



Monitoring and Responses to Attacks on Religious Buildings and Other Holy Sites in BiH

The Project Review Report

November 1st 2011 – October 31st 2012

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Background

“Monitoring and Responses to Attacks on Religious Buildings and Other Holy Sites in BiH” started as a one-year pilot project (November 2010 – October 2011) that has been implemented in cooperation with the Inter-religious Council of Bosnia Herzegovina (IRC), the Nansen Dialogue Center Sarajevo (NDC) and the Oslo Center for Peace and Human Rights (OC). It was developed within the framework of the wider project *“A Universal Code on Holy Sites”* run by four partners: One World in Dialogue (EVID), Search for Common Ground (SFCG), Religions for Peace (RfP), in addition to the European Council for Religious Leaders (ECRL) and the OC. The goals of the project are the safe use by religious adherents of their sacred places world-wide and to build trust and promote inter-religious reconciliation. Currently an effort is being made to have a UN resolution adopted in the spirit of the Code. The pilot project was completely financially supported by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA).

The pilot project *“Monitoring and Responses to Attacks on Religious Buildings and Other Holy Sites in BiH” – Protection of Holy Sites* continued for another year (November 2011 – October 2012). In the second year of the implementation part of the project was financially supported by The Office of Public Affairs (OPA) of The United States Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, while the evaluation part of the project was again supported by NMFA.

Except for budgetary issues and various technical requirements of different donors, which significantly influenced the level of implementation, the project structure remained more or less the same.

The overall goal of the project is enhanced trust and improved relations between religious and ethnic communities in BiH.

The project monitors attacks and other incidents related to **objects of religious significance** for Muslim, Orthodox, Catholic and Jewish communities throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) with **the main goal of improving their protection**. Attacks on religious objects or holy sites are defined as physical attacks, as well as any form of vandalism and desecralisation of religious buildings or other places of significance. In this regard expected results of the project are:

- A well established and informative data base of the attacks, with all relevant details such as: the attacked object, location, damage, perpetrators and their profile, motifs, law enforcement status, and reactions of religious communities, authorities and media;
- An organized multi-religious response – condemnation of such attacks in a timely manner.
- An analysis of the collected data and recommendations for better protection of objects of religious significance, as well as a more efficient response of all religious communities, authorities and media.

To obtain results and achieve these goals the project will be implemented through five main stages, with supplementing activities:

1. Collection of Data and Reports on Attacks
2. Verification of Attacks
3. Reaction/Response to Attacks
4. Documentation
5. Evaluation

Methodology

The review is based on qualitative and quantitative analysis of the project's documentation and data including:

- Concept Paper for The Pilot Project 'A Universal Code On Holy Sites': Monitoring and Responses To Attacks On Religious Buildings And Other Holy Sites In BiH
- The Final Report On The Pilot Project from the first year
- The Final Review Report from the first year
- The Final Report on The Project from the second year¹
- Central Register of Attacks (CRA)²
- Registers of an Attack (RA)³
- Web presentation and contents
- Travel report: project visit to Bosnia Herzegovina
- Personal notes from the meetings.

The documentation was carefully read and analyzed both manually and with support of software for qualitative ("Atlas-Ti 7") and quantitative ("Excel") analysis. The analysis was done in two steps. First, we analyzed the documentation related to the second year of implementation: 1st November 2011 – 31st October 2012. Secondly, we compared the data from the first and the second years of implementation.

All arguments, conclusions and recommendations were derived from analysis of the text since deeper contextual analysis was beyond the project scope and therefore was not performed. However, the data and results gained during project implementation offer a solid base for such contextual analysis as revealing factors that influence project implementation also reinforce arguments, conclusions and recommendations.

Assessment of the second year project implementation

Introduction

The first year of the project ended on 31st October 2011. It continued into November 1st 2011 and lasted for another year. The second year was routinely implemented according to procedures developed at an early stage of the first year of project implementation. The procedure consisted of several steps:

- Reception of report on the attack;
- Immediate verification and validation of received report, including identifying applicant and facts of the attack;
- Option 1: 7 days after – a site visit was planned in agreement with the victim;
 - Invitation was sent to representatives of all religious communities, authorities and media;
 - Repeated invitations were sent in the form of a request for confirmation – (this was to be seen as further encouragement for potential participants to attend the site visit);

¹ IRC, *Monitoring and Responses to Attacks on Religious Buildings and Other Holy Sites in BiH - Protection of Holy Sites*, Annual Report, Reporting Period from November 1, 2011, to October 31, 2012, Sarajevo 2012 Available at: http://www.mrv.ba/images/stories/Monitoring/engl_monitoring%20izvjestaj%202012_final.pdf Accessed 01.03.2013.

² A simple data-base spreadsheet in MS Excel, containing basic information about all attacks.

³ A word document containing detailed information about every single attack.

- During the site visit and gathering, information on the event was shared, and a statement of condemnation conveyed to presented media;
- List of all participants was made;
- The day after the meeting there was a web presentation of the gathering and all relevant data on the attack, participants and their statements;⁴
- Option 2: When there was no joint meeting and condemnation, project staff (PS) solely, in agreement with the victim, published a statement condemning the attack
- The data on the event, including images, is to be stored in a specific file. An electronic data base was also established and is being maintained.
- 60 days after the attack a follow-up was planned, which focused on police/court procedures for finding and processing the perpetrator(s).

It is important to emphasize that during the implementation, given time-frames and reactions may have varied from case to case due to the specific circumstances of the attack. The basic principle behind a reaction should be “Do not harm!” Namely, that the reaction to the attack should not further jeopardize the victim.

The implementation of the second year of the project will be reviewed through the six stages/activities mentioned above with regards to these procedures. At the end, we will examine the status of achievements with regard to expected results, and the overall goal of the project.

Collection of Data and Reports on Attacks

During the first year, a flyer with instructions on how to report an attack was created and distributed through several channels: regular religious communities’ communicational channels, regular dissemination channels of IRC, NDC and other related NGOs, and by personal deliveries. The application form for registering attacks has been available from the IRC web site since the project’s inception.⁵

During the second year there was no further distribution of the flyer.

Collection of the reports was another important activity at this stage. The first reported attack of the second year took place on November 8th2011, while the last reported attack in this reporting period took place on October 10th 2012.

