



Monitoring and Responses to Attacks on Religious Buildings and Other Holy Sites in BiH

The Final Review Report

November 1st 2010 – October 31st 2011

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Background

“Monitoring and Responses to Attacks on Religious Buildings and Other Holy Sites in BiH” is a one-year pilot project that was implemented in cooperation with the Inter-religious Council of Bosnia Herzegovina (IRC), the Nansen Dialogue Center Sarajevo (NDC) and the Oslo Center for Peace and Human Rights (OC). It was developed within the framework of the wider project *“A Universal Code on Holy Sites”* run by four partners: One World in Dialogue (EVID), Search for Common Ground (SFCG), Religions for Peace (RfP), including European Council for Religious Leaders (ECRL) and the OC.

From a broader perspective, **the overall goal of the project was enhanced trust and improved relations between the religious and ethnic communities in BiH.**

The idea of the project was to monitor attacks and other incidents related to **objects of religious significance** for Muslim, Orthodox, Catholic and Jewish communities throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) with **a main goal of improving their protection**. Attacks on religious objects or holy sites are defined as physical attacks as well as any form of vandalism or desecralisation of religious buildings or other places of significance to the religious communities.

In this regard, the expected results of the project were:

- A well established and informative data base of the attacks, with all relevant details such as the attacked object, location, damage, perpetrators and their profile, motives, law enforcement status, and reactions of religious communities, authorities and media;
- An organized multi-religious response condemning such attacks in a timely manner
- An analysis of the collected data and recommendations for better protection of objects of religious significance, as well as more efficient responses from all religious communities, authorities and media.

To obtain these results and achieve these goals, the project will be implemented through five main stages with supplementing activities:

1. Collection of Data and Reports on Attacks
2. Verification of Attacks
3. Reaction/Response to Attacks
4. Documentation
5. Evaluation

Methodology

This review is based on qualitative and quantitative analysis of the project documentation including:

- Concept Paper for The Pilot Project ‘A Universal Code On Holy Sites’: Monitoring and Responses To Attacks On Religious Buildings And Other Holy Sites In BiH
- A 6 Month Progress Report
- A 6 Month Review Progress Report
- A Final Report On The Pilot Project
- Central Register of Attacks
- Registers of an Attack
- Web presentation and contents

Additionally, we used personal notes from the meetings as a data source.

The documentation was carefully read and analyzed both manually and with support of “Atlas-Ti” software for qualitative analysis and the calculative availabilities of “Excel” for the quantitative part. All arguments, conclusions and recommendations come from text analysis, as deeper contextual analysis was beyond the project scope and therefore was not completed.

However, the data and results gained during project implementation are a solid base for making such contextual analysis and for revealing factors that influence project implementation and reinforce arguments, conclusions and recommendations.

Assessment of Project Implementation

Introduction

The project was launched on November 1, 2010 and lasted one year. The inception of the project was announced to the media at a press conference on November 3, 2010.

In the early stages of project implementation, the project staff (PS) followed predefined stages/activities, to create and distribute a flyer outlining how to report an attack. They also developed a procedure for implementing the main project activities. The procedure consists of several steps:

- Reception of report of the attack;
- Immediate verification and validation of received report including identification of the applicant and facts of the attack;
- 7 days later – a site visit was planned (in agreement with the victim);
 - Invitations were sent to representatives of all religious communities, authorities and media;
 - Repeated invitations were sent in the form of a request for confirmation – (this was to be seen as further encouragement for potential participants of the site visit);
 - During the gathering, information on the event was shared, and a statement of condemnation was conveyed to participants and media;
 - A list of all participants was made;
- The day after the meeting there was a web presentation of the gathering with all ~~the~~ relevant data on the attack, participants and their statements;¹
- The data on the event were to be stored in a specific file, including images. In addition, an electronic database was established and is being maintained.
- 60 days after the attack, a follow-up was planned, which was to focus on police/court procedures for finding and processing the perpetrator(s).

It is important to emphasize that during implementation, given time-frames and reactions might vary from case to case due to the circumstances of the attack. The basic principle behind each reaction is “Do not harm!” Namely, the reaction to the attack should not further jeopardize the victim.

