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Date (Signature)

/Stamp/ Republic of Serbia
Ministry of the Interior
VII
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I N F O R M A T I O N

on the living conditions and presence of members of MOS /Muslim Armed Forces/
at the holding centres at Mitrovo Polje and Braneško Polje

In the period from 31 July – 25 October 1995, violating the FRY state border, larger and smaller groups of the MOS were entering from the Žepa area, numbering a total of 799 persons. They crossed the state border in the sector of the village of Jagoštica, municipality of Bajina Bašta, and from the direction of Crni Potok, in former BiH territory, crossing the Drina river by boat, makeshift rafts, etc.

The public here and abroad were informed through the media about the arrival of these groups. We note that two armed groups committed gross violations of our country's territory and managed to cross into Sandžak territory through illegal channels.

Two holding centres were formed immediately for the accommodation of runaways from the MOS, one in Braneško Polje, municipality of Čajevina, and another in Mitrovo Polje – on Mt. Goč.

The Braneško Polje holding centre was formed on 1 August 1995 in prefabricated workers' huts of the GP /construction company/ Planum of Belgrade, and the Mitrovo Polje one on 3 August 1995 in the holiday camp of the Republic of Serbia MUP /Ministry of the Interior/. The ICRC /International Committee of the Red Cross/, UNHCR /United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees/ and other international organisations were immediately informed about the forming of the holding centres, and MOS members were granted limited refugee status.

During the first 20 days or so, all expenses of the MOS members' stay were covered by FRY state organs. After that the ICRC and the UNHCR also participated, providing assistance in food, clothing, improvement of accommodation and other conditions in the holding centres.

ICRC and UNHCR representatives were granted regular and unimpeded access to the holding centres. Accordingly, the MOS members were immediately registered by the both these organisations, which were allowed to see for themselves the

accommodation conditions, the general mood, as well as the attitude of MUP members towards them /as written/.

We note that upon arrival at our country, MOS members were physically exhausted, suffering from various infectious (skin, intestinal) diseases and other ailments of the heart, kidneys, lungs, with a number of cancer cases being registered also. All this was determined by thorough physical examinations by teams from the health and medical centres in Užice and Kruševac, and subsequently confirmed by ICRC, UNHCR and other expert medical teams once they arrived.

After thorough medical examination, teams of health workers regularly visited the holding centres, /the teams/ comprising general practitioners, epidemiologists, specialists for skin, intestinal and other diseases, dentists, as well as teams from health institutions from health centres in the country and similar teams from international organisations. Due to this, infectious diseases were regular and the MOS members' state of health significantly improved and was regularly monitored by ICRC and UNHCR delegates. In some more serious cases, the MOS members were given treatment at health clinics, general hospitals and other /institutions/, of which records have been kept by the ICRC and UNHCR.

Some assistance in medicines and medical equipment was provided by ICRC and UNHCR representatives who delivered them to the holding centres or health institutions.

As for the accommodation conditions, MOS members had better conditions at Mitrovo Polje where the conditions provided were at hotel accommodation level. The Braneško Polje holding centre, in view of the type and previous use of the facility, did not offer suitable conditions. Thanks to financing from the UNHCR, the construction of a building with bathrooms and toilets with hot water was organised. At the same time, the kitchen and dining hall were also set up, and meals were organised by assigning people from MOS ranks for the task (taking cooks, cleaners and others from among their ranks). UNHCR delivered a sufficient number of beds, mattresses, blankets, sheets, as well as dining hall equipment, tables and chairs, kitchen equipment – electric stoves, plates, cutlery and other items. At the same time, the problem of heating was resolved with furnaces and fuel being provided by UNHCR members.

Meals for MOS members were organised according to principles laid down in UNHCR regulatory documents. The delivery of food was organised by the UNHCR, while preparation and serving of the food was organised by the MUP. ICRC also provided some help in food deliveries from time to time. MOS members were supplied with tobacco by ICRC. The bulk of the clothing and footwear for the MOS was provided by UNHCR, and a part by ICRC.

The MUP members assigned for duty at these holding centres drew up and executed a daily plan of activities of the MOS members. Recreation was organised in the form of morning exercise activities, having the MOS members participate in the construction of facilities, maintenance and upkeep of the holding centres, and by providing games (chess, cards etc.), all in aid of improving their general mood.

Since MOS members had money of foreign currency origin, currency exchange offices were organised in the holding centres. These currency exchange offices were branches of socially-owned banks, and foreign currency was exchanged at the official rate. Parallel to that, the holding centres were supplied with consumer goods, via canteens – general goods stores.

Besides enabling communication of MOS members to communicate with family and other connections abroad, in our country and the war area in the territories of former BiH, distributing postal packages via the ICRC, services of this kind were also performed by the PTT enterprises in our country. Thus each member of MOS was able through our above mentioned enterprises to send and receive postal (valuable and standard) dispatches, parcels and the like. All interested family connections were allowed access and delivery of packages and gifts to MOS members in the holding centres. The operation of the holding centres was accessible to representatives of foreign governments, members of information institutions from abroad and our country, foreign humanitarian and other international organisations. Representatives of the government of the USA, Australia, Ireland, Switzerland and other countries visited on several occasions. Of the better-known information agencies, the holding centres were visited by journalists from Reuters, AP, WTN, ITN, LA /as written/, The Times, Yomiuri Shimbun, ORF, German television, as well as British, Dutch, Hungarian and Belgrade television.

All the above-mentioned representatives and journalists were allowed to inspect living conditions in these holding centres, direct contact, talks, interviews, filming, photographing and the like.

In the period from 7 December 1995 to today, a number of MOS members were granted entry to third countries, so that a total of 495 persons have left so far.

Of that number, 214 went to the United States, 103 to Australia, 11 to Sweden, 78 to France, 36 to Ireland, 10 to Holland, 12 to Switzerland and 31 to Finland.

We note that 3 MOS members died in our territory, one on the way from the border to the Braneško Polje holding centre, the second in the Braneško Polje holding centre and the third in the Mitrovo Polje holding centre.

We note that on 9 February 1996 all MOS members from the Mitrovo Polje were transferred to the Braneško Polje holding centre, and their total number is 301.

In Užice
8 March 1996

FROM OZS /?Department for Foreigners/
SUP /Secretariat of the Interior/ UŽICE