

# WORLD & NATION

## Bishop: Democracy needed for Kosovo peace

By Jennifer E. Reed  
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — A Serbian Orthodox bishop said democratic rule and the containment of Serbian and Albanian extremists are essential for peace in Kosovo.

Bishop Artemije Radosaljevi of Raska and Prizren, Yugoslavia, said that the 100,000 mostly Orthodox Serbs who remain in Kosovo now are being oppressed just as the Albanian majority population was by Serb forces.

"Everything Albanians went through in war, now Serbs are going through in the peace," he said, including kidnappings, murders and forced expulsion from their homes.

Speaking through an interpreter in a Feb. 25 meeting with U.S. bishops' conference officials in Washington, Bishop Artemije said, "The final solution of Kosovo and the status of Kosovo is postponed until there are changes in Belgrade and democracy happens in Serbia."

Kosovo, legally part of Yugoslavia, has been under the responsibility of a NATO-led peacekeeping force and the United Nations since last year's NATO bombing pushed out Serb forces that had been repressing the Albanian population.

Kosovo was an autonomous province within Serbia until 1989, when its autonomy was revoked by then-Serb leader Slobodan Milosevic, now president of Yugoslavia.

"We all want to get rid of Milosevic and free ourselves of his regime. The (Western nations') sanctions and the suffering of Serbs in Kosovo only strengthen him because he uses these as proofs of hatred of the international community toward the Serb people," he said.

Milosevic controls all media in Serbia and tells the people the West is responsible for their difficulties, said Bishop Artemije. Milosevic also claims the peacekeeping forces are only in Kosovo to occupy it, not to help the people, the bishop said.

The bishop, believed to have been instrumental in the Serbian Orthodox Church's public condemnation of Milosevic's regime in June, said he was "very pessimistic" that Milosevic would resign.

But he added "we are great optimists" about the possibility that democratization will take place.

During his visit to Washington, Bishop Artemije met with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, who told reporters Feb. 25 the bishop said he intended to take the seat reserved for the Serb representative on Kosovo's interim administrative council. Bishop Artemije is president of the Serb National Council.

Since August, two-thirds of Serbs who lived in Kosovo, more than 200,000 people, have been expelled, the bishop said. More than 50,000 other non-Albanians, mainly Gypsies, have also been forced out, he added.

He described the "total destruction" from June to October of more than 80 Orthodox churches and monasteries in Kosovo as "most painful."

During those months, cities and towns in Kosovo were "cleansed of Serbs," he added. In Pristina, for instance, where more than 40,000 Serbs lived before the arrival of peacekeepers, now there are 200-300 elderly people "who do not dare go out" of their homes, he said.

Serbs remaining in Kosovo live in four large enclaves, he said, "actually ghettos, I dare say concentration camps, from which there is no exit." They are denied basic human rights, do not have freedom of movement and receive little humanitarian aid, the bishop said.

A Serb who goes outside of his enclave becomes a "moving target," he said, who will be shot, beaten or kidnapped.

"We cannot move anywhere without a very strong escort" from peacekeeping troops, he added.

"We hope that after this visit in the United States some further steps will be taken to increase security and improve conditions for the well-being of Serbs in Kosovo," he said.

Before Serb and non-Albanian refugees can return to Kosovo they must feel safe and have normal conditions in which to live, he said. KFOR, the NATO-led peace-

keeping force, and the U.N. Mission in Kosovo must be more engaged in ensuring these conditions, he added.

"They have to provide conditions for the process of return just as they did ... for Albanians. ... Only through this evenhandedness we can bring to life this idea of creating a multicultural and democratic Kosovo," he said.

The United Nations said Feb. 28 that in previous days, violence had increased against Serbs in Kosovo. NATO officials have warned that peacekeepers would act decisively in response to Serbian or Albanian extremists' efforts to use violence to fuel further conflict in Kosovo.

Bishop Artemije said, "Until somebody blocks the road for these extremists there will be no hope for either Serbs or Alba-

nians."

He asked the U.S. bishops' conference to continue efforts to influence U.S. government policy on Kosovo "by spreading the truth I told you and taking it to the ears of the U.S. Congress."

