through the window. Then he came back, there were three of them. They jumped on me, pulled out a knife and started to slash me from head to toe. They wore camouflage uniforms with black caps."

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<sup>12</sup> *Ustaša* is a perjorative name for a Croat as used by Serbs. It derives from the name of the Croatian fascist regime during the Second World War.



Ivan described in detail how the injuries were made. An Amnesty International delegate observed recently formed scars consistent with his account, which was corroborated by Nevenka. He had knife wounds to his face, arms and legs as well as injuries to his hands which he said were made by hammer blows. Later in his account he stated: "...two or three minutes before departing they hit me with an iron bar on the back and said 'Ustaša, get out'".

Another man, Hajrudin, described a robbery one night in February 1994 in which three men in the uniforms of the Bosnian Serb army violently robbed him in his home of money, electronic goods and other possessions. Ill-treatment started soon after they entered the house:

"He leaned me against a wall. Then he hit me about the head, pulled me by the hair ... Then he beat me badly, [throwing me] to the other side of the corridor, with a pistol pointing at me. He cocked it. He didn't shoot in the corridor. Then we went outside."

Outside he was made to crawl half-naked in the snow. There, they also fired at the ground around his feet. His torture and ill-treatment lasted several hours; a relative was also a victim. He stated that one of them threatened them before leaving:

"They told us to pack up... To disappear from Serbian land, we musn't be found anywhere, for wherever we were found, we would be wiped out immediately."

#### **SHOOTING AND BOMBING OF HOUSES**

Many refugees spoke of shots being fired or grenades being thrown at their houses, with obvious disregard for the safety of the occupants. Most such incidents occurred after dark and the perpetrators were unseen. They associated them with threats to leave which they also heard shouted from the streets. One man described how he was injured in January 1994:

"Sometime around 9.20pm I heard the dog barking and I opened the entrance door about 20 centimetres to see. I heard shooting, he had a silencer, surely. I heard tak... tak... tak... tak... tak.... I collapsed in the corridor, but remained conscious. As I fell, the other bullet hit my wife in the leg, the ankle, and passed through. There was a pool of blood formed. Our child fainted. My father was stunned. When the old man came to his senses he called a neighbour ... Later we discovered that they had fired from about 15 metres and ambushed us from behind the wall."

His wife gave a similar account. Both displayed injuries consistent with their accounts. After they returned from hospital their house was reportedly hit by a rocket-propelled grenade in March 1994.

One family alleged that their house was shot at from another apartment occupied by a Serbian official who was involved in organizing the relocation of Serbian refugees.

*Deliberate and arbitrary killings of civilians*

**KILLINGS IN PRIJEDOR BETWEEN 29 MARCH AND 1 APRIL 1994**

From 2 April 1994 onwards reports emerged of the killings in several separate incidents of up to 20 people, 17 Muslims and three Croats<sup>13</sup> (10 of them women), which had occurred in Prijedor between 29 March and 1 April 1994. The killings were said to have followed the return of the bodies of six Serbian policeman who had been killed in fighting with the mainly Muslim Bosnian Army at Doboј. The local Muslim charity, the *Merhamet*, drew the reported killings to the attention of representatives of the ICRC and UNHCR working in the area. With a limited ability to travel freely in the area, the UNHCR reported that it was able to confirm that there was circumstantial evidence, such as newly burnt-out buildings, indicating that the reports were correct. Some of the victims were allegedly killed by hand-guns and others by grenades or were deliberately burned alive in their homes. All were allegedly robbed. Vladimir Lukić, referred to as Prime Minister in the *de facto* Bosnian Serb Government, at first denied that the killings had occurred. Then, in an apparent response to international outrage over the killings, in various statements, he and other members of the *de facto* Bosnian Serb authorities confirmed that up to 16 killings had taken place. They quickly condemned the killings; announced that the perpetrators would be brought before a court and that an undisclosed number of suspects had been detained or were being sought and said that extra police patrols had been introduced in the parts of the town where the incidents had occurred. However, the Bosnian Serb authorities' acknowledgement of the probable motives appeared contradictory in that, for example, the Chief of Police in Prijedor told the Belgrade newspaper *Borba* (5 April 1994) that "it was presumed that the killings had been motivated by greed". However, in the same newspaper, another Bosnian Serb spokesman referred to the return of the bodies of the Serbian policemen as the background to the killing, claiming that the policemen had been tortured before they were killed, implying that this had provoked the attacks.<sup>14</sup> The authorities also announced that in one of the incidents the suspects were Muslims and the victims Muslims who had supported the Bosnian Serb authorities.

