

Albanian bishops decry Serb attacks

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — As NATO countries increased their pressure on the Serbian government to stop its offensive against ethnic Albanians in Kosovo — including a show of force by NATO jets June 15 — the bishops of Albania appealed for an end to the violence.

"We denounce every violent action against the weak, the innocent and the defenseless, from whatever side it comes," the Albanian bishops said in a statement published June 12 by the Vatican.

The bishops said violence "does nothing but increase the hatred and evil."

"The exodus of children, women and the aged leads us to think that the situation is becoming increasingly alarming and aggravated," the bishops said.

The Serbian government which controls Kosovo — a province whose population is 90 percent ethnic Albanian — began a crackdown on pro-independence movements in February. The offensive escalated in late May with the Serbian army reportedly bombing villages.

An estimated 20,000 people have fled Kosovo, many of them seeking refuge in Albania.

Kosovo was an autonomous province within Serbia, a republic of Yugoslavia, until 1989, when its autonomy was revoked by Serb leader Slobodan Milosevic, now president of Yugoslavia.

On June 15, 85 NATO warplanes staged mock air raids over Albania, coming within 10 miles of the border with Kosovo. NATO officials said the maneuvers were intended to pressure Yugoslav forces to end their attacks on ethnic Albanians.



CNS/Reuters

A couple of Kosovo refugees walk into Albania after crossing the high mountains on the border between Serbia's turbulent Kosovo province and Albania June 13. Albania's bishops made an appeal June 12 to end the violence in the Balkans. NATO jets stage mock air raids June 15 as a warning to Serb forces.

"We are showing that we are willing to back up international diplomacy with military means," Javier Solana, NATO secretary-general, told reporters June 11 when plans for the air exercises were announced.

Despite the display of air power, however, there were reports of continued attacks by Serb forces in Kosovo.

The Albanian bishops' appeal included a call to their own people "to welcome our brothers and sisters in difficulty in the spirit of the Gospel of Jesus Christ who

identified himself with every man."

The bishops also called on the international community to take action to ensure that "basic human rights are recognized and respected in accordance with international agreements."

The Albanian bishops closed their message with a prayer that "reason, good sense and peace" would return to the Balkans and that "the Lord would open the hearts and minds of those who have the fate of these brothers and sisters in their hands."

Chinese priest released

HONG KONG (CNS) — A priest of the underground church in China was released by security officials six days after being detained for displaying an image of Jesus outside his church and playing hymns over a loudspeaker, a source said.

Father Miao Shaozeng of Fu'an Diocese, in coastal Fujian province, was allowed to return to the church in Kangcuo May 28 and resume normal activities as parish priest, without paying any fine, the source told UCA News, an Asian church news agency based in Thailand, June 12.

The source confirmed that Public Security Bureau officials had arrested Father Miao May 22 for disrupting social order.

The charge concerned his hanging a picture of Jesus from the spire of the church and playing recorded hymns for the public to hear on Easter.

The source said Father Miao used to hang festive red cloth and play hymns over loudspeakers during major Catholic feast days, but that officials had warned him last Christmas about hanging up the cloth outside the church. Officials did not take further action at that time.

The fact that the priest is in charge of diocesan finances might have led to the arrest, but the security officials had no evidence with which to charge him with raising funds to finance illegal activities, the source noted.

Several years ago, a former Fu'an procurator was also arrested, he said. More than a million yuan to be used by the diocese for church construction, formation and welfare services was confiscated, the source said.

CALENDAR

All Dioceses

Fundraisers

■ **TUE, JUNE 23** — Golf classic: to benefit Catholic school scholarships; Greystone Golf Course, 1400 Atlantic Ave., Walworth; 10 a.m.; call Sr. Anne 716/328-3210, ext. 308.

Meetings

■ **JUNE 27, 30** — Discussions: Pastoral council planning next year; June 27, 10 a.m.-noon, St. Mary's Church, 40 Elizabeth St., Dansville; June 30, 7:30-9 p.m., St. Mary of the Lake Church, 901 N. Decatur St., Watkins Glen; to register call Elaine, ext. 328, at 716/328-3210 or 800/388-7177, or e-mail weinzler@dor.org.

Religious Activities

■ **SAT, JUNE 20** — Mass and Cenacle: Shrine of the North American Martyrs in Auriesville, N.Y.; Mass 11 a.m.; celebrant/homilist, Fr. Richard Severson; Cenacle 1:30 p.m.; 518/581-1750.

Chemung Schuyler

Meetings

■ **SAT, JUNE 20** — Alcoholics Anonymous: St. Joseph's Hospital Cusick Room,

555 E. Market St., Elmira; 5 p.m.

■ **WED, JUNE 24** — Support group: widow/widower; St. Joseph's Hospital Executive Conference Room, 555 E. Market St., Elmira; 4 p.m.; call Connie at 315/733-1084.

Monroe County

Fundraisers

■ **JUNE 18-20** — Garage sale: Mercy High School gym and garage, 1437 Blossom Rd., Rochester; Thurs. and Fri. 8 a.m.-4 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-noon.

■ **JUNE 18-20** — Carnival: St. Charles Borromeo Church, 3003 Dewey Ave., Greece; Thurs. 4-11 p.m., Fri. 4 p.m.-midnight, Sat. noon-midnight.

■ **MON, JUNE 22** — Golf tournament: to benefit School of the Holy Childhood; Penfield Country Club; noon; \$160; for information call 716/359-3710.

■ **FRI, JUNE 26** — Summer Night 1998: St. Andrew's Church, 923 Portland Ave., Rochester; music by Tim Herliky; 6-11 p.m.

Meetings

■ **THU, JUNE 18** — Seminar: for caregivers and older adults; four Thursdays in June; Mercy Center with the Aging, 327 Warrington Dr., Rochester; 7-9 p.m.; 716/244-5190.

■ **MON, JUNE 22** — Registration deadline: for June 29, July 6, 13 wellness class; leader, Sr. Margaret Ann Lawson, RSM; Mercy Prayer Center, 65 Highland Ave., Rochester; 7:30-9 p.m.; \$30 for series; 716/473-6893.

Religious Activities

■ **FRI, JUNE 19** — Rosary: Feast of the Sacred Heart; at Shrine of Jesus and Mary, 237 Rye Rd., Greece; 7 p.m.; bring a chair.

■ **FRI, JUNE 19** — Mass: Feast of the Sacred Heart; sponsored by Knights of Columbus Msgr. Richard K. Burns Council 11749; St. Thomas the Apostle Church, 4536 St. Paul Blvd., Irondequoit; 6:15 p.m. rosary, 7 p.m. Mass, 8 p.m. blessing of enshrined statue and dedication of eternal flame to the unborn.

■ **SUN, JUNE 21** — High Mass: in traditional Latin rite; celebrant, Fr. Dennis Bonsignore; St. Stanislaus Church, 1124 Hudson Ave., Rochester; 1:30 p.m.

■ **TUE, JUNE 23** — Registration deadline: for June 30 "Prayers of the Cosmos"; leader, Mary Gleason; Mercy Prayer Center, 65 Highland Ave., Rochester; 7-9 p.m.; \$12; 716/473-6893.

■ **WED, JUNE 24** — Open house/Mass: to celebrate 20th anniversary of Bethany House of Hospitality/Rochester Catholic Worker; 169 St. Bridget's Dr., Rochester; 2-5 p.m.; Mass 6 p.m. at St. Bridget's Church, 14 Mark St.,

Rochester; celebrant, Bishop Matthew Clark; followed by reception in church hall.

■ **THU, JUNE 25** — Centering Prayer group: Guardian Angels Church, 2061 E. Henrietta Rd., Rochester; 7:30-8:30 p.m.

■ **FRI, JUNE 26** — Evensong: celebrating the covenant between the Roman Catholic and Episcopal dioceses of Rochester; Bishop William Burrill, presider; Bishop Matthew Clark, preacher; Ss. Luke and Simon Cyrene, 17 Fitzhugh St., Rochester; 5 p.m.

Workshops

■ **MON, JUNE 22** — Registration deadline: for June 27 workshop "Sacred African American Liturgical Music II"; with Richard Cheri and Company; Immaculate Conception Church, 445 Frederick Douglass St., Rochester; 9 a.m.-3 p.m.; \$10 includes lunch; followed by Gospel Mass June 28; 10:30 a.m.; call the Office of Black Ministries 716/328-3210 or Immaculate Conception 716/325-3893.

Seneca Cayuga

Fundraisers

■ **JUNE 18-20** — Festival: St. Patrick Church, 97 W. Bayard St., Seneca Falls; dinner 5 p.m. each day; Thurs. Karaoke

8-11 p.m.; Fri. music 6-11 p.m.; Sat. Kool Cats 8-11 p.m.; advance ride tickets at St. Patrick's School.

Tompkin Tioga

Social Activities

■ **SUN, JUNE 21** — Reception: to honor Jim Raftis, who broadcast the Sunday Mass for 29 years from St. Patrick Church; St. Patrick Church, 300 Main St., Owego; 10:30 a.m.

Yates Ontario Wayne

Social Activities

■ **SUN, JUNE 21** — Golf: Divorced, Separated, Bereaved support groups; sponsored by Finger Lakes Social Ministry; Big Oak Golf Course, Packwood Rd., Geneva; tee-off 4 p.m.; call Les 315/789-9419, Carl and Alma 315/539-2284 or Claire 716/394-6722; meets every Sunday.

■ **TUE, JUNE 23** — Strawberry festival: St. John's Church Parish Hall, 114 Sodus St., Clyde; 6-8 p.m.; \$2 adults, \$1 ages 6-12; tickets available after Mass or at the door.