

**PANEL I:**

**SOUTH EAST EUROPE – CHIEF EXPORTER  
OF ORGANISED CRIME IN EUROPE – A  
CLICHÉ? TYPES AND FORMS OF CRIME AND  
CRIMINALITY.**



## **Sebouh Baghdoyan**

# **DRUG TRAFFICKING IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE**

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is not a law enforcement agency. We do not manage informants, undertake surveillance or analyze criminal intelligence but we do coordinate and deliver technical assistance to countries to develop and strengthen these skills. This is our role in the war against drugs. To help us in South Eastern Europe we employ law enforcement officers in the field.

Today, I will present to you an overview of drug trafficking in South Eastern Europe – the threat – the prioritization – the response.

What do we at the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime perceive as the principal threats in South Eastern Europe?

1. Heroin trafficking
2. Cocaine trafficking
3. Cannabis cultivation
4. Opium poppy diversion
5. Synthetic drug production
6. Precursor chemicals
7. Increased drug abuse
8. Organised Crime
9. Corruption

South Eastern Europe is a complex region. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime considers the following countries to fall within its project activities in this area: Albania – Bosnia and Herzegovina –

Bulgaria – Croatia – the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia – Romania and Serbia and Montenegro. In the past twelve years it is a region that has seen conflict and political instability. It has seen poverty, weak democratic institutions, porous borders and continues, in many countries, to see an abundance of corruption in state institutions, police, customs and the judiciary. The region has provided fertile soil for organised criminal activity of all descriptions and, importantly, drug trafficking, which brings us together here today.

South Eastern Europe has it all. There is almost no type of illicit drug that is not either trafficked, produced or consumed in the region I have described.

1. Heroin
2. Cocaine
3. Cannabis
4. Opium
5. Synthetic drugs
6. Precursor chemicals

All lead to increased local drug consumption, despite the poor buying power of the local market.

Of course, with drugs comes organised crime, local criminal groups trying to organize independent drug trafficking channels, and distribution networks leading to brutal territorial clashes, murders, gun battles and car bombings. All of this is commonplace in certain cities of South Eastern Europe.

Every organised criminal group will try to corrupt and bribe to facilitate the furtherance of its illegal activities. With greater financial resources than the true law enforcers who seek to undermine them, they will try to pay their way through any obstacles. In a region still emerging from transition under regimes where oppression was common place, “facilitation” is a way of life, where acceptance of facilitation as a means

to survive a low income turns to greed, and corruption is a debate that could cover many hours with no clear answer with solutions, in the short term even more difficult to implement.

So let us move on to look more closely at the principal drugs trafficked here in the Balkans.

Taking a look at heroin, South Eastern Europe is a bridge between the Middle Eastern and Central Asian drug producers and the lucrative Western European drug consumer market. The heroin produced in Afghanistan, generally, travels through Iran to Turkey, where it is refined, and then onwards into Bulgaria. Bulgaria is pivotal in the South Eastern European drug trafficking scene acting as a crossroads for a variety of trafficking routes.

**Let us take a look at a few of these variations:**

*The Classical Route*

Prior to 1991, licit traffic and, under its camouflage, the bulk of heroin, travelled along the Sofia–Belgrade-Zagreb-Ljubljana route. The wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina and later the conflict in Kosovo, as well as the bombing in Serbia, led to a breakdown of this route and the emergence of a number of further variations.

*The Northern Route*

This route emerged leading from Bulgaria either utilizing the Ruse-Giurgiu bridge or by ferry across the Danube into Romania. Thereafter, either through the Czech Republic and Slovakia and from there to the EU countries, or through Ukraine and Poland and thereafter into the EU.

*The Southern Route*

From Bulgaria through the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia into either Kosovo or Albania.

### *The Black Sea*

Sea containers, RORO, train carriages, and bulk deep-sea cargo ships, all circulate and arrive at Black Sea ports, making this an ideal alternative to the traditional TIR routings.

### *The Ferry*

There is increasing evidence that the ferry line between Istanbul and Trieste is used for the direct transfer of large quantities of heroin directly into the EU. The increased detection of heroin on the Bulgarian side of the Turkish/Bulgarian border has very quickly pushed the traffickers to considering a variety of new routings.

### *Central Asia*

The route through Central Asia and Russia, with Central Asian countries Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, is beginning to play a significant part in the trafficking of heroin along this so called 'Silk Route'.

South Eastern Europe now becomes increasingly important as a transit country for South American cocaine.

Cocaine is regularly entering the Balkan region at the airports concealed with passengers and increasingly cargo.

The Black Sea Ports of Constanta, Varna and Burgas all potentially receive illicit drugs originating from South America concealed in sea containers and aboard deep-sea banana vessels. The illicit cargo will then generally be off-loaded, where it will continue its way by lorry across the myriad of leaky border crossings that comprise what has now become known not as the Balkan Route but rather the Balkan Corridor.

The situation is no different at the Adriatic ports where it is even easier to take illicit cargo by fast boats either up the Coast, or land it directly into Italy.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has realized that good governance and clear priorities enhance credibility and attract funding.

After almost half a year of analysis and consultation, the Office is now pleased to have emerged with a new name, a new vigor and enthusiasm and a professional prioritisation. I shall briefly outline some of the key changes that I believe take our Office forward, as a quality provider of technical assistance in support of the fight against drug trafficking and organised crime.

