

**A Cry of World's Orthodox Youth
Regarding the Kosovo and Metohija Crisis**

Report on the Syndesmos XVIth General Assembly: "Serve the Lord in Unity", Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Valamo, Finland, 17-25 July 1999

We, the representatives of over 120 Orthodox youth movements from more than 40 countries worldwide, who have gathered for the General Assembly of SYNDESMOS, the World Fellowship of Orthodox Youth, wholeheartedly sympathise with the pain of all those who have suffered injustice and violence in the crisis in Yugoslavia.

We also condemn violence, ask for reconciliation and peaceful coexistence, and pray to the God of Truth and Love to perform His miracle, so that a just, permanent and peaceful solution can be found for the troubled area of Kosovo and Metohija.

We pray that the Lord will enlighten all those who wield power in the whole region, to act in wisdom and seek peace and to respond sincerely to human misery, wherever it is found. Noting the close personal interest of His Holiness Pavle, Archbishop of Pec and Patriarch of Serbia, and His Beatitude Anastasios, Archbishop of Tirana and All Albania, we applaud the Orthodox Churches in Serbia and Albania for their efforts in peacemaking and relieving human pain before and during the crisis.

The delegates further ask all Sides involved to act quickly to make good the environmental damage in Yugoslavia and the surrounding countries to contribute to the work of reconstruction before the onset of winter, so that the destruction of the civilian infrastructure caused by the violence, will not result in the widespread loss of innocent human lives. We also pray that God will help both the Patriarchate of Serbia and the Autocephalous Church of Albania to continue to respond to the tragedy with compassion and forgiveness.

We finally express our deep sorrow and condemn the destruction of holy monasteries and churches, as well as mosques and other religious and cultural monuments, in the suffering region.

Valamo, Finland. 24 July 1999