The implementation of the project will be evaluated with regard to the procedures outlined in the five stages mentioned above. At the end, we will examine the status of achievements as compared to the expected results, and the main and overall goals of the project.

¹ For example: <http://www.mrv.ba/ba/arhiva/30-osuda-napada-na-katedralu-srca-isusova-u-sarajevu> accessed 13.02.2012.

Collection of Data and Reports on Attacks

This phase consisted of a number of activities.

As mentioned in the introduction, a flyer with instructions on how to report an attack was created and distributed through several channels: religious communities' regular communicational channels, the dissemination channels of IRC, NDC and other related NGOs, or by personal delivery. The form for registering attacks was also made available on the IRC web site from the project's inception.²

Requests for reporting attacks were also made to the media at the project's launch press conference and repeatedly through the media coverage of the multi-religious visits to the sites of the attacks.

Collection of the reports was another important activity during this stage. The first report came on November 5th, just two days after the initial public announcement. The last report covered by this review took place on October 26, 2011.

During project implementation there were 56 reported attacks on mosques, churches, synagogues, graveyards, religious officials and believers; 26 of them in Federation of BiH, 30 in Republic of Srpska (RS). According to religion there were:

- 28 attacks on Islamic Community objects and people;
- 17 attacks on Serbian Orthodox Church objects;
- 9 attacks on Catholic Church objects and people;
- 2 attacks on Jewish community objects.

These attacks took place in 31 different locations (cities, towns, villages) throughout BiH.

The reports were received directly from officials of the religious community to which the attacked object belonged, except in the two cases, where an IRC associate submitted the report. The official IRC reporting forms (web based or flyer) were used for reporting in all but 6 cases, when the report was sent as a memorandum from the victim of the attack.

Reports from all parts of BiH, and the prevailing use of the official reporting form, suggests that information on the project and the reporting procedure was thoroughly distributed throughout the country. Still, based on communication with religious representatives in the field, PS expressed the need for wider distribution of information, particularly to local communities throughout BiH.

By posting the final report on the implementation of the pilot project on the web site's main page,³ PS provided additional, and more detailed, information of the project, which might result in better and faster reporting in the future.

² <http://www.mrv.ba/images/stories/documents/prijjava%20napada.pdf> accessed 13.02.2012.

³ http://www.mrv.ba/images/stories/documents/izvjetaj_monitoring_kratki_engl.pdf accessed 13.02.2012.

Verification of Attacks

The second stage of implementation was to validate the information on the attack. It is an important action in order to avoid possible false information that might produce a negative impact. In addition, it is very important for the person who filed the report to see that their information was received and taken seriously. Furthermore, it was an opportunity for discussion with the reporting persons to decide on an appropriate response to the attack.

In every case, the PS verified the reported attack through direct conversation with representatives of the attacked side. Validity of the reports was also confirmed by police reports in the majority of the cases. In 4 cases the police claimed that they did not receive a report on attack. It is interesting that all 4 of these cases were related to attacks in Banja Luka, 3 of them on the same object - the Sefer-Bay mosque.

Reaction/Response to Attacks

An essential part of the project implementation was fast and appropriate responses to the attacks. It was designed to be a gathering point of religious communities' representatives in joint condemnation of any kind of attack on holy sites in BiH. Beyond its immediate effect of sending a joint message regarding highly inappropriate acts of attacking any religious community, it indirectly built trust and improved communication among religious communities' representatives in the local communities.

Following instructions given in the project design, and particularly relying on the principle "do no harm," the PS organized appropriate reactions and responses in all cases.

For 24 cases, a joint visit to the site of attack was organized. Representatives from each local religious community took part in these visits.

In 20 cases, either a representative from the local government visited the site, or publically condemned the attacks. Unfortunately, local authorities from Sapna, Zenica, Tuzla and Gacko did not take part in these meetings or condemnations after attacks in their communities.

National and local media came to report on these events. There were 40 documented media (TV, Radio, newspapers, agencies) covering the cases. This number does not include numerous web portals that also covered the cases. These 40 media, plus the web portals, appeared at visits and/or conveyed messages on attacks 144 times.

Though generally not invited, police took part in some of these visits, and in some cases ~~they~~ even helped organize the event.