During the second year of implementation there were 27 reported attacks on mosques, churches, graveyards, religious officials and believers. According to religion there have been

- 11 attacks on Islamic Community objects and people;
- 4 attacks on Serbian Orthodox Church objects;
- 12 attacks on Catholic Church objects and people;

There have been no registered attacks on Jewish community objects.

The attacks took place in 16 different locations (cities, towns, villages) throughout BiH, 18 of them in Federation of BiH, 9 in Republic of Srpska (RS). Out of the total number of attacks, 10 occurred in the same locations as the previous year, while there were also attacks in 6 new locations.

The reports were received directly from the officials of the religious community to which the attacked object belonged. The official IRC reporting forms (web based or flyer) were used for

⁴ See: <http://mrv.ba/lat/projekti/monitoring-napada> accessed 01.03.2013.

⁵ <http://mrv.ba/images/stories/documents/prijava%20napada.pdf> accessed 01.03.2013.

reporting in all but 2 cases where the attack was reported by phone and the IRC officer completed the official form.

Reports from all parts of BiH, and the prevailing use of the official reporting form, suggest that the information on the project and the reporting procedure has been fairly well distributed throughout the country. Still, according to communications with religious representatives in the field, as well as a significant number of non-reported attacks, we suggest another round of distribution of information and flyers to local communities throughout BiH.

By posting the final report on the implementation of the pilot project on the web site's main page,⁶ PS provided additional and more detailed information of the project, which might result in better and faster reporting.

Verification of Attacks

The second stage of implementation is validation of the information on the attack. It is an important action designed to avoid possible false information that might produce a negative impact. It is also very important feedback for the person who filed the report to see that this information has been read and processed. It is also an opportunity for discussion with the reporting persons on the appropriate response to the attack.

In all the cases, PS verified the reported attack by direct conversation with a representative of the attacked side. Validity of the reports was also confirmed by a police report in the majority of the cases. In one case related to attacks in Banja Luka, police claimed that they did not receive a report on the attack.⁷ The same response was also given in the last reporting period for the four attacks that took places in Banja Luka, so there is certain continuity in the police behavior in regards to these attacks.

Reaction/Response to Attacks

An essential part of the project implementation is a fast and appropriate response to the attacks. It is designed to be a gathering of religious communities' representatives in joint condemnation of any kind of attack on holy sites in BiH. Beyond its immediate effect of sending a joint message regarding highly inappropriate acts of attacking any religious community, it indirectly builds trust and improves communication among religious communities' representatives at a local level.

The following instructions were given in the project design. PS organized reaction and response in all cases.

For 8 cases (30%), a joint visit to the site of the attack was organized. In 6 cases, representatives of all the religious denominations from the local communities and local government took part in these visits. In one case there was only a visit by PS. And in one other case there was not enough data in the documentation about who visited (Case 074-04/2012). In the final report, another case was mentioned where representatives of the Islam and Orthodox religious communities jointly condemned the attack on a Catholic Church and parochial office in Mostar.⁸ However this attack is registered neither in the "Central Register of Attacks" (CRA) nor in the individual "Registers of an Attack" (RA).⁹

⁶ IRC, *Monitoring and Responses*.

⁷ It is very symptomatic that in the victim's report (Case No. 61-12/2011) it is written that the police identified the perpetrator, arrested him for an informative talk but released him in order to be called to meet before a judge at a later stage. However, in the police memo, sent on IRC request, there is statement that the attacks have not been reported.

⁸ IRC, *Monitoring and Responses to Attacks*, p. 7 and p. 11.

⁹ The reason for not reporting this attack from the side of victim is that the bishop in which jurisdiction is the attacked church do not belongs to IRC.

In 3 cases both local and national media came and reported on the joint condemnations. Three more visits were reported only by various web portals, while two cases (Cases no: 076-04/2012 and 083-10/2012) had no registered media reports.

In 19 cases there was no organized visit. There is no explanation in the project documentation why these visits did not take place. PS issued the public statement of condemnation in 18 cases, while in one case (Case no: 082-09/2012) no statement was issued, without explanation in the documentation. Various web portals published 7 of these statements.

According to available documentation, there have been a total of 7 documented media representatives (TV, Radio, newspapers, agencies) to cover the cases, including those with no joint condemnation. This number does not include numerous web portals that covered the cases. These 7 media, in addition to various web portals, appeared at visits and/or conveyed messages on attacks 26 times. This number includes only one report per the category “web portal”, since there is no list of the web portals which published reports on the attacks. Therefore the specified number of 26 media reports is, in reality, probably several times larger. However, the number of attacks not covered by the media is 10 (37%), which seems somewhat high.¹⁰

Besides media coverage of the event, PS published reports on the attacks, responses and statements at the IRC web site, except in 1 case (Case no: 082-09/2012). As a regular practice, the actual attack is posted on the front page,¹¹ while the posts from the previous attacks could be found at IRC’s page dedicated to monitoring the project.¹²

According to received reports of the attacks, all of them have been reported to police. This was also officially confirmed by police except in the above-mentioned case in Banja Luka.¹³

In the project period, police identified perpetrators in 6 cases (22%), and further procedures towards prosecution have begun in three cases.

To conclude fairly about the reaction and response to the attacks, we are missing a lot of details and data in the project documentation. Relying upon previous experience with the project, and the fact that there is a new funder of the activities, we can only assume why there have been no visits in so many cases (per request of the victim¹⁴ and/or reduced personnel and travel funds), but no available data to corroborate these assumptions.

Regarding media response, we were informed by PS that the following media coverage was not specifically requested by the new funder. In addition, the lower number of attacks and joint visits influenced media coverage. However, a more comprehensive list of media (particularly web portals) would help in more precisely estimating the response of media.

What we found well done was the increased efforts of PS to communicate with police, which is corroborated by the attached police memos issued on PS requests.

Besides these remarks, there are no indicators of any problems with the project implementation, so we can conclude that it proceeded without major obstacles.

¹⁰ For comparison: only 16% of attack was not media covered in the first year.

¹¹ <http://www.mrv.ba> accessed 02.03.2013.

¹² <http://www.mrv.ba/lat/projekti/monitoring-napada> accessed 02.03.2013.

¹³ Case No. 061-12/2011, see foot note 4.

¹⁴ They consider attacks either as clear case of burglary and theft, or they simply did not want to make “big story” about it, which might have counterproductive effects for them being the significant minority in the local community. This is also reason why many of the cases have not been reported at all.