The Office of Drug Control and Crime Prevention of the United Nations was originally set up in 1997, combining the International Centre for Crime Prevention (CICP) and the International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP). It was established by the Secretary-General to enable the Organization to focus and enhance its capacity to address interrelated issues of drug control, crime prevention and international terrorism in all its forms.

Yet, with globalization came new agendas and new challenges in these three fields, triggering the need to apply fresh policies and move with the changing environment that we seek to interdict.

In the new name and the reorganization that shall occur in the coming months you will see our own institutional divide between Drugs and Crime removed forever.

Our mandate is derived from Conventions and General Assembly Resolutions, with which many of you are surely familiar, but they are now expanded with the coming into force of the Convention against Transnational Organised Crime.

This is our armoury and these are our key themes:

1. An integrated approach
2. Sustainable development
3. Prevention and enforcement
4. Knowledge and vision
5. Best practices
6. The power of partnership

### **An integrated approach**

Drugs and crime, as well as terrorism, are most certainly intrinsically interrelated. The UNODC has now recognized that and in the period ahead it will be essential to take a more integrated approach and look into drugs issues in all their complexity.

#### *Sustainable development*

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime cannot work alone. It can enhance the civil society dimensions of globalization only if its programmes can trigger and become part of common and coordinated efforts to promote sustainable development.

#### *Prevention and enforcement*

Law enforcement alone will not succeed without parallel measures to prevent drug abuse and the treatment and rehabilitating of addicts. It is a fact that money spent on prevention and treatment will save several times that amount otherwise needed for law enforcement and interdiction.

#### *Knowledge and vision*

With more precise knowledge on the drugs phenomenon, more effective strategic decisions can be made, trends identified and timely projects



considered to permanently plug gaps as they appear. More technical assistance is needed to address these data deficiencies, which in turn undermine the effectiveness of any project whether multi- or bi-lateral.

### *Best practices*

The UNODC will aim to identify best practices, adapting them to the country concerned and applying them to institution building. Best practice is easy – adapting this to local conditions and thereafter building sustainable capacity is much harder. Here, our network of Field Offices is very much our strength.

### *The power of Partnership*

The Office desires and needs to work with others on the basis of its comparative advantage. This will become more difficult as the sharing of purpose and of instruments expands. We will promote partnerships at the earliest stages of our project development cycle – partnerships with assisted countries, partnerships with development institutions, partnerships with private sector stakeholders and, importantly, partnerships with donor institutions and Governments.

The response to the threat I have described, in line with the prioritisation that I have detailed, is very much the strength of our field-based implementation.

As mentioned in my opening words, UNODC is not an operational unit, as many of you here would understand it. UNODC is a technical assistance agency – some would believe that it just provides money to help agencies fight drugs and crime. But this is not true. UNODC in South Eastern Europe is an agency, which aims to make a difference. It is a combination of technical assistance with operational implementation.

In what follows, I am going to give you a brief overview of our current structure, our recent project successes and our plans for the future to meet the growing threat that proliferation of drug trafficking and organised crime poses to all of our countries.

Under the supervision of the UNODC HQ, day-to-day running of the Programme in South Eastern Europe is managed by a field-based Programme Coordinator, Mr. Mark Stanley, assisted by national support staff within the Field Operations Unit for South Eastern Europe, which is currently situated in Sofia. Additionally, locally engaged National Project Officers have been selected and are resident in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. These National Project Officers are also either current or ex-law enforcement officers. Together, they form a cohesive and formidable team with considerable experience within the region. We implement the Programme activities and ensure adherence to the aims and objectives of the United Nations and more specifically the Office on Drugs and Crime.

Possibilities for the future include the expansion of the network to include Project Offices in Tirana, where a border control/law enforcement project is under preparation, and Belgrade, where a priority project portfolio is also close to final authorisation.

Like all UNODC projects, they require direct donor funding and fall outside of the general UN contribution. This process can be a long one, as many donors, despite their confidence in UNODC operations, cannot offer the size of funding in one allocation. For this reason, many of our projects are divided in different financial tracks, which allow the activation of sub elements within the overall project as free-standing units. There are some potential funding sources, who prefer, for political reasons, to engage bilaterally with the beneficiary countries or through mechanisms such as twinning. Whilst some such mechanisms have succeeded, I would argue that without a dedicated and professional field operation many have shown intermittent results. Herein lies the comparative advantage of UNODC project execution in this region and one that I hope will be utilised to the full in the coming period.

In South East Europe, over 1200 staff received training by the UNODC projects in the past four years. Here is an example of front line training.

1. Land Borders
2. Sea Ports
3. International Airports
4. Intelligence Analysts
5. Informants
6. Surveillance
7. Coordination
8. Professional Networking

Does front line training work? – Yes. For example, in March 2000 at Bucharest Airport, 13.9 kilos cocaine concealed in baggage were detected through profiling by a recently trained team.

Over 200 officers have participated in Workshops and overseas study tours to consolidate their learning experiences.

Do Workshops and Study Tours work? – Yes. The September 1999 Study Tour at UK Airports permitted the seizure of 0.5 kilos of cocaine and 4.5 kilos of cannabis from passengers and 40 kilos of cannabis hidden in cargo.