It is important to emphasize that the joint visit to the Catholic parish office in Doboj (Case No.7), which was attacked on the night between 23rd and 24th of November, was attended by representatives of religious communities without IRC's organization. Additionally in Modriča, (Case 54) the mayor of the municipality visited the site of the attack on his own initiative. These are indicators that the project is beginning to produce lasting effects.

In the cases where there were no organized visits, it was decided so in communication with representatives of the attacked religious communities. They did not want to highlight attacks they considered clear cases of burglary and theft, in order to avoid any counterproductive effects. In 3 cases without a visit more than a month passed before the attack was reported, so the visit would not have had a significant impact. It is important to emphasize that in these cases, the attacked religious community was a significant minority in the local community.

In 8 non-visit cases, no public statement of condemnation was given by the PS in accordance with the wishes of the attacked: 3 due to late reports, and 5 per request of the victim.

In other non-visit cases the PS issued a statement and sent it to media; all but three were published.

Besides media coverage of the event, the PS published reported attacks, responses and statements on the IRC web site. The most recent attack was posted on the front page,⁴ while posts from previous attacks can be found on the IRC archive page.⁵

As stated above, according to received reports on attacks, all of them were reported to police. However, police claimed they did not receive reports of four cases in Banja Luka. During the project period, police successfully identified perpetrators in 22 cases. These cases were brought to relevant courts, and 17 of them have been resolved. In 2 instances the victim did not press charges and the remaining 3 were given to prosecution offices for further processing.

At the beginning of the project, PS had difficulty traveling to the site of the attacks as IRC did not have a dedicated mode of transport. This problem was solved with the support of OSCE, which generously offered a vehicle for this purpose.

In conclusion: according to reactions and responses to the attacks, all indications show that PS followed the indicated procedures and conducted this part of the project without any major obstacles.

Documentation

For documentation and analytical purposes the PS developed an electronic database in which the reported attacks were recorded. It consists of the “Central Register of Attacks” (CRA) programmed in Excel and hyperlinked to the individual reports, “Registers of an Attack” (RA).

The original CRA was improved in the second part of implementation, which allowed for easier data manipulation and processing. The following data are covered by the CRA:

- Record-case number,
- Attacked object (also functioning as a hyperlink to individual RA),
- Religious community – full name, including administrative unit
- Religious community – one letter abbreviation
- Location – name of place
- Location – municipality and/or City
- Location – Entity
- Date of report
- Method of report
- If the attack was reported to police,
- Verification of the attack
- If site visit was made
- If the suspect was identified,
- Motive of the attack,
- If the perpetrator was convicted.

The template of the RA was made as a Word document and contains all required content divided into the following chapters:

- Heading: memo of the project, number of the case and date

⁴ <http://www.mrv.ba/ba> accessed 13.02.2012.

⁵ <http://www.mrv.ba/ba/arhiva> accessed 13.02.2012.

- Chapter 1 – Report on attack: name of the attacked object, place and date of the attack, religious community to which the object belongs, details on how the attack was reported
- Chapter 2 – Authenticity test
- Chapter 3 – Details of police report
- Chapter 4 – reaction/response to the attack: what was done, media reactions
- Chapter 5 – Police investigation: was perpetrator is identified, motive of the attack, list of stolen/damaged properties, profile of the perpetrator
- Chapter 6 – Details on legal prosecution, whether the case is open, by which agency, how the case was resolved.
- Addendum – scanned report, photos from the attacked site, press-clippings, statements, etc.

The RA allowed for all relevant data on a single attack data to be recorded in one place.

The database has fairly detailed information regarding the status of implementation of the project. Details of attacks and responses were registered, while details on the law enforcement, particularly legal prosecution, were added where available. Many of the cases are still making their way through the legal system, so that information will be registered when the process is complete.

Some small inconsistencies have been found between the CRA, RA and Final report, though without serious effects on the reliability of the data.⁶ Nevertheless, these inconsistencies should be resolved directly.

We maintain our recommendation to give more detailed descriptions of the responses in the RA document, similar to what was given in the progress report in chapter 2.⁷ Also, IRC's abovementioned web posts on the attacks, responses and statements, could be hyperlinked to the cases recorded at CRA, integrating it into the project documentation.

