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MEĐURELIGIJSKO VIJEĆE U BOSNI I HERCEGOVINI
MEЂURELIGIJSKO VIJEĆE У БОСНИ И ХЕРЦЕГОВИНИ
Interreligious Council in Bosnia-Herzegovina

**MONITORING AND RESPONSES TO ATTACKS ON RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS
AND OTHER HOLY SITES IN BiH -
PROTECTION OF HOLY SITES**

ANNUAL REPORT

(REPORTING PERIOD FROM NOVEMBER 1, 2011, TO OCTOBER 31, 2012)

Sarajevo, December, 2012

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1. INTRODUCTION

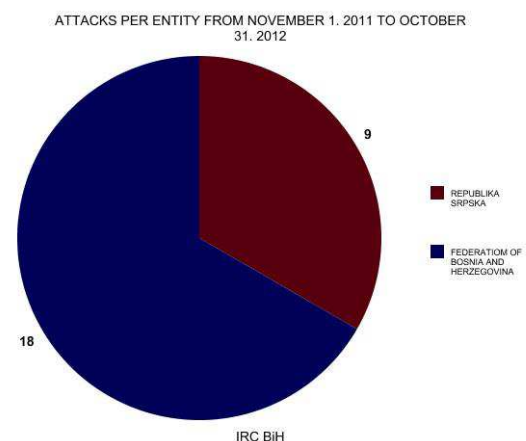
“Monitoring and Responses to Attacks on Religious Buildings and Other Holy Sites in BiH”, or the “Protection of Holy Sites” Project, was created as a one-year pilot project of the Interreligious Council in Bosnia Herzegovina (IRC BiH) implemented in cooperation with the Nansen Dialogue Center Sarajevo (NDC) and the Oslo Center for Peace and Human Rights (OC). This project was developed within the framework of a larger project, “A Universal Code on Holy Sites”, which aims at the adoption of a single document in the form of a United Nations (UN) Declaration or Resolution which would provide protection to holy sites of all religions around the world. The basic goal of the “Protection of Holy Sites” Project is to improve the protection of religious buildings and other buildings of significance to religious communities (holy sites) of all religions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The additional goals of the project are the establishing of a record of attacks on religious buildings, the analysis of gathered information regarding: the manner of attack, the motive of attack, the identification of perpetrators, as well as the area in which the attacks are taking place, and the like. Following the analysis of the results of the monitoring of attacks on religious buildings in each reporting period, the Interreligious Council in BiH will define proposals for the competent bodies regarding the improvement of protection of religious buildings in certain areas.

We use this opportunity to especially thank the US Embassy which financed the project implementation in this reporting period (November 1, 2011 – October 31, 2012) through its grant.

2. RESULTS

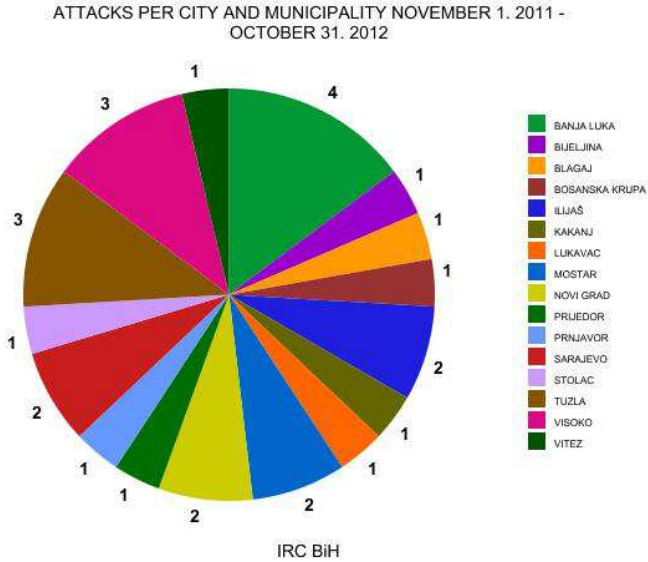
In this project implementation reporting period (November 1, 2011 – October 31, 2012), the Secretariat of IRC BiH received 27 reports on attacks on religious buildings, as well as religious officials who are closely linked with religious buildings. This number of reported attacks probably does not represent the total number of attacks on religious buildings in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but rather the number of those attacks reported to the Interreligious Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A certain number of attacks remain unreported to the IRC, especially when the attacks are motivated by material gain. Unlike the previous year, when no traditional Churches and religious communities were spared from attacks on their property, in this reporting period there were no attacks on buildings of the Jewish Community. However, the locations of the attacks in this reporting period are once again dispersed throughout the country.