Documentation

In the previous year of the project implementation, PS developed an electronic database in which the reported attacks have been recorded for documentation and analytical purposes. It consists of the “Central Register of Attacks” (CRA), programmed in Excel, that is hyperlinked to individual reports “Registers of an Attack”. (RA)The original CRA has been improved in the second part of implementation, which makes for easier data manipulation and processing. The following data are covered by the CRA:

- Record-case number,
- Attacked object (also functioning as a hyperlink to individual RA),
- Religious community – full name including administrative unit
- Religious community – one letter acronym
- Location – name of the place
- Location – municipality and/or City
- Location – Entity
- Date of report
- Method of report
- If the attack is reported to police,
- Verification of the attack
- Whether visit to site has been made
- If the suspect has been identified,
- Motif of the attack,
- If the perpetrator was convicted.

Although in the final revision of the report we suggested and attached an upgraded version of the CRA document that included more automatic statistic and media following tools for easier analysis, it was not adopted. However, during preparation for this report we used an upgraded version of CRA documents for much easier access to data for comparative quantitative and qualitative analysis.

The template of the RA was made as a Word document and contains all required content divided into the following chapters:

- Heading: memo of the project, number of the case and date
- Chapter 1 – Report on attack: name of the attacked object, place and date of the attack, religious community to which the object belongs, details on how the attack has been reported
- Chapter 2 – Authenticity test, i.e. verification of attack
- Chapter 3 – Details of the report to police
- Chapter 4 – Reaction/response to the attack: how it was done, media reactions
- Chapter 5 – Police investigation check: whether perpetrator was identified, motif of the attack, list of stolen-damaged properties, profile of the perpetrator
- Chapter 6 – Details on legal prosecution, whether the case is open, by which agency, how the case was resolved.
- Addendum – scanned report, photos from the attacked site, press-clippings, statements, etc.

The RA allowed for all relevant data on a single attack to be recorded in one place.

Regarding the content of the database, this is where the data of attacks and responses are registered; law enforcement and particularly legal prosecution were added, where available, in the second year. However it is significantly less detailed than in the previous year. What is absent in particular is a description of the attack. PS relied mainly upon the attached description of the attack from the attack reporting form. This is particularly problematic, since unlike in the previous year where these details were given in the final report, new final report gives no such data. Secondly, a more detailed list of media (particularly web portals) is needed, regardless of the fact that the funder did not specifically request it. Also, some small inconsistencies were noted among CRA and RA, but without serious effects on the reliability of the data.¹⁵ Nevertheless, these inconsistencies should be resolved ASAP.

Although descriptions of responses in the RA documents were informative, our recommendation remains to give a more detailed description, similar to the one that was given in the progress report of the first year under the chapter 2.¹⁶ Also, if the only response is IRC's press-release, it would be good idea to have it copied in the RA document or, as we recommended in the last review, to hyper-link IRC's web posts on the attack, response and statement with the cases recorded at CRA.

Since the project will be continued and as data will aggregate, we now strongly recommend the development of a professional data-base for easier and faster input, manipulation, search and analysis of data. The professional data-base could easily connect all forms, reports, statistical and other data in one place significantly decreasing time needed to administrate data and information.

To conclude: Data on attacks has been fairly registered in a timely manner. Yet we expected more detailed elaboration in the important chapters of the RA abovementioned.

Evaluation and Data analysis

Unlike in the report from the previous year, data analysis and evaluation has now been presented in a very brief form. PS presented basic statistical data, drawing few conclusions.¹⁷ They also made a brief comparative analysis between the first and second year.¹⁸ Based on this analysis they formed conclusions regarding a number of project benefits (added values beyond main goal),¹⁹ and offered a number of recommendations.²⁰ In the closing chapter, PS gave a short conclusion on the report.

From the presented issues, it is obvious that the report was written for PR purposes rather than as a comprehensive description of the project and its results. Whether such a form was requested from the funder we do not know, since we were provided only with this form of the report.

However, we will attempt additional analyses according to the categories from the previous period in an attempt to create consistency between data, analysis and comparison. Analyses from the IRC report will be adjusted to the logic we used in this review. We will use the following categories for the analysis:

¹⁵ For example: In the CRA (Case 74) it is written that there had been field visit, while in the RA there are no details about that visit at all.

¹⁶ In the Case 1, for example, instead of given description of the reaction „Izlaskom na teren i osudom od strane lokalnih vjerskih službenika (site visit and condemnation of the local religious officials)“ we suggest content from your progress report: “IRC's staff visited above mentioned monastery on November 9th 2010 to make a public condemnation of this attack. Religious officials from Catholic and Muslim communities were present, namely Auxiliary Bishop of Banja Luka, Msgr. Marko Semren and chief imam of Banja Luka Muris ef. Spahic. Also representative of OSCE, Mrs. Marijana Andjelkovic accompanied IRC's delegation. City mayor also condemned this attack.”

¹⁷ IRC, *Monitoring and Responses to Attacks* Chapter 2: Results; Chapter 4: Conclusion Regarding the Joint Condemnation of Attacks on Religious Buildings; Chapter 5: Media Coverage of the Project.

¹⁸ Ibid., Chapter 6: Comparative Analysis.

¹⁹ Ibid., Chapter 7: Project Benefits.

²⁰ Ibid. Chapter 8: Recommendations.

- Analysis of attacks and incidents
- Conclusions regarding interreligious responses
- Analysis of Media reports
- Challenges and benefits in the project implementation
- Lessons learnt
- Recommendations

Analysis of attacks and incidents

In the final report of chapter 2, Results, PS offers basic statistical data and graphs on the attacks. We presented these and other data in the chapters “Collection of Data and Reports on Attacks” and “Reaction/Response to Attacks” of this report. In addition to the statistics presented, we also found some symptomatic statistical patterns to be taken into consideration:

- There have been 6 attacks on graveyards (22%): 2 on Muslim; 3 on Orthodox; 1 on Catholic
- There have been 5 attacks endangering people (19%) – religious officials and people during prayer: 3 on Muslim; 1 on Orthodox; 1 on Catholic: the latter two took place in Sarajevo.
- One attack was particularly terrifying and symbolically significant. The perpetrators impaled a live cat on the fence of the Sefer-Bay mosque in Banja Luka, one that was particularly targeted in the previous year.²¹ Except for this attack, there were no additional attacks on that mosque in this period, which is encouraging. However, the message of this attack is extremely strong and very symptomatic.
- There have been objects that are repeatedly attacked:
 - Church of the Saint Greatmartyr Procopius in Visoko – 2 attacks
 - Vidorija Mosque in Novi Grad – 2 Attacks

Except in a short notice in chapter 9 of the final report,²² PS has restrained from indicating motifs behind the individual attacks. This might be a good decision since there has not been court verdict for any case.²³ On the other hand, to support their argument for recommending harsher sentences for perpetrators, treating the attacks as criminal act, or hate motivated act, PS should at least indicate a statistic of motifs, explaining that it is simply an approximation.

