



THE BISHOPS CONFERENCE OF BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

PRESS RELEASE

The members of the Bishops Conference of Bosnia-Herzegovina gathered in Sarajevo on 8 March 2001 and discussed amongst other things, the recently created situation of the Croatian people in the country and with regard to the same, release the following communiqué:

1. They express their profound gratitude to the Holy Father who in his address to the representatives of the International League of Humanists on 9 February 2001, expressed his fatherly care for the peoples of Bosnia-Herzegovina and amongst other things stated: "Support and understanding are required: support, so that the current social, political and economic difficulties can be overcome; understanding, so that the best solutions can be found which would correspond to the legitimate expectations of all three constitutive nations of the country".
2. They collectively adopt the principles expressed by Msgr. Ratko Perić in his capacity as local Bishop, which he stated in his Address to the Croatian National Assembly in Mostar on 3 March 2001.
3. They manifest their disaccord with the way in which the representatives of the International Community in Bosnia-Herzegovina are ignoring the political will of the Croatian people, expressed in the elections of November 2000.
4. Since the Croatian people, just as the other two peoples are constitutive in the entire territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina, they consider that the decisions of the International Community on the election law, on the method of electing the members of the Presidency, on the role of the Chamber of nations, in effect abolish the rights and equality of the Croatian people in relation to the other two national groups.
5. They invite the competent representatives of the International Community to search through dialogue with the representatives the Croatian electoral body gave their democratic political trust to, for an adequate solution to the current crisis.
6. They encourage the political representatives, who were legally and legitimately elected to represent the national interests of the Croatian people in the entire territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina, to be open for dialogue with all those who are searching for a just social-political solution for this country and all of its citizens.
7. They distance themselves from all those who would usurp the essential interests of the Croatian people for their own private aims, as well as all those who would reduce this nation to a national minority, so that their preconceived goals may be attained, and by doing so, instead of helping this national group come back to their own homes, constrain the same to leave the country.
8. They invite all the members of the Croatian nation to maintain a dignified level of conduct and especially invite all the Catholic faithful to prayer and to completely put their trust in Divine Providence.

Sarajevo, 8 March 2001.

The Secretariat of the Bishops Conference of Bosnia-Herzegovina