From a total of 27 attacks in this reporting period, 9 attacks occurred on the territory of Republika Srpska, while 18 occurred on the territory of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.



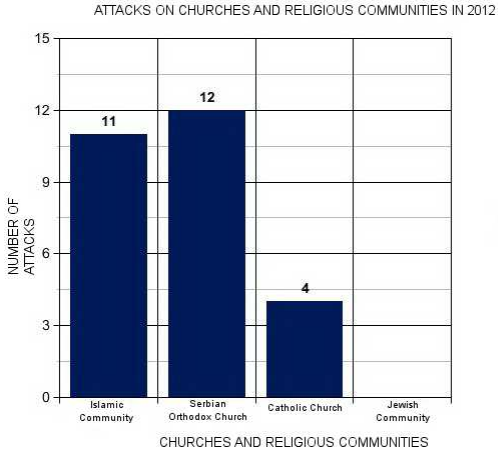
This is the representation of attacks per city and municipality in this reporting period (November 1, 2011 – October 31, 2012):

- 1. BANJA LUKA.....4
- 2. BIJELJINA.....1
- 3. BLAGAJ.....1
- 4. BOSANSKA KRUPA.....1
- 5. ILIJAŠ.....2
- 6. KAKANJ.....1
- 7. LUKAVAC.....1
- 8. MOSTAR.....2
- 9. NOVI GRAD.....2
- 10. PRIJEDOR.....1
- 11. PRNJAVOR.....1
- 12. SARAJEVO.....2
- 13. STOLAC.....1
- 14. TUZLA.....3
- 15. VISOKO.....3
- 16. VITEZ.....1



When it comes to the number of attacks on religious buildings of each of the Churches and religious communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Interreligious Council in BiH has reached the following conclusion by analysing the received reports:

Of a total of 27 attacks which occurred in this reporting period (November 1, 2011, to October 31, 2012) there were 11 attacks on buildings of the Islamic Community, 12 attacks on buildings of the Serbian Orthodox Church, and 4 attacks on buildings of the Catholic Church. As stated earlier, there were no reported attacks on buildings of the Jewish Community of BiH in this year.



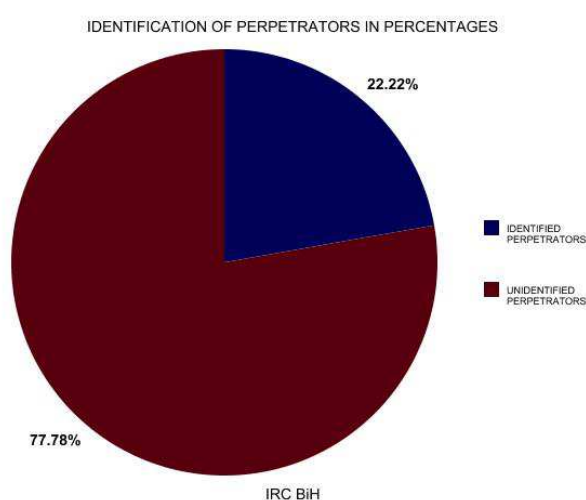
In this reporting period, in most cases the attacks were once again directed against religious buildings of Churches and religious communities which are, according to the number of believers in the area, somewhat of a minority.

IRC BiH condemned each of the reported attacks (except in cases when the aggrieved parties requested otherwise), and, if necessary, we organized field visits to the attacked community, and condemned these attacks together with the representatives of other Churches and religious communities, as well as representatives of the municipal administration. What is especially encouraging is the fact that there are cases in which the representatives of Churches and

religious communities in a certain local community self-initiatively organize joint condemnations of attacks on religious buildings.

Besides joint condemnations of attacks, the Interreligious Council also organized meetings with representatives of police agencies around Bosnia and Herzegovina, with a focus on places of repeated attacks. Results of the monitoring of attacks on religious buildings in the previous reporting period were presented in these meetings, and the ways for improving the protection of religious buildings was also discussed.