It is true that, in the previous review report, we suggested caution in labeling an attack with two main motifs: **theft** caused by poor economical situation, and religious-ethnic **hatred**. The reason is that the attacks have been exclusively happening to a “minority” group,²⁴ which is usually labeled as the “enemy” group.²⁵ Such context gave the perpetrators the impression that theft from “the enemy’s religious object” is to a certain extent “socially acceptable”. Due to such a relationship, even in cases where the theft has been carried out by the thieves from the same group to which the

²¹ 7 reported attacks in the previous year.

²² “A very small number of attacks on religious buildings are treated as incitement of religious hatred. We believe that this has to change since attacks on religious buildings are very often motivated by hate against a certain Church or religious community.” IRC, *Monitoring and Responses to Attacks*, p. 11

²³ Or at least it has not been recorded in the documentation. But having in mind the slow legal processes, we might expect verdicts in couple of years.

²⁴ IRC, *Monitoring and Responses to Attacks*, p. 4. Minority here refers to the number of members of the particular ethno-religious community, not their constitutional status (except in the case of Jewish community, which is minority in both senses).

²⁵ As a consequence of the recent war!

attacked object belongs,²⁶ the perpetrators might calculate that the police investigation will turn to the members of the other group (“majority”), rather than to them. If many theft cases could be interpreted like this, then religious-ethnic **hatred** could be indicated, if not as the main motif behind attack, then as a social or cultural context that encourages perpetrators, even in the case of “pure” theft.

This is an important conclusion that should be communicated with religious leaders throughout the country, particularly at the local level, to encourage them to report every single attack, regardless of what motif they assume is behind the attack. It is not necessarily as important to report it to police, or to organize joint condemnation or any public statement, as it is that the attack at least be recorded at IRC’s data-base for analytical purposes that might result in creating better actions for protection of the objects and people as well improving interethnic relations in the local communities.

Besides not indicating motifs in the final report, there is also no indication of the potential motif in the internal documentation, which might serve for analytical purposes. According to the RA documents, while taking into consideration the abovementioned limitations, we estimated the following:

- Attacks motivated predominately by hatred – 25 (74%)
- Attacks motivated predominately by theft – 5 (19%)
- No clear motifs – 2 (7%)

Of course, the final motif can be established only after court procedures and verdicts. Here, we only interpreted perpetrators’ acts and results assuming their purpose.

Concerning places of attack, as in the previous period, PS concluded that attacks took place all over the country.²⁷ They also identified locations with more frequent registered attacks.²⁸ These are again the two biggest cities in BiH, Banja Luka (4)²⁹ and Sarajevo (2+2)³⁰. Also, another two major cities suffered frequent attacks, Tuzla (3) and Mostar (2+1).³¹ Again, religious objects were more frequently attacked in urban areas.

It is very important to emphasize once more that there are quite a high number of non-reported attacks. In conversation with PS and representatives of religious communities, many felt that most of these attacks were motivated by material gain,³² and that negative public attention might jeopardize interethnic relations among ordinary people in the local community, for which all respondents claim are very good. To preserve this delicate relationship, some verbal attacks with obvious hate-content made by, as they claim, a small number of troublemakers, were not reported. Rather, victims get accustomed to it as a consequence of being minority.³³

Due to such attitudes, it is hard to estimate the total number of attacks, but it is probably between 30³⁴ – 70³⁵% higher than the number reported.

²⁶ And there is indication for such case from the first year (Case No: 004-11/2010), where police identified perpetrators who – we assume according their names – belong to the same religious/ethnic group of the object they attacked and stole.

²⁷ IRC, *Monitoring and Responses to Attacks*, p .3.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 4

²⁹ However, there is a significant decrease in a number of attacks (60%) in comparison to the first year.

³⁰ 2 attacks took place in the inner City and 2 in the region of Canton Sarajevo, Ilijaš. Interestingly, both attacks in the inner city were against persons.

³¹ 2 reported, another not reported but with joint condemnation. See footnote no 6.

³² See also IRC, *Monitoring and Responses to Attacks*, p .3.

³³ From personal notes from conversations with religious representatives.

³⁴ Estimation made by PS in conversation with them.

³⁵ Our estimation after conversations with religious representatives.

We argue, as mentioned above, that although it is necessary to preserve favorable interethnic relations in the local community, it is also necessary to report every single attack, if only for analytical purposes and possible preventative action that might result from analyses.

Response of Local Authorities

In the final report there is no particular mention of the role of local authorities, except that PS is pleased with their participation.³⁶ However, in documentation referring to joint condemnations (RA documents and media reports), it is apparent that local authorities joined all condemnations, supported the projects, and, in some cases, even participated in preparing actions to prevent such incidents (Sarajevo, and Banja Luka).³⁷ The positive attitude of local authorities was also confirmed during field visits with representatives of the attacked religious communities. However, in two cases, Banja Luka and Ilidža, the respondents hinted that, since they belong to a “minority”, they expected larger and more sensible engagement of the local governments in protection of their objects and people.

Response of Police and Legal institutions

In conversation with PS, we were informed that additional efforts were made to communicate with police. This is also evident from the documentation (RA), where memos from various police agencies were attached confirming the status of reported attacks and actions taken regarding them. As it was pointed out both in communication with PS and in the final report, only information on cases that took place in Canton Sarajevo have not been delivered.³⁸

As was mentioned earlier in the section “Reaction/Response to Attacks”, in 6 out of 27 attacks, perpetrators were identified and in 3 cases they were reported to prosecution offices. Only one was characterized as “a criminal act of attacking on religious freedoms and promoting national, racial or religious hatred” (Case:079-07/2012).