Meanwhile, Orthodox Metropolitan Amfilohije Risto Radovic of Montenegro said recent violence in the ethnically divided Kosovo town of Mitrovica was evidence of KFOR's shortcomings.

"All these months (with peacekeepers) have not succeeded in reducing the profound hate that divides the population," he said in a Feb. 29 interview with the Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera*.

"Force is not what is needed. A spiritual and moral renewal of the population is needed," he said.



Reuters/CNS

### Cheers in Egypt

Sudanese women cheer for Pope John Paul II as he arrives at St. Mark's Coptic Cathedral in Cairo Feb. 24. The pope was on a three-day pilgrimage to Egypt, which borders Sudan.

## Cardinal O'Connor anticipates naming of his successor

By Tracy Early  
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK — Cardinal John J. O'Connor of New York, recovering from brain surgery he underwent last year, suffered a setback that left him too weak to celebrate his regular Sunday morning Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral Feb. 27.

Auxiliary Bishop James F. McCarthy, who celebrated the Mass, told the congregation that Cardinal O'Connor was feeling weak and "last night did not sleep well."

In a telephone interview later the same day, Joseph Zwilling, communications officer for the Archdiocese of New York, told Catholic News Service that the cardinal was resting in bed at his residence, and that two doctors attending him reported they "had nothing specific to release at this point."

"The cardinal has a very pronounced weakness beyond what he has experienced in the past," Zwilling said. "The doctors

have some concerns and want to monitor him very closely in the next couple of days to see if they can find what is causing the problem."

Since the cause had not been diagnosed, no new medication or therapy had been undertaken, and there were no immediate plans for hospitalization, the spokesman said.

Cardinal O'Connor had surgery for removal of a brain tumor Aug. 31 at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in Manhattan, and subsequently was given approximately five weeks of five-day-a-week radiation treatments.

His appearance since then has been considerably altered, with a puffiness in his face and loss of hair.

He returned to Memorial Sloan-Kettering for treatment of a blood clot in his left leg Oct. 18-20, and at the same time received fluids for dehydration.

No announcement has been made about what treatment the cardinal has received subsequently. But in a recent letter he told priests of the archdiocese that "various medications I am on have affected my gait," Zwilling said.

In the same letter Cardinal O'Connor said he guessed that his successor would be announced in late February or early March. No further information was available by press time Feb. 29.

Pope John Paul II declined Cardinal O'Connor's resignation offered at age 75, but there has been widespread speculation that his retirement would come shortly after he turned 80 this past Jan. 15.

In addition to developing general weak-

ness, Cardinal O'Connor has recently had difficulty focusing his eyes to read. Although he celebrated the Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral Feb. 20, Auxiliary Bishop Robert A. Brucato had to assist him by reading prayers, Zwilling said.

However, the spokesman said Cardinal O'Connor was able to see well enough to recognize people at a staff meeting.

The doctors had not determined whether the problem with the eyes was connected to the recently increased weakness, Zwilling said.

Earlier, Cardinal O'Connor reported that he was feeling stronger. In December, he resumed celebrating Mass after missing some Sundays, and on Jan. 3 he started going to his office to work for the first time since shortly after the surgery.

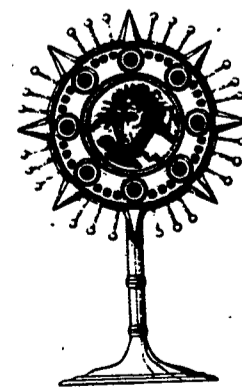
Although he has had difficulty walking, his only public appearance in a wheelchair came Jan. 27, when he was honored by the Cathedral Club of Brooklyn at a dinner in a Manhattan hotel. He told reporters that his feet were unsteady, but "each day they're getting stronger."

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### Correction

In the Feb. 24 edition of the *Catholic Courier*, a Catholic News Service story about the Diocese of Birmingham's norms for Mass broadcasts contained incorrect information. The Eternal Word Television Network, EWTN, airs a live Mass daily at 8 a.m. Eastern time, and broadcasts it again by tape at noon, 7 p.m. and midnight Eastern time.

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