

Foreign Press Office - Mostar

MEDIA REPORTS

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ICTY to continue operations even after 2008

FENA

June 8, 2005

The United Nations Tribunal for war crimes in the Former Yugoslavia will not complete its activity by the 2008, the date set by the Security Council, because of key fugitives still at large and new indictments submitted to the court, states the Tribunal's Tuesday press release.

The report submitted to the Security Council once again criticizes Serb, Bosniak, and Croat leaders for their failure to transfer Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic and his leading general Ratko Mladic, reports the Associated Press.

Karadzic and Mladic have been on the run since the Tribunal charged them with genocide and other war crimes committed during the 1992-1995 war in BiH. It is believed that Karadzic is hiding within Republika Srpska, while Mladic is in neighboring Serbia.

President of the Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia Theodor Meron stated elsewhere in the release that a second obstacle for completion by 2008 is the fact that several indictments have been submitted to the court which he must take them into consideration.

Meron stated that the Tribunal cannot cease operations at the cost of "a fair process and human rights for the purpose of speeding up activities."

He stated that trials will last at least until 2009, but did not provide further details.

The Security Council set a timeframe for the Tribunal, as well as the Rwanda court, to finish all trials by 2008 and appeals by 2010.

Derventa: Rectory break-in

FENA

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During the night between June 5 and 6, unidentified persons broke into the rectory in Bukovica near Derventa where they committed significant damages, says pastor Ivan Juric

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According to him, the vandals broke in through the main entrance, smashed the windows of the stockroom and in the main room. They also turned over the altar and shattered the statues of Saint Anthony and Our Lady. A cross was thrown into a corner of the room.

Pastor Juric points out that the attack was most likely carried out in order to intimidate Croat returnees. In the area of Bukovica there were 1200 Croats living before the war. Up until now, only one Croat has returned. After the rectory was renovated, 26 Croats registered to return to Bukovica.

International Community ignoring the needs of Croat returnees to RS

Vecernji list
By Dejan Jazvic

June 8, 2005

During the first visit by Ivo Miro Jovic as Croat Member of the BiH Presidency to Plehan, an incident occurred clearly portraying that refugee return, especially to RS, is not a simple process. Before the eyes of the state delegation, Serb locals removed the power transformer from recently built electrical lines which were supposed to spur hope for more Croat returns to the Derventa region. The incident was witnessed by Deputy Minister for Human Rights and Refugees and President of the State Committee for Refugees and Displaced Persons Ivica Marinovic.

VL: What exactly happened in Plehan and what is your comment, as a person directly involved in the return process?

Marinovic: During President Jovic's recent visit to Plehan, Serbs cruelly removed the transformers from the recently built electricity distribution grid. Thus they demonstrated their power and sent a message to potential returnees – if we can do this in front of a BiH Presidency Member, can you imagine what we can do when he is not here. They did this with the approval of what we call the international community, which confirms their position towards Croat returnees. Croat returnees are left with the fact that they cannot plug in both their hairdryer and refrigerator at the same time so that they do not endanger the stability of the electricity grid. At the same time, President Cavic superficially calls for Croats to return to their homes in RS.

VL: Croat returns to RS are obviously a difficult and harsh process. It seems that no one, not even the government, can answer how to secure mass returns?

Marinovic: The answer to that question is being answered already by those who do not wish well and it is unfavorable for Croats in RS. Compared to pre-war figures of Croats living in the territory of today's RS, 95% are missing. That same area has seen the return of 145,000 Bosniaks, which is 33% of their pre-war population. These statistics illustrate that Serbs and Bosniaks in territories they consider their own allow returns according to a one-for-one principle. They have open support and assistance for these projects from the "international

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community.” It is clear that everyone together, Serbs, Bosniaks, and the “international community,” simply do not take us Croats into consideration and in their negotiations and activities act as if we do not exist.

VL: It also seems that Croat representatives in government bodies are not doing enough for Croat return to RS. Where do you see the solution for true Croat return to the smaller of the BiH entities?

Marinovic: We need to significantly strengthen the position of Croats within the Federation Ministry for Refugees and Displaced Persons. In order to revitalize Croats in RS, we need to formulate strong return programs to the Banja luka and Posavina regions. We also need to strengthen the constitutional and legal status of Croats in RS so that they can be equal in their full capacity.