

Foreign Press Office - Mostar

MEDIA REPORTS

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No justice even 12 years after massacre

Vecernji list

By Miroslav Vasilj

July 28, 2005

Twelve years ago today members of Armija BiH committed horrendous crimes against imprisoned members of the Croat Defense Council [HVO] and Croat civilians in the village Doljani in Jablanica municipality, where they killed 24 HVO members and 14 civilians, of which five are still missing.

The largest massacre occurred on Stipica livada where 22 bodies were located.

The same day 16 Croats, mostly civilians, were killed in Krkaca, Stupari, Orlovac and Sarancevic.

Those who survived Doljani, around 210 of them, were arrested and deported to the infamous concentration camp "Muzej" in Jablanica.

The captured included 21 children less than five years old, the youngest of which was 37 days old, 42 children age five to 15, 10 pregnant women, 39 women and 31 people older than 60.

After the Doljani massacre, the local Jablanica television showed Enes Kovacevic, commander of the 44th Armija BiH mountain brigade, publicly commending the actors of the attack on Doljani. Congratulations also came from the Jablanica war presidency, headed by Dr. Safet Cibo.

It is disturbing that, despite the extent of the crime and despite the fact that Hague investigators visited the locality several times, no one has been held responsible at The Hague for the massacre in Doljani.

The Mostar cantonal court conducted investigations several times. However, due to a "lack of evidence" the commanders and those who carried out the crimes have evaded prosecution.

The survivors call upon The Hague Tribunal and newly established war crimes court in Sarajevo to finally initiate processing the crimes committed in Doljani.

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European Union forces in Bosnia raid several private security agencies

Associated Press Worldstream

July 28, 2005 (7:46 AM EST)

European Union forces on Thursday raided several private security agencies suspected of threatening the peace in Bosnia, officials said.

"Inspections are taking place on several locations throughout Bosnia and involving more than one security company," said Col. Bruno Compagnone, a spokesman for EU force in the town of Mostar. "We are merely ensuring that the companies are conducting themselves and controlling weapons in their possession in a correct fashion."

Under the peace deal that ended the 1992-95 Bosnian war, foreign peacekeepers can enter any facility in the country and search it or detain people if they believe there is a danger of the peace accords being violated.

Troops on Thursday entered the premises of various private security agencies in Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Mostar and other smaller towns. They were seen blocking off a building in downtown Mostar where the offices of the Puma security agency is based.

Puma officials were not immediately available for comment.

The U.S. government branded Puma a threat to regional stability in May 2003, when U.S. President George W. Bush signed an executive order freezing the U.S. assets of several people organizations from the Balkans, including Puma.

EU peacekeepers raid private security agencies in Bosnia

Agence France Presse

July 28, 2005 (11:40 AM GMT)

EU peacekeepers on Thursday launched near simultaneous raids of private security agencies suspected of criminal activities across Bosnia, a spokeswoman said.

"The main focus of the operation is premises of security companies suspected of criminal activity.

We have a number of targets throughout the country," spokeswoman for the EU Force (EUFOR) Bridget Rose told AFP.

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"Security companies can lawfully have access to wide variety of weapons, but there is information that maybe not all of their activities are legitimate," she added.

Rose could give details only for operations in three major cities -- Sarajevo, Mostar and Banja Luka.

Around 100 EUFOR soldiers sealed off a residential area in the center of Sarajevo early Thursday, and witnesses said they used hammers to forcefully enter the small premises of the Sword Security Company.

"The owner of the company is of Arab origin and we suspect him of criminal activity," said a Bosnian policeman on the spot without elaborating.

The 7,000-strong EUFOR is mandated to provide security following the brutal 1992-95 Bosnian war. Its brief includes fighting organized crime and terrorism and hunting for war crimes suspects.

Award instead of punishment

Vecernji list

By Dejan Jazvic

July 28, 2005

The BiH Council of Ministers has become a true refuge for compromised politicians and other officials, who lost influential positions following reforms and vetting.

The appointment of former Sarajevo cantonal prosecutor Mustafa Bisic as assistant justice minister is the latest in a long line of controversial appointments within the state government.

Vecernjak has learned that he was appointed at the insistence of the Party for Democratic Action, despite the fact that he participated in some of the most controversial court cases in Bosnia and Herzegovina's recent history.

Bisic is known as the author of the embarrassing indictment in the "Leutar case," which collapsed when Dominik Ilijasevic and five other Croats were declared innocent.

Besides that, his name is mentioned in connection with several other, equally controversial investigations and indictments of the Sarajevo cantonal prosecution, including the prosecution's lack of interest in investigating war crimes committed in the greater Sarajevo region from 1992 to 1995.

This is likely the reason why Bisic did not pass the vetting process for judges and prosecutors, which was conducted by the international community.

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After a brief period outside of public life, Bisic recently “appeared” as assistant justice minister, which only confirmed earlier assumptions that he is close to the Bosniak political leadership.

Unfortunately, this is not the first controversial appointment in the state government.

Samir Rizvo, who issued identity cards to mujahideens falsely living in Sarajevo municipality Center, was recently appointed assistant security minister.

Soon after, there was yet another, no less controversial appointment. Former Federation interior minister Mehmed Zilic was appointed advisor to the prime minister for security matters, even though an indictment was confirmed against him for abuse of office while he was federal minister.

All these appointments are a result of cadre politics according to which ruling parties autonomously choose candidates to fill “their” vacant positions and positions belonging to certain ethnic groups. Thus, it is not surprising that no one among Croat or Serb representatives in the Council of Ministers objected to Bisic’s appointment.