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HELSINŠKI MONITOR SLOVENIJE

INTERNATIONAL
HELSINKI
FEDERATION FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS

- združenje za človekove pravice

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HELSINKI MONITOR OF SLOVENIA - Association for Human Rights

HIMS

18.3.1999

THE DANISH HELSINKI COMMITTEE, Mr. Ole Richter,

Re.: Situation of Serb-Slovenian families in Slovenia

Dear Sir,

Please excuse us for the delay in answering your urgent letter. The delay was caused by the pressure of work for very many similar cases as the one of refugees from Slovenia as you have described. For too long the international community has been turning a deaf ear to the appeals of our committee. (See attached Statement No.1 of 1998)

In answer to your specific questions:

Ad 1. Yes.

Ad 2. We have very many similar examples, approximately 4000.

Ad 3. The mentioned maltreatment is very likely and it is due to the administrative ethnic cleansing systematically executed by the authorities via ministries and the press (which has been instigating chauvinism since 1989 for this purpose or as a purpose of secession of Slovenia).

Ad 4. The family will not be able to recover and uphold a normal Slovenian existence if sent back. The problem is not mainly a problem of chauvinism of individuals but of the state authorities.

Ad 5. There are no statistics on maltreatment of non-Slovenians in Slovenia, because the problem is being carefully hidden by the authorities - they are not interested for any such revealing statistics. As for our committee, we are ready and willing to publish our findings and do more research work, but we need partners and financial support - which we were unable to obtain because the authorities have been very efficient in presenting a positive picture of Dorian Gray to the world. Great improvement of the present situation in Slovenia could be made if your committee and other Helsinki committees would be willing to establish partnership and pool funds together with our committee.

Ad 6. As you have written, the family is now suffering psychological and physical consequences of the treatment in Slovenia and is in no condition to suffer and to endure more, neither is it in condition to fight. I presume, that the husband has not been granted Slovenian citizenship either. Our committee has succeeded by the help of EU that Slovenian authorities will now have to reregister 130,000 non-Slovenians who have illegally been erased from registers of permanent residents and citizens of Slovenia before the secession (see Statement No.1) - but we are witnessing every day

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that the authorities are trying to prolong the agony of people by simply not carrying out any promises and obligations towards its non-Slovene citizens.

If there is anything we can do for the family from here and of course confidentially, please, let us know. In any case, please inform us of further decision and also - are you ready to become our partner in a project?

Sincerely yours,


PRESIDENT
Nava Miklavc Preben

For information:
- IHF

P.S.: We would also need some support of the IHF. They still prefer the version of life presented by the Slovenian authorities, specifically Mr. Vajgl, the ambassador in Vienna. Some time ago Aaron Rhodes confronted me in writing with the opinion of Mr. Vajgl on the situation in Slovenia - which we found a most unusual procedure within the federation, exhibiting some understandable lack of confidence. Until very recently we were unequipped (and actually still are) for informing Helsinki committees with our statements, reports and findings, therefore we asked IHF to circulate our statements for us.

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January 27, 1999

Re: simikic.slo

Re: situation of Serb-Slovenian families in Slovenia

Dear Madam,

Referring to our pleasant telephone-conversation of to day we hereby foreward you the mentioned case, on which we would like your comments:

Short resume:

A married couple and their 2 children came to Denmark 9 months ago and applied for asylum. They had been living for 17 years in Celje, Slovenia. The husband was born in Bosnia-Hercegovina, Republika Srpska and of Serb ethnical origin. The wife was born in Slovenia and is ethnic Slovenian. The children were born in Celje. They were both working for many years in a factory in Celje.

In 1991 when the war started the man was drafted by both the JNA and the new army of Slovenia. He didn't want to serve in any of them and went with his family to his brother in Bosnia. The JNA found him there and he went on via Hungary Back to Celje.

Since that he, his wife and his children have been seriously chikaned, harassed and violated by colleagues at the factory, by neighbours and by the childrens schoolmates. The man says he has several times been beaten by his colleagues, and the wife has been called "a whore" and the children been beaten and harassed, all ending up with a sacking of the man from the job he has been doing for 17 years. The Serb man has been forced to renounce his orthodox belief for a catholic one. The apartment has been wrecked, and man has been beaten by the police when complaining of the harassment. In Spring 98 the wife was raped in the apartment by 3 police officers.

Then they left Slovenia, came to Denmark and applied for asylum here. The Danish Refugee Board and the Directorate of Immigration being in charge of applications for asylum have both turned down the application, finding the harassment and chikane not serious enough.

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Weismann, Vladimir

The husband has tried to commit suicide, but was saved. Both the husband and wife are on nerve medication after doctors prescription, and in a very bad mental state, which has also influenced their physical state.

We would very much like to have your opinions on:

- 1) Is it according to the factual situation, that non-Slovenians are treated badly by the local Slovenians, by the Slovenian authorities and by Slovenian police?
- 2) If so, in which way does that show? Do you have any examples? Do you have examples similar to the above mentioned?
- 3) To your experience is a maltreatment as above mentioned likely to be true? And is this harassment due to ethical chauvinism?
- 4) Will the family be able to uphold a normal Slovenian existence in the future, be able to get jobs and housing, or will they be harassed severely, if send back?
- 5) Are there any statistics on maltreatment of non-Slovenians, or any other likely material?
- 6) What is your recommendation? Should the family return to Slovenia or not?

Since the family is to leave the country on January 29, we would ask you for an early answer, thank you.

Yours Sincerely


Ole Richter