In conversation with representatives of the attacked religious communities we discovered that they are actually very satisfied with police work, and praised them for doing their best with such limited resources. This could be corroborated by evidence we received during a field visit to previously attacked Orthodox churches. This visit coincided with a religious holiday. In both cases, there were police patrols in vicinity of the Churches.

When it comes to prosecution, the biggest problem is that the cases were mainly characterized “as *‘damages to property’*. *In such cases, the aggrieved party is obliged to submit a request for criminal prosecution, and in most cases the aggrieved parties drop further prosecution.*”³⁹ Additionally, court procedures are slow so we still do not have information on the verdicts of any of the cases.

Analysis of interreligious responses

The brief analysis of interreligious response has been offered in Chapter 4 of the final report. According to the response of religious officials, PS is confident in the continuation of their support for both to the action of condemning the attacks and for the project as whole. The support comes from both high level religious officials and from those in the field. PS also pointed out an instance, mentioned above, of representatives of religious community at the local level self-organizing a condemnation of an attack on a church.

³⁶ IRC, *Monitoring and Responses to Attacks*, p. 11

³⁷ See: IRC, *Monitoring and Responses to Attacks*, p 10; <http://www.vijesti.ba/vijesti/bih/67727-Osudjen-napad-hramu-Preobrazenja-Gospodnjeg.html>, accessed 03.03.2013.

³⁸ IRC, *Monitoring and Responses to Attacks*, p. 5.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.11.

Again, PS probably correctly assumed certain pragmatism, particularly on the local level, in this support. Local religious leaders are willing to cooperate because they could also be a target where their group is a minority. During field visits and conversations with religious leaders we got a similar impression. Our respondents told us, paraphrasing: “*what happens here to us, probably happens elsewhere to the others where we are majority.*” Additionally, due to widely expressed satisfaction with interethnic relationships in local communities and neighborhoods, support for the project might indicate, as we suggested in the previous review, increasing need among people living in the local community to act jointly for mutual benefit, regardless of widely promoted ethnic and religious division.⁴⁰ Therefore, indisputable support for the project among our respondents should be seen. As one of respondent concluded, this project is a rare case of civil society action that makes sense and improves relationships in the field.

Also, our respondents mainly support gatherings and joint condemnations, for it sends a strong message, and turns away potential perpetrators. Yet, one respondent remarked that though gatherings are beneficial, they still cannot significantly change the situation and position of the minority group. A remark from the international conference in Warsaw⁴¹ supports this position. After the project was presented, a comment was made that it is normal for religious leaders to condemn such an attack together, but more should be done to promote such an attitude among ordinary people, students, youth, etc. Only by such comprehensive action could the joint condemnation make sense and contribute to interreligious relationships.

It is interesting to note that an Orthodox priest from Sarajevo went to Banja Luka to visit police to ask about frequent attacks on Muslim religious objects and people. It was after that visit that the police in Banja Luka became more cooperative.

As was the case in the previous year in other parts of RS, representatives of the Orthodox religious community demonstrated high levels of solidarity to the victimized side, offering cooperation and even a proactive approach to the project.

Analysis of Media reports

The very brief description of the media coverage of the project was given in Chapter 5 of the final report. PS expressed their satisfaction with the media coverage of the project, how they portrayed the project, joint condemnation, with “mainly fair and balanced”⁴² reports. But, there is no statistical data to support these conclusions in the final report. Moreover, even in the other project documentation there is little reference to media coverage. As previously stated, the main reason provided by PS is that following the media was not a priority at this time, since the new funder did not specifically request it.

Several links in the RA document directed to web portals, which covered the project activities, indicated “fair and balanced” reporting, but we are missing a more established and structured press-clipping and video-audio archive that would allow us to evaluate media coverage.⁴³ Having in mind the importance of media in conveying specific messages to the wider population about the project and its goals, the establishment and maintenance of such an archive should be an integral/important (imperative) part of the project activity, regardless of any requests made, or not made, by a particular funder.

⁴⁰ This need should be seriously considered and studied. Such enterprise is of course far beyond range of the project. Yet, data from the project are fair base for such a study.

⁴¹ OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2012 – side event ‘The Universal Code on Holy Sites’ – a step towards freedom and tolerance? Held on 1st of October 2012.

⁴² IRC, *Monitoring and Responses to Attacks*, p. 7.

⁴³ For example, there was a short special on the project results at Al Jazeera Balkans, the international TV source covering the whole region. See <http://balkans.aljazeera.com/vijesti/smanjen-broj-napada-na-vjerske-objekte>. Accessed 03.03.2012. This and similar clips should be integral part of the project documentation.

Challenges and Lessons Learnt during project implementation

In the final report, there are no references made either to the challenges met during the project implementation, or to lessons learned from the previous period. Although the purpose of the final report is largely a public (relations) report, which does not necessarily require deep analysis, it would be very informative if PS at least described a few very general challenges they faced during the implementation of the project.

Having in mind the documentation available, as well as conversation with PS and representatives of religious communities in the field, we will present a few observations on these issues.

In technical terms, the project has been implemented consistently, without major variations from the previous year. It does not seem, however, from available documentation, that there has been significant improvement in the overall implementation the project, except in the area of cooperation with police.

The other major challenges remain the same:

- Not all attacks were reported (for the reasons described above);
- Low number of identified perpetrators;
- The majority of open cases are still treated as “damage of property”, rather than hate motivated criminal acts;
- The prosecution system is slow, providing no feedback on the processes;
- Local governments are slow to increase technical protection (i.e. installing video surveillance);
- Persistent avoidance of representatives of the Orthodox religious community in Banja Luka towards joint condemnations, although there has been movement towards creating a solution for this problem with a help of an Orthodox priest from Sarajevo.

However, this year, the main challenge was reduced project funds of approximately 30%, which severely influenced human resources allowing for just a part-time coordinating position for the whole project, with field visit possibilities. With this challenge we see the main factor influencing certain technical regression in the implementation of the project (number of visits, press-clippings, data-base maintenance). It was a lucky coincidence that the number of attacks decreased 52% – otherwise, it would have been nearly impossible to maintain regular function of the project.

Conclusion on Evaluation and Data Analysis

Data analysis and evaluation of the project implementation has been done very briefly, but the conclusions that are presented in the final report are not fully corroborated with data presented there. Yet, comparing it with the other available data from the project documentation, and in conversation with beneficiaries, one can find that the conclusions are well founded.

