

PODGORICA, THE CAPITAL

Miomir Mugosa, Mayor

CC: Milo Djukanovic, Prime Minister

CC: Ranko Krivokapic, President of the Parliament

CC: Filip Vujanovic, President of Montenegro

CC: Ivan Brajovic, Minister of Internal Affairs

CC: Ranka Carapic, Supreme State Prosecutor

Podgorica, 15 July 2010

Dear Mr. Mugosa,

Today is the tenth day as our fellow citizen, Mr. Rizo Alkovic, his wife and their daughter live in front of the Parliament of Montenegro, in a protest against years of abuse by their neighbors because of their ethnicity and religion.

They sleep on concrete, next to the "discrimination" sign and two photographs, published in the media long ago, which represent evidence of hatred towards them expressed by their neighbors, who obviously, according to the photos, cannot stand the fact that people of Muslim name and religion live next to them.

Numerous police interventions have been unsuccessful. Mr. Alkovic and neighbors managed to file only misdemeanor charges against each other, although we believe that in the "graffiti" drawn on the apartment door of the Alkovic family the state prosecutor should have identified elements of a criminal offense under Art. 370 paragraph 2 of the Criminal Code of Montenegro¹, and a

¹Inciting ethnic, racial and religious hatred, discord and intolerance

Article 370

(1) He who causes and incites ethnic, racial or religious hatred, discord or intolerance among nations or ethnic communities living in Montenegro, shall be punished with imprisonment from six months to five years.

(2) If the offense referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article is committed under coercion, harassment, jeopardizing safety, defamation of national, ethnic or religious symbols, damaging other people's property, desecration of monuments, memorial insignia or graves, the perpetrator shall be punished by imprisonment of one to eight years.

(3) He who commits the offence referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Article by abusing position or authority, or if those offences have caused riots, violence or other serious consequences for the coexistence of peoples, national minorities or ethnic groups living in Montenegro, shall be punished for the offence under paragraph 1 of this Article by imprisonment of one to eight years, and for the offence under paragraph 2 by imprisonment of two to ten years.

criminal offence Threat to safety in the other activities. We believe that such action of the state prosecutor would provide the conditions for achieving the prerequisites for the existence of a multicultural society Montenegro aspires to be, which it often how it represents itself in front of the foreign officials.

Therefore, we have witnessed that three persons decided to live on the street and not take food for ten days in order to point to their unresolved issue – in a state where the Constitution forbids inciting or encouraging hatred or intolerance on any ground and declares that each person is required to respect the rights and freedoms of others, regardless of whether he / she likes or dislikes other people's religion or ethnicity.

As the Alkovic family concluded that returning to the apartment building in Zagoric (outskirts of Podgorica) where they lived with their neighbors is still impossible, and that they expect the state to finally help them by replacing the apartment they were given to use for another one, we join their appeal and support it.

We kindly ask you to help the Alkovic family, in accordance with your authority, by ensuring the replacement of the apartment they received from the municipality.

We appeal to all responsible to ensure that any manifestation of hatred is suppressed in accordance with the Constitution, especially ethnic, racial and religious hatred, for what there has been a pre-condition long provided by the Criminal Code, so that similar cases would not be repeated in future. We also ask you to review whether the families who live next door deserve to get help from the state if they degrade and insult other people on ethnic and religious grounds.

Tea Gorjanc Prelevic, Executive Director of the NGO Human Rights Action

Ljupka Kovacevic, Coordinator of the NGO ANIMA

Edina Hasanaga Cobaj, NGO Youth Initiative for Human Rights