When it comes to the rate of solved cases, or the number of identified perpetrators, we received the following results from the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Federation of BiH and the Public Security Centres of Republika Srpska:



Perpetrators were identified in only 6 of the 27 attacks reported in this reporting period. In percentage, this amounts to 22.22% of all reported cases in this reporting period. We have to point out that, until the time of publishing of this report, we still have not received an answer from the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Canton Sarajevo, so that these results do not include attacks on religious buildings on the territory under their jurisdiction, i.e. Canton Sarajevo.

3. LIST OF RECEIVED REPORTS

In the reporting period between November 1, 2011, and October 31, 2012, the Interreligious Council in BiH received the following reports on attacks on religious buildings and other holy sites, as well as religious officials in close connection to these buildings. The following reports are in listed by chronological order and reference number.

Ref.no.	Name of building	Religious Community/Church	Location	Date
057-11/2011	Sv. Mihovila Cemetery	Catholic Church-Archdiocese of Vrhbosna	Bistrac, Lukavac	8/12/2011
058-12/2011	Brezičani mosque	Islamic Community-IC Majlis Prijedor	Brezičani, Prijedor	8/12/2011
059-12/2011	Vidorija Mosque	Islamic Community-IC Majlis Bosanski Novi	Novi Grad	9/12/2011
060-12/2011	Čaršija Mosque	Islamic Community-IC Majlis Stolac	Stolac	10/12/2011
061-12/2011	Ferhadija Mosque	Islamic Community-IC Majlis Banja Luka	Banja Luka	20/12/2011
062-12/2011	St. Elijah Church	Serbian Orthodox Church - Metropolitanate of Dabrobosna	Ilijaš	25/12/2011

063-01/2012	Church of the Transfiguration of the Lord	Serbian Orthodox Church - Metropolitanate of Dabrobosna	Sarajevo, Municipality Novo Sarajevo	3/1/2012
064-01/2012	Chapel in Breške Cemetery	Catholic Church-Archdiocese of Vrhbosna	Breške, Tuzla	30/1/2012
065-02/2012	Sv. Ante Chapel	Catholic Church-Archdiocese of Vrhbosna	Bukinje, Tuzla	16/2/2012
066-02/2012	St. Elijah Church	Serbian Orthodox Church - Eparchy of Bihać-Petrovac	Vranjska, Bosanska Krupa	23/2/2012
067-03/2012	Parish House	Serbian Orthodox Church - Eparchy of Zahum-Herzegovina and Primorje	Blagaj	23/2/2012
068-03/2012	Sefer Bey's Mosque	Islamic Community-IC Majlis Banja Luka	Banja Luka	13/3/2012
069-03/2012	Attack on a nun	Catholic Church-Archdiocese of Vrhbosna	Sarajevo, Municipality Centar	19/3/2012
070-03/2012	Arnaudija Mosque - Cemetery	Islamic Community-IC Majlis Banja Luka	Banja Luka	26/3/2012
071-04/2012	Bjelušine Cemetery	Serbian Orthodox Church - Eparchy of Zahum-Herzegovina and Primorje	Mostar	2/4/2012
072-04/2012	Memorial to fallen civilians	Islamic Community-IC Majlis Vitez	Donja Večeriska, Vitez	9/4/2012
073-04/2012	Hadži-Omer Mosque	Islamic Community-IC Majlis Banja Luka	Banja Luka	9/4/2012
074-04/2012	Church of St. John the Baptist	Serbian Orthodox Church - Metropolitanate of Dabrobosna	Kakanj	18/4/2012
075-04/2012	Church of the Saint Greatmartyr Procopius	Serbian Orthodox Church - Metropolitanate of Dabrobosna	Visoko	18/4/2012
076-04/2012	Church Cemetery in Raštani	Serbian Orthodox Church - Eparchy of Zahum-Herzegovina and Primorje	Potoci, Mostar	24/4/2012
077-06/2012	Church of the Conception of St. John the Baptist	Serbian Orthodox Church - Metropolitanate of Dabrobosna	Golo Brdo, Zimča, Visoko	12/6/2012
078-06/2012	Vidorija Mosque	Islamic Community-IC Majlis Bosanski Novi	Bosanski Novi	13/6/2012
079-07/2012	Atik Mosque	Islamic Community-IC Majlis Bijeljina	Bijeljina	30/7/2012
080-08/2012	Church of the Saint Greatmartyr Procopius	Serbian Orthodox Church - Metropolitanate of Dabrobosna	Visoko	17/8/2012
081-08/2012	Serbian Orthodox Cemetery in Kadarići	Serbian Orthodox Church - Metropolitanate of Dabrobosna	Ilijaš	17/8/2012
082-09/2012	Church of St. George the Great Martyr	Serbian Orthodox Church - Eparchy of Zvornik-Tuzla	Tuzla	5/9/2012
083-10/2012	City Mosque	Islamic Community-IC Majlis Prnjavor	Prnjavor	8/10/2012

