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## Appeal for Peace in Yugoslavia/Kosovo

We are addressing our call for peace to the public, to the responsible governments of NATO countries, to Yugoslavia, to leaders of the Kosovo Albanians and to the political leaders of the Balkan countries and around the world.

We are very concerned about the present developments in FR Yugoslavia (FRY) and in the whole region, including Bosnia and Hercegovina. The war in FRY has raised tensions in the region and the fragile peace process in Bosnia-Hercegovina has suffered a serious setback since NATO started their bombardment. Present perspectives for peace work in the region are very gloomy. In our understanding the peace in Bosnia and Hercegovina is very much connected with democratic development in the neighbouring countries of Croatia and FRY. In the same way that peace and the shape of democracy in FRY has an influence on neighbouring Macedonia, where ethnic tensions between Macedonians and Albanians are very high.

We *condemn* the violence of the Yugoslav security forces in Kosovo and other parts of Yugoslavia and *demand* an immediate stop.

We *condemn* the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia and *demand* an immediate stop.

We *condemn* the violence by the Kosovo Liberation Army and *demand* immediate stop.

We *demand* that the rights of all people are respected. And we *demand* that all of the people in Yugoslavia/Kosovo respect the rights of others to live in their homes in peace and dignity, no matter of their ethnic origin.

The escalation of violence has strengthened extremist forces on all sides and has degraded the space for political opposition and democratic development in the whole region. The NATO bombing has however created the space for a brutal operation by the Yugoslav security forces, which will probably result in an Albanian free Kosovo. Yugoslavia will be destroyed, many human lives will be lost, many refugees created, and Milosevic's regime will be stronger than it ever was. It is not a surprise that the Yugoslav security forces, incapable of defending themselves from cruise missiles and bombs, are retaliating and hitting hard at the Kosovo Albanians, treating the civilian population worse than ever before. It is not a surprise, but on all moral, military and political dimensions, it is not a justification. It is reprehensible.

The NATO bombings aimed at forcing Milosevic to sign a peace "agreement" and prevent a humanitarian catastrophe have completely failed. It seems that the only reason for continuing on the attacks is NATO's lack of alternative strategy.

NATO's aim is now being defined as "reducing Yugoslav military resources". This can be interpreted that they do not know what else to do, and that they do not know how to finish this terrible action without admitting that they have made a mistake.

We are convinced that war can be no solution and that a cease-fire agreement or final peace agreement is better than continuing the present war.

Therefore:

1. We urge the public to *put pressure* on NATO governments to *stop the bombing* and *start negotiating* with the Yugoslav government, with a cease-fire in Kosovo as the only precondition. We think that the priority now is to stop the killing through cease fire agreement and then lead to political negotiations about the future of Kosovo. The cease fire agreement does not prejudice the final agreement. Should this happen we appeal to the international community to exercise their influence on the KLA and Yugoslav government to hold onto the cease-fire.
  2. We demand from the Yugoslav government to *stop repression and violence* immediately.
  3. We urge all people in Yugoslavia to *express solidarity* with, their fellow citizens irrespective of their origin. This we do expect from the antiwar movement and the democratic opposition in Yugoslavia, those who have fought against Milosevic's regime over the past 8 years and who received so little attention and support from the democratic countries. We greatly acknowledge the courage this requires.
  4. We demand of NATO to *stop the policy of disrespect of the United Nations Conventions*, stop obstructing UN and constructively work on the strengthening and democratisation of UN structures.
  5. We demand the *arms embargo against Yugoslavia to be respected* and enforced by all countries and we demand a stop to military aid for the KLA.
  6. We demand *immediate humanitarian aid for the Albanian refugees and other refugees* from Yugoslavia for as long as it is needed. Within Yugoslavia this includes the Serbian population. Host countries in need of support include Albania, Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, BiH (Republika Srpska and Federation of BiH).
  7. We ask *all individuals and groups to voice their opinion*; every single voice is valid. Please speak out.
  8. We demand the *right to political asylum* for all conscientious objectors and refugees of all nationalities in NATO and other countries.
- Out of our conviction that sustainable peace can not be achieved or maintained through or by military force, but only through the development of democracy and the culture of peace and nonviolence, we demand:
9. *An end to the policy of armament and militaristic security strategy*. Instead we demand disarmament and support for civil dealing with conflicts, based on the experience and resources gathered by peace and human rights groups from around the world.

Of course large scale armed conflicts can not be resolved solely through political agreements. But this does not mean that military action is the logical, or only, alternative. From a political agreement we expect a frame which would make peace building possible. Building peace is a long-term process; violence is a short-term response, peace can not be imposed. The fact must be acknowledged that only one day of war takes years to rebuild trust and reconciliation in a society.

Let us remember all the human beings involved in this tragedy.

Centre for Nonviolent Action - Sarajevo

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