



Macedonian Patriotic Organization

• Switzerland of the Balkans •

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To whom it may concern:

Re: *Human Right Violations of Spaska Mitrova - Republic of Macedonia*

In September 2009, the 'Switzerland of the Balkans' chapter of the Macedonian Patriotic Organization alerted international human rights advocates to the draconian sentence imposed on the young mother Spaska Mitrova by the justice system of the Republic of Macedonia. Ms. Mitrova was jailed and heavily fined by a local court for not providing her ex-husband lodging in her parents' home when visiting their daughter. Ms. Mitrova is a recent graduate of a university in the Republic of Bulgaria and has dual Macedonian and Bulgarian citizenship. She was imprisoned in the notorious Idrizovo jail near Skopje at the beginning of August 2009 and released at the end of September.

While we are satisfied that Ms. Mitrova is no longer incarcerated, we are deeply concerned that her three-year-old daughter has been taken away and any contact with the child has been denied during the past seven months (even though the mother had legal custody prior to her incarceration and her maternal competence was confirmed by Macedonian psychiatrists). Tearing a young child away from her mother without any reasonable justification and then denying the mother custody or visiting privileges is a barbaric and absurd practice in this day and age.

We suspect that the reason for this psychological cruelty on the part of the Macedonian authorities is that Ms. Mitrova has taken the politically dangerous step of publicly stating that she is an ethnic Bulgarian from the Republic of Macedonia. In the 21st century, anyone should be free to declare his or her own ethnicity without interference from the state.

Consequently, we respectfully ask you to intercede with the Macedonian authorities to let this poor mother have custody of her child as soon as possible. At a minimum, she should be guaranteed visitation rights until the court has rendered a final ruling on the matter.

We thank you in advance for your help.

Sincerely,

Larry Koroloff
President

Philip Nicol Vuchkoff
Vice-President

George Kizoff
Treasurer