4. CONCLUSION REGARDING THE JOINT CONDEMNATION OF ATTACKS ON RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS

All joint condemnations of attacks on religious buildings organized by the Secretariat of IRC BiH were organized through the regular hierarchy of Churches and religious communities. From the very beginning, the project was supported by the religious leaders of all four traditional Churches and religious communities. In most cases the religious officials understand the problems of minority communities, since all the Churches and religious communities in BiH are a minority in some parts of the country, and they are all facing similar problems. This is one of the main reasons for religious officials to be usually very interested in participating in these events, and showing solidarity with their colleagues from different Churches and religious communities regarding the attacks on religious buildings. What is especially encouraging is the number of cases of spontaneous condemnations of attacks on religious buildings which take place without the organization of the Secretariat of IRC BiH. One such example is the example from Mostar in which an imam and a priest jointly condemned the attack on a Catholic church.



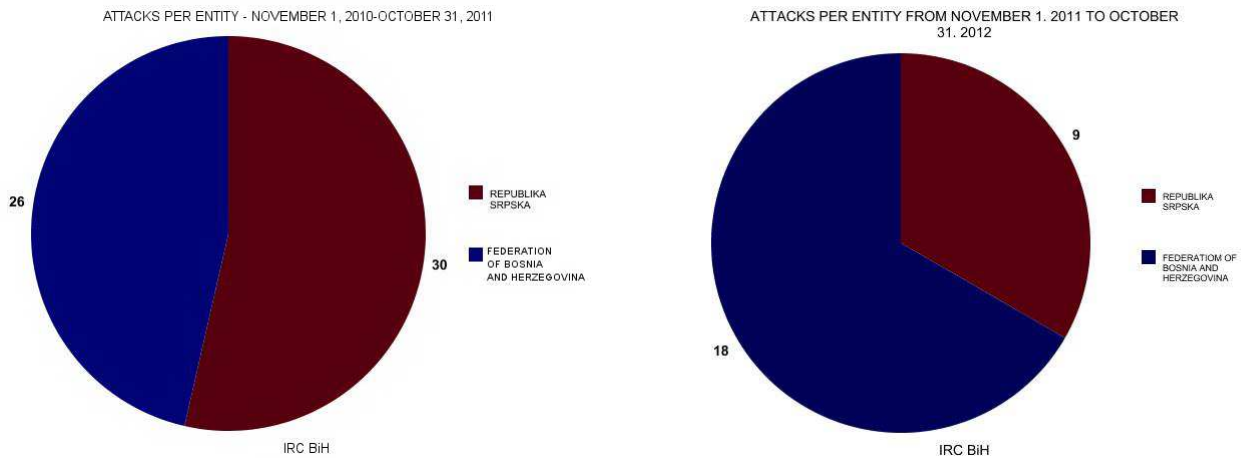
5. MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE PROJECT

This project is well received in the media from the very beginning. Media representatives recognized the significance of this project and made an enormous contribution by informing the public about the project, thereby also contributing to the affirmation of tolerance and peaceful coexistence in the society of Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the press conference at which we announced the beginning of the project, all the major TV and radio stations were present, just like the representatives of the printed media. The project was announced in the main news programme of all public services. Private TV and radio stations, as well as the printed media, also conveyed the message. Many media sources continued to follow the project and regularly cover our condemnations of attacks on religious buildings. The coverage was mainly fair and balanced. When everything is considered, we can be satisfied with the media coverage. As we neared the end of the first project period, we noticed that the interest of the media regarding project results, especially about the total number of attacks, as well as the percentage of solved and unsolved cases grew.