For better perception and understanding of these conclusions we suggest more statistical data examination and argumentation, even in the public report. This will not only improve understanding of the conclusion, but improve arguments for recommendations.

What is essentially missing in the final report is a structured review of project achievements in terms of results and goals. They have barely been mentioned through out the presentation and are too scattered for reader to follow them effectively.

Comparative Data Analysis from the First and the Second Year of project Implementation

Here we will try to compare data from the first and the second years⁴⁴ to get an idea of the trends and possible effects of the project implementation on the quantity and quality of attacks.

Table 1.	Year 1		Year 2		Total		Trend	
Attacks on religious community	#	%	#	%	#	%	Trend	%
Islamic	28	50%	11	41%	39	47%	Decrease	61
Jewish	2	4%	0	0%	2	2%	Decrease	100
Catholic	9	16%	4	15%	13	16%	Decrease	56
Orthodox	17	30%	12	44%	29	35%	Decrease	29
Total	56	100%	27	100%	83	100%	Decrease	52

As Table 1 indicates, the total number of registered attacks in the two years of monitoring is 83, an average of 3.5 attacks per month. In the second year the number of attacks dropped 52%, from 56 the first year to 27 the second year. With regards to attacks on the particular religious communities, each of them was attacked fewer times. However, there is a rising trend of attacks against the Orthodox community in comparison to the Muslim community, where attacks have generally declined. The level of attacks on the Catholic community remains relatively stable, while there have been no attacks on the Jewish community in the second year.

Table 2.	Year 1		Year 2		Total		Trend	
Attacks per entity	#	%	#	%	#	%	Trend	%
FBiH	26	46%	18	67%	44	53%	Decrease	31
RS	30	54%	9	33%	39	47%	Decrease	70

Table 2 indicates why there is a relative increase of attacks against the Orthodox community: while in RS the relative trend of decreasing attacks is 70%, in the Federation it is 31%, which means that more attacks took place in FBiH, where the Orthodox community, being the “minority,” is the main target of attacks.

It is worth noting that there is significant decrease of a number of attacks in Banja Luka region. During the first year there have been 10 reported attacks, out of which 7 targeted Sefer-Bay mosque; and during the second year there have been 4 reported attacks, out of which 1 targeted Sefer-Bay mosque.

Table 3.	Year 1		Year 2		Total		Trend	
Objects of attack	#	%	#	%	#	%	Trend	%
Graveyard	14	25%	6	22%	20	24%	Decrease	57
People	12	21%	5	19%	17	20%	Decrease	58
Objects of religious significance	30	54%	16	59%	46	55%	Decrease	47

Table 3 indicates relatively stable trends in the choice of targets. Around 20% of the attacks target graveyards, which having in mind the importance of graveyards for each religion, indicates a significantly high level of expressed hatred. There were a similar number of attacks targeting people, which had more immediately frightening effects, considering their “minority” position. The specific targets of attacks generally correlate with the motifs behind the attacks, shown in the Table 4.

⁴⁴ PS gave a brief comparative presentation of data, making no interpretation or conclusions about them. See IRC, *Monitoring and Responses to Attacks*, p. 8-9

Table 4.	Year 1		Year 2		Total		Trend	
Motif	#	%	#	%	#	%	Trend	%
Hatred	34	61%	20	74%	54	65%	Decrease	41
Theft	14	25%	5	19%	19	23%	Decrease	64
Indefinite(Inconclusive)	8	14%	2	7%	10	12%	Decrease	75

As we previously stated, one should be very careful when labeling an attack with a motif before full court procedures or deep social-cultural analysis have been completed. However, for analytical purposes, it is possible to indicate these motifs (as a working hypothesis) from characteristics of the attack. In this regard we assumed a slight increase in hate-motivated attacks and a decrease in personal gain motivated attacks. This might be surprising, due to the deterioration of the economic situation, as one would expect increased attacks on property and stealing. However, it is not unusual for economic crises to provoke more hatred towards others. Acts against minorities in particular are presented as the consequences of a poor political and economic situation. On the other hand, one respondent remarked that the overall number of attacks decreased due to the bad economic situation, as people are focused on trying to survive and have no time to plan attacks against other groups' religious objects. This should not be dismissed as simply good witticism. The correlation of the crisis and decreasing number of attacks should be more thoroughly investigated.

The decreased number of attacks has seen a decreasing number of visits/public condemnations, which is shown in the Table 5.

Table 5.	Year 1		Year 2		Total		Trend	
Visits/public condemnations	#	%	#	%	#	%	Trend	%
Visits/public condemnations	24	43%	8	30%	32	39%	Decrease	67
No visits/public condemnations	32	57%	19	70%	51	61%	Decrease	41

However, the relative ratio between the first and second year does not match: while in the first year there were field visits for 43% of attacks, the second year saw a decrease to 30%. This might be explained by the lack of resources for more extensive field visits.

A similar situation occurred with the media.

Table 6.	Year 1		Year 2		Total		Trend	
Media coverage	#	%	#	%	#	%	Trend	%
Number of individual media reporting ⁴⁵	41		8		43 ⁴⁶		Decrease	80
Total media reports	144		26		170		Decrease	82
Media average acc event	2.57		0.96		2.05		Decrease	63
Not covered	9	16%	10	37%	19	23%	Increase	-11

Table 6 shows a significant decrease in both the number of media reporting and the number of their reports. As mentioned before, there was no focus on media reporting from PS, so it is possible that many reports were not registered. Also, due to the low number of joint condemnations, it may have been less interesting for the media to convey only an IRC' condemnation.

The more interesting question is whether these visits and media reports correlate with the decreased number of attacks and to what degree. As of now there is no definitive answer. Even after comparing the number of incidents in both years (Table 7), joint visits/condemnations and media reporting (table 8 and 9), we were unable to establish a correlation of data that might offer a hint.

⁴⁵ Most of the reporting was done by web portals. However PS did not provide a comprehensive list of those, so we consider all portals as one media – which significantly changes the results. However, the same methodology was used in the previous year, so for analytical purposes and comparison it gives a rather fair projection.

⁴⁶ This is not a simple calculation of media reporting the attack. 6 out of 8 media from the second year are the same, so the total number is 43.

