

MUSLIM NATIONAL COUNCIL OF SANJAK



SANJAK

GEOGRAPHY
ECONOMY
POLITICS
HUMAN RIGHTS

NOVI PAZAR APRIL 1993

S A N J A K

- NAME OF PEOPLE: Muslims
- SIZE: Territory of Sanjak covers an area of 8,687 square kilometers.
- CAPITAL: Novi Pazar with 105000 inhabitants including all districts of the Novi Pazar Municipality
- POPULATION: Sanjak has 529 965 inhabitants.
- RELIGION: Islam
- LANGUAGE: Bosnian
- PLACE OF ORIGIN: The Muslims are indigenous people of Sanjak, a part of Bosnian people.
- ETHNIC DIVERSITY: The Muslims make 353357 or 66.67% of total population. The Serbs, Montenegrins, Albanians and others make 176708 or 33.33%. Figures vary depending on different sources. For example, only in Novi Pazar there are about 12000 of unregistered Muslims, whose right on citizenship is being denied.
- MAJOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS: Thanks to backwardness of Sanjak, this region has not had greater environmental problems. Still, the existing air and water pollution should not be undermined and neglected. In Berane region a pulp-mil waste pollutes the river Lim, one of the most important rivers of Sanjak. The power plant in Pljevlja pollutes the air. Mass exploitation of the wood has destroyed several tenths of acres of forests around Rozaje, Berane and Plav.
- GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION FEATURES: Sanjak is situated in central part of the Balkan Peninsula. It is located between Serbia, Montenegro. From the north-west it borders Bosnia and Hercegovina, from the south-east Kosova, and from south Albania. The most of its territory belongs to eastern part of the Dinara mountainous range, making an extension geologic Eastern-Bosnian Paleozoic, with variety of geographic features. Its morphologic totality is of an altitude character with outstanding tectonic, karats and erosive processes. The central and largest part of Sanjak is the Pester Plateau. It is an immediate extension of eastern Bosnian table land, which has an average height of 1000 meters above the sea level. It is surrounded by mountains, Golija, Javor, Zlatar, Jadovnik, Ozren and Jarut. There are two other smaller geomorphologic entities. Gornje Polimlje, a region of high mountains above 2000 meters and a

mountainous region of Novi Pazar and Tutin with approximately 800 meters above the sea level. Their main geographic features are canyons, river valleys and small mountain lakes. Main geographic features of Sanjak are: karst fields, depressions, canyon gorges, valleys, and caves. Sanjak has a temperate continental climate. Its vegetation varies from conifer to beech, oak and a great abundance of grass. Rains fall all year around. Lacustrine sediments, impermeable stones and Paleozoic slates keep sufficient amount of moisture which make Sanjak a pasture land. The river network is rich. Main rivers are: The Lim, Ibar, Raska, Uvac and Cehotina, as well as many other smaller rivers and peatic waters. Settlements are located in the river valleys, and some of them date 3000 years BC. Although Sanjak had been from the Roman Times, through the Middle Ages and the Turk Times one of the greatest crossroads, nowadays, all its roads are class II.

RECOURSES:

Main recourses are coal in vicinity of Pljevlja, Berane, Petnjica and Sjenica with more than 700,000,000 tons of brown coal, and marble in vicinity of Novi Pazar. They are active mines. There are recourses of iron, lead, and zinc, which were excavating in the past. There are good potentials of hydro-energy. The river flows are good for building new power plants with small investments. There are idle recourses for cattle breeding, fish breeding, growing and gathering of mushrooms, blueberries, blackberries, rose-hips and medical herbs, as well as for food production. Mountains rich in wild animals, rivers rich in fish, lakes, mineral and thermale springs give all possibilities for development of many tourism branches. On the Sanjak territories different civilizations met, West-Roman, Byzantine and Islamic, leaving a number of cultural monuments that should be more presented to a broader public.

