



Statement on Kosovo Conflict

April 13, 1999

Approved by the Jewish Community Relations Council

The Jewish Community Relations Council of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, Sonoma, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, representing approximately 80 synagogues and Jewish organizations, calls upon the nations of the world to provide significant aid and refuge to meet the urgent humanitarian needs of the refugees from Kosovo.

We are proud of the U.S. humanitarian response to date. We welcome the leadership role assumed by the United States and numerous international relief organizations in coordinating humanitarian relief for the refugees, providing food, medicine and shelter. We urge members of our community to respond to calls for help, as many have already done.

We are also proud that among the first responses to the urgent plight of hundreds of thousands of refugees was the setting up of a field hospital by Israeli doctors, nurses and volunteers to aid the Kosovar Albanian refugees, the sending of emergency supplies to the refugees, and the welcoming of 110 Kosovar refugees to Israel.

We also support the decision taken by President Bill Clinton and our allies in NATO to intervene militarily to curtail the brutal Serbian aggression against civilians in Kosovo, and we hope this action will pave the way for a diplomatic solution of the conflict. We call upon our government to provide full support to the International War Crimes Tribunal with the goal of bringing those individuals responsible for this cruelty and brutality to justice.

The world has watched in horror as yet again the forces of Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic undertake a systematic campaign of "ethnic cleansing," this time directed at the ethnic Albanian population of Kosovo. The experience of the Jewish people in the Holocaust makes us especially sensitive to the importance of stopping dictators who exploit ethnic tensions and commit atrocities resulting in death and destruction in order to maintain their hold on power.

The decision to launch a military operation that will result in casualties - civilian and military - to all sides in this conflict, was certainly an extremely difficult one to make. We agree with the President that U.S. national interests and moral values require such a response in this situation. Our prayers go out for the safety and success of those brave men and women serving in our armed forces who are being called upon to carry out this important mission.

How to Help

1. Respond to calls for humanitarian assistance. Among the agencies receiving donations are:

Jewish Community Federation

121 Steuart Street

San Francisco, CA 94105

(Checks earmarked for Kosovo relief will be forwarded to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee for direct humanitarian relief)

American Jewish World Service

989 Avenue of the Americas, 10th Floor

New York, NY 10018

(earmark for Kosovo Relief)

2. Communicate with your Senators and Congresspersons, utilizing some of the points contained in this statement.
3. Call JCRC at (415) 957-1551 if you are interested in being contacted about community events aimed at highlighting the plight of Kosovar refugees and the atrocities committed there in the hope of bringing an end to the brutality.