During preparation for this report we further improved the CRA, making it more functional for better and faster searching, calculation and comparison of data. This improvement will allow data from the RA to become more accessible for comparative quantitative and qualitative analysis. The new version of CRA is in the addendum of this review, and we are encouraging its use in the future.⁸

If this becomes a long-term project, data will eventually aggregate. In that case, we suggest the development of a professional database for easier input, manipulation and analysis of data.

In conclusion: though this part of the project implementation functioned well without major difficulties, there is still room for technical improvements which will contribute to better and faster analysis and use of data.

⁶ For example: There are no details on the visit in RA, although there is information in the final report (Case 52); or: in the final report it is stated that the condemnation by MRV was distributed via web portal, but it was not registered in RA (Case 47).

⁷ In Case 1, for example, instead of the given description of the reaction „Izlaskom na teren i osudom od strane lokalnih vjerskih službenika (site visit and condemnation of the local religious officials)“ we suggest content from your progress report: “IRC’s staff visited abovementioned monastery on November 9th 2010 to make a public condemnation of this attack. Religious officials from Catholic and Muslim communities were present, namely Auxiliary Bishop of Banja Luka, Msgr. Marko Semren and chief imam of Banja Luka Muris ef. Spahic. Also representative of OSCE, Mrs. Marijana Andjelkovic accompanied IRC’s delegation. The city mayor also condemned this attack.”

⁸ Still there is room for improvement: for example making separate lists of attendees, similar to the one made by the media.

Evaluation and Data analysis

The IRC used data analysis to conduct an internal evaluation of the project in chapters 4-9. It includes:

- Analysis of attacks and incidents
- Conclusions regarding interreligious responses
- Analysis of Media reports
- Challenges and successes of the project implementation
- Lessons learnt
- Recommendations

The elements of evaluation discussed in this chapter will focus on the outputs and outcomes of the data analysis.

In chapters 4-6 the PS made brief analyses of the data and project implementation. The number of attacks (56) during one year of implementation of the project gives sufficient data for proper, relatively substantial analysis and viable conclusions. The following are comments regarding the analyses and conclusions.

Analyses of attacks and incidents

PS starts the analysis by concluding that overall there were too many attacks on religious sites and people. Although some statistics are presented in chapters 2 and 10 (Charts and Graphs) we are missing a brief presentation of statistics and comments as an introduction to the analysis.

In addition to the statistics we presented in the chapter “Collection of Data and Reports on Attacks” (and in the PS’s final report) we also found some symptomatic statistic patterns to be taken into consideration, particularly for future recommendations:

- There were 8 attacks on graveyards (14%): 6 Muslim; 1 Orthodox; 1 Catholic
- There were 12 attacks endangering people – religious officials and people during prayer (21%): 10 Muslim; 1 Orthodox; 1 Catholic
- Several objects were repeatedly attacked:
 - Sefer-bay Mosque in Banja Luka – 7 attacks reported to PS⁹
 - Catholic parish office in Dobojo – 2 Attacks
 - Orthodox church in Sarajevo – 2 attacks reported to PS¹⁰

⁹ According to the main imam the mosque has been attacked 50 times in the last 7 years.

¹⁰ According to the final project report the Church has been attacked 31 times during the last 10 years.

In addition to these reported/verified attacks, the following objects were also repeatedly attacked:

- Turbe of Sijerčić's in Novo Goražde attacked several times¹¹
 - Church of the Assumption of the Lord in Gračanica – 21 attacks in 2010¹²
 - Banja Luka Mufti office attacked several times¹³
- There have been 8 attacks during religious holidays (14%)

While analyzing the motives of the attacks, the PS cautiously concluded two basic motives: **theft** caused by the bad economic situation, and religious-ethnic **hatred**.

According to the final project report and suggested classifications we have calculated the following:

- Attacks motivated predominately by hatred – 34 (61%)
- Attacks motivated predominately by theft – 13 (23%)

There are some cases where theft has occurred that could be classified in either category. However, additional elements of desecration suggest that these acts were hate-driven. There have been 9 such attacks (16%), which brings the number of hatred-based attacks to 43 (77%).

As we suggested in the progress report, these categories could be even more ambiguous, since it may appear that the religious objects become the target of an attack not only due to the material value of the object, but also because it belonged to the minority religious group in the local community. For the perpetrator theft is easier, and to some extent more “socially acceptable”, when attacking the “enemy” religious object. If many theft cases can be interpreted in this way – and there is indication by the PS that they can¹⁴ – then religious-ethnic **hatred** could be indicated as the main motive behind an attack, even if it is a case of “pure” theft.

