

# An appeal from Yugoslav workers

23 April 1999

Deeply shocked by NATO strikes devastation of our country and the plight of Kosovo Albanians, we, the representatives of non- governmental organizations and the Nezavisnost Trade Union Confederation, energetically demand from those who have created this tragedy to immediately take all necessary steps to create conditions for the resumption of peace process.

For two weeks now the most powerful military, political and economic countries in the world have been killing people and destroying military and civilian facilities, bridges, railway lines, factories, heating plants, storage facilities and fuel tanks. This has produced an exodus of unprecedented proportions. Hundreds of thousands of Yugoslavs, primarily ethnic Albanians, are forced to leave their devastated homes to escape the bombing and military actions of the regime and KLA, in the hope that they will find salvation in the tragic status of refugee. It is obvious that all this leads to a catastrophe and that a negotiated and peaceful solution to the Kosovo problem, which we have urged for years, is now farther than ever.

Our effort to develop democracy and a civic society in Yugoslavia and help it restore its membership of all international institutions have taken place under constant pressure by the Serbian regime. We, the representatives of civil groups and organizations, have courageously and consistently fought against every war-mongering and nationalistic policy, and for the respect of human rights, and particularly against the repression of Kosovo Albanians. We have always insisted on the respect of their human rights and freedoms and on the restoration of autonomy for Kosovo.

Throughout this period, Serb and Albanian civil society groups were the only ones to retain contacts and cooperation. The NATO intervention has destroyed everything that has been achieved so far and the very survival of the civic society in Serbia. Faced with the current tragic situation, we put up the following demands in the name of humanity and values and ideas

that have been guiding us in our activities:

We demand an immediate cessation of bombing and all armed operations;

We demand the resumption of peace process with international mediation at the regional (Balkan) and European level, as well as in the United Nations;

We demand from the European Union and Russia to take their charge of responsibility for finding a peaceful solution to the crisis;

We demand an end to the practice of ethnic cleansing and repatriation of all refugees;

We demand support for peace, stability and democratization of Montenegro and every possible action aimed at helping this republic alleviate the disastrous consequences of the refugee crisis;

We demand from Serbian and international media to report professionally and impartially about current developments, to refrain from participation in the media war and from fanning inter-ethnic hatred, hysteria and glorification of force as the only reasonable way out of the crisis. We are unable to achieve this on our own. We expect from you to support our demands and help us realise them through your actions and initiatives.

- Association of Citizens for Democracy, Social Justice and Support for Trade Unions
- Belgrade Circle
- Center for Cultural Decontamination
- Center for Democracy and Free Elections
- Center for Transition to Democracy
- Civic Initiatives
- EKO Center
- European Movement in Serbia
- Forum for Ethnic Relations and Foundation for Peace and Crisis Management
- Group 484
- Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia
- Students Union of Serbia
- Union for Truth About Anti-Fascist Resistance

- VIN: Weekly Video News
- Women in Black
  - Yugoslavian Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, and
- NEZAVISNOST Trade Union Confederation



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