Following is some of the equipment that the UNODC has provided in recent years to beneficiary agencies:

1. Comprehensive rummage tools
2. Contraband detection equipment
3. Drugs scenting dogs and kennel vehicles
4. Computer hardware for intelligence units
5. Drug test kits
6. Surveillance aids

Contraband detection equipment is used to detect relative density and thereby give an indication of potential concealment of contraband.

Does it work ? – Yes. It was beyond original expectations – UNODC Projects are flexible instruments of assistance – the figures speak for themselves – 10 kilos of heroin, concealed in a fuel tank, were detected with donated contraband detectors without previous intelligence at the Vidin Land Border. In all, 700 kilos were detected with these devices. Other smuggled substances and articles were also detected:

1. Tons of cannabis
2. Millions of cigarettes
3. Counterfeit goods
4. Gold

All that was the past – what about the future?

The UNODC Field Operations Unit for South Eastern Europe has just finalised a Strategic Programme Framework for 2003-2007. That document lays out the challenges for UNODC in the region and sets out a framework of projects aimed at plugging identified gaps where little or no technical assistance has to date been received. The framework dovetails with existing initiatives and moves forward other regional objectives – Accession – Stabilisation and Association Process, to name but two of the more significant. These are improved by enhanced capabilities and services to face new challenges. Together, they will energize the fight against crime and drug trafficking in the region. Here are some key initiatives as a conclusion:

1. Enhanced drug laboratory capacities in SEE
2. Basic surveillance training in BiH
3. Advanced surveillance and technical equipment in Bulgaria
4. Automated Donor Assistance Mechanism (ADAM)
5. Strengthening of capacities for the collection and analysis of criminal intelligence in SEE
6. Criminal Intelligence System for National and International Cooperation CISNIC
7. Fresh organisation with priorities written for the future not based in the past
8. Professional project design and field based implementation
9. Coordination with other agencies and common sense flexibility to adapt and dovetail
10. Offer effectiveness to beneficiaries and value for money to donors.

Sebouh Baghdoyan  
United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC)  
Vienna



**Josef Nothdurfter**

## **SMUGGLING AND WEAPONS TRAFFICKING IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE: THE EUPM EXPERIENCE**

As the only foreign police force in South East Europe, the European Union Police Mission has a complex task. This essay aims at acquainting the reader with the purpose, mission and successes of the EUPM.

What is our goal? We aim to establish a sustainable policing arrangement under *their* ownership in accordance with the best European and international standards. This was issued by the Council on Joint Action in Brussels. How long does our mandate last? We are supposed to leave Bosnia by the end of 2005. We are 500 international police officers from the EU member States. How will we achieve our goal? We do not arrest criminals on our own. We are not armed. We just monitor, mentor and we advise and inspect the local ministry of interior and local high ranking police officers. By this we hope that they will establish a sustainable police force.

We have no executive mandate, contrary to the international police in Kosovo. They have executive power, but we don't as I mentioned. But our priorities are of course to protect returning refugees and displaced persons. They should feel secure if they want to return in Bosnia – we are still expecting a lot of returnees – and if they don't feel secure, they will be reluctant to return. Then, we try to reach the goal that minority representation in local police force will be reached. Regarding the present percentage of the respective populations, the local police officers should be representative. In every police force, there should be Serbs, Croats and Muslims. And of course very popular topics at the moment is the fight against organised crime, because Bosnia is one of the main targets of human trafficking, and the restructuration of criminal investigation departments in accordance with uniform intelligence-led models. The criminal investigation department in Bosnia and in SEE are

very poorly organised. And of course, we put a very big effort in the de-politicization of the local police. There is no need to have political influence in the local police, because then the population will have no confidence in them.

Some operational and security aspects; the economic situation was mentioned, as was the assassination of Prime Minister Djindjic in Serbia<sup>2</sup>, and we have a survey regarding the confidence of the local population in their police. The unemployment in Bosnia is 40%, in Kosovo 60% this influences the security feeling and smuggling and organised crime in the Balkans. Salaries and pensions are not regularly paid, then of course, there is low foreign investment, because if they don't feel secure, then why should they invest in the region? In Bosnia for instance, there is now a law on bankruptcy and liquidation. This will again raise the unemployment rate.

An enquiry and a survey done by SFOR shows you the confidence of the population in the local police. 34% of the local population have *some* confidence in the authorities and the police force, but 36% don't or have little confidence in the local police, and there, we have to build on this to look to a decrease of corruption and ensure that no politician will be involved in police activities.

Now a few words about weapons smuggling in SEE. In the Former Yugoslavia, the production of arms and military equipment was an important economic factor. Up to 60% of the State budget went into arms production. The majority of the mines laid in the Iraq-Iran conflict from 1980-1989 came from an ammunition factory in Bosnia. These arms exports culminated in the support of Iraqi air force by RS military officials. RS means Republika Srpska, which is a part of Bosnia. As you are aware, Bosnia is divided in two parts, the Republika Srpska and the Federation. And in the Republika Srpska there was this ORAU company which exported parts for aircraft in Iraq, and so violated the UNSC Resolution and the Dayton Agreement. And because of this so-called ORAU affair, the Serb member of the Bosnian presidency, Mr. Saravic

---

<sup>2</sup> Some perpetrators of the assassination of the Prime Minister of Serbia are supposed to be in hiding in Bosnia.



had to resign. This detection was initiated by the US Embassy and SFOR<sup>3</sup>. And latest statements in the news also allege exports of arms to Liberia by a Belgrade company which also would have violated the UNSC sanctions against Liberia. But these activities cannot be taken to be arms smuggling in the classical sense of course. But there are also such classical cases, although the statistics in this connection is very poor. A crucial role in the smuggling of arms to Bosnia was played by the Third World Relief Agency located in Vienna. In 1992, this agency opened an office in Sarajevo and became the main intermediary and facilitator in the smuggling of weapons for the Bosnian Muslim Army. But what are the reasons why smuggling is relatively easy?

