



DEVASTATED STREET — Police stand guard on a street destroyed by an April 22 explosion in Guadalajara, Mexico, second largest city. According to witnesses, the explosions in the sewer system killed nearly more than 180 people and injured some 600 others.

Some residents flee as Medjugorje shelled

ZAGREB, Croatia (CNS) — The Bosnian town of Medjugorje has been shelled by the Yugoslav Army, and many of the people have been evacuated, reported the Zagreb-based Christian Information Service.

The report said there were no working telephones, electricity or water. As of April 23, the front was about two-and-one-half miles outside the city.

Medjugorje, a town in Bosnia-Herzegovina, has been the site of alleged Marian apparitions since 1981. Bosnia-Herzegovina has declared its independence from Yugoslavia.

Christian Information Service said St. James Catholic Church had been closed "for some time now." Easter Mass was celebrated in the basement of the parish office, the report said.

"Only men capable of carrying arms have remained here," said Ivan Dragicevic, one of the youths who claims to have seen Mary. "Women, children and old people have been sent to relatives or friends, to the Croatian coast and abroad."

In the week after Easter, he said, there were about 50 pilgrims — most of them Italian — in the village. They brought, by truck, medicine and food, he said.

Father Slavko Barbaric, who re-

mained in Medjugorje, told Christian Information Service about the shelling in the village.

"So far, six cluster bombs have been fired at the Medjugorje parish, but only one exploded in the area which is not inhabited," he said. "Plus there have been more than 4,000 different shells fired at the parish."

Father Barbaric said it was "a miracle that nobody was hurt at Medjugorje after all those heavy attacks."

The report said that in Medjugorje and the neighboring town of Citluk, people often spent nights in air-raid shelters.

The fighting erupted in Bosnia-Herzegovina as the European Community and United States recognized the republic as an independent state. The republic had escaped much of the earlier fighting in the break-up of the Yugoslav federation.

Meanwhile, the archbishop of Sarajevo said thousands of Catholics and their pastors are leaving his diocese, the latest battleground in Yugoslavia's violent breakup.

Residents of the Sarajevo area be-

lieve Western countries are capable of stopping the war, but they do not expect such intervention given the destruction that occurred in neighboring Croatia, Archbishop Vinko Puljic told Vatican Radio April 24.

Sarajevo, a city of mixed Muslim Slav, Croatian and Serbian populations, is the capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina. In recent weeks, the Yugoslav Army and Serbian forces have taken much territory in the republic and have begun shelling neighborhoods of Sarajevo.

Meanwhile, on April 27 two of the republics of the collapsing state, Serbia and Montenegro, had formed a new country called the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The former state, comprising six republics, was called the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The Sarajevo Archdiocese has about half a million Catholics.


"There's nothing left for us to do, except implore God to restore peace in our cities, villages and countryside. We ask all people of good will to help those suffering in this region," Archbishop Puljic said.

He said people were dying not only from the bombings and shelling, but from lack of food, medicine and drinking water. Many villages have been evacuated, with pastors joining their faithful in fleeing to relative safety in Croatia, he said. Shelling of convents and monasteries has caused groups of religious to leave, too, he said.

Some of the priests have been detained, mistreated and then released by the Serbian forces, he said. At least one priest, Father Zvonimir Matijevic of Glamoc, was still being held by the Serbians despite appeals by bishops, he said.

At Mostar, in a neighboring diocese, the cathedral was damaged when the city came under heavy shelling, he said.

Croatia Caritas is seeking additional aid for the estimated 200,000 refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina. While thanking international agencies for help in recent months, the Croatian organization said it needed more relief supplies to help the youngest and weakest of the new arrivals.



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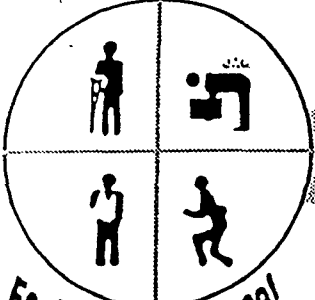
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