

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

PUBLIC STATEMENT

AI Index: EUR 63/002/2010
11 June 2010

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Amnesty International calls for justice and reparation for survivors of war crimes of sexual violence *Human Rights Council adopts Universal Periodic Review outcome on Bosnia and Herzegovina*

Amnesty International welcomes the government's commitment to address the situation of women who were victims of war crimes of sexual violence during the 1992-1995 war, as expressed by Minister Safet Halilović in February 2010 during the examination of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the UPR Working Group. The organization appreciates the efforts by the government to draft a state law and a national programme for reparation for all civilian victims of war crimes, including survivors of war crimes of sexual violence. It calls on the government to ensure that both are adopted without further delay and in consultation with the survivors. Survivors should be guaranteed access to justice and reparation, as defined by international law, including restitution, satisfaction, compensation, rehabilitation and guarantees of non-repetition.

As suggested during the review, the law and the reparation programme should also provide victims of war crimes of sexual violence with improved access to affordable health services, including psycho-social support centres.¹ Amnesty International calls on the government to ensure that the law and the reparation programme address the needs of survivors of war crimes of sexual violence for housing and employment.

Amnesty International welcomes the commencement in the last six months of several new trials related to war crimes of sexual violence before the State Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, while other cases have reached the trial chamber stage or final judgment. The organization emphasizes the importance of government support for the recommendation to establish a comprehensive witness protection scheme for cases involving war crimes, with sufficient safeguards, including an identity protection system and psychological support.²

Finally, as recommended during the review, Amnesty International urges the government to amend the Criminal Code to include a definition of sexual violence, in accordance with international standards.³

Background

The UN Human Rights Council adopted the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of Bosnia and Herzegovina on 11 June 2010 during its 14th session. Prior to the adoption of the report of the review Amnesty International delivered the oral statement above. Amnesty International also contributed to the information basis for the review through its submission on Bosnia and Herzegovina: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR63/007/2009/en>

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International Secretariat, Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW, UK
www.amnesty.org

¹ A/HRC/14/16, paragraph 90, recommendation 73 (Austria)

² Ibid, paragraph 90, recommendation 20 (Spain)

³ Ibid, paragraph 90, recommendation 72 (Austria)
