

# NATO Sponsored Kosovo Police Shoots at Serbs at Administrative Crossing

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*KURŠUMLIJA — Live ammunition was used in a clash against a group of Serbs by the Kosovo police at the Merdare administrative checkpoint early on Thursday.*

The group was headed to Gazimestan for a celebration of St. Vitus Day (Vidovdan), one of the holiest Serbian holidays which marks the anniversary of the June 28, 1389 “Battle of Kosovo”.

“One person with life-threatening injuries was taken by ambulance from Prokuplje to Niš,” Kuršumlija Health Center Director Ljiljana Arsenijević told Tanjug earlier on Thursday.

The injured man was shot in the back with live ammunition and was taken to emergency surgery.

Arsenijević said the Emergency Room treated 20 people with bullet wounds inflicted at Merdare.

Ten people were treated at the scene, while another ten with more serious injuries were treated at the healthcare center. Five of them were later taken by ambulance to the surgical ward of the Dr Aleksa Savić Hospital in Prokuplje.

20-year-old Žarko M. from Zrenjanin was admitted to the Niš Clinical Center’s Urology Clinic and taken to surgery.

“The wounded young man is currently vital, stable and out of danger,” the Niš Clinical Center Spokesman Marko Smiljković said and added that he was still in surgery.

According to him, the patient had a gun shot wound to his pelvis.

Five more seriously injured persons were admitted to the Prokuplje Hospital’s Surgical Ward with gun shot wounds to their extremities and stomachs.

Prokuplje Hospital Spokeswoman Jelena Pantović said that 23-year-old Ž.M from Zrenjanin, 25-year-old F.Z. from Belgrade and 23-year-old D.B. from Obrenovac sustained the most serious injuries. She pointed out that it was still not certain whether they would be operated on in Prokuplje or transferred to another hospital.

Kosovo’s Interior Minister Bajram Rexhepi did not want to comment on the incident for

Tanjug, saying he was at the parliament.

However, he told Radio Free Europe that 32 Kosovo police officers had been injured in the incidents near Merdare.

“The policemen were injured when a group of Serbs, who were trying to cross over into Kosovo, threw rocks at them,” he claimed.

“We pushed back a group known as Delije, who are known nationalists. Several police officers were hurt, mostly from being hit by rocks,” said Rexhepi. He added that shots from firearms were heard from the direction of Serbia.

Beta news agency has reported that the attacked people were Partizan sports fans. The remaining, uninjured fans were taken over by the Serbian police and returned to central Serbia.

The Serbian police told Tanjug earlier that the incidents occurred when a group of Serbs, who had crossed the administrative line in Rudnica and Jarinje early on Thursday, was stopped by the Kosovo police in Vučitrn, demanding they return through Merdare to central Serbia.

The Merdare administrative crossing is closed for traffic.

This is the third incident in Kosovo since this morning. According to a Kosovo police regional spokesman, a group of people who came from central Serbia threw rocks at the Kosovo police at the main Ibar bridge in Kosovska Mitrovica and unknown perpetrators [fired shots at the multiethnic police](#) in the village of Dobrosin near the southern Serbian town of Bujanovac.

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