First of all, consider Bosnia; this country is divided in two entities each having their own armed forces. But at this moment I need to state that the unification of the army is in progress. And they have rather weak central authorities. These are some of the reasons supporting smuggling activities. Customs remain under the control of the entities and this didn't change much even with the establishment of the State Border Service. The State Border Service is the Police Force which is in charge of checking and controlling the border. But the State Border Service's competence is limited to the border crossing of persons, while the flow of goods remain with the custom authorities under entity control. The borders are very porous and cooperation with the respective counterparts, with the local police, or with the border police of the neighbouring countries is very very poor.

There is one case I would like to emphasize. Recently, one year ago, big smuggling was detected from Gorazde<sup>4</sup> to Kosovo, smuggling intended to support the Kosovo Liberation Army. Police have arrested 7 people in connection with a weapons smuggling gang which had been running arms from Bosnia to Kosovo. Among those arrested were a formal army general and two policemen. And here we see that corruption and the involvement of local authorities is still present. These weapons came from army and police depots. 300 automatic rifles and 1000 anti-tank rockets and 500 tank grenades, a lot of ammunition were hidden in a

---

<sup>3</sup> SFOR is the NATO Stabilisation Force in Bosnia and there are 12000 soldiers within it.

<sup>4</sup> Gorazde is a village in Bosnia.

truck under wooden boards when they were seized by KFOR and UNMIK Police in Pecs. Some sources state that this ring has smuggled arms to equip up to 50 000 Kosovo Albanians. But there is no evidence and this is just an estimation.

How can we reduce the huge number of weapons in the Balkans? Because there are lots of relics from the war and it is still a tradition to fire weapons in the sky, for weddings or something like this. This is called celebration fire. There is Operation Harvest under way, and SFOR is urging the local population to deliver or to hand over ammunitions and weapons to them for destruction. The results in 2002? 8000 small arms, 40 000 hand grenades, 4000 mines and a lot of ammunition were destroyed. And this year this trend continues. This is a very big success on the way to destroying the weapons that remain from the war.

Finally, we can answer the question how can we improve the situation? There must be better coordination between border guards of the countries. There must be better equipment and finally there must be better intelligence gathering in order to end the fight against organised smuggling.

Josef Nothdurfter  
EUPM to Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Operations Department  
Sarajevo

**PANEL II:**

**ARE CRIME AND CORRUPTION  
JEOPARDIZING POLITICAL REFORM AND  
DEMOCRATISATION IN SOUTH EAST  
EUROPE? – SELECTED COUNTRY STUDIES.**



**Ivan Djordjevi\_**

## **THE CURRENT SECURITY SITUATION IN SERBIA AND THE AFTERMATH OF THE ASSASSINATION OF THE PRIME MINISTER**

As you are well aware, the situation in Serbia in recent months was marred by the tragic murder of the Prime Minister, Zoran Djindjic.

I will be direct - the shot at Prime Minister Dr Zoran Djindjic was at the same time aimed at the young democracy, at our state Serbia.

This assassination was organised and perpetrated by a criminal organization – the so-called “Zemun band”, which represents the residue of the criminal heritage from the Milosevic period and which worked in the past for the leadership of the former State Security Service and former commander of the Special Operations Unit of that Service.

The goal of their conspiracy, that they called “Stop to The Hague”, was to use the assassination of the Prime Minister in order to provoke chaos in the country. They thought that such an act would prevent the election of the Council of ministers in the common state of Serbia and Montenegro. The assassination was performed at the time when this country was without a minister of defense. They also hoped that it would not be possible to elect the new Serbian Government. All this was supposed to trigger the fall of the administration and return of hostile forces to the same positions that they enjoyed under Milosevic.

The political background and platform of the conspirators was gathering the so-called “healthy patriotic forces”, while in reality it was a joint attempt of all those who rose to protect Milosevic’s criminal heritage.

Their plan had a boomerang effect. They got clear answers.

First of all, the citizens of Serbia, with their magnificent farewell to Dr. Djindjic during his funeral, which was attended by more than half a million citizens, clearly demonstrated that all the plans of these criminals had failed and that there were no chance of a return to the past.

The ruling coalition had not fallen apart. On the contrary, this tragedy unified it. The coalition understood the importance of this historical moment and it was aware of the responsibility that it had towards the citizens and the State. Elections for the Council of Ministers and the Government went on without a hitch.

Instead of disunity on which the terrorist were counting and instead of the disharmony between the Republican and Federal authorities that used to be the main problem in our fight against organised crime in the period after the democratic changes, we had full unity between the Government of Serbia and the Council of Ministers of the State Community.

