

Kosovo: U.N. troops accused of abetting genocide

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American Council for Kosovo documents 8 years of ethnic cleansing against Serbs

WASHINGTON - United Nations forces moved into Kosovo in 1999 to "stop genocide." But, according to a blistering new report from the American Council for Kosovo, U.N. troops have aided and abetted the deliberate, systematic and nearly complete ethnic cleansing of the mostly Christian Serb population by mostly Muslim ethnic Albanians. "Every facet of the way of life of the Serbs of Kosovo is threatened by the new reality established since June 1999 under KFOR (the NATO Kosovo Force) and the U.N. and therefore the very existence of the Serbs there is threatened," says the report "Hiding Genocide in Kosovo."

"All kinds of persecution using all types of methods have been adopted," the report says.

"Throughout the territory of Kosovo, the Serbs have been persecuted, a persecution that is happening on their own territory, in their own country. They are denied basic human rights and are not equal to their Muslim counterparts under the law. Even though the Serbs were the main targets, they were not the only ones. Consider the situation of the Croats who now number less than 500, or the Roma who have been banished to the edges of the Serb enclaves by persistent terrorization, or the Gorani, Slavic Muslims, who reside in the south west tip of Kosovo in the mountains and whose numbers dwindle every year."

Using a combination of eyewitness reports, diaries of the dead and interviews with survivors, the report pieces together a harrowing narrative about eight years of mostly low-intensity genocide by the Muslim ethnic Albanians now demanding independence for Kosovo.

A Serb home in Svinjare burns The U.N., in conjunction with Western powers, has been working toward this end, which they term "the final status." "The biggest lie: the internationals claimed they were coming to stop a genocide," writes James George Jatras, director of the American Council for Kosovo. "In reality, they are facilitating one. For the Serbs in Kosovo 'final status' can only mean a final solution." Ethnic and religious violence between Albanians and Serbs in the Serbian province of Kosovo was not unusual leading up to 1999 when the Albanian majority drew NATO onto their side in an effort to tip the scales in the balance of terror. Kosovo has been occupied by the U.N. ever since the war ended. But the new report attempts to document the U.N.'s continuing partiality toward the Albanians, who have turned more and more Kosovo Serbs into refugees, virtually emptying out many Serb-dominated villages and burning and defacing churches along the way. Thirteen months of international talks on the future of Kosovo ended in stalemate earlier this year. Now, three diplomats from the U.S., Russia and the European Union are set to start afresh.

While ethnic Albanians see their independence movement on the verge of success, Serbia turned to its Russian ally to veto U.N. adoption of any independence plan. Meanwhile, the report on Kosovo violence looks at 12 municipalities, all of which had sizable Serbian Christian populations as recently as 1999. Today, the tiny Serb remnants are composed mainly of elderly and infirm simply incapable of moving. Still, the carnage continues, right under the noses of U.N. KFOR authorities. In Cernica, 45 Serb homes have been destroyed since the war ended in 1999. Since the middle of 2003, 12 Serbs have been killed, with no one being charged for the crimes. Often, says the report, acts of violence against Serbs result in the arrest or detention of the victims. For instance, on Aug. 5, 2001, a hand grenade was thrown at the house of Vladimir Savic, records the diary of a Cernica Serb who himself was later killed by Albanians. Initially, Savic was reported killed in the blast. The grenade exploded just two meters from the main door and seriously wounded Savic and his wife, Stanica. But when KFOR personnel arrived at the scene, they refused to provide the victims with first aid. Instead, they attempted to arrest their son, Miomor, who had been in the house with his wife and two children at the time of the explosion. "Since the soldiers refused to help the wounded, their son carried them to his car and drove them without escort to the Greek military base in Bartes, where he was refused any help as well," says the report. "Not knowing what to do, he proceeded to the American base Bondstil." The base personnel refused initially to admit the civilians. But, given the grave condition of the wounded, they admitted them to the hospital. After three days of medical treatment, they were transferred to Kosovoska Mitrovica.

At the ruins of Holy Archangels Monastery near Prizren, an Albanian mob left their messages: "Death to Serbs" and "Down with UNMIK" - the U.N. police who offered minimal resistance for the attackers. German U.N. forces, meanwhile, watched the monastery destroyed without taking action "Both victims have been mutilated for life and are invalids today," says the report. "The perpetrator has never been found." Similar horror stories are recounted in the towns of Novo Brdo, Devet Jugovica, Pristina, Letnica, Urosevac, Kosovo Polje, Vitina and Banjska. U.N. forces are also charged with a kind of ethnic profiling that directly aided the cause of Albanian ethnic cleansing. U.N. authorities overseeing the ethnic and religious balance in towns frequently identified Serbian Christian homes and Albanian Muslim homes. Sometimes yellow crosses were placed on the Christian homes - which helped identify targets for the persecutors, according to the Kosovo genocide report. "On the White House lawn on 7 May 2007, while welcoming British Queen Elizabeth, George W. Bush stated that both their countries were 'defending liberty against terror & while resisting those who murder the innocent to advance a hateful ideology,'" concludes the report. "Is it possible in this information age of high technology, where the media daily bombards us with news and information, that these two leaders do not know what has really taken place in Kosovo? Can it be possible that they do not know that their troops were aiding and abetting terrorists in Kosovo and stood by as whole communities were wiped out?"

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