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# REPEATED INCIDENTS IN GORAŽDEVAC / GORAZHDEC: PROMPT ACTION REQUIRED

In the night of 7 December, a series of incidents took place in the predominantly Serb-inhabited village of Goraždevac/Gorazhdec in the Municipality of Pejë/Peć. There was gunfire in the central part of the village; a car was shot at, bullets hit the house of a family living there. A monument in remembrance of the victims of war and the 2003 incident involving the murder of several children in the village was also set on fire and partially destroyed with a blunt object.

Kosovo Police confirmed that it had begun an intensive investigation. The Police clarified that they have immediately contacted village representatives and that they have dispatched additional police forces to the area to ensure that the village and its citizens remain safe and secure. They also added that there had been a joint meeting with municipal authorities, representatives of the Ministry for Communities and Return and village representative and municipal assembly member Miloš Dimitrijević on 4 December. The security situation was considered to have been calm and stable at the time.[1]

Head of the Office for Kosovo in the Serbian Government, Marko Đurić, condemned the attacks, labeling them "terrorist attacks by Albanian extremists on Serbs and their property", and called upon citizen of Goraždevac/Gorazhdec to "keep their calm and not answer on provocations by Albanian extremists". He also noted that he's "confident that the majority of Albanians does not want to escalate the situation in their community", and that Kosovo's institutions have the opportunity to show their maturity by apprehending those responsible.[2]

Đurić also visited Goraždevac/Gorazhdec, in the presence of Kosovo Ministers Ljubomir Marić and Dalibor Jevtić, when he used a less polarizing discourse and called on politicians responsible for security to care about Serbian children as they cared about Albanian children. He added that the fact that there were only three Serbian policemen in the village indicated that "something was not right". Jevtić and Marić added that they had pointed at the lack of Serbian policemen in Goraždevac/Gorazhdec and suggested increased security measures (including camera supervision) at several occasions, but that none of these measures had been implemented.[3]

[1] http://www.telegrafi.com/lajme/incident-i-armatosur-ne-gorazhdec-te-pejes-konfirmohet-edhe-nga-policia-80-11433.html and http://kossev.info/strana/arhiva/vatra_u_gorazdevcu_zapaljen_spomenik_zrtvama_nato_a/7061

[2] http://kossev.info/strana/arhiva/vatra_u_gorazdevcu_zapaljen_spomenik_zrtvama_nato_a/7061

[3] http://kossev.info/strana/arhiva/gorazdevac_/7070.

A positive development compared to previous incidents involving the Serb community in Kosovo is that Kosovo Albanian political representatives officially reacted. President Jahjaga quickly condemned the incidents, and noted that "incidents of this nature will not be allowed to aggravate inter-ethnic relations".[4] The Kosovo Government decried the incident and expressed its commitment to improve the living conditions of all Kosovo citizens.[5] Mayor of Pejë/Peć Gazmend Muhaxheri visited the village and stated that those responsible should be brought before court.[6] The opposition party AAK, politically significant in the Municipality of Pejë/Peć in the past, urged authorities to investigate the incidents and bring the perpetrators to justice so that such incidents "cannot undermine our efforts to integrate Serbs and have them be free and equal citizens of Kosovo".[7]

The incidents were also condemned by the OSCE mission in Kosovo, which termed them "a persistent disturbance" which "contribute to a general fear of insecurity".[8] Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy Johannes Hahn claimed that there can be no place for violence in any democratic country with European perspectives.[9]

ECMI Kosovo has written extensively about incidents involving minority communities in Kosovo, including a similar incident that occurred in Goraždevac/Gorazhdec on 8 and 9 July 2015.[10] As we have done in the past, we call upon authorities to show determination and immediacy in concluding the investigation and apprehending those responsible.

The fact that these incidents have been occurring in Goraždevac/Gorazhdec and the wider region repeatedly implies that they can no longer be discarded as merely isolated incidents. This is a trend of increased intensity that has a negative influence on the security of the Serb community, which is a crucial prerequisite for their integration process in Kosovo. This pattern should be dealt with in the short term (by increasing security measures and acting against those responsible), but also in a more structural way by increasing the trust and reducing the ethnic distance between Albanian and Serbian communities in Kosovo, including at a political level.

*Through the **Kosovo Communities Issues Monitor**, ECMI Kosovo monitors, analyses, and provides recommendations on developments and concerns related to the position of minority communities in Kosovo, within the framework of international and domestic minority rights legislation. The analyses presented in the Monitor rely on close monitoring of media and interviews with relative stakeholders. While ECMI Kosovo strives at all times to provide accurate and nuanced information and to present the views and perceptions of all sides, the objective of the Monitor is not to provide journalist or factual coverage, but to offer an additional analytical element to the debate, reflecting ECMI Kosovo's longstanding experience with communities issues in Kosovo and the domestic and international legal framework in place.*



[4] http://fax.al/read/news/2028536/10671770/jahjaga-nuk-lejojme-qe-incidentet-e-tilla-te-acarojne-raportet-nderetnike-ne-kosove
[5] http://www.rtklive.com/rtk2/?id=2&r=4161.
[6] http://www.rtklive.com/rtk2/?id=2&r=4126
[7] http://fax.al/read/news/2028536/10670747/aak-kerkon-zbardhjen-e-incidentit-ne-gorazhdec
[8] http://www.gazetaexpress.com/lajme/osbe-denon-incidentet-ne-gorazhdec-150196/
[9] http://www.rtklive.com/rtk2/?id=2&r=4150
[10] http://ecmikosova.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/English.pdf

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ECMI Kosovo is the principal non-governmental organisation engaged with minority issues in Kosovo, with the overarching aim to develop inclusive, representative, community-sensitive institutions that support a stable multi-ethnic Kosovo. ECMI Kosovo contributes to the developing, strengthening and implementation of relevant legislation, supports the institutionalisation of communities-related governmental bodies, and enhances the capacity of civil society actors and the government to engage with one another in a constructive and sustainable way.

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