At the urging of the Government of Serbia, the acting president of Serbia, Mrs. Natasa Micic, declared the state of emergency. The Supreme Defense Council passed a decision and ordered to the Yugoslav Army to provide full assistance to the Police of Serbia in the investigation and arrest of the perpetrators of this assassination and in the removal of all the conditions that caused the introduction of the state of emergency. So, for the first time we found ourselves in the position where the Army, the Police and security agencies were working together, with the same goal. The results are obvious.

The state of emergency was introduced in order to facilitate rapid arrest of the perpetrators, organizers, financial supporters and those who inspired the assassination of Prime Minister Djindjic, in order to fight organised crime throughout the country, as well as to fight against the individuals who used to be, for various reasons, untouchable by the law and who already had thick criminal records.

I want to clearly stress that the state of emergency was not imposed against the citizens, against their freedoms or rights and that it was not used in an abusive way. This was in general terms confirmed by the

delegation of the OSCE Mission in SAM that visited detained persons, although certain irregularities were noted with regard to the state of our prisons.

We enjoyed full understanding of the citizens and we had very good cooperation with them, in a way that by providing the public with certain information we located some members of this criminal organization or obtained other data relevant for the investigation.

When we talk about organised crime, I would like to use this opportunity just to repeat what Mr. Mihajlovic, Serbian Minister of Interior, said at the London Conference, whose conclusions are very good. Their relevance and significance, unfortunately, are confirmed also by this tragic event and enormous loss of our Prime Minister.

Organised crime gains its power from the ability to respond flexibly to every change in the environment in which it acts, as well as to adapt itself to all the repressive measures that the society is undertaking against it.

The existence of the “Zemun clan” is just another proof of this stand. This gang was, in reality, the biggest narcotics cartel in Serbia, and had exclusive rights for the distribution of cocaine and, connected with its partners throughout the world, a major supplier of heroin in the Serbian market. From Columbia and other countries whence the heroin was coming, up to the European countries where their bank accounts were.

All these activities significantly trespass national boundaries, so that the fight against them cannot be imagined exclusively within national jurisdictions. The organised crime that is today affecting both developed and underdeveloped countries has become international long ago and its actors, from different countries and regions, have been uniting and now act on a global scale. Arms dealers and drug traffickers, mercenaries and organised pirates, are laundering their profits through the well-established channels of financial crime, which is also taking its own part of the profits.

After coming to power Serbian authorities realized quickly how big and serious the criminal heritage of the Milosevic regime was. That criminal pyramid, at whose tip were the individuals from the state administration, had two faces. One face are war atrocities and the other is organised crime. We saw that terrorism is just a political aspect of organised crime and that it is financed from the revenues of criminal activities.

From these revenues the security details of some war criminals are also financed.

Also, we saw that criminals were behaving like real globalists as they established a real Balkan criminal brotherhood during the times of conflict and war in the area of the former Yugoslavia, while politicians and statesmen were divided and were trying to erect Berlin walls between new Balkan States.

But, after these wars the Balkans are again becoming a transit area, not only when we are talking about the Balkan heroin route, through which most of the heroin that is reaching the European Union's narcotics market is passing.

That is the reason why the countries of the European Union, if they want less drugs on the streets of their cities, if they want less false asylum seekers and less uncontrolled migrations, have to aid police, customs, tax and judiciary systems in the countries of South Eastern Europe. Such an orientation is also cheaper for the taxpayers of the countries of the European Union, than the expenses needed for the elimination of all these drugs and migrants from the streets of European capitals.

High level of violence in the previous regime in Serbia represented the main weapon of organised crime. Partners of organised crime were not protected from this violence even if they had high positions in the legal world. However, the consequences of this violence were not felt exclusively by partners of organised crime, but they were also felt by all citizens, who were victims of a feeling of personal insecurity and endangerment of life and property.



The Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Serbia has undertaken very clear and concrete measures in fighting organised crime.

The first step was a public recognition that organised crime does exist in Serbia, followed by the establishment, two years ago, of the Directorate for fight against organised crime, as a specialized organizational unit in the Ministry.

Unfortunately, too late, we got the Law on the fight against organised crime, which introduced in our legal system the necessary institutions - i.e. witness protection, etc. – so that we could reach the very core of the problem and to secure evidences on the activities of these criminal organizations. Up to then, police information did not have value.

Thanks to the moles in our own ranks and in the very system of prosecution – now we know that it was the deputy State Prosecutor, who was to be arrested – but there was a leak which reached this criminal group and they committed their desperate move by shooting the Prime Minister just days before we wanted to arrest them. The results are well known.

The killers of Prime Minister Djindjic are now in prison. The result of the undertaken police measures will be Serbia without unsolved crimes that used to disturb the public, without killers on the loose, without organised criminal groups and without war criminals.

Each one of the 105 criminal groups, which were detected at the beginning of 2001, was attacked. Each person with a personal criminal record with the Police was submitted for interrogation. Over 11600 persons were interviewed. The measure of detention lasted just for the period of time that was necessary to gather information and secure material evidences. As of last Monday (May 12), 3560 criminal charges were filed against 3946 persons, for 5671 crimes.

Although the biggest burden of this action lays upon the Belgrade Police and Directorate for fight against organised crime, it is important to note that this action is undertaken throughout Serbia. That was a chance for

the citizens throughout Serbia to be rid of the fear of local bands. Local police branches solved numerous killings, located big printing premises for counterfeiting money, seized significant quantities of narcotics, weapons and found many stolen vehicles.

