

## VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN SANDŽAK

The territory of Sandžak encompasses the southwestern regions of Serbia and northeastern regions of Montenegro which represents an area of 8686 km<sup>2</sup>. They are made up of the following municipalities: Novi Pazar, Sjenica, Tutin, Novi Varoš, Prijepolje, Priboj, Rožaje, Ivangrad, Bijelo Polje, Pljevlja i Plav.

Until 1878 Sandžak was a part of Bosnia and as such had the status of an autonomy (political and territorial). Until the Balkan wars (1912-13) it was a separate administrative-political entity; afterwards, by an agreement between European superpowers in London, it was divided between Serbia and Montenegro.

In World War II, on the 20th of November, the Antifascist Council of the Peoples' Liberation of Sandžak (ZAVNOS) was established in Plevlja as the supreme legislative, legal and political body which also included political autonomy.

After the war, on the 29th of March 1945, by a decision of the Communist Party, Sandžak was again divided between Serbia and Montenegro and, in the framework of these Republics, it was again divided into two units of interest.

In Sandžak already in the fifteenth century, two thirds of the population was made up of Muslims and one third were other nationalities. In 1911, there were 217,433 inhabitants in Sandžak of whom 126,791 were Muslims.

In the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the Muslims of Sandžak were exposed to state terrorism which resulted in their massive emigration from these regions. Only from the Montenegrin part of Sandžak in 1914, through the port of Bar in Smirno (Izmir) and Constantinople, 16,570 Muslims emigrated and, one year earlier, 500 Muslim families emigrated from Šahović, Ravna Rijeka and Mojkovac. The Kingdom of Yugoslavia pursues its policy of state terrorism and implements measures for the physical annihilation of the Muslims of Sandžak. Thus, in 1924, 250 innocent Muslims were massacred,

In court proceedings whether in criminal proceedings or others, the sentences always imply a political motive and especially in article 61 of the Criminal Code of Serbia where only the Serbs of Sandžak are protected by law confirming that inequality between Serbs and Muslims is legalized in Serbia.

There are many examples of inequality in the political life of Serbia:

- In Novi Pazar where over 80% of the population is Muslim, the president of the municipal council is a Serb, as well as the chief of police (SUP) and other SUP officials.
- From the establishment of the radio station in Novi Pazar until today, the director never was a Muslim.
- In Tutin where 97% of the population is Muslim, the president of the municipal council is a Serb.
- In Bijelo Polje following the multiparty elections, the Muslims won 36% of the votes, but the communists do not allow them to participate in the municipal council. The chief of police in Bijelo Polje never was a Muslim although some 50% of the population in this municipality is Muslim.
- At the first multiparty elections in Serbia held on the 9th of December 1990, the electoral districts in Sandžak were so formed as to prevent the Muslims from obtaining the number of representatives which in reality it should: (Raška with 29,000 inhabitants, Brus with 23,000 inhabitants, Vrnjačka Banja with 25,000 inhabitants received one representative, while the Muslims cities of Sjenica with 36,000 inhabitants and Tutin with 33,000 inhabitants together only have one representative.)

Hadžet, a large Muslim cemetery was demolished as well as the Musala (religious object). In the village of Deževa a large Muslim cemetery was demolished. Such a crime was also noted in the neighborhood of Potok, in Prijepolje, Bijelo Polje and all other cities in Sandžak.

- Muslim cultural and educational institutions in Sandžak which were of higher religious education were abolished.

#### Information

For the entire civilized European world, television represents a window to the world, yet for the Muslims of Sandžak it is a window to darkness because, via TV Belgrade, there is an aggressive cultural and spiritual assimilation of Muslims.

In its programming, TV Belgrade does not feature anything from the Muslim culture, but throughout the years, an anti-Muslim campaign is waged on the TV screens. Even smaller Serbian towns have their own TV studio, while there is not even one in all of Sandžak.

Such a form of discrimination does not exist anywhere in Europe. Sandžak is in a complete news blackout since official news and communiques from Sandžak are not published in the media in Serbia.

Thus, this territory is being cut off from the rest.

#### Economy

Tutin (97% Muslim) is at the bottom of the list for development in Serbia with a national income of 16% of the Republic's average. The neighboring municipality of Raška inhabited by Serbs has a national income of 81% of the Republic's average.

- Serbs have priority in obtaining employment; even new jobs are being created for them while tens of thousands of Muslims are unemployed.

- Manufacturing plants are built in purely Serbian villages.

Montenegrins; one victim was a minor, a 14 year-old Muslim girl.

Because of the demands made by our representatives in the Assembly of Montenegro to clarify the above-mentioned killings, the president of Montenegro made a direct threat of bringing criminal charges against the representatives.

Due to all of the above, the Muslims of Sandžak organized many protest rallies (February 6, 1991, February 25, 1991), but the authorities (police) prevented them from taking place. We wish to indicate that these are only the most recent examples of the violation of human rights against Muslims in Sandžak for which we have concrete proof.

