

PRESS STATEMENT OF CCHR

DATE: 26th September 2002

In strong reactions and acts of support to general Bobetko one simple fact is forgotten: crimes in Medački Džep have undoubtedly occurred! It is known for a long time now that those concern crimes committed against civilians such as, as stated in the indictment from Haag, burning alive Boja Vujnović, an elderly woman, while the group of murderers in Croatian Army uniforms around her laughs.

That happened nine years ago.

Have general Bobetko or Ministry of Defense or organizations for defense of dignity of the Homeland war done anything to establish who were the murderers and to wash that stain from Croatian Army?

Has Croatian Justice Department done anything to find out truth and to prosecute those criminals? Has the Catholic Church persisted on the moral judgment of these crimes? Have the previous or present Governments condemned those crimes and criminals as well as actions and individuals who endanger foundations of the Croatian state?

Unfortunately, none of this has happened.

Perhaps they were not aware of it. But today when everything is known, one is not trying to achieve the unity of the country in condemning those crimes but in obstructing the process to establish and punish those who are guilty for the crimes. In the flood of political manipulations statement of the President of Republic of Croatia was refreshing and gave one back the faith that there might be hope for this country, that there are people on most important positions who, in critical times, can in tranquil manner say the simple truth.

There is a little to add to this. It is truth that the indictment contains few imprecision (so, for e.g. in paragraph 19 of the indictment, it says that (as if it was written by extremist Croatian politicians): «few months before the declaration of independence of Croatia there were armed conflicts between Croatians Serbs and Croatian forces...» ... «Croatian Serbs and Yugoslav National Army were in control of one third of the Croatian territory»). But the fact that the indictment contains wrong claims, should be proven in the court and can serve as a strong evidence of defense of the accused. All of those who are involved in finding errors in the indictment are in fact working on its correction and thus making it stronger.

Legitimacy of the defense of Croatia or Croatia as a state is not at all questioned in the indictment. Conscious false presentation of the indictment is an attempt of

petty-political manipulation with emotions of the citizens. But what really represents great danger for the mental health of the nation, and as politicians would say for Croatia, are attempts to evade punishing of war crimes and consequently to never make distance between those crimes and the Croatian state and the Croatian Homeland war.