Now we are witnessing the real effects of our decision to establish a Gendarmerie. This unit is providing strong support to the implementation of emergency measures and in providing security in Southern Serbia. With their assistance the assassin was arrested, and the decision on dismembering of Special Operations Unit was implemented peacefully. With that action the last contaminated part of the Serbian Police was removed.

The general state of security has improved, and the number of crimes has significantly dropped compared with the same period last year. So for the first time in recent history we had days in Belgrade when more cars were recovered than were stolen.

Simultaneously with the seizure of illegal weapons and explosive devices from the criminals, the voluntarily surrender of weapons and of legalization was underway. For example, the following quantities of weapons were seized from criminals: 593 pistols, 235 automatic rifles, 463 rifles, 14 machine guns, 347 hand grenades, 7 bazookas, 10 rocket launchers and great quantities of explosives.

During this action 73.5 kg of drugs were seized, out of which 28.2 kg of heroin, 463.5 grams of cocaine and 44.8 kg of marijuana, as well as 4960 tablets of synthetic drug Ecstasy. Also 688 stolen vehicles were recovered.

Citizens surrendered to the Police and to the Army 40438 parts of weapons and mine devices as well as 2 million pieces of ammunition. Also, 27392 applications for the legalization of weapons were submitted.

We are not living in the illusion that organised crime can be completely eradicated, but we do think that we can exterminate it and that we can reduce it to a tolerable level, from which it will not represent danger for the institutions of society and for the values that our citizens cherish.

We wanted to achieve this goal through the complete reform of our Ministry, and the conclusions of the London conference, as well as the readiness of the European Union and its member States to help not only us but also to the whole region in fighting this global evil, significantly encouraged us in our endeavor.

The tragedy of Dr. Zoran Djindjic on March 12 has its security, political and historical dimensions. From the security point of view these events have the same significance for Serbia as the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> have for the United States. In the political sense, March 12<sup>th</sup> is for us October 6<sup>th</sup> as it gave us a chance for a successful completion of political changes, which were late due to the impermissible divisions within the political forces that led to October 5<sup>th</sup>. But these divisions are over.

From the historical angle, this horrible tragedy is a unique chance for a historical change of the way of thinking, and I believe that this is the last attempt, in a long string of events, to change power violently in Serbia.

The EU and the US offered support to Serbia and Montenegro, which was manifested by pledging assistance for the elimination of the budget deficit, by admitting us in the Council of Europe, and by a chance to define, on the occasion of the forthcoming Thessaloniki Summit, our process of stabilization and association.

By finishing the tasks already undertaken in implementing the necessary reforms, we will provide citizens with a better living standard, and to our people and state it will facilitate becoming full members of the family of European peoples and states.

The end of the state of emergency was the end of the extraordinary authority of the police, but that was not the end of our decisive fight against organised crime in Serbia.

Ivan Djordevic  
Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Serbia  
Chief of Staff  
Belgrade



## **TERRORISM, VIOLENCE AND ORGANISED CRIME IN SANDZAK**

During the last twelve years, the republics of Serbia and Montenegro gained a rich common experience with terrorism, violence and organised crime, whose emergence could be connected with radical nationalism there and with the wars of conquest in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. That fact undoubtedly determined the nature and character of terrorism and organised crime on their territories.

At the very beginning of the disintegration of Yugoslavia, authorities in Serbia and Montenegro formed special police, military and paramilitary forces. They have been trained by secret police and military services, composed of people with a rich criminal background, in some cases people released from prison.

Following the example of State institutions, most national political parties formed paramilitary forces that have also performed with military and even civil authorities' structures.<sup>5</sup> These forces have been used on foreign battlefields and in their countries as well, producing terror over the non-Serbian population with the aim of creating an homogeneous, ethnically clean space not only in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina

---

<sup>5</sup> The public knows of 4 political opposition parties who used to have strong and very well organized paramilitary forces. The first, so-called Serbian Guard, was formed by that Srpski Pokret Obnove Party (Serbian Movement of Restoration, or SPO), led by Vuk Draskovic. The second, White Eagles, was formed by the Serbian National Restoration Party (SNO), led by Mirko Jovic. Two paramilitary organizations bearing the names of their leaders but whose participation in politics is undeniable were the Seselj Men, an ethnic paramilitary formation created by the Serbian Radical Party (SRS) and Vjislav Seselj. The fourth paramilitary organization were the Tigers or Arkan's Guards, commanded by the leader of Serbian Unity Party (SSJ), Zeljko Arkan. Of the four, two were elected to Parliament (SNO and SSJ) while the two others had important roles in the structures of Serbian civil power. These are the most notorious of many other paramilitary organizaons, with the latter three infamous for their crims in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

where most of the action took place, but also in the areas where the population was non-Serbian.

In keeping with the aforementioned aims, the authorities tolerated and supported the formation of rival police, military and paramilitary forces. The main characteristics of terrorism, violence and organised crime in Serbia and Montenegro between 1991 and 1995 was ethnically and politically motivated. Most victims of terrorism and violence, including also organised crime, were members of non-Serbian nationalities, concretely Bosniaks in Sandzak, Croats in Vojvodina, and Albanians in Kosovo. There are many examples of all this.