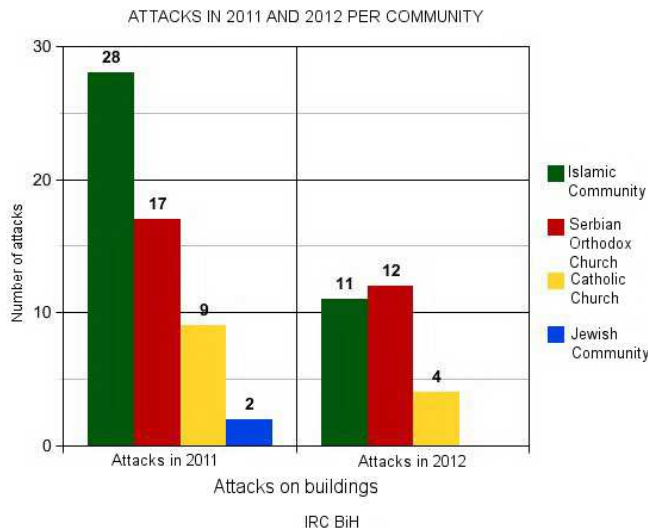
6. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Since the start of the project implementation (November 1, 2010) until the end of this reporting period (October 31, 2012), IRC BiH received a total of 83 reports of attacks on religious buildings.

From the total number of 83 attacks since the start of the project implementation on November 1, 2010 until the end of the second reporting period, concluding with October 30, 2012, a total of 39 attacks took place on the territory of Republika Srpska, while 44 attacks took place on the territory of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This is the comparative graphic display of attacks per entities in the first and second year of project implementation.



From a total number of 56 attacks which took place in the previous reporting period (November 1, 2010 – October 31, 2011), 27 attacks were directed against the buildings of the Islamic Community, 17 were directed against buildings of the Serbian Orthodox Church, 9 were directed against the buildings of the Catholic Church, and 2 attacks were directed against buildings of the Jewish Community. From a total of 27 attacks which took place during this reporting period (November 1, 2011 – October 31, 2012), 11 attacks were directed against buildings of the Islamic Community, 12 were directed against buildings of the Serbian Orthodox Church, and 4 were directed against buildings of the Catholic Church.



During the first year of project implementation, the police managed to identify the perpetrator in 20 of the total 56 reported cases of attacks on religious buildings. In percentage, this amounts to 35.71% of all reported cases. During the second year of project implementation the perpetrators were identified in 6 of 27 reported cases, or 22.22%. These are data received from the Public Security Centres in Republika Srpska, and the cantonal Ministries of Internal Affairs of the Federation of BiH. The final information is that the police managed to identify the perpetrators in 26 of a total 83 cases of attacks on religious buildings, which amounts to 31.32%.

7. PROJECT BENEFITS

Besides the main goal, the improvement of the protection of religious buildings, this project provides a number of other benefits, such as:

- **raising awareness on the need for public statements**
- **raising awareness on the need for joint condemnations of attacks**
- **placing pressure on competent bodies to perform their work more efficiently**
- **encouraging interreligious dialogue in local communities**
- **initiatives for the placing of video surveillance on religious buildings are in motion**

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the results of the monitoring of attacks on religious buildings, the Interreligious Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina recommends:

- HARSHER SENTENCES FOR PERPETRATORS

During these two years we have noticed that the sentences for perpetrators are not adequate. Of all the reported attacks, only two cases are being treated as incitement of religious and national hatred. All other cases are being treated as an offence or crime of damage to property, while the sentences are always either a monetary fine or probation. Harsher sentences need to be delivered for such crimes, since such crimes contain the “seed for spreading evil” and represent a potential source for inciting interethnic or interreligious hostility and conflict. After the attack on the Jewish Culture Centre and Synagogue Bet Shalom in Doboje, and the drawing of Nazi graffiti, the District Prosecutor stated, according to the Public Security Centre Doboje, that the above mentioned event does not display any criminal elements.

