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HEAD OF THE OSCE MISSION TO CROATIA CONDEMNED VIOLENCE
AGAINST ELDERLY SERBS IN **OSTROVICA**

Fuentes: Incidents in Croatia are isolated cases

By L. Kalmeta

ZADAR - The Head of the OSCE Mission to Croatia, **Jorge Fuentes**, accompanied by his associates visited **Cedomir Medic** and **Miljko Medic** in Ostrovica, Benkovac area, on Thursday. The visit came two days after the Medic brothers, both of them in their 80's, were attacked and beaten in front of their houses in Ostrovica.

“Such violent incidents and ethnic intolerance are isolated cases in Croatia. Naturally, even a single incident is a lot, but the situation is not dramatic and this event will not influence the fact that Croatia is advancing well regarding reconciliation and the acceptance of diversity,” said Ambassador Fuentes, emphasizing that he came to Ostrovica in order to condemn the incident and violence against the two elderly Serb men.

“I spoke about the event with Zadar County Prefect **Ivo Grbic** and Mayor **Zivko Kolega**, who are in contact with the police and insist on resolving this case. We were informed by the police that the investigation is intense and that results would soon be published,” said Fuentes.

He spoke with the injured old men in Ostrovica and the conversation took place in the presence of the Head of Benkovac Police Station, **Zoran Zrilic**, the Mayor of Lisane Ostrovacke Municipality, **Zeljko Mijic**, and a member of the Council for National Minorities, **Nebojsa Cvjetan**, along with the numerous OSCE members. All three official condemned violence against the old town-inhabitants-returnees, while Ambassador Fuentes stressed that the incident caused only short-term damage to Croatia.

“It is important that the Croatian authorities punish the perpetrators as soon as possible. In the long run, Croatia is on a good track, which I spoke about with the Prime Minister **Ivo Sanader**. The Prime Minister promised that Croatia would make significant progress in that field,” stated Fuentes.