According to the evidence and statistics of violations of human rights in Sandzak between 1991 and 1995 done by the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Sandzak, members of the police, army, paramilitary forces and organised groups of citizens of Serbian nationality committed 36 murders. The citizens were killed in their homes, working places and other public places. 51 were kidnapped from their homes, trains and buses, of whom 43 were killed. There were 18 conventional attacks on villages by members of the police, army and paramilitary forces. Those actions have been followed by the burning of houses, murders and expulsion of citizens. In separate attacks 52 domestic and commercial buildings and 11 religious sites were booby-trapped or burned, and many private and commercial vehicles were destroyed. 279 citizens were injured, 291 citizens were mistreated individually or in groups in public places or in the streets.<sup>6</sup>

There is evidence that those criminal acts were supported and sometimes organised by official authorities. At the trial of one of the perpetrators of the kidnapping of 19 Bosniaks from a train station in Strpce on the 27<sup>th</sup> of February 1993, documentation provided by the State railways undoubtedly confirm that the abduction required participation of State railway employees as well as high ranking police officers, the State Security of the Ministry of Defence and senior members of the security

---

<sup>6</sup> The data refers only to the cases recorded and examined by the Helsinki Committee. In that sense they can't be considered correct, since they didn't involve all the cases. According to the information of political parties and their committees for human rights and other NGOs, we can say that the Helsinki Committee gives 40-50% of the total number of cases.

apparatus. Also, the trial of the perpetrators of another kidnapping of 17 Bosniaks which took place in Sjeverin on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October 1992, showed that representatives of police, army and civil authorities were to blame, together with directors of public enterprises in Priboj. There are also some clues indicating that top State echelons were involved in abductions and other forms of violence, leading the president of the Helsinki Committee, Mr. Alomerovic, to press criminal charges against the president of the Serb Former Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), Dobrica Cosic. Mr. Alomerovic practically won the case, but Cosic wasn't sentenced.<sup>7</sup>

Besides individual and collective suffering, terrorism and violence in Sandzak consequently led to the emigration of great numbers of citizens. They, being afraid of violence, left their homes, moving to West European countries or Turkey. That way, the whole territory of Bukovica near Pljevlja (Montenegro) was ethnically cleansed. It used to have 28 villages with mainly Bosniak populations. The same happened to 31 villages of the region of Priboj (Serbia) and part of (30-80%) of the few hundreds of villages on the territory of Pester (Serbia) and Bihor (Montenegro).<sup>8</sup> So the aim of those paramilitary and terrorist groups is obvious.

---

<sup>7</sup> Dobrica Cosic and the Minister of Interior brought criminal charges against Mr. Alomerovic in mid 1996, but the charges were dropped when they discovered that Mr. Alomerovic indeed had incriminating evidence.

<sup>8</sup> According to the statements of the leader of the Bosniak National Party, 90 000 citizens from Sandzak emigrated. According to the rare statements of the authorities of the time, that number was never bigger than 40 000 and of course according to them, these people had not been pressured or expelled, they left on their own accord. The report of Elizabeth Rehn, special reporter on human rights, dated 25 October 1996, stated that as a result of violence 60 000 to 80 000 Muslims left the region of Sandzak since 1992, finding shelter in different countries of West Europe. The International Crisis Group (ICG) estimated that 80 000 Bosniaks left Sandzak because since the beginning of the war in 1992, until the end of 1993, the Milosevic regime performed an official policy of expulsion of Muslims in this region. Considering the total number of Bosniaks in Sandzak (244 446), whatever figure is right represents a big percentage of the population to emigrate. This very fact shows the dimensions and aims of terror and violence that has been used to trigger emigration. Anyway, there is a big number of people who experienced the tragedy of asylum seekers, beginning with losing members of their families, burning of property, the expulsion whether by escape or voluntary departure from their homes, to the problems faced as refugees, and the impossibility of returning home.

There is no doubt that the creation of those extremist groups had their political and national motives, but there was also the desire to get rich by robbing and plundering the conflict region including Sandzak. There are many such examples, beginning with robbery, confiscation by force to more subtle forms of pressure like ransom.

Those groups had been used by Serbian and Montenegrin authorities for illegal trading with foreign countries as means to overcome sanctions applied since 1991. That situation strengthened the connections between organised crime and State organs and politicians. Those connections still exist.

### **The Post Dayton Period**

The separate and completely different experience with organised crime of Serbia and Montenegro could be related to the post-Dayton period, especially after the frictions and complete separation between Serbian and Montenegrin authorities in mid 1997. According to analysts there is a significant difference between organised crime in Serbia and in Montenegro. In Serbia, especially during the Milosevic regime, organised criminal groups were made of former “patriot” members of paramilitary formations, who were using the State as an instrument, but some individuals from the top echelons of the State participated in racketing with these groups (Milosevic did it through his son Marko who at the time was Prime Minister of Serbia).

