

PRESS STATEMENT by Civic committee for human rights

DATE : 7th June 2002

Civic committee for human rights was addressed by son of Mrs. Božica Popović, returnee to the village of Čista Mala, in rear area of Šibenik. Mrs. Popović was coming back on Thursday, June 6, from Vodice to Čista Mala. As soon as she got on the local bus, the bus driver Mr. Zdravko Storić from the nearby village started shouting at her that she was «četnikuša» (chetnik woman), to get lost from Croatia, that her house should be burnt down and similar threats and offences. These threats and offences, apart from being disgraceful, are liable for prosecution and as intolerable behavior of bus driver toward passengers have a specific weight in the light of the fact that few years ago in Čista Mala one elderly returnee was murdered by the local bandits and one other elderly man was beaten up and sexually abused in the most bestial way. Some passengers from the bus joined the bus driver in threats and offences. After all of this, the scared population of Čista Mala said that Mrs. Popović made the mistake of entering the bus alone since it is known that people from Čista Mala go to nearby places only in a group.

Country in which elderly woman, if being of «another ethnic group», cannot enter the bus alone out of the fear that, not skinheads, but the bus driver and «peaceful citizens», will threaten and offend them, has problems (in a certain sense more serious than the economic ones) that demand decisive solving. First step towards ending such disgraceful behavior is (at least) public condemnation of offenders.