But this should be considered very skeptically. Since it is not in the capacity of this project to deeply analyze motives, particularly since it requires wider contextual, psychological, social and legal analysis, the statements made in individual reports should simply be seen as assumptions.

As for the locations of the attacks, the PS concluded that these incidents took place all over the country, and in almost all cases the local “minority”¹⁵ groups were victimized.

The two biggest cities in BiH, Banja Luka (10)¹⁶ and Sarajevo (4/6)¹⁷ had the highest number of registered attacks. It is important to note that religious objects seem to be attacked more frequently in urban areas.¹⁸

Response of Local Authorities

In this part of the analysis, PS evaluated the response of local governments. In the majority of the cases, representatives of the local communities joined to condemn the attacks. Representatives of the local governments took part in 20 visits¹⁹. In two cases (Ilidža, Case 35, and Modriča, Case 54)

¹¹ Source: The final project report

¹² Source – Press clipping in RA: <http://tuzlalive.ba/portal/2010/12/crkva-u-gracanici-na-meti-vandala-21-puta/> accessed 12.02.2012.

¹³ Source – conversation with the Mufti.

¹⁴ As they suggest “almost all cases of attacks happened to the minority groups in different local communities.”

¹⁵ Minority here refers to the number of members of the particular ethno-religious community, not their constitutional status (except in the case of Jewish community, which is minority in both senses).

¹⁶ 7 attacks were made on a single object – Sefer-bey mosque

¹⁷ 4 attacks took place in the inner City (2 at the same object) and 2 in the region of Canton Sarajevo, Ilidža and Ilijaš.

¹⁸ For example Dobož – 4; Bosanska/Kozarska Dubica and Zenica – 3

¹⁹ 2 of them were not organized by IRC.

the municipalities financially supported repairs; many of them also condemned the event on their official web sites.²⁰

Conversely, representatives did not appear at 6 visits. Two of them were especially significant cases. In the municipality Sapna, the representatives used “bureaucratic” excuses to avoid the condemnation, claiming that the monastery did not have the correct building permits (Case 8).²¹ In the municipality Gacko, representatives did not appear at 2 condemnations. Moreover a member of the assembly took part in one of the attacks (Case 52). Unlike local authorities, representatives of the religious communities in these places demonstrated a high level of mutual understanding.

Response of Police and Legal institutions

At this time we are missing evaluations of the work of the police and legal institutions in processing attackers. In addition to the statistics provided in chapters 2 and 10 of the final project report, and here in the chapter “Reaction/Response to Attacks”, there are few remarks on this issue.

According to the reports of attacks, all cases were also reported to the police. The police confirmed this in all but 4 cases. Interestingly, all of these non-confirmed attacks were connected to Banja Luka police and 3 referred to the cases at the Sefer-bey mosque.²²

Police found perpetrators in 22 cases. According to the database, only 17 of them were prosecuted. What is most noteworthy is that these attacks were generally **not treated** as attacks motivated by religious or ethnic hatred, even in e cases where such behavior was obvious (Case 21 – attack in Tuzla, where police explicitly deny possibility of religious hate as a motive).²³

Analysis of interreligious responses

After analyzing the responses of religious officials, the PS concluded that they were largely supportive of both the action of condemning the attacks, and for the project as whole. The support comes from high level religious officials as well as from others in the field.

PS noted cases where religious officials self-organized a joint visit to the attacked site, and where the sick religious leader of the perpetrator came to the site. They also took note of instances when the religious leader took the initiative to personally talk to the perpetrator’s parents from his community condemning the attack. In this regard PS probably correctly assumes certain pragmatism in this mutual support, particularly on the local level. Local religious leaders are willing to cooperate because they could also be a target where their group is minority.

However this may also indicate an increasing necessity for people in local communities to act cooperatively for mutual benefit, regardless of widely promoted ethnic and religious division. This should be seriously considered and studied. Such an enterprise is, of course, far beyond scope of the project. Yet, data from the project could provide a fair basis for such a study.