*Le... 1991*  
MILITARY ABUSE AGAINST MUSLIMS COMMITTED BY THE SERBIAN AND MONTENEGRO POLICE AND UNSOLVED MURDERS OF MUSLIMS

...and... physically abused and...  
...each without the...  
...right to a defense (second trial was one minor...)  
...and his brother Samir were...  
...for not producing their identity card...  
...was beat up by the police...  
...was hospitalized for an...  
...Professor Salih Kerem...  
...a doctor's certificate...  
...displayed religious...  
...in the...  
...to be...  
...to be...

- In the cities of Sandzak, taxes for private entrepreneurs are up to ten times the amount for the same activities in Serbia (e.g. stonecutters in Novi Pazar) pay taxes of 160 thousand dinars, while in Serbia they pay 18 thousand dinars; - The forestation of pastures is being carried out in purely cattlebreeding regions where Muslims live and whose only livelihood they are. - In all development projects of Serbia, railroads, pipelines and highways bypassed Sandzak. - Political decisions take away the wealth from forests in the municipality of Rožaje (93% Muslims) and is distributed in a neighboring municipality where the majority is made up of Serbs and Montenegrins.

- September 9, 1990: 5 Muslims, physically abused and sentenced to 60 days' imprisonment each without the possibility and right to a defense (among them was one minor - 16 year-old Neremir Suljević)

- October 8, 1990: Sateo Ibroid and his brother Samir were beat up and arrested for not producing their identity card. - February 6, 1991: Smajo Medovic was beat up by the police and lost consciousness several times; was hospitalized for ten days for his injuries.

- February 16, 1991: Professor Salih Karizik was beat up by the police, and could not obtain a doctor's certificate for the injuries he sustained.

- Imprisonment of a minor for having displayed religious and party flags during religious holidays

- In the past several years in the municipality of Bijelo Polje twelve cruel killings of Muslims were committed by

PHYSICAL ABUSE AGAINST THE MUSLIMS COMMITTED BY THE SERBIAN AND MONTENEGRIN POLICE AND UNSOLVED MURDERS OF MUSLIMS

## Discrimination in the Areas of Culture and Education

### Cultural Genocide

The cultural genocide being carried out even today against the Muslims of Sandžak does them greater harm than a physical genocide because this type of genocide wipes out their national conscience and identity.

The spiritual genocide begins already in the first grade of elementary school. In the elementary textbooks only one Muslim name appears and it is placed in a negative context. In the school curriculum, there is no teaching of Muslim history, literature, art, traditions, customs and religion.

In Serbia, Muslim teachers are threatened with dismissal for the use of the Latin alphabet in official documents (documents signed using the Latin alphabet are not recognized).

In Sandžak where there is a population of 500,000 and which has an area of 7096 km<sup>2</sup>, there are no postsecondary institutions and many sectors of secondary education are being abolished (School of Medicine in Novi Pazar abolished).

The principals of elementary and secondary schools on the territory of Sandžak are primarily of Serbian nationality; for example, in Tutin 97% of the population in four schools is Muslim, yet three principals are Serbs.

In Prijepolje (50% Muslim) where there are nine schools, seven principals are Serbs.

### Culture

Muslim cultural and religious objects are mercilessly destroyed in order to erase the traces of their traditions and of their existence in these regions.

For years Muslims were prevented from establishing their cultural institutions.

- In Novi Pazar ten mosques were demolished and in their place residential buildings were built. In the neighborhood of

and after such abominable crimes, no one was ever held responsible.

In World War II, the Muslims were the victims of Chetnik massacres where some 30,000 Muslims from Sandžak perished. Such a massacre was carried out under the orders of the Chetnik leader and war criminal Draža Mihailović (order #370, points 1-5).

What the Chetniks did not accomplish, the communists did after the war. Thousands of innocent Muslims were executed during the first postwar years, and their emigration to Turkey resumed after a gentleman's agreement was reached between the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and Turkey which was signed in 1938 and renewed and implemented in 1954.

Emigration was accelerated under the terror of Aleksandar Ranković. For these reasons, thousands of Muslims live outside of Sandžak (Macedonia, Kosovo, Bosnia and Turkey). Consequently, it is somewhat of a paradox that more Muslims of Sandžak live outside of Sandžak than in Sandžak itself. However, regardless of all these negative facts, the Muslims in Sandžak represent the majority of the population.

Even today, the state of Serbia institutionalizes state terrorism against the Muslims through its discriminating laws and political decisions which apply in practice only to Muslims making them second class citizens:

- the decision of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Serbia (former communists and present socialists) still in force and which prohibits the settlement of Muslims in Sandžak.
- the real estate law which stipulates that Muslims cannot purchase real estate (houses, land, e.g. in Novi Pazar).
- the prohibition of registering the names of Muslim settlers in the registry of citizens, thus in Novi Pazar itself, there are some 12,000 such persons whose constitutional right to vote and to stand for election in the city of residence is not recognized.