ECONOMY:

Since Sanjak had been, from the Roman Times through the Middle Ages and Turkish Times up to the 1878, one of the biggest trade crossroads that lead via Dubrovnik to the West and via Constantinople to the East, it was a very developed region. Since creation of Kingdom of Yugoslavia and later on the Communist Yugoslavia, all important communications have bypassed this region and it was excluded from all developing programs. Thus it has become one of the most undeveloped regions in the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The table below is used as an illustrative example and the figures are indexes from the Federal Bureau of Statistics for the year 1986, whereby we compared similar municipalities by the number of citizens but different by national structure. (S marks Serbs, and M marks Muslims. National income and investments are expressed in million dinars). All four municipalities are within the same region Kraljevo, in a circle of 100 kilometers.

| Municipalities | population | investments | national-income |
|----------------|----------------|-------------|-----------------|
| N. Pazar | 74000 (85%) M | 7997 | 32.3 |
| Kraljevo | 122000 (98%) S | 12303 | 88.9 |
| Tutin | 33000 (97%) M | 793 | 5.2 |
| Raska | 29000 (99%) S | 8178 | 22.2 |

Agriculture, particularly cattle breeding have been the predominant economy of Sanjak population. Unfortunately government often limited this economy-branches by the law on Maximum Ownership of Land. The socialist economy did not pay a needed attention to exploitation of coal, wood and marble. Population of Sanjak often had to find out all possible ways to make their living because of this region's backwardness and unemployment.

Population often went to seek jobs in Western European countries, and a part of Muslim population worked in small private shops and handicrafts. In the last 15 years, during a certain liberation of economy wool domestic manufacture and opening of small private firms for production of denim clothes, as well as trade business flourished. Novi Pazar has become one of the biggest markets in former Yugoslavia; many wool-domestic manufactured products, denim clothes, meat and milk products were sold all over Yugoslavia. Textile, footwear, knitwear, furniture and food industry exported to international market. Due to numerous cultural historical monuments tourism started to develop. All these show that population of Sanjak is sufficiently qualified, ready and willing to fit into modern international market and labor exchange. Free market, free movement of people, goods and capital are a part of Muslim tradition without which they do not see the future.

POLITICAL
LEADERS
PARTIES:

The biggest and the most influential party is Democratic Action Party of Sanjak, which gathers absolute majority of the Muslims of Sanjak. Muslim National Council of Sanjak is non-party organization-movement of Muslim people of Sanjak, which is the only legitimate body to represent Muslim people of Sanjak. The Assembly of the MNCS, as the highest organ, being established May 11, 1991, is only entitled to bring decisions important for the Muslim people of Sanjak. President of the MNCS is Dr. Sulejman Ugljanin.

POLITICAL
SYSTEM
GOVERNMENT:

Sanjak is within the borders of the rest of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). After dissolution of communist regime of the former Yugoslavia, the Socialist Party of Serbia managed to succeed the communist party members and all potential of the Yugoslav National Army. It created a totalitarian regime, which is responsible for the war in Slovenian, Croatia and Bosnia and Hercegovina. That is a new form of social-fascism that threatens to exterminate all non-Serbian peoples. Actions of the Serbian Socialist Party leaders are just a continuation of the nationalist aims of Ilija Garasanin, Vasa Cubrilovic, Draza Mihajlovic and Dobrica Cosic, which perfectly match with almost all other opposition party programs (Radical Party, Serbian Movement for Renewal, Serbian National Renewal and many other).

LEGAL
STATUS:

Sanjak was a constituent part of Bosnia and Hercegovina, with special status of autonomy up to 1878, when it was, on the Berlin Congress, under item 25, separated from the BH. Sanjak had continued to exist as a separate administrative and territorial unit up to the Balkan Wars when it was occupied by Serbia and Montenegro. When The Kingdom of Yugoslavia was created in 1918, it has definitely lost its legal status. During the Second World War Sanjak established its authority and liberation movement on November 11, 1943, which was abolished, with disagreement of Sanjak representatives, by the communist regime on March 29 1945. In the former Socialist Federal Republic Muslims were one of the six constitutive peoples (Serbs Croats, Muslims, Slovenians, Macedonians and Montenegrins). The regime of Federal Republic of Yugoslavia brought the new Constitution on April 27, 1992, which excluded the Muslims. Nowadays Sanjak has unsolved legal status, although the Muslim National Council of Sanjak carried out referendum October 25 to 27 1991, when people of Sanjak voted

for full political and territorial autonomy of Sanjak with the right of connection to one of the republics. From the total number of voters who went to the polls, 183302 or 98.85% voted in favor of autonomy, which is 69.39% from total number in the voter-registers.