Table 7.	Year 1		Year 2		Total		Trend	
Attack location	#	%	#	%	#	%	Trend	%
Number of attack locations	31		16		37		Decrease	48
Number of objects reputedly attacked	3		2		5		Decrease	33
Number of repeated attacks	11	20%	4	15%	15	18%	Decrease	64

Though the number of locations in which attacks took place decreased 48%, it is also significant that attacks took place in only 6 new locations (for a total of 37 locations). In 10 locations the attacks were repeated, though by significantly lower rates than previously reported (64%).

Table 8.	# of attacks
Attacks from the first year only	21
Repeated places of attack	10
New places of attack	6
Total attack locations	37

Taking into consideration the next table with correlations of field visits, media reports, as well as the number of attacks and their locations from the previous year, we still cannot draw a meaningful conclusion.

Table 9.	# of cases
Correlation of the Attacks and Visits/Condemnations	
Visits/Condemnations - No new attacks	9
Visits/Condemnations - Decreased number of Attacks	4
Visits/Condemnations - the same or increased number of attacks	2
No Visits/Condemnations - the same or increased number of attacks	4
No Visits/Condemnations - No new attacks	12
No Visits/Condemnations - no media reports - no new attacks	9

In 9 cases where there was a joint visit/condemnation, there have been no new attacks in the same location; in 4 cases with visits there were attacks, but a decreased number. However, in 2 cases with visits, there was the same or an increased number of attacks (the increase was notable, but not significant). In 4 additional cases without a visit, the same or more attacks took place. In comparison, in 12 cases with no visit there were no more attacks at the same location, and in 9 cases without either a visit or media reporting there were also no new attacks at the same location.

It is apparent that a simple analysis of quantitative data cannot establish a meaningful pattern for correlating a proactive approach by condemning the attacks to making no action, in reducing the total number of attacks. Deeper contextual analysis of each incident may give light to this correlation, but it is not in the scope of the project. It is possible that some cases benefit from a visit and joint condemnation (as suggested by few respondents), while for others it is a useless waste of resources.

The only possible conclusion of the comparative data analysis is that we cannot explain certain reasons for the significant decrease of attacks within the scope of the project, its activities and its documentation. The answers can be found at the intersection of many factors previously indicated, such as economic situation, project activities, particularly discontinued information campaign, i.e. lack of media campaign and flyer distribution, media coverage, police involvement, prosecution and court work, as well as the commitment of the local government and communities.

The project Achievements

Activities

In the second year PS faced a significant decrease in funding, hence the level of engagement was lower than during the previous year. Yet, with regards to overall activities, the project was largely implemented as planned, within the given terms and time frames. Other than the loss of funding PS did not face any other serious obstacles, which may have disturbed the course of implementation.

Regarding the **first main activity** - establishment and maintenance of a database of the attacks – PS continues to provide and fulfill that data base. All relevant data on the attacks was recorded, although we are missing more elaborate descriptions of the attacks, responses and press-clippings.

The **second main activity** – organized multi-religious response/condemnation of the attacks – was performed in an appropriate and timely manner. The responses were organized as joint visits or public statements. In one case the only response was registering the attack. We expect that all of these responses were done in communication with the victim side following the principle “do no harm”. Representatives of the religious communities living in the local community, local authorities and representatives of IRC participated in 4 cases. In 2 cases only representatives of IRC visited the site.

It is important to emphasize that, among respondents, this was the most highly praised activity of the project, one that immediately impacts the local community. It coincides with the original intent of the project, where joint condemnations were recognized as the key activity.

The **third main activity** – an analysis of the collected data – was the activity with the least focus. It was certainly the activity most directly affected by the decrease in funding, since it required very focused, intensive, intellectual work that should be done in a proper time frame, not disturbed by other activities.

With the available time and human resources, PS did their best: they collected data, performed basic calculations and statistical analysis and presented it in visual form for easier grasping of basic correlations. The conclusions they drew from the data are presented in chapter 8 and as recommendations in the final report.⁴⁷ They are:

- Implement harsher sentences for perpetrators
- Simplify the crime reporting procedure
- Encourage and incite public condemnations of attacks on religious buildings
- Place video surveillance on religious buildings that have been the target of repeated attacks
- Support the proposal of the OSCE mission in Sarajevo regarding the establishing of a hate crime data-collection mechanism.

Nonetheless, the continuation of this project will benefit greatly from an effort to deliver the missing data, or at least to continue gathering and registering data in the future. The data-base could be a valuable source for further, deeper analysis of issues not only related to attacks on religious objects, but also for other issues such as the role of religion in society and interreligious and interethnic relations. Finally, it can, as such, be used as a point of project improvement.

⁴⁷ IRC, *Monitoring and Responses to Attacks*, Chapter 8: Recommendations.

Goals of the Project

As defined in the project design, **the overall goal of the project is enhanced trust and improved relations between religious and ethnic communities in Bosnia Herzegovina, by improving the protection of religious objects and holy sites in BiH.**

The project was originally run as a pilot at a time when there was no systematic monitoring of attacks on religious objects throughout the whole of BiH. After the first year of implementation, with systematic monitoring and responses to such attacks, we had a more reliable perception of the phenomenon, its range and its characteristics. The main focus of that period was to get statistics, profiles, context and other relevant data on these attacks and to “test” the readiness of religious officials, local governments, media and local communities to oppose such attacks regardless of the identity of the perpetrator.

In the second year, the project was designed to continue the technical part of monitoring, recording, and responding, but also to build on the achievements of the first year towards the main and overall goals. However, due to significant cuts in funding, this year the project succeeded only in maintaining the level of achievement from the previous year. With new data it slightly enriched the existing image of the phenomenon’s range and the characteristics of attacks on religious objects throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. As such, the project bears certain heuristic potential, as it enables a small amount of comparative analysis that could offer some practical and theoretical hypotheses. These could be examined at a subsequent time, either as part of this project or a similar one that handles inter-religious issues in Bosnia and Herzegovina and beyond. Briefly presented at the international expert’s level,⁴⁸ the project drew a lot of attention for its potential application in other multi-religious areas of the region and the world.