However, in Montenegro, organised crime was a function of the State and it facilitated trading and other forms of organised crime, like contraband of cigarettes, laundering money, etc. From the profits of such business the Montenegrin State also took money from “taxes” for using the port of Bar.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> Forum, #2 and #3, Forum for Ethnical Relations, Belgrade



## **Bosnian organised crime in Sandzak**

Sandzak differs from other regions in Serbia and Montenegro because of the ethnic structure organised crime. During the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the population of Sandzak, or the majority of it, was victim of terrorism and police violence, as well as victim of military and paramilitary units and some militant citizens of Serbian or Montenegrin origin who were affiliated to structures of authority.<sup>10</sup>

There is other evidence confirming the link between this form of crime and official authorities. Besides, the institutional, systematic political, economic, social, cultural and other discrimination against Bosniaks could be taken as a proof. The Helsinki Committee did a detailed analysis of 4 laws, 1 regulation and 1 legal surrogate according to which discrimination is being performed at a national level in territories with major Bosniak populations.<sup>11</sup> Such a relation to authorities in Sandzak prevented the development of terrorism and organised crime in extreme forms. On the other hand, the difficult economic and social position caused by national discrimination of Bosniak citizens caused the development of some types of organised crime involving Bosniaks.

One of the most frequent forms of organised crime in Sandzak is informal trading, or in slang, the “grey economy”. The beginning of this form of organised crime in Sandzak can also be connected to the

---

<sup>10</sup> According to incomplete statistics and partial evidence of human rights violations in Sandzak between 1991 and 1995, Serbian and Montenegrin nationals performed 98 acts of extreme violence in Serbia in general and in Sandzak. There were 9 murders and 17 wounded. The rest refers to booby-trapping and bombing of businesses or appartments owned by Bosniaks. The Helsinki Committee also has date on big number of other forms of violence (general mistreatment, ransoming and confiscation of property) committed by Serbian and Montenegrin nationals. Those forms of violations couldn't be examined because of the mistrust of the victims.

<sup>11</sup> Law on Territorial Organization of the Republic of Serbia pertaining to Local Autonomy, Law on Special Conditions of Real Estate Turnover, Law on Area Plans of Serbia until 2010, and the Law on naming Undeveloped Regions of Serbia until 2005, as well as the regulation Program of Tasks and Measures for Faster Development and Making Slow Migration Movements in the Towns of Novi Pazar, Sjenica, Tutin and Prijepolje. See also instructions of the Federal Ministry for Traffic and Connections, which forbids return of refugees from asylum in a European country.

appearance of extreme nationalist policies of the Serbian and Montenegrin regimes.

### **The forms of organised crime involving Bosniaks in Sandzak**

The first form of organised crime is informal trading and the counterfeiting of brand name clothing and footwear. Informal trading in Sandzak began to grow with the imposition of sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Bosniaks organised a wide network to import all kinds of goods. They avoid paying taxes, customs duties and all other obligations. Another form of informal economy in Sandzak that spread quickly is the production of jeans, counterfeiting of brand names like Levi's, Diesel, Legend and Calvin Klein.

There is also a developed white slavery trade. Young girls are taken mainly from developed centres of Serbia or other Eastern European countries. Sandzak became a transit centre for white slave trading, but also the ultimate destination for owners of night clubs dealing with prostitution. There is a belief that young girls prostitute themselves willingly, but there is no doubt that some of them fall in the spider's web of white slave traders unwittingly. In Tutin and Novi Pazar, two girls had to murder their pimps to escape slavery.

The Sandzak population faced drug problems after the war in Bosnia. Informal traders began trafficking drugs, making connections with criminal groups in Belgrade, Kosovo and Podgorica, but it is a public secret that drugs come from Turkey, through Kosovo to Sandzak. However, the number of users is low, especially for strong drugs. So we can suppose that the drug is distributed further in great quantities. Unfortunately, policing in Sandzak towns is inefficient, which is a great advantage for organizing these groups better.

By definition, informal trade and manufacture as well as white slavery is followed by street corruption (of municipal service clerks, medical doctors, traffic police, etc.), commercial corruption (of customs officers, tax collectors, high ranking politicians and judges from lower and higher court) with the aim of maintaining illegal trading and avoiding sanctions.

Both forms of corruption are extremely well-developed in Sandzak among the Bosniak population.

Some analysts think there is a danger of terrorism by some Bosniak extremists to support secessionist trends, as well as from those who lean towards a radical interpretation of Islam. But we think there is no possibility of either of these two extremes developing.

First, among Bosniaks in Sandzak, secessionist trends do not exist. They are legal and legitimate demands for equal status and democratization of society. Second, there is indeed a group gathered around the Sandzak mufti who has a radical perception of Islam, but they perform this radicalism through the strict observance of Islamic rites and dress codes. Nevertheless, Serbian authorities tried to use the terrorist attack on New York on September 11<sup>th</sup> and the anti-terrorism campaign led by the USA against them.

11<sup>th</sup> September and the anti-terrorist campaign in Serbia was used for implementation of nationalistic aims directed against Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Sandzak and Albanians in Kosovo who are mainly of Islamic faith. The authorities in Belgrade even tried to justify crimes committed by Milosevic against Bosniaks and Kosovo Albanians, finding connections between Bosniak authorities and Al-Qaida and the so-called presence of Al-Qaida in Bosnian and Albanian armies.

What differs organised crime in Sandzak from other regions is that no organised crime here practices violence, which is undoubtedly a structural part of terrorism and means of organised crime in Serbia and Montenegro. Regardless, organised crime in Sandzak, like elsewhere in the world, represents a serious threat to democracy and prosperity.

Elvedina Omerovic  
Helsinki Committee for  
Human Rights in Sandzak  
Novi Pazar