Immediately after the killings, individuals or representatives of the Muslim and Croat communities appealed to the ICRC and UNHCR for urgent measures including evacuation. The ICRC negotiated with the Bosnian Serb authorities for the security of the remaining

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<sup>13</sup> Different press reports in the following weeks of the number of killings acknowledged by the Bosnian Serb authorities put the number between 14 and 20.

<sup>14</sup> *Tanjug* report of statement by Jovan Zametica in *Borba*, 5 April 1994.

minorities<sup>15</sup> and for their evacuation, recognizing the risk of further attacks and seeing the measure as a last resort. The Bosnian Serb authorities placed restrictions on the numbers who would be allowed to be evacuated and, finding this unacceptable, the ICRC suspended negotiations.

Although the reports are incomplete, Amnesty International is concerned that there are strong indications that the victims were deliberately and arbitrarily killed. The organization welcomes the authorities' announcement of investigations and calls upon them to make the findings public as well as to ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice. Amnesty International also welcomes the announcement of increased security measures to protect the minorities, but calls on the authorities to ensure that these are effective and universal throughout the area they control.

#### **OTHER REPORTS OF DELIBERATE AND ARBITRARY KILLINGS**

Where deliberate and arbitrary killings have occurred, often all members of the household have been killed together. This means that eye-witnesses to the actual killings are rare and reports are difficult to confirm. However, among refugees recently interviewed by Amnesty International, were two people who assisted an elderly neighbour who was badly injured with a knife in February 1994. They reported finding the neighbour, lying bleeding in his house with a gag round his mouth after being alerted by the victim's grandchild, who told them that the attackers had worn military uniforms. He was taken to hospital, but died a few days later.

#### **RAPE AND SEXUAL HUMILIATION; ILL-TREATMENT OF CHILDREN**

Recent violent attacks by uniformed soldiers also include alleged rape. One survivor, a woman in her early thirties, described how in February 1994 two men in military uniforms, with stockings over their heads, came to her house late one evening:

"They demanded money from us. I said that we had none. Then they beat my mother and father and they also beat my daughter. They wanted to take revenge because we had no money. We screamed and shouted. They were armed. My daughter had earrings and when they hit her on the ear and pulled off an earring, she started to bleed from the nose and mouth. Then I threw myself on one of them to save my child. Then they beat and raped me ... [After the rape] one of them said to my daughter, 'You musn't tell anyone that we were here or we will come again'."

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<sup>15</sup> Estimates put the number of Croats remaining in Prijedor as around 3,000 and the number of Muslims at up to 7,000. Some are in mixed marriages with Serbs. Their pre-1992 numbers in Prijedor were 6,300 and 49,500 respectively. The majority of the those who were left were expelled in 1992. Many were detained, tortured or ill-treated or deliberately and arbitrarily killed in this period. A significant number "disappeared".

She also stated that the same men raped her nine-year-old daughter. In the conditions under which the interviews took place, Amnesty International did not consider that it was in the interest of the child to try to confirm this with her.

Two other women stated that they had been raped recently, both in Banja Luka, one in October 1993 and the other in February 1994. Amnesty International did not press for full details since the demeanour of both women indicated that they had undergone severe trauma. Another woman stated that she was stripped naked in front of her teenage son by two men in military uniforms in March 1994.

### *Other human rights abuses*

Besides arbitrary detentions in 1992, several men reported being detained for short periods in 1993 and 1994. The detentions were made during police raids on the pretext of searching for arms or for men allegedly evading work obligations. They all reported being beaten at some time during their detention. Several were held in the *Mali Logor* army barracks in Banja Luka. Other locations were also reported, such as Manja\_a, south of Banja Luka. Amnesty International continues to seek more information about the current use of these detention camps.

