



Security Council

Fifty-third Year

3859th Meeting

Friday, 6 March 1998, 4.55 p.m.

New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Sedat Jobe	(Gambia)
<i>Members:</i>	Bahrain	Mr. Buallay
	Brazil	Mr. Patriota
	China	Mr. Shen Guofang
	Costa Rica	Mr. Berrocal Soto
	France	Mr. Dejammet
	Gabon	Mr. Dangué Réwaka
	Japan	Mr. Tanaka
	Kenya	Mr. Mahugu
	Portugal	Mr. Monteiro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Fedotov
	Slovenia	Mr. Türk
	Sweden	Mr. Lidén
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Gomersall
	United States of America	Mr. Richardson

Agenda

The situation in Croatia

The meeting was called to order at 4.55 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Croatia

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Croatia, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Šimonović (Croatia) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to the following documents: S/1998/161, letter dated 26 February 1998 from the Chargé d'affaires *ad interim* of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council; and S/1998/197, letter dated 5 March 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Croatia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council.

Following consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council expresses its concern at the Croatian Government's lack of compliance with obligations assumed under the Basic Agreement on the Region of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (S/1995/951), the Croatian Government's letter of 13 January 1997 (S/1997/27, annex) and the agreement of 23 April 1997 between the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Croatian Government concerning

the return of refugees and displaced persons. The Council notes that the overall security situation in the Danube region remains relatively stable, but is particularly concerned about the increasing incidence of harassment and intimidation of the local Serb community in the region and the failure of the Croatian Government to apply the process of national reconciliation in an effective way at the local level. This worrying situation, together with recent statements by the Croatian authorities, cast doubt upon the Republic of Croatia's commitment to include ethnic Serbs and persons from other minorities as full and equal members of Croatian society.

"The Security Council, recalling the statement by its President of 13 February 1998 (S/PRST/1998/3) and having noted the letter from the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Croatia of 5 March 1998 (S/1998/197), calls upon the Croatian Government publicly to reaffirm and by its actions to demonstrate its commitment to fulfilling its obligations under the Basic Agreement and other agreements in full, including through progress on national reconciliation at every level. In particular, the Council calls upon the Croatian Government to take prompt and unequivocal steps to ensure the safety, security and rights of all Croatian citizens and to build confidence among the Serb community throughout Croatia, including by providing promised funding for the Joint Council of Municipalities. These steps should include measures to create the conditions to allow local Serbs to remain in the region, to facilitate the return of refugees and displaced persons and to address underlying practical and economic issues which inhibit returns. The Council calls upon the Croatian Government to: establish clear procedures for the documentation of refugees from Croatia; issue an equitable plan for nationwide two-way returns; implement fully and fairly its legislation on amnesty; act promptly to pass equitable property and tenancy rights legislation which would encourage returns and stimulate additional international reconstruction assistance; ensure fair employment benefit practices and equal economic opportunity; and ensure the non-discriminatory application of the rule of law.

"The Security Council recognizes that, since the end of the UNTAES mandate, the performance of the Croatian police has been generally satisfactory, and in this context expresses its

appreciation and support for the work of the United Nations civilian police support group. The Council notes, however, that public confidence in the police is low. The Council calls upon the Croatian Government to take measures, including through public information and police preventive action, to improve public confidence in the police as part of a wider programme of measures to prevent ethnically motivated crime and ensure the protection and equal treatment of all Croatian citizens, regardless of ethnicity.

“The Security Council stresses that, following the termination of UNTAES, responsibility for the

full reintegration of the Danube region lies clearly with the Croatian Government. The United Nations will continue to work closely with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in monitoring the situation and reminding the Croatian Government of its obligations.”

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/1998/6.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on the agenda.

The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.