

More hate crimes in Serbia

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NOVI SAD, BELGRADE -- Tuesday -- More racist graffiti has appeared in Novi Sad.

An anti-Muslim message was sprayed on the wall of the Maxi supermarket last night, hours after Serbia-Montenegro Human and Minority Rights Minister Rasim Ljajic helped officials of the Vojvodina governmental administrations paint over the anti-Hungarian graffiti that appeared in the region several days ago.

According to Radio 021, the Novi Sad police have arrested the perpetrators, while the Vojvodina institutions are giving conflicting information that the investigation is ongoing. Ljajic has announced that the penalties for graffiti whose content is of a racist and offensive nature will be more severe.

Another incident occurred in Belgrade last night, where a building belonging to the Christian Adventist Church was pelted with rocks and windows on the front door were shattered.Â

The sign in front of the building was also taken down. According to the Ministry of Religion, the authorities have been notified of the incident by church officials and are investigating the act of vandalism. The ministry said that the perpetrators of the crime must be arrested and forced to pay a fine that will pay for the damage done to the church building.

"The Ministry of Religion is sorry to report to the public that all churches and religious communities in Serbia are from time to time subjected to similar attacks of intolerance, most frequently the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Christian Adventist Church," the statement reads, adding that these acts "nullify the progress that the Serbian Government has made in protecting religious freedoms and allowing all churches and religious communities to exist without discrimination."