With regard to its main goal to **improve the protection** of religious objects and holy sites in BiH, there has been limited progress in comparison to the previous year. Stronger police engagement in preventive work is evident in some cases, and local authorities in tow cases set the procedures for installing video surveillance. Religious leaders continue to support the project as well, and there we have seen promising case of self-organized condemnation. The media also continue to support the project. A kind of “detour strategy” was exercised for increasing the protection of non-Orthodox religious objects in Banja Luka, with the engagement of an Orthodox priest from Sarajevo acting as a mediator. Other suggested recommendations, if properly addressed, have the potential to improve the protection of religious objects. Yet, decreased funds disabled the development of the project to its full potential following a successful first year.

Although, the number of attacks significantly decreased (by 52%), there are no measurable, verifiable indicators available to indisputably present it as result of implementation of this project. It is not possible, however, to deny the likelihood that this project greatly contributed to the production of such results.

With regards to the **overall goal - enhanced trust and improved relations between religious and ethnic communities in Bosnia Herzegovina** – the project shows early indications of success. With the support of leaders from all religious denominations, as well as from local communities and the media, the project is well on the way to achieving this goal.

The „physical part“ of the project – namely joint visits and condemnations – significantly contributed to the progress made toward achieving this goal. As previously illustrated, these actions were greatly appreciated by the local communities, particularly the victim. Yet these visits affected only a small number of communities and, as suggested by some respondents at an international conference, should reach a wider population. It seems that PS developed the strategy for such outreach through IRC’s developing, or already established, local councils for inter-religious

⁴⁸ The abovementioned OSCE conference in Warsaw.

cooperation,⁴⁹ consisting of religious officers, assistants, women and youth groups from ~~the~~ local communities. However for more precise evaluation of the direct contribution of the project to the goal, more precise indicators must be developed.

As a **final conclusion**, in the given circumstances with reduced funds, we can say that the project has largely been implemented as planned, within the given framework, providing valuable results to be built upon. It succeeded in maintaining previous achievements, yet there has been no significant improvement as the pilot phase indicated. The project has yet to reach its full potential.

Recommendations

It is fact that the recommendations from the previous review have not been fully implemented. However, we must take into consideration that while the recommendations suggested expansion, the project was implemented with more limited resources.

We will continue to push in the same direction, as we believe, now more than ever,⁵⁰ that the project has huge potential for development, not only in its technical capacities for monitoring and registering attacks, but also in its capacities for practical action in the field to encourage reconciliation/integration of interreligious and interethnic communities. Last, but not least, the data-source and analytical potential for both practical and theoretical usage should not be neglected.

These recommendations have already been explained in the course of the review, so we will simply list and summarize them here.

There are two groups of recommendations, technical – to improve project management - and those concerning possible actions to be taken for achieving goals.

Technical recommendations

- Database:
 - Although the database has been slightly improved, we are strongly suggesting the development of a professional database that will be able to gather all documentation, forms, reports, and automatic statistical calculations, in one place. It should have a search function and the possibility to link with SPSS or other similar programs. This will enable easier and faster data input, manipulation, export, and quantitative and qualitative analysis. It will provide better tools for project management as well as potential analysts and researchers.
 - Here we urge again to provide an (existing or newly developed) data-base with detailed, accurate and current data.
- Media:
 - For better analysis of media reports we are suggesting the establishment of a video-audio archive in addition to a press-clipping archive and their integration in the database.
 - Having in mind the importance of media coverage for the project, we are suggesting the development of a new media strategy, which will define goals and activities in the promotion of the project and further encourage media to follow up on the project in more systematic way.

⁴⁹ Councils are an integral part of IRC and those in Brčko, Bijeljina, Orašje, Gorazde have been active since 2010. The new ones will be established in Zenica, Banja Luka, Dobož and Livno.

⁵⁰ Due to the potential results we got from very brief comparative analysis and from conversations with religious representatives in the field, including conversations and remarks from the international conference.

- Staffing:
 - Having in mind that 83 attacks occurred in two years, 3.45 monthly, we shoulder a lot of administrative work to properly register attacks, communicate and organize a response, as well as follow-up with media, police and prosecution. In this regard, to enable the project to function smoothly, we are suggesting PS consider the possibility of developing a full-time administrative position for the project. In addition, there were a lot of field visits, and communication with religious leaders, authorities and media. In order to fully reach the potential of the project, another full-time project manager would be needed to take charge of these activities.⁵¹ At the end, to be able to use the maximum of collected data for improving the project, but also for reporting, publishing and other promotional work, we recommend PS to recruit an expert capable of making comprehensive data analysis for these purposes.

Recommendations for actions

We **fully support recommendations given by PS**,⁵² which include cooperation with various institutions as well as additional lobbying and advocacy. Furthermore, we recommend:

- Having in mind that the interethnic relations are still fragile in BiH, substantial reconciliation work still needs to be done. Through the evaluation of the project we learned about the significant potential the project might have in improving inter-religious and interethnic relations in Bosnia Herzegovina if fully implemented on a permanent basis. Thus, this project could offer a considerable contribution to reconciliation work across BiH. What has been developed so far represents a huge potential for further development. However, major achievements in the project might be lost if sufficient resources are not secured for the further project implementation. So we are **strongly suggesting** that PS should prioritize this project and develop more strategic approach in providing proper, full-scale, permanent funding for the project, targeting not only international donors, but **primarily** the BiH government(s) to take responsibility for financing the project;
- We repeat the recommendations from the previous year that PS should work to engage municipalities and hold regular meetings with local representatives of religious communities, schools, neighborhoods and police;
- As elaborated before, PS should **reactivate the information campaign on the project to ensure that the information tricle down in all religious communities accross BiH, as well as to** strongly emphasise to all religious communities the:
 - Necessity of attending joint site visits and condemnations, particularly those members of the religious community to which the perpetrator belongs
 - Necessity of reporting every attack on religious objects, properties or people to both PS and police
- PS should immediately begin to use IRC's local councils for inter-religious cooperation both for promotion of the project, and as a base for preventive actions and condemning attacks (presentations in schools, neighborhoods, etc.)
- PS should promote the project at national and international conferences, seminars, etc, both among practitioners (peacebuilding particularly) and scholars. This will increase the possibility of attracting analysts, researchers and funders who can significantly contribute to the project.

⁵¹ Funding limitations for the project implementation during the second year put one half-time officer in charge of all of these activities. This is barely enough to keep registering attacks, so in this respect the PS did a tremendous job during the second year.

⁵² See under The project Achievements, Activities.

- PS should offer all victims of attacks annual reports, via e-mail or standard post, as feedback on the work being done to assist them and their communities.