There have been many reports of men being made to perform forced labour in dangerous locations such as close to front lines (all three sides are reported to have done this during 1993). One male refugee recently interviewed stated that he had been made to work near the front lines, although he did not witness any casualties resulting from this. Another reported that he refused to pick fruit in a minefield when ordered to do so in September or October 1993. He did not suffer serious consequences. Most men interviewed stated that they had been made to perform forced labour at some time, although not in dangerous conditions. They reported having to work long hours without any pay and having to provide their own food. It may be that in some cases the forced labour constituted cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, although Amnesty International is seeking further evidence to confirm this. Some women claimed that work obligations had also recently been introduced for women without young children although none confirmed being made to perform it themselves.

### **LACK OF PROTECTION FROM THE AUTHORITIES**

When questioned about whether they reported serious incidents to the police, many of the refugees said that they had done so. Most of them complained that the police did not respond immediately and that the investigations appeared brief and superficial. In the case of Ifeta, described above, the military police came immediately and apprehended uniformed soldiers ill-treating her in her flat. The woman reported, however, that those arrested were released the next day and that the main perpetrator came to her flat again and threatened her a few days later. Many of the victims left Bosnia-Herzegovina soon after the incidents. It is therefore possible that in some cases actions were taken against perpetrators after they left. However, the departure of the victims or key witnesses and the general circumstances would probably make this less rather than more likely. It is particularly disturbing that in several cases, when victims appealed to representatives of the authorities, the responses were themselves of a threatening nature.

After being attacked in his home by uniformed soldiers one man was told by the police in February 1994: "You [nationality omitted] have no place here, be happy that you are alive!". Another complained in December 1993 after his house was fired at over a period of several hours in Banja Luka. He said of the visit to the police station:

"They told us to move out, 'There's nothing for you here', he said. 'It was not intentional'. Then he told me, 'It would be better for your safety to go. We cannot protect you.'"

### **ASSISTANCE FROM SERBIAN FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS**

It is important to note that several of those interviewed emphasized that they were assisted by Serbian friends and neighbours. Two stated that their Serbian friends had had problems as a result of their actions.

## **Amnesty International's conclusions**

Amnesty International concludes that serious human rights abuses have been committed regularly against members of the Muslim, Croat and Roma communities remaining in Bosnian Serb-controlled areas. It is concerned that these abuses have been perpetrated regularly since 1992. Although the scale of the abuses has certainly varied with time, recent evidence of abuses reinforces concern for the safety of the remaining minorities. As in the past, recent abuses have been committed by men wearing Bosnian Serb military uniforms and the authorities have not acted effectively to prevent such abuses. Moreover, the actions of the *de facto* Bosnian Serb authorities appeared to condone such acts and in often to encourage them. The resulting atmosphere of fear and insecurity has caused members of the remaining minorities to seek to leave. Amnesty International considers that these people have effectively been forcibly expelled.

## **Amnesty International's recommendations**

Amnesty International calls on the *de facto* Bosnian Serb authorities:

- to respect the commitments made in the Program of Action on Humanitarian issues, signed in London on 27 August 1992;
- to ensure adequate protection for non-Serbs in the areas they control;
- to cease condoning the victimization of non-Serbs in the areas they control;
- to strengthen discipline among members of armed forces;
- to investigate all reported human rights abuses;
- to actively encourage the reporting of any further abuses;
- to bring to justice all those suspected of perpetrating or ordering human rights abuses;
- to cooperate with international bodies present in Bosnian Serb-controlled areas in confidence-building measures to reassure members of the minorities;
- to remove restrictions on the movements of members of the minorities enabling those who wish to leave to do so safely and without prejudicing their right to return, including their right to ownership of their housing and other property.

Amnesty International also repeats its calls upon governments in refugee-receiving countries, particularly in Europe, to take positive steps, including the removal of visa requirements on people from Bosnia-Herzegovina, to ensure that those fleeing human rights abuses in Bosnian Serb-controlled areas are able effectively to exercise their right to seek asylum and are able to find effective protection.

**APPENDIX I - Map of Bosnia-Herzegovina showing approximate areas of control as at Spring 1994**