

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: EUR 63/15/93

Distr: UA/SC

20 July 1993

Further information on EXTRA 47/93 (EUR 63/12/93, 14 May 1993) - and follow-up: EUR 63/14/93 of 28 May 1993 - Deliberate and arbitrary detention of civilians/deliberate and arbitrary killings/fear of torture and ill-treatment

~~BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA: Civilian population in Mostar and in villages in central Bosnia-Herzegovina~~

Amnesty International is concerned at new reports of thousands of people being held in detention camps in Mostar, Stolac, Dretelj, Gabela and elsewhere in the region. Some 10,000 Muslim males from Mostar and surrounding areas have been detained by Bosnian Croatian forces over the past few weeks and held in crowded, detention camps with little food. About 6,000 men and some women are said to be held at a heliport near Mostar, others are reportedly detained in camps at Dretelj near Stolac, in Stolac ironworks and at Gabela (near Naum) and elsewhere in the region, according to United Nations (UN) sources. While many of these are likely to be captured soldiers of the mainly Muslim Bosnian Government army, others are civilians.

A woman in the town of _apljina (about 40 kilometres from Mostar) told a reporter for the British newspaper, the Guardian, that her husband, an invalid, had recently been taken away by Bosnian Croatian forces from their home, together with all other Muslim men from the town. Another woman told the journalist that her four sons had been detained and said that when she had gone to the camp where they were held she had been informed that her second son had been killed. The report, published in the Guardian on 19 July 1993, stated that Muslim shops in the town had been dynamited and reports of rape were reaching the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

There have been similar reports of detentions in the nearby town of Stolac. Among those said to have been detained in Stolac is Dr Mehmed Kapi_, a doctor working at the local hospital. He was arrested in May 1993 and at the end of June he was believed to be held in Gabela. The UNHCR and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) are said to have recently been barred access to the detention camps, and their staff told by local Bosnian Croat leaders that they would be shot if they tried to enter Mostar, where Muslim women, children and the elderly have been evicted from their homes and forced across the river to the eastern part of the city held by Bosnian Government forces.

Bosnian Croatian leaders have reportedly informed the UNHCR that they wish to deport the detainees to third countries via a transit camp in Ljubuški on the border of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Croatia's Foreign Minister is said to have promised his government's cooperation. UN sources have described the scheme as "abhorrent", and the UNHCR on 16 July reportedly rejected a request

from Bosnian Croats and from Croatian officials in Zagreb for help in carrying out the scheme. Some 500 detainees were reportedly transported to Croatia from 16 to 18 July and further deportations, according to a Croatian Government official, were expected shortly.

Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits "regardless of their motive", the "individual or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportations" of people who find themselves under the control of a party to the conflict "from occupied territory to the territory of the Occupying Power or to that of any other country, occupied or not..." Breaches of Article 49 constitute a war crime.

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

- urging the release of all civilians detained solely because of their national/religious origin or held as hostages in camps in Mostar, Stolac, Dretelj, Gabela and elsewhere in the region;
- urging that all detention camps be identified and be open for regular inspection by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC);
- urging that any persons detained, whether civilian or military, be granted effective safeguards against torture or ill-treatment and against deliberate and arbitrary killings and the threat of such killings;
- urging that Croatian forces abide by their repeated and broken commitments to respect international humanitarian law;

APPEALS TO

1) Leader of the Croatian Defence Council (HVO) (Bosnian Croat forces):

Mate Boban
Kod Glavnog Ureda Hrvatskog Vijeća Obrane
Trg Rondo BB
88000 Mostar
Bosnia-Herzegovina - via Croatia
Telegrams: Mr Mate Boban, Mostar, Bosnia-Herzegovina
Faxes: + 38 58 366 019

Salutation: Dear Mr Boban

2) President of the Republic of Croatia:

Dr Franjo Tudjman
Predsjednik Republike Hrvatske
Visoka 22
41000 Zagreb
Croatia
Telegrams: President of Croatia, Zagreb, Croatia
Faxes: + 38 41 444 532

Salutation: Dear President

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO: Croatian and Bosnian diplomatic representatives in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 20 August 1993.