

The description of the situation of refugees and displaced persons notes, *inter alia*: it is conservatively estimated that at least 500,000 refugees from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina are already in the FRY; most have found shelter in larger towns with relatives or friends; others are sheltered in collective centres throughout the country, including in Kosovo; many have not been registered with authorities or have registered only those individual family members — usually children or the elderly — whom they deem to be in the most extreme need; many have not applied to domestic or international humanitarian organizations for assistance; these organizations have admitted that their stores are exhausted and their donors fatigued; and an estimated additional 200,000 persons have been internally displaced by the crisis in Kosovo. The SR warned that the task of supporting over 700,000 persons in need, a significant portion of whom cannot return to their homes destroyed in fighting, cannot be sustained by the already overtaxed aid structure in the FRY, and that this is a far-reaching regional catastrophe in the making.

The challenges facing the FRY are noted as including to: build a system based on rule of law instead of on a ruling party; foster an independent judiciary; implement in daily practice international standards and constitutional protections; create functional units of self-government and local administration; promote democracy and pluralism; support freedom of broadcast and print media; transform economic and social systems so as concurrently to create opportunity and protect the vulnerable; and heal the wounds of war.

The SR noted that the situation in Sandzak was affected by the crisis in Kosovo, including through: social and economic consequences for the local communities which received large numbers of displaced persons; a rise in ethnic tensions and concerns about a revival of anti-Islamic sentiments both locally and in the national Serbian media; and imposition of mandatory rule in Novi Pazar in July 1997, further contributing to an atmosphere of mistrust and fear and causing a growing number of Sandzak Muslims to leave the region for Bosnia and Herzegovina and western Europe. The SR underscored the need for the Serbian and Yugoslav authorities to investigate the atrocities that took place in the region during the war years 1992–1994 and also stated that the abductions of mainly Muslim civilians in Strpci, Mioce, Bukovica, Sjeverin and other places in 1992 and 1993 have not been properly investigated and the families of the victims have received no compensation for the suffering and losses they endured.

With regard to Montenegro, the SR noted the impact of the crisis in Kosovo, particularly in terms of an influx of internally displaced persons and associated economic and social consequences. In September, the Montenegrin government decided that it was no longer in a position to admit internally displaced persons from Kosovo because its resources had been exhausted and a continued influx could pose a threat to internal security. The SR urged the authorities to devise a solution to meet the educational needs of internally displaced school-age children who, in

some communities, outnumbered the resident children and, having attended “parallel” schools in Kosovo, could not be integrated into the state educational system. The SR also noted that court proceedings on behalf of the Roma community in Danilovgrad — whose homes were destroyed in riots in April 1995 — had not resumed, despite pledges from the authorities that the proceedings would recommence during the summer of 1998.

Report of the Secretary-General

The report of the Secretary-General (A/53/563, 30 October 1998) on the human rights situation in Kosovo notes that from April 1998 the scope and intensity of the conflict in Kosovo grew dramatically while the human rights situation deteriorated. Violations noted included: approximately 700 deaths directly attributable to hostilities; the internal displacement of more than 240,000 people; burning and looting of houses and villages by government forces in areas under their control; use of torture by the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) against and the execution of abducted persons; massacres and reports and discoveries of mass graves in a number of areas of Kosovo, with some bodies showing signs of mutilation and/or the persons having been shot in the head at close range; arbitrary arrests and long periods of pre-trial detention in the context of police actions in the field; arbitrary arrests and harassment of Kosovo Albanian lawyers, political activists and humanitarian workers; deaths in custody following torture and/or ill treatment; and concerns related to the independence of the courts and defendants’ access to legal counsel in politically sensitive trials which began in October 1998.

The report notes that the agreement of 13 October 1998 provides for up to 2,000 OSCE monitors in Kosovo who will comprise the Kosovo Verification Mission. The need for an expanded international human rights presence, linked to the establishment of an OHCHR office in Kosovo, was seen as urgent given that the human rights situation in the region continues to be a serious cause for concern.

Resolutions of the General Assembly

Situation of human rights in the FRY

The 1998 session of the General Assembly adopted by recorded vote a consolidated resolution related to the territory of the former Yugoslavia (A/C.3/53/L.60). The resolution was adopted with 132 in favour, none opposed, 20 abstentions.

In the section on general considerations and concerns, the GA, *inter alia*: fully supported the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the annexes thereto (collectively the “Peace Agreement”); expressed disappointment at the continuing evidence of violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms taking place; called for the full and consistent implementation of the Peace Agreement and the Basic Agreement by all parties to them; stressed the crucial role of human rights in the successful implementation of the