



10 JANUARY 2015

## ECMI KOSOVO CALLS FOR CALM IN LIGHT OF PROTESTS AGAINST MINISTER JABLANOVIĆ'S CONTROVERSIAL STATEMENT

On 10 January, a peaceful protest demanding that Prime Minister Mustafa relieve Minister Jablanović of his duties was held in Gjakovë/Đakovica. The protest, called by Vetëvendosje and the NGO Mothers' Call and attended by a few hundred citizens, was held after controversial statements made by Kosovo Government Minister Aleksandar Jablanović, which led to a series of furious reactions by opposition parties and the Ombudsperson of Kosovo.

In an oral statement to media, Mr. Jablanović was quoted saying "savages did not allow Serbs to go back to their burned houses"<sup>1</sup> commenting on the protest organized by Vetëvendosje and the NGO Mothers' Call on 6 January, where the Serb pilgrims were not allowed to enter the Serb Orthodox Church in Gjakovë/Đakovica for the Christmas liturgy, through blocking the entrance to the church.<sup>2</sup> His statement was picked up by media all over Kosovo, quickly earning widespread condemnation from the public. NGO Mothers' Call, which brings together the mothers of thousands of missing persons from 1999 from the Municipality of Gjakovë/Đakovica, called this statement offensive to them and to the memory of those killed and missing. Ombudsperson Sami Kurteshi called the statement "chauvinistic" and "the most serious violation a minister could do".<sup>3</sup> After increasing pressure from the public and media, Minister Jablanović issued another statement saying that he was "unaware of the gravity of human losses in Gjakovë/Đakovica", and that he did not call all citizens of Gjakovë/Đakovica savages but "just those throwing rocks".<sup>4</sup> Following Jablanović's statement, Prime Minister Mustafa expressed his satisfaction with the explanation given by Jablanović, and called upon everyone, including political leaders, to tone down the rhetoric and to focus on rebuilding bridges instead of creating new divisions.<sup>5</sup>

ECMI Kosovo reiterates that peaceful protests are a hallmark of a healthy democratic society. We would also like to once again express our concern about the violent blockage of the entrance to the Serb Orthodox Church in Gjakovë/Đakovica<sup>6</sup>, as well as about the statement issued by Minister Jablanović where he referred to protestors as "savