Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 1360 (1998)[1]

Crisis in Kosovo

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Assembly is deeply concerned about the escalation of violence in Kosovo in recent weeks. While rejecting violence as a means to achieve the political goals of the Albanian community in Kosovo, it strongly condemns the excessive and indiscriminate use of force by the Serbian security forces during the recent events in the Drenica region, which caused many civilian casualties.

2. The Assembly stresses that the human rights situation in Kosovo and threats to the stability of the region are a legitimate concern of the international community, and cannot be declared an internal matter of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia or of Serbia.

3. The Assembly notes the conclusions of its high level mission, headed by its President and composed of the Chairmen of the Political Groups and the Chairman of the Political Affairs Committee, which visited Belgrade and Pristina on 12 and 13 March 1998 to discuss the crisis in Kosovo in the context of relations between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Council of Europe.

4. The Assembly fully supports the decisions taken at the ministerial meeting of the Contact Group for the former Yugoslavia in London on 9 March 1998.

5. The Assembly reiterates its demand for the instant and full restoration of human rights and fundamental freedoms of the Albanian community in Kosovo. It expects the Yugoslav authorities to implement forthwith the agreement on education concluded in September 1996 between Mr Milosevic, then President of Serbia, and Mr Rugova, leader of the Albanian community in Kosovo.

6. The Assembly calls for the establishment of an international monitoring presence in Kosovo, and for an independent inquiry into the recent events in the Drenica region.

7. The Assembly believes that a long-term solution to the crisis can only be found on the basis of a greater autonomy for Kosovo within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and calls for an immediate start to genuine negotiations on this issue between the Yugoslav authorities and representatives of the Albanian community in Kosovo.

8. The Assembly reiterates its offer to assist in contacts between the Yugoslav authorities and representatives of the Albanian community. The Council of Europe has considerable expertise in the relevant areas, such as human rights, minority rights, local and regional democracy and education, which it could put at the disposal of the parties.

9. The Assembly welcomes the existence of political dialogue in Montenegro between the authorities of this republic and the Albanian, as well as Muslim, communities, which has led to the participation of representatives of these communities in the new Montenegro government.

10. The Assembly calls on the authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to :

10.1. make every effort to de-escalate the situation;

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1. See Doc. 8037, report of the Political Affairs Committee, rapporteur: Mr Bársony. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 18 March 1998.

10.2. establish dialogue without any preconditions with representatives of the Albanian community to examine ways for a greater autonomy for Kosovo within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia;

10.3. enable the international community to establish a monitoring presence in Kosovo;

10.4. agree to an independent inquiry into the recent events;

10.5. implement the education agreement concluded between Mr Milosevic and Mr Rugova in September 1996;

10.6. comply with the recommendations made by Mr Felipe González on behalf of the OSCE in December 1996 and accept his role as a mediator for the opening of a dialogue with the Kosovo Albanians;

11. The Assembly expects the leaders of the Albanian community in Kosovo to condemn and refrain from the use of violence, and agree to a dialogue with the Yugoslav government.

12. The Assembly calls on the international community to re-establish, and, if necessary, reinforce its sanctions with regard to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, if its requests concerning the peaceful resolution of the Kosovo crisis are not complied with.

13. The Assembly reaffirms its position that the development of relations between the Council of Europe and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia will depend on compliance by the latter with the requests of the international community.

14. The Assembly recommends the Committee of Ministers deal with the Kosovo crisis as a matter of priority within the framework of its political dialogue and in close co-ordination with the OSCE and the European Union.