We welcome the initiatives for amendments to the criminal laws, in the sense that harsher sentences should be provided for. Such amendments were made in Republika Srpska and

District Brčko, and are expected in the Federation of BiH. However, we have to point out that for the victim it is not important whether an attack on a religious building will be treated as a special criminal offence or a severe form of another criminal offence. What is important to the victims is adequate sanctioning which will prevent the repeating of such actions, which has not been the case so far. Besides the efforts put into amending criminal laws, it is necessary to cooperate with the competent institutions regarding the penal policy which concerns such criminal offences.

- SIMPLIFY THE CRIME REPORTING PROCEDURE

Very often, the victims complain about the complicated and long-term crime reporting procedure. Sometimes the reporting of attacks on religious buildings requires over two hours due to the completion of all necessary forms. It is clear that a certain procedure is required, but we believe that this procedure needs to be simplified, especially with regards to reports of attacks on religious buildings which are targets of repeated attacks. It is also necessary to provide legal help and consultations to attack victims.

- ENCOURAGE AND INCITE PUBLIC CONDEMNATIONS OF ATTACKS ON RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS

With regards to attacks on religious buildings, the reaction of the local community is very important. Many victims pointed out to us that the public condemnation of attacks organized by IRC BiH in cooperation with religious communities and Churches in BiH meant a lot to them. The aim of attacks on religious buildings is very often to send a message to a certain religious community telling it that it is not welcome in a certain community. It is therefore important for the local community to react in such a way as to deny such a message, and for the representatives of civil society to condemn the attack and clearly state that this group is welcome in the local community. It is also necessary to help the victims in remedying the effects of the attacks in the sense of removing offensive graffiti or repairing damages made to the building.

- PLACING VIDEO SURVEILLANCE ON RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS WHICH HAVE BEEN THE TARGET OF REPEATED ATTACKS

In the report for the first year of monitoring, the IRC recommended video surveillance on buildings which have been targets of previous attacks. These proposals have been generally accepted, and we know that a few municipalities are working on that, namely: Novo Sarajevo and Banja Luka.

- WE SUPPORT THE PROPOSAL OF THE OSCE MISSION IN SARAJEVO REGARDING THE ESTABLISHING OF A HATE CRIME DATA-COLLECTION MECHANISM

The OSCE Mission in BiH, in its report “Combatting Hate Crimes 2012” (pg. 52) suggests the establishing of a joint hate crime data-collection mechanism. IRC BiH supports such a proposal, and we believe that the establishing of such a mechanism would help in combatting such crimes, thereby also providing better protection of religious buildings.

9. CONCLUSION

Although we have noticed a significant decrease in the number of attacks on religious buildings during the second year of monitoring, we believe that the attacks are still frequent and that greater efforts must be made in combatting such crimes.

From the reports of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Federation of BiH, and the Public Security Centres of Republika Srpska, we have established that in a large number of cases the attacks on religious buildings have been characterized as “damages to property”. In such cases, the aggrieved party is obliged to submit a request for criminal prosecution, and in most cases the aggrieved parties drop further prosecution. A very small number of attacks on religious buildings are treated as incitement of religious hatred. We believe that this has to change since attacks on religious buildings are very often motivated by hate against a certain Church or religious community.

We are pleased by the joint statements and an increased number of public condemnations of attacks on religious buildings by state officials. We can, for example, state the joint condemnation made by the IC Majlis in Mostar and the Eparchy Zahum-Herzegovina in which they condemned the attack on a Catholic Church and parochial office. What should also be welcomed are the activities of certain municipalities regarding video surveillance and repairs of damages made to certain religious buildings.

We are pleased with the cooperation with the media and we are grateful to all the media who were covering and publishing our joint condemnations of attacks, thereby also making a great contribution to the condemnation of discrimination and the promotion of tolerance throughout BiH.

We also welcome the activities of the OSCE Mission in Sarajevo in combatting hate crimes. The best results can only be achieved through cooperation of the competent state institutions, the civil society, and international institutions.

We have to point out the good cooperation with police agencies in BiH, as well as with the Ministry of Security of BiH.

More information about the project as well as the electronic version of the report can be found on the website of the Interreligious Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina: www.mrv.ba



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