

“NATO has become the aggressor”: The Case of Kosovo and Metohija

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*His Grace Bishop of Ras-Prizren and Kosovo-Metohija Artemije delivered a lecture titled “**NATO at Work: The Case of Kosovo and Metohija**” at the international conference entitled “Ukraine’s Development towards NATO or Bloc-Free: Prospects and Risks”, September 19-20, Somferopol, Crimea.*

The objective of the conference was to discuss Ukraine’s partnership with NATO.

Nato at Work

The Case of Kosovo and Metohija

Esteemed Chairperson,
Respected organizers of this honored gathering,
Ladies and Gentleman,

I consider it a great honor to have been given this opportunity to stand before this esteemed gathering and present the first hand witness about the (wrong)doings of NATO over one old Christian nation, its faith and culture, its present and future.

You are aware that we have come from Serbia, from Kosovo and Metohija, the Serbian Jerusalem, the cradle of Serbian spirituality, Serbian culture and Serbian statehood. There – where our roots lie, where the spiritual identity of the people was created, where numerous sacred sites are located (1300 churches and monasteries), built and erected over the course of almost a millennium – today, mostly as a result of the operations undertaken by NATO, we find ourselves in grave danger of the last traces of our existence being obliterated.

How did this come to be? Is this possible at the beginning of the 21st century?

Yes, ladies and gentlemen, it is possible. It is possible thanks precisely to the operations of NATO under the conductor’s baton of Washington and Brussels. NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the clasp that binds Europe and North America, was established in 1949 with a mission to guarantee the freedom and security of all its member states by political and military means. A noble purpose, indeed: worthy of all praise. Unfortunately, that purpose has been abandoned, namely, since the end of the Cold War in the 90s (the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dissolution of the Soviet Union), NATO, in order to justify its existence, is in search of a new purpose and establishing different priorities.

Instead of one that looks after the freedom and security of its member states, NATO has

become the aggressor that threatens the freedom of others, violates the security of a nation that presents no peril to it. You may already be guessing that I am talking about the war that NATO waged against SRJ (that is Serbia and Montenegro) in 1999. It was an unusual war, the first of its kind in the history of warfare. It was the aerial war in which the “warring factions” never stood face to face against each other. For the full 78 days NATO was illegally, unjustifiably, heartlessly and violently destroying my homeland by dropping bombs and missiles of all makes, reeking more destruction to civilian (hospitals with maternity wards, residential districts, power lines, bridges, factories) than military targets, purposely aiming at trains and buses packed with passengers and killing over two and a half thousand civilians.

All this terribly hurts my people. But what hurts incomparably more than this is the cynical explanation, the “justification” of their bestial rage, that it was not intended against the Serbian people but the government in Belgrade of that time, while the innocent civilian victims were categorized under the two monstrous words - “collateral damage” - the term so hideous that even the international media proclaimed it “the ugliest term” of 1999.

It was with the extreme delectation that NATO assassins took to darkening the sky over Kosovo and Metohija, providing aerial support to the terrorist organization known as the KLA (Kosovo Liberation Army), throwing on the sacred land of Kosovo and Metohija all available munitions such as cassette bombs (forbidden to use) and rockets “enriched” with depleted uranium whose detrimental effects are felt even today in Kosovo and Metohija regardless of nationality, including the members of NATO and the soldiers of KFOR themselves.

They lied that the bombing campaign, inaptly named “the Angel of Mercy”, was organized to prevent the humanitarian catastrophe that did not even exist at the time, but only instigated one through their aggression against our county (and masterfully directed with the Albanian leaders of the KLA).

But that, ladies and gentleman, is not all. The crimes of NATO against our people reached their full expression only after the “war” had ended, that is when the armed forces of KFOR stepped onto the soil of Kosovo and Metohija based on the resolution of the UN Security Council and the Kumanovo Treaty (military-technical) from June 10, 1999. The mandate of KFOR, according to the agreement, was to prevent the animosity between the warring factions, to establish a secure environment as well as to demilitarize the KLA. According to the resolution 1244 SC, KFOR came to Kosovo and Metohija to establish a peaceful and secure life for all citizens of Kosovo, and to facilitate the unconditional and safe return of the refugees and displaced persons.

Not even one of these listed tasks has since been accomplished. It was exactly after the very arrival of KFOR and the civil authorities of the UN and UNMIK, that, not only did the humanitarian catastrophe ensue, but it culminated in the unprecedented ethnic cleansing of the province. The unique genocide over the Serbian population in peacetime, unheard of in the history of mankind, is unfolding under the auspices of KFOR and UNMIK whose members render their services and offer the support to the Albanian extremists and the terrorist organization KLA, enabling them to persecute and execute two thirds of the Christian Serbian people (250,000), as well as other non-Albanian communities of the Roma, Egyptians, Ashkali and Goranci.

Article II of the Genocide Convention of the UN says: In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

All these points mentioned in the UN Convention that define genocide have been carried out over the Serbian people in Kosovo and Metohija during the last eight years in the presence and under the “protection” of NATO troops.

I have to remind you that the history of Kosovo and Metohija is sad and bloody. It has lasted over 600 years. It began with the famous battle of Kosovo in 1389 and has not finished yet. Over the course of that history there have been but a few sunny and peaceful days, some 20 years perhaps. All other years and centuries went by in the darkness of Turkish bondage, on the cross of suffering. Historians speak volumes about that, and numerous books have been written by both domestic and foreign writers. There is the plethora of witnesses that attest to the fact that each succeeding period was harder, more arduous and bloodier than the preceding. The book called “The Lamentation of the Old Serbia” by Nikola Popovic describes the last one hundred years spent under Turkish rule. Although they were still under Ottoman bondage, the main perpetrators of the crimes of violence against Serbs, against the fragile and feeble among the Serbs, against our sacred sites were the Kosovo Albanians who converted to Islam. In reading the book and at the same time looking closely at the recent events since June 1999, one cannot but help feeling that our history repeats itself. There may be some slight differences in the intensity but it is nevertheless being repeated, now more than ever.

Since June 1999, Kosovo and Metohija are once again hung on the cross. Even before that, since 1941, they suffered great hardships: they were going through the fire and water of suffering: violence; robberies; murders; rapes and persecution. Notwithstanding the above injustices, during the last eight years, under the “protection” of NATO and the administration of UNMIK, all the cruelty experienced and recorded in the history books has been surpassed. Kosovo and Metohija on the cross! Can we picture before our eyes anything more distressful than this? One cannot speak while standing at the cross. There, one can only remain numb or weep bitterly. And especially the One on the cross cannot speak. He bears and suffers. And He prays for those who tortured Him: “Forgive them, Father, for they do not know what they do”. Those are the words of the crucified Lord. We, hung on the cross with Kosovo and Metohija, do not dare to repeat those sacred words. For those who torture us know very well what they do and why they do it.

And what they – today’s terrorists and criminals, the Kosovo Albanians – do in Kosovo and Metohija is well known to the entire world. They have been committing their hideous deeds before the eyes of the entire world for eight years now, in the presence of the entire international community, represented by the members of UNMIK and KFOR in Kosovo and Metohija.

Their presence not only in the role of a witness but as a direct governing body and the authority that, instead of preventing and fighting, not only allows but tolerates criminal activity. Even though the interim administration of the UN is still present and valid in Kosovo and Metohija, even though NATO troops (16,500 soldiers) are still stationed in their bases, there are still hundreds and thousands of terrorists and criminals wandering freely and unchecked through Kosovo and Metohija, carrying out their monstrous crime – the complete

eradication of Serbian Christians from Kosovo and Metohija. Many of those criminals are official members of the Kosovo institutions that legitimately cooperate with the international community.

The newest book of Iseult Henry, the pen name of a current member of the international mission in Kosovo and Metohija, "Hiding Genocide in Kosovo – A Crime Against God and Humanity" speaks of all this, concretely and in detail. This is not a typical book of current events or an international affairs genre, nor is it a journalistic exposé.

This is simply a book of stories, true stories of what has taken place in Kosovo since the end of the 1999 war: shooting; beheading; burning; bomb attacks; maiming; rape; abduction; torture; theft; mutilation; and desecration of holy sites – churches and monasteries (over 150). And this abuse of justice was made possible and tolerated by NATO. The cold distance of the KFOR forces, the signal unmistakably and intentionally given to the KLA thugs, was, as a matter of fact, the signal given for the silent and methodical program of the elimination. That program culminated in the pogrom of March 2004, when all of Kosovo was set ablaze while NATO calmly watched.

And how that passivity of KFOR in carrying out its mission looked like, is best described by the following example. A teacher Miomir Savic from the village of Cernica, close to Gnjilane, was sitting in front of a small Serbian café with some of his friends. The Albanian terrorists threw a bomb at the café and ran away. The deadly device exploded leaving Miomir seriously wounded. He lost a lot of blood from the wounds to his legs. People ran to help him but, as soon as they approached the members of the American KFOR forbade them to come near. He lay there for over two hours, bleeding to death. The Albanian medical workers, a surgeon with three nurses, came from the emergency ward from Gnjilane. Even they pleaded with KFOR to allow them to help, but they were not even allowed to come close to him. Miomir was lying in front of the café bleeding to death while KFOR did nothing nor allowed anyone else to help. After lying on the ground for about two and a half hours with severe leg injuries, a helicopter with the medical staff arrived from the Bondsteel Camp. But it was too late for Miomir. Surrounded by American soldiers, he died. For two and a half hours those soldiers watched him bleed to death. They were only following orders!

Not only were the living Christian Serbs and other non-Albanian people targets of the terrorists, but also property; houses and holy sites; including even the Christian cemeteries. Many Serbian cemeteries across Kosovo and Metohija have been vandalized, the crosses broken, the monuments smashed, the bones dug up and scattered all over, while some of the cemeteries were completely destroyed. The members of the KLA wage war not only against the living but also against the dead, right under the auspices of NATO that turns a blind eye: for no one has ever been brought before the courts for any of these crimes. Even the dead have to disappear. Not even the dead can rest in peace in Kosovo. It is possible to win a war against the living, but no one has yet won a war against the dead. They are invincible.

NATO came to Kosovo to bring peace but created a hell for all except the Kosovo Albanians. They won all, and the Serbs and other communities gained suffering, persecution, and destruction. What kind of peace is that if one cannot: speak in one's own language on the street, outside one's yard; if one cannot confess and practice one's faith because one's place of worship is either behind barb wire or destroyed; if children cannot go to school; if one cannot till one's own land; if one cannot return to one's hometown? What kind of freedom is that if within a couple of years someone obliterates all traces of your culture, and

then attempts to convince you that it is your own fault?

And then the final question: to what end is all this? A dilemma remains that awaits resolution:

Has NATO for the first time entered the war so that the swindlers and charlatans could steal the house from their rightful owner?

Has NATO entered the war to ensure that the Christians in Kosovo cannot bury their dead in Christian cemeteries and that they cannot visit the graves of their relatives?

Has NATO entered the war to make sure that the few Serbs still left in Kosovo and Metohija cannot peacefully and safely sleep at night?

Has NATO entered the war to make sure that property belongs to those who want it, not to those who legally own it?

The list of similar questions to pose is inexhaustible and each can end with the basic question: why all this?

But this is not an end. Today, NATO (USA and EU) is concentrating all its power to crown the efforts of the Albanian terrorists for their crimes committed in Kosovo and Metohija against the Serbs, and reward them with an independent Kosovo against all international conventions, resolutions and the generally accepted international law of territorial integrity and sovereignty of all member states of the UN, of which Serbia is among the first. Such an imposed solution that implies the separation of Kosovo and Metohija from Serbia, the Serbian state and people as a whole, no matter where they live, will never be accepted.

We are being insolently blackmailed into accepting an Independent Kosovo (the package of Matti Ahtisaari) in return for instant membership into NATO. Serbia is not prepared to do that. The victims of the NATO bombing campaign from 1999, as well as the victims who fell at the hands of the KLA criminals while under NATO "protection", ask that we do not forget or betray them. They are now our conscience and it is our moral obligation to preserve their eternal peace and allow their souls to rest, with the message that they laid down their lives before the altar of the Fatherland so that we may never live in the same company with their murderers. Many Serbs publicly ask: Why run into the arms of those before whose eyes and under whose "protection" around 2500 Serbian martyrs have been killed, and no one has ever been charged for it? Serbian people feel that it is better to disappear from the face of the earth than to agree to that, for a man (and nation) without honor, pride and national dignity is reduced to nothing, deserving of being spat upon. Joining NATO would represent the greatest descent, misfortune and humiliation for the Serbian people in their entire history. We are convinced that Serbia will never allow that to happen.

Bishop Artemije

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