Another important observation made by PS is that there remains a need to persuade religious officials to report all attacks. Although this is not explained in the report, we assume from the

²⁰ For example: http://www.ilijas.ba/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1485:osuda-napada-na-hram-svetog-proroka-ilije-u-ilijau&catid=1:latest-news&Itemid=50 accessed 12.02.2012.

²¹ This is hardly an acceptable excuse and indicates a rigid political attitude. Regardless of the “administrative obstacles” demonstrated, the good will of the authorities significantly contributes to the improvement of inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations and a sense of security among minority groups.

²² The repetition suggests that this neglect could be politically motivated.

²³ As described in the final project report: “*The targets of the attack were the church and the graveyard in the church’s yard. The perpetrator broke the entrance gate and entered the churchyard. They stole tin dripping edges from the windows, damaged the façade, and left human faeces near the northern wall. They also left dirty socks on one of the windows. In the graveyard two gravestones were damaged and one bust stolen.*” It is hard to argue that this attack was not hate-driven. Furthermore, the police deny the possibility of 6 out of 7 cases in Tuzla Canton. This statement indicates possible political motivation. The 7th case was the last case (Case 51) and there is not yet official police feedback.

available documentation that reluctance to report the attacks is based on religious leaders' fear that, by insisting on publicizing attacks, they will disturb the fragile balance of interethnic relations, further deteriorating already precarious living conditions. Convincing the religious leaders that the extent of the public response is completely at their discretion may help to ease these fears. It should also be made clear, that by reporting these incidents and contributing to the research being conducted, they will be helping to prevent further violence toward their people and precious objects.

Analysis of Media reports

The PS has concluded that the project was well received by the media, who seemed to recognize the importance of the work being done. On average, 2.57 media followed up on the attacks/gatherings by conveying messages of joint condemnation and requests for interreligious tolerance. Keeping in mind these, and other statistics on media attendance, this is fair conclusion.

Unfortunately, there are no previous records of media following such events, so the conclusion must to be based on well-informed assumptions. However, it is common to see one side of the story over-emphasized, while intentionally neglecting positive stories of integration and joint events.

Analysis of the content of the media reports in these cases indicates much more fair and balanced reporting. From available press-clippings²⁴ it is apparent that the media transmitted statements jointly prepared by religious leaders and facilitated by the PS, without further, extraneous commentary. The same is true for reports on attacks, only the facts were presented.

Additional proof of fair and balanced reporting can be also found in the statistics. For example, RTRS (RS public broadcasting service)²⁵ was present/reporting at 12 events,²⁶ 6 times in RS, and 6 times in FBiH. The same goes for Dnevni Avaz (the biggest daily in BiH, situated in Sarajevo)²⁷: 11 attendances,²⁸ 5 in FBiH, 6 in RS. Regardless of the fact that both are considered biased news sources, they both reported on attacks from "the other side". In addition, there was only one documented misinterpretation (deliberate or not), further evidence of positive media coverage.

Regarding the abovementioned comment on usual media practices, it is possible that such changes in behavior indicate a positive shift media treatment of such events. To be certain of this trend, media reports should continue to be followed, and new data should be compared against that collected during the pilot project implementation.

On the other hand, PS pointed out the apparent indifference of electronic media (TV and Radio) towards IRC statements of condemnation that are not part of site visit. Part of this indifference could be accounted for by the "nature" of the media,²⁹ and part by the editorial policy towards this type of communication. But this should be investigated through the general strategic plan for communication with the media.

Challenges and Lessons Learnt During Project Implementation

In chapters 7 and 8 PS briefly evaluated challenges and lesson learned during project implementation.

The overall impression is that the project was implemented relatively smoothly, without any major obstacles. Yet, PS recognized several challenges and lessons learnt during the project implementation.

²⁴ The one that is included in RA documents.

²⁵ Usually considered as "Serb media".

²⁶ Which makes it the most engaged electronic media during the project.

²⁷ Usually considered as "Bosniaks media".

²⁸ Which makes it the most engaged printed media during the project.

²⁹ TV particularly which needs visual material to reinforce the story.

