



Intelligence Report

DCI Interagency Balkan Task Force

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Grave Humanitarian Conditions Loom In Bihac Region

A variety of humanitarian challenges in the Bihac region could soon cause large scale suffering among roughly 250,000 people. [redacted] food shortages among 200,000 people in the Bihac enclave are critical; some inhabitants could face starvation by mid-winter. Some 30,000 additional Bosnian refugees in the Krajina who fled the collapse of rebel Muslim leader Abdic are ill-prepared for winter and completely dependent on UN food and water deliveries. Meanwhile, Bosnian Government offensives south of Bihac have forced 10,000 Serbs from their homes [redacted] Serb retaliation against aid deliveries would intensify already grave conditions in Bihac and elsewhere in Bosnia.

- UN officials warned recently that aid warehouses in the Bihac pocket were empty and that a poor harvest limited other food supplies. They blame a blockade by Krajina Serbs for the shortage; Serbs have turned back more than 70 aid convoys over the past five months. Aid agencies have prepared plans to airdrop relief supplies to the enclave, but US military planners judge the threat to relief aircraft as too great to conduct airdrops. Without aid convoys or airdrops the food situation will soon be critical.
- Unlike most areas in Bosnia, any obstruction of aid deliveries to the 30,000 refugees at Batnoga and Turanj in the Krajina would cause an almost immediate food crisis. The threat due to exposure could soon be significant as well; temperatures will reach freezing in November and many of the refugees still lack shelter and winter clothing. The refugees refuse to return home out of fear of government reprisals and conscription and the erroneous belief--fanned by Abdic loyalists--that Croatia will shelter them.
- Although relief agencies initially dispatched food and medical supplies to Serb refugees they have since refused to send additional supplies because Bosnian Serbs have refused to protect relief workers and convoys. Many of the refugees are likely to be in continuing need since they probably took only limited food and clothing before fleeing. An aid shortfall among needy Serb refugees could prompt expanded Serb retaliation. [redacted]

This report was prepared by analysts assigned to the DCI Interagency Balkan Task Force in support of US policy on Bosnia. Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to Chief, [redacted]

