



REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

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STATEMENT

by H.E. Mr. Vuk Drašković,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia
at the 1st Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council
High-Level Segment
Geneva, 19 June 2006

Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am speaking on behalf of the Republic of Serbia, the successor state of the state union of Serbia and Montenegro.

I express my satisfaction over the election of the Human Rights Council. I congratulate all the members. In particular, I congratulate Ambassador Luis Alfonso de Alba on his election as Chairman of the Council.

I express my gratitude to the former Commission, as well as to the High Commissioner, Mme Louise Arbour, for the sincere efforts she invested in making our world a better place to live in.

Unfortunately, we are still very far from the projected ideal of liberty, brotherhood and equality for all people irrespective of faith, nation, race, ideology or any other belonging. Because of non-liberty, discrimination, hatred, terrorism and the diktat of the stronger and the richer, hundreds of millions of people suffer and perish in the world today.

It was exactly because of the gross violations of the human rights guaranteed by the Charter of the United Nations that the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, was prompted to propose, and the General Assembly of the United Nations to accept, that the Human Rights Council be invested with considerably greater powers than the former Commission and become a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly itself.

In welcoming those powers of the Council, I address to you a demand and a request to stigmatize in a resolute way the massive and systematic violations of the human rights of the Serbs and other non-Albanians in a part of the state of Serbia, the Province of Kosovo and Metohija, which has been under United Nations civil and military administration since 10 June 1999.

Here are some facts:

More than 220 000 Serbs, Roma, Turks and other non-Albanians have been expelled from Kosovo over the last seven years. Not a single Jew lives in Kosovo any more. More than 1 000 Serbs have been killed, including many children. About 40 000 Serbian homes and 150 centuries-old churches and monasteries have been destroyed. There is no doubt that Kosovo is an infernal place nowadays for all those who are not Albanian, as well as an infernal place for many who are Albanian.

Perhaps because, as United Nations ombudsman for Kosovo, he was honest witness to the truth of this human rights inferno, Mr. Marek Nowicki was replaced without an explanation last year with a tragic message to the Serbs, and not only the Serbs, that the great and mighty world, its mouth full of human rights, is turning its head away of their plight.

Ambassador Kai Eide, United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the implementation of democratic standards in Kosovo, arrived at the same gloomy conclusions. He reported to the Secretary-General, Security

Council and the Contact Group that the human rights situation in Kosovo was dismal and that, by and large, crimes remained undetected as the "the culture of non-punishment" reigned in the Province.

Ambassador Eide went on to say that the Serbs are often prevented from tending their land in their villages because the Albanians shoot at them or simply seize and take possession of that land by force.

The Secretary-General and the Security Council, as well as the Contact Group adopted the Report of Ambassador Eide without a single remark. And what is going on?

The political leaders of the Albanian majority are being congratulated for their promise to respect the rights of the Serbs provided the Province of Kosovo be declared an internationally sovereign State!

This trafficking in human rights and this trafficking in state borders is the biggest possible violation of human rights and the Charter of the United Nations since human rights and the international state borders of internationally recognized states must be respected unconditionally.

The international Contact Group and the Security Council will decide the future status of Kosovo at the end of this year. Serbia demands that the Human Rights Council take the position that the rights of the Serbs and other non-Albanians must be protected forthwith and unconditionally with international guarantees and that the existing borders of internationally recognized states cannot be changed contrary to the will of those states themselves.

Serbia is a small state, but a state as any other state. Just as there can be no people whose human and legal rights are allowed to be trampled upon, so can there be no state, either, whose borders are allowed to be shifted contrary to their right and will.

Serbia has put forward its candidature for a member of this Council in the period from 2008 to 2011. If my country is elected, and I hope it will, we shall work on making the Charter of the United Nations binding on all and on having the same principles apply on all people, nations and states.

Thank you.