The biggest challenge was how to persuade religious officials of the need to report all attacks and attend all joint public condemnations. There were multiple attacks that were not mentioned, due to lack of official reporting.³⁰

Several lessons learned will help PS to respond to these challenges in the future, and better present the project to all levels of the hierarchy of the religious community. Furthermore, we will work towards a simplified reporting procedure, using higher ranked religious leaders to improve the experience of site visits, and will continue to organize joint condemnations exclusively with the expressed approval of the victimized side.

During implementation PS faced some small technical problems, which did not influence the overall implementation of the project.

Conclusion on Evaluation and Data Analysis

Data analysis and evaluation of the project implementation has been done properly, and the conclusions presented in the final report are in accordance with the available data from the project documentation.

However, in order to better understand these conclusions we suggest further examination of the statistical data, similar to what we offered in this review. This will not only improve understanding of the conclusions, but also support the arguments for suggested improvements.

The final report is missing a condensed, structured assessment of the project's achievements in terms of goals and results. They have been mentioned throughout the report but are too scattered for a reader to follow and fully comprehend the message being conveyed. In the following chapter we will propose content for this review.

Project Achievements

Activities

With regard to overall activities the project was implemented as planned, within the given terms and time frames. The PS did not face serious obstacles, and any minor ones were properly dealt with. This indicates very strong and pro-active involvement of the PS in project implementation.

The **first main activity** – establishing a database of attacks – was completed successfully and contains all relevant data. The database has been regularly maintained and was updated during the second phase of the project to be made more user friendly.

The **second main activity** – organizing multi-religious responses/condemnations of the attacks – also achieved its objective. It was performed in an appropriate and timely manner and consisted of joint visits or public statements. In many of the cases however, the only response was registering the attack. All of these responses have been performed in communication with the victim following the principle “do not harm”. In 18 out of 24 (75%) cases there was a multi-religious response that included members of all denominations.

In addition to this multi-religious response, PS would like to involve local authorities in the joint condemnations, increasing the range of the project's impact.

These are important achievements; we could even call this the key activity of the project. Involving a diverse and influential group of citizens in response to violent acts produces immediate effects and impact and directly contributes to the achievements of the overall goal of this project.

³⁰ The information on these attacks was given in private communication with religious officials, or was published in media.

The **third main activity** –analysis of the collected data – was conducted briefly in accordance with the procedures of project implementation. The conclusions from the analysis and evaluation offer valuable insight for the continuation and improvement of future project activities. These data and conclusions could also be used as a baseline study against which new data will be compared and analyzed. If this is the case, we recommend further elaboration on and analysis of the data collected.

Goals of the Project

As defined in the project design **the overall goal** of the project is **enhanced trust and improved relations between religious and ethnic communities in Bosnia Herzegovina**, while the **main goal** of the project is to **improve protection of religious objects and holy sites in BiH**.

The project was the first of its kind. There has been no systematic monitoring of attacks on religious objects throughout the whole BiH prior to this effort. However, it was visible from media and other formal and informal channels of information that this phenomenon exists and that it contributes to the deterioration of interethnic and interreligious relations in BiH, particularly in local communities. The main focus of this project was to gather statistics, profiles, context and other relevant data on these attacks and to gauge the support of religious officials, local governments, local communities and media to opposing such attacks regardless of the religious or ethnic affiliation of the perpetrator. In this regard the project fulfilled its immediate objectives. As a result of the implemented activities, this project contributed to the development of techniques in some local communities, aiming to **improve the protection** of religious objects and holy sites in BiH.

There are several indicators of the direct influence this project has had on the social shift that seems to be occurring:

Firstly, religious leaders from all communities openly support the project. This is not only symbolic support; it is clearly visible at the gatherings at attack site visits as well as through joint condemnations of the attack and calls for interreligious tolerance; some religious leaders have even taken the initiative by reprimanding perpetrators from their own religious group independently from the joint condemnation;

Secondly, local authorities have also openly supported the project. They have joined in condemnations of attacks and calls for interreligious tolerance. There have also been some concrete steps toward improved protection, such as the installation of video surveillance;

Thirdly, this project has increased police sensitivity to the situation at hand. They have increased patrols in several locations of reported and reoccurring attacks;

Fourthly, intentional involvement of the media produced a positive change in their attitudes and practices of reporting on the attacks – they are beginning to balance the negative image of attacks with the positive image of joint condemnations and calls for tolerance.

Fifthly, the involvement of such an international organization as OSCE as a verbal and technical supporter, significantly contributed to the success of project implementation.

Having in mind the influence of these stakeholders on the population – public condemnations and calls for tolerance of religious and civil authorities, intensified police work and more balanced media reporting – **their actions have already contributed to achieving the project goal**, though in the long term this contribution is expected to expand.

Concerning the **overall goal**, the project initiated positive effects and changes at the local level from the very beginning. As many as 85% of site visitors have witnessed these effects.

According to the PS, some religious leaders, who met for the first time after the attack, continue to communicate and interact more frequently, for various reasons. In addition, the project activities

allowed the IRC to establish relations and partnerships with local religious leaders that they had not previously worked with.

The most significant indicators in this regard are cases in which religious leaders and local government officials initiated a response on their own, without PS mediation. In the cases of attacks in Gacko (Cases 15 & 52), religious leaders were even more cooperative and sympathetic than the local government. This project enabled and revealed this situation to be possible.

It is important to emphasize that gatherings have significant effects on the victim of the attack – in many cases they are delighted with the visits, particularly when religious leaders of the majority community come to condemn the attack. This especially, creates a sense of security and introduces the opportunity for better communication and integration of minorities in the local community.

Finally, the attack in Blažuj (case 35) indicated a change of attitude in the local community, as the families of perpetrators took it upon themselves to condemn the attack.

All of these activities have had immediate effects by increasing the quality of interreligious communication in local communities, which is seen as a necessary prerequisite for interreligious dialogue in the wider community. In this regard the project contributes to the overall improvement of relations among ethnic and religious groups in BiH, achieving its long term, overall goal.

As a **final conclusion** we can say that the project has been implemented successfully as planned, within the given framework. It has already produced significant results and achievements, with all factors indicating that it will continue to do so.

Recommendations

In response to this review we will list a number of recommendations, with the aim of improving project implementation and the achievement of its results and goals. Some of them have already been suggested throughout this review. Here we will try to summarize them.

There are two groups of recommendations: technical (improving project management) and those concerning possible actions to be taken to assist in achieving goals.

Technical recommendations

- Database:
 - Although the database has already been improved to a certain extent, we are suggesting further improvements of CRA documentation (suggested changes can be found in the addendum); we also suggest a more informative description of the reaction in the RA document (footnote 6). With the long-term interests of the project in mind, we are also suggesting the development of a professional database.
- Media:
 - For better analysis of media reports we are suggesting the establishment of a video archive and press-clipping archive, which would be integrated into the database.
 - Having in mind the importance of media coverage to the project, we suggest the development of a media strategy, which will define goals and activities to promote the project and further encourage the media to follow up in a more systematic way
- Staffing:
 - There were 56 attacks during this year of the project, 4.66 monthly. As a result, we assume a significant amount of administrative work to properly register attacks, communicate with victims, organize a response, contact the media, and follow-up with police and prosecutors. In addition, visits to the site, and with religious leaders, authorities and media must be completed. In order to enable the project to function

smoothly, we suggest that PS consider the possibility of developing a full-time position for the administration of the project.

Recommendations for actions

At this time we would like to reinforce the recommendations given by PS. They include cooperation with various other institutions as well as continued lobbying and advocacy.

Our basic recommendation then, is that lobbying and advocacy should be treated as project activities. Here are the main issues to be considered:

- It is necessary to set up video surveillance over religious buildings that were the subject of attacks, particularly those that have been repeatedly attacked;
- It is necessary to increase police patrols around religious buildings, particularly during religious holidays;
- Municipalities should hold meetings with local representatives of religious communities, schools, neighborhoods and police, at least twice a year;³¹
- Attacks on religious buildings/people should be treated as crimes of inciting religious and ethnic hatred in accordance with the Criminal Code of FBiH and RS, if the facts indicate so;
- Keeping in mind the sensitivity of religious issues and relations in BiH as well as the long-term sustainability of the project, it is necessary to urge BiH government(s) to finance the project.

Finally, it is important to emphasize to all religious communities the necessity of:

- Attending joint site visits and condemnations, particularly representatives of the religious community to which the perpetrator belongs
- Reporting every attack on religious objects, properties or people both to PS and to police.

³¹ Mjesnih zajednica