

16/11/98

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NR. 661

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04/11/98 19:03

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NO. 369 P001/012

78

17/11/98



UNHCR

FORMER YUGOSLAVIA LIAISON UNIT (FYLU)

KROATIEN (77)

Rapporten er udsendt under
Forb. Jugoslaven - nr. 31 - bilag nr.

(227)

MONTHLY REPORT ON BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, CROATIA AND THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA

SEPTEMBER 1998

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA AND KOSOVO SITUATION AREA

Population Displacement

New large scale population displacement took place during the month of September in and from Kosovo. Government punitive actions were mainly at the origin of these population movements, while fighting between Serbian security forces and KLA continued in several pockets of resistance. On 1 September, the village of Rusinovce, Lipjan municipality, was shelled by Serbian security forces with a death toll of four civilians and 16 seriously injured. The beginning of September saw fighting developing in the area south of Prizren, with several villages targeted. Some 20,000 people fled Government violence to the vineyards surrounding Prizren and into the city itself. A total of 35 casualties was reported. On 6 September, UNHCR was informed that police had encircled 15,000 people at Ponorac village in the Klinja-Malisevo-Orahovac triangle. Some 2,000 people were captured, men separated from their families and taken away. Later on, Government sources confirmed that 450 individuals had been detained after a sweep of the hills in Ponorac and that 50 people had been charged for terrorist activities. On 8 September, an estimated 25,000 people became displaced due to shelling of their villages south of Pec, according to UNHCR teams who witnessed the outflow - while on 9 September in the area east of Glodjane (south-east of Pec) shelling of villages caused 20,000 IDPs to move. On 12 September, in Istinic, Government troops dispersed 15,000 IDPs camped in the open during the previous days. Severe clashes between Serbian police and members of the Kosovo Liberation Army in the central Drenica region and Mount Cicavica area produced displacement of tens of thousands of new IDPs. A Government offensive in Mitrovica-Podujevo areas, which lasted from 14 to 18 September, affected 17 villages and displaced some 20,000 people. On 22 September, the military operations extended to villages in Obilic and Vucitrn areas, around the Cicavica mountain, with a reported population of 6,000. Following international pressure to end the campaign of military aggression against civilians and in defiance of Security Council Resolution 1199, Serbian security forces resumed, on 24 September, shelling of villages and punitive raids in the area along the Komorane-Kijevo road and in Suva Reka municipality. This lasted until 29 September, while the operation in the Cicavica mountain area intensified. On 28 September, UNHCR received reports of 15,000 new displaced persons on the move from their villages in Suva Reka municipality.