

Mr. Milo Djukanovic
Prime Minister, Republic of Montenegro
Mr. Miras Radovic
Minister of Justice, Republic of Montenegro

Stockholm, 10 February 2010

Dear Mr. Djukanovic and Mr. Radovic,

On behalf of Civil Rights Defenders (former Swedish Helsinki Committee) I would like to express my deep concern about a possible violation of Article 3 (prohibition of torture) of the European Convention of Human Rights in the Institution for Enforcement of Criminal Sanctions (ZIKS) and the lack of full and independent investigation in relation to these cases. Moreover, I am concerned about the ban of permissions to visit ZIKS, which were previously issued for my colleague Mr. Goran Miletic (human rights lawyer, Civil Rights Defenders) and Mr. Boris Raonic (Programme Director) and Milan Radovic (Researcher) from Youth Initiative for Human Rights in Montenegro.

In co-operation with Civil Rights Defenders, Youth Initiative for Human Rights in Montenegro has over the last years monitored and reported on some torture cases. Relevant state institutions have been encouraged to step up its efforts to fully eradicate torture and inhuman and degrading treatment within the state structures. Some of the cases have been connected to prisoners in the Institution for Enforcement of Criminal Sanctions (ZIKS). At the end of January media announced that over 100 prisoners in ZIKS were on hunger strike because of the way they were treated by the prison staff. The administration of ZIKS denied these facts, while independent monitors were not allowed to enter the prison in order to verify what was taking place.

I am deeply concerned over reports and allegations of torture and inhuman and degrading treatment within ZIKS. I urge you to ensure that the responsible institutions do everything possible to prevent possible ill-treatment of prisoners. Furthermore, it is of utmost importance that independent control organs properly investigate such allegations and reports. This is a clear international obligation of all members of the Council of Europe, including Montenegro.

Civil Rights Defenders and Youth Initiative for Human Rights will continue to monitor and report on the situation in regard to prisoners within ZIKS, as well as the overall situation in regard to the prohibition of torture and inhuman and degrading treatment in Montenegro. However, inclusive monitoring will be impossible without immediate access to prisons. Thus, I would appreciate if necessary permissions can be issued without further postponing.

I look forward to receiving your response. Thanks in advance.

Sincerely,

Robert Hårdh
Executive Director