



General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

A/48/641
S/26796
24 November 1993
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH/FRENCH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Forty-eighth session
Agenda item 107
ELIMINATION OF RACISM AND
RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-eighth year

Letter dated 23 November 1993 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i.
of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations
addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter addressed to you by
Dr. Slavko Gordic, Minister for Education and Culture of the Federal Republic of
Yugoslavia (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex
circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda
item 107, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dragomir DJOKIC
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

ANNEX

Letter dated 11 November 1993 from the Minister for Education
and Culture of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia addressed
to the Secretary-General

For many years, a large number of Yugoslav nationals have been living with their family members in Western European countries. The host countries, wishing to ensure that the children of migrant workers maintain their national and cultural identity, have, in accordance with international instruments and bilateral agreements, authorized, for more than 20 years, the teaching of the language and culture of the countries of origin, in addition to the regular education of foreign children and young people.

The imposition of the Security Council sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the adoption of Security Council resolution 757 (1992) have, in some European countries, called into question the position and status of Yugoslav nationals and their children. Although the sanctions are directed at the territory of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and should not affect migrant workers, during the past year and a half in which the sanctions have been implemented, some countries have expanded their application to include Yugoslav nationals living in their territory. Furthermore, in some host countries, the sanctions also affect the field of education, which was exempted from them under a UNESCO decision.

The specific reason for this letter is the decision by the French Ministries of National Education and Foreign Affairs to suspend, during this school year, language and culture courses in the Serbian language for Yugoslav children of Serbian and Montenegrin nationality. Unfortunately, this decision by the French authorities, which they justify through implementation of the sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, fails to take account of the fact that it is a question of children, who, in most cases, were born in France or are even of French nationality.

In the Federal Republic of Germany, only Yugoslav children of Serbian and Montenegrin nationality have been deprived of grants for organizing native language and culture courses and only these children are unable to purchase school textbooks and readers printed in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia because a decision by the German Government imposed an embargo on the import of school books. Not only has the United Nations sanctions Committee not acceded to the request by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to exempt books and textbooks for the teaching of their native language to children living abroad from the application of the sanctions, but it has not even replied to that request. Such a situation has placed the teaching of the national language and culture in a very difficult situation in Germany and constitutes an act of national discrimination with regard to the other foreign children in that country.

In addition to these examples of acts designed to threaten the national and cultural identity of Yugoslav citizens of Serbian and Montenegrin nationality by eliminating the teaching of Serbian language and culture in French schools and a considerable worsening of teaching conditions in Germany, extremely alarming

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examples of an interpretation of conflicts in the regions of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia have recently been appearing in the school textbooks and literature of those countries. The most recently used history textbooks in French schools for children from the age of 10 to 14 and 16 to 18, such as, for example, the secondary-school eighth-level textbook by Pierre Milz and Serge Bernstein, contain texts in which Serbs, as a nation, are depicted as those who caused the war and the population migrations in the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Serbs, Serbia and the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts are linked in these textbooks to the ideas of "Greater Serbia" and "ethnic cleansing". In the Federal State of Hamburg in Germany, a text entitled "War in the Balkans", for 10th grade pupils in German schools, holds the Serbs responsible for the war and war crimes (articles published in the press on the mass murder of Muslims by Serbs, the rape of Muslim women and the oppression of Albanians in Kosovo by the Serbian State are quoted). In addition, exhibitions of work by children, including Croatian and Muslim children, depicting their view of "Serb aggression" have been held in classes.

Owing to this attitude on the part of the school authorities, the current policy has been introduced into schools and citizens of Serbian and Montenegrin nationality have been systematically subjected to a type of discrimination which was unknown in the recent history of the developed countries and can be compared only to the stigmatization and prosecution of the Jews during the Second World War.

In view of the foregoing examples, we believe that Yugoslav citizens of Serbian and Montenegrin nationality living abroad, including those who are nationals of those countries, are, in spite of the fact that they are making a major contribution to their development (they pay taxes, inter alia, for education), themselves victims of the sanctions imposed against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which are suspending and violating their basic human rights and the right to education, exercised, furthermore, by migrant workers. In other words, United Nations instruments, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families are being violated in the case of Yugoslav nationals residing abroad. For this reason, we request you to provide your assistance, in accordance with your office and authority, to ensure that the practice of extending the application of the sanctions to Yugoslav nationals residing outside the frontiers of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is halted, since a single United Nations document has thus rendered invalid the conventions adopted to ensure the greatest protection of human rights and freedoms. The facts referred to above concerning the elimination of the teaching of the Serbian language and culture in French schools, the publication in France and Germany of school textbooks containing erroneous and non-pedagogical material, and the imposition of school textbooks designed for others on Serbian and Montenegrin children for the teaching of their language and culture indicate a dangerous practice in European countries, which is causing discrimination, stigmatization and the spread of intolerance and hatred among the native population.

We expect that the Organization, which you head, will request the Governments of the countries in which the aforementioned occurrences were reported to treat Yugoslav children like the children of the other foreign

communities and that they will prevent any form of discrimination against them. This means that it will be necessary to reinstate the language and culture courses in the Serbian language for Yugoslav children in France, lift the embargo on the import of school textbooks in Germany and publicly condemn the attempts to introduce into education a policy which stigmatizes innocent citizens of Serbian and Montenegrin nationality in those countries.

We hope that acting by virtue of your eminent and honourable position, you will protect the human rights of the Yugoslav children and young people who are living abroad and, thereby, the basic principles of mankind in education.

(Signed) Slavko GORDIĆ
Federal Minister