HUMAN
RIGHTS:

By revival of chetnik movement and Great-Serbian hegemony Muslims are once again exposed to a grave violence of human rights that represents a classical example of ethnic cleansing. The UN Special Raporteur's Report A/47/666/S24809, of December 1992, on Situation of Human Rights in the Former Yugoslavia, from the forty-seventh session of General Assembly, the Sate Department Report on Situation of Human Rights on the Territory of Serbia/Montenegro, for 1992, as well as the reports of The CSCE Mission for Sanjak, show only a part of grave violation of human rights in Sanjak. Only from the beginning of April 1992 to the end of August 1992, more than 69000 Muslims, because of life insecurity, military-police terror, economic pressure and a grave anti-Muslim campaign through influential government media, took refuge in Western European Countries and Turkey. There is no college or university in Sanjak. Some secondary-school curricula are being narrowed to disadvantage of academic occupations. School curricula are full of direct hate against Muslims, Turks, Albanians and other people. Muslim students study nothing from their national history, literature and art. They are exposed to a specific assimilation and feelings of inferiority in relation with the Serb. Many Muslims are expelled from their jobs on ethnic basis, especially in higher positions in police, army and enterprises. More and more murders, abductions, burning of houses, attacks and distraction of property, searches, robberies and forced mobilizations contribute to faster ethnic cleansing of Sanjak. For example, only from the beginning of April 1992, to February 1993, 39 Muslims were killed, more than 100 abducted (The Sanjak Committee for Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms possesses data about 58 abducted Muslims). Fifty-five Muslims were beaten up or injured. On the borderline with Bosnia and Hercegovina, police carry out searches of all Muslims houses, without warrants. With assistance of Yugoslav Army more than 100 houses were robbed. With explosive devices 11 shops or coffee bars of Muslim owners were destroyed, and 40 damaged. Ethnic cleansing is gravest in the western part of Sanjak. Primary objective is to cut Muslim ethnic link with Bosnia and Hercegovina. Ethnic cleansing of Sanjak is not a consequence of the war in Bosnia and Hercegovina but primary goal of Serbian-Montenegrin ex and present nationalists and ideologists.

Continuous ethnic cleansing of Sanjak is being carried out since the Berlin Congress, when Serbia and Montenegro broadened their territories to disadvantage of Sanjak, for more than 2000 kilometers. On the occupied territory, where Muslims made absolute majority, nowadays there are no Muslims. Muslim people of Sanjak, being exposed to genocide, for which nobody was responsible, have gone through a cruel exodus. Many places were renamed and traces of Muslim existence on those territories are being destroyed (graveyards and other religious and cultural buildings). In the period between 1912, and 1914, from the part occupied by Serbia 4000 Muslims were expelled, and from the part occupied by Montenegro, only in the period from April to July 1914, 1657 (children are not included in the number) were expelled to Turkey (they were taken by boat from the Harbor Bar). During the same period 23000 were displaced to Bosnia. On the territories of Plav and Gusinje 850 of prominent Muslims were killed in 1913. In Sahovici, Pavino Polje and Gacarevo with its surroundings (municipality Bijelo Polje), 2500 Muslims were brutally killed by Serbian-Montenegrin chetnics in 1924. During the period from 1927, to 1936, 19278 Muslims were expelled to Turkey. In 1938 the Kingdom of Yugoslavia signed the Yugoslav-Turkish Convention, which immediately came into force. During the period from 1941, to 1945, 15000 Muslims of Sanjak were brutally tortured and killed by chetnics. In 1954, the Communist Yugoslavia

renewed the convention with Turkey by so called Gentleman Agreement. Because of these circumstances and the military-police terror of Alexander Rankovic nowadays, about 1200000 Muslims from Sanjak origin live in Turkey. Great number of them stayed in Macedonia, on their way to Turkey, especially in bigger towns, and some of them stayed in the villages (for example, 29 villages are completely settled by Muslims from Sanjak). Later on, in the communist period violation of human rights was carried in different spheres of life, from economy to education and culture.

NOTES:

No international organization has ever had monitoring in the census data handling of but Serbian authority.

Plans for development of Sanjak were never made. The only analysis ever made was analysis of 1964, made by Serbian Social Accountancy Service. Even the authors of this study complained that there was no evidence in enterprises, in regional administration or on the republic level.

New Serbian plans for development of communications network and other infrastructure absolutely bypass this region.

Sanjak covered a broader region before the Berlin Congress, and the number of genocide victims and population transfer, presented here, includes partly victims from the region that does not belong to Sanjak of today

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