

STATEMENT OF SHARED MORAL COMMITMENT

Concerned at the visibly slow and inefficient implementation of the Dayton Accords as they pertain to civil society, and deeply disturbed by recent unpleasant events in the Zone of Separation, the Reis-ul-Ulema of the Islamic Community of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the responsible representatives of the two Christian Churches, Serbian Orthodox and Roman Catholic, and the President of the Jewish Community of Bosnia-Herzegovina, have decided to issue the following common statement:

1. The peoples of Bosnia-Herzegovina have undergone enormous suffering. But, thanks be to God, the war has ended. Our task now is to establish a durable peace based on truth, justice and common living.

2. We, the Reis-ul-Ulema of the Islamic Community of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the responsible representatives of the two Christian churches (Serbian Orthodox and Roman Catholic) and the President of the Jewish Community of Bosnia-Herzegovina recognize that our Churches and Religious Communities differ from each other, and that each of them feels called to live true to its own faith. At the same time we recognize that our religious and spiritual traditions hold many values in common, and that these shared values can provide an authentic basis for mutual esteem, cooperation and free common living in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

3. Each of our traditional Churches and Religious Communities recognizes that the dignity of man and human value is a gift of God. Our faiths and religions, each in its own way, call us to recognize the fundamental human rights of each person. Violence against persons or the violation of their basic rights are for us not only against man-made laws but also breaking God's law.

4. We jointly, in mutual recognition of our religious differences, condemn all violence against innocent persons and any form of abuse or violation of fundamental human rights.

Specifically, we condemn:

- Acts of hatred based on ethnicity or religious differences. We express our especial concern at the burning of houses, the desecration of religious buildings, and the destruction of graveyards;
- The obstruction of the free right of return;
- Acts of revenge;
- The abuse of the media with the aim of spreading hatred.

5. Further, we call for respect for the fundamental human rights of all persons, regardless of religious or ethnic affiliation, which must include:

- The freedom of all responsible representatives or religious leaders of Churches or Religious Communities in the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina to fulfil their mission in every part of the country;
- Opportunities for the free performance of religious services and all forms of pastoral care by all Imams of the Islamic Community, all Christian priests (Serbian Orthodox and Roman Catholic) and all representatives of the Jewish community;
- The right of every child to religious instruction in his or her own faith; and
- Guarantees that no one shall be compelled to attend instruction in the institution of another church or religious community.

6. Finally, we call on all people of good will to take responsibility for their own acts. Let us treat others as we would wish them to treat us.


7. With this Statement we appeal to believers of our Churches and Religious Communities, and all citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and

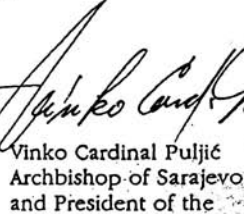
Mr Alija Izetbegović, President of Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina


Mr Momčilo Krajišnik, member of Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina

Mr Krešimir Zubak, member of Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina


Dr Mustafa Cerić
Reis-ul-Ulema
of the Islamic
Community
of BiH


In the name of and with
the authorisation of His Holiness
Serbian Patriarch Pavle,
Metropolit dabrobosanski
Nikolaž


Vinko Cardinal Puljić
Archbishop of Sarajevo
and President of the
Bishops' Conference
of BiH


Mr Jakob Finci
President of the
Jewish Community of
Bosnia-Herzegovina,
Sarajevo

Sarajevo, June 9, 1997.