

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 35/93 Fear of ill-treatment/
Fear of deliberate and arbitrary killings

11 February 1993

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA: Non-Serbs in the Serbian-controlled town of Janja

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of non-Serbs in the town of Janja near Bijeljina in north eastern Bosnia, and fears the possibility of arbitrary killings, torture and ill-treatment either perpetrated by the authorities or condoned by them. Such abuses may be intended to force non-Serbs from the area or to accept expulsion. Janja, which has a majority Muslim population, has been under the control of Bosnian Serb forces since April 1992. It is believed to have the highest remaining proportion of non-Serbs in the area.

There are allegations of killings of civilians and of rape in the village in May 1992 and later, as well as other incidents such as the bombing of property belonging to Muslims. Events in recent weeks included the shooting of local Muslims by armed Serbs about which Amnesty International is particularly concerned.

In late January a Muslim couple who were in hiding were shot dead by armed Serbs in civilian clothes. The police claimed that the men were ordinary criminals, however local people fear that they were acting with the complicity of the police. After this incident local non-Serbs demonstrated against the violence and a Muslim woman was shot dead by police during the demonstration. Local Muslims claim that the police fired into the crowd but the police claim that she was shot while standing on a balcony which would be consistent with their claim that they fired into the air.

A certain amount of discipline was maintained in the town through the presence of soldiers of the Bosnian Serb army. However, in the last two months security has been mainly in the hands of the police who have themselves been replaced or added to by units from outside the town.

Non-Serbs are reportedly permitted to travel only as far as Bijeljina which is 12 kilometres away. Some local non-Serbs have escaped into Serbia by paying Serbian smugglers. In the last two weeks a total of five buses have also been organized by Serbs to take out non-Serbs who wish to leave the town permanently. Potential passengers have reportedly had to pay large amounts of money for places on the buses.

On 2 February 1993 Bosnia-Herzegovina radio alleged that sixty Muslims and Croats from towns in the region, including Janja, had been forcibly mobilized into the Bosnian Serb army and that they had been used for mine clearing on the front line near Donji Rahi_.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Huge suffering has occurred in Bosnia-Herzegovina since fighting broke out surrounding the declaration of the republic's independence from the Yugoslav state in spring 1992. This war has recently become more clearly a three-sided conflict involving Bosnian Serb forces, Bosnian Croat forces and the largely Muslim Bosnian Government forces. All three sides also have paramilitary groups fighting with them. The suffering has included human rights abuses on a huge scale, including deliberate and arbitrary killings, torture and ill-treatment and arbitrary detention. All sides have been responsible for abuses to some

extent. Some of these incidents are documented in Amnesty International reports including Bosnia-Herzegovina: Gross Abuses of basic human rights (AI Index: EUR 63/01/92, October 1992), Bosnia-Herzegovina: Rape and sexual abuse by armed forces (AI Index EUR: EUR 63/01/93, January 1993) and Rana u duši - A wound to the soul (see below).

Amnesty International is concerned that the pattern of events emerging in Janja appears to resemble that documented in other Serbian-controlled towns in Bosnia-Herzegovina in recent months. The Amnesty International report Bosnia-Herzegovina: Rana u duši - A wound to the soul, (AI Index EUR 63/03/93, January 1993) documents events in the town of Bosanski Petrovac in north west Bosnia-Herzegovina. The organization fears that the security situation may deteriorate rapidly for non-Serbs or Serbs opposed to the authorities in the town of Janja and that deliberate and arbitrary killings, torture and ill-treatment may occur, either perpetrated by the authorities or condoned by them consistent with a possible intention to force the remaining non-Serbs to flee or be compliant if forcibly expelled. Such fears are justified on the basis of similar events which have occurred in other Bosnian Serb-controlled towns, and taking into account the recent situation in Janja.

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

- stressing that Amnesty International is concerned for victims of human rights violations of all nationalities in the former Yugoslavia;
- expressing concern about reports of possible deliberate and arbitrary killings in the town of Janja in recent weeks;
- urging the authorities to take urgent measures to ensure that the local security forces are effectively controlled and that strict orders are issued to ensure that they abide by international human rights and humanitarian law standards;
- urging them to take urgent measures to ensure that local armed Serbs are controlled and that they are not allowed to assault the non-Serb population;
- urging them to instigate thorough and impartial investigations into reported killings and ill-treatment of local non-Serbs;
- urging that any individuals suspected of ordering abuses or being complicit in allowing such as deliberate and arbitrary killings, torture or ill-treatment be removed from any position of authority and that they be held to account for their actions.

APPEALS TO:

1) Representative of the Bosnian Serbs:

Dr Radovan Karad_i_
Biro Republike Srpske
Moše Pijade 8
11000 Beograd, Yugoslavia

Telegrams: Representative of the Bosnian Serbs Karad_i_, Beograd, Yugoslavia

Faxes: + 38 11 338 633

Salutation: Dear Dr Karad_i_

2) Commander of Serbian forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina:

General Ratko Mladi_
Biro Republike Srpske
Moše Pijade 8
11000 Beograd, Yugoslavia

**Telegrams: Commander of Serbian forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina Mladi_,
Beograd, Yugoslavia**

Faxes: + 38 11 338 633

Salutation: Dear General Mladi_

3) The chief of police in Bijeljina:

Šef milicije

Stanica milicije

Ante Markovi_a 2

76300 Bijeljina

Yugoslavia (for Bosnia-Herzegovina)

Telegrams: Šef milicije, Bijeljina, Yugoslavia

Salutation: Dear Commander

4) The chief of police in Janja:

Šef milicije

Stanica milicije

76316 Janja

Yugoslavia (for Bosnia-Herzegovina)

Telegrams: Šef milicije, Janja, Yugoslavia

Salutation: Dear Commander

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia:

Prof. dr Dobrica _osi_

Predsednik SRJ

Bulevar Lenjina 2

11070 Beograd, Yugoslavia

and to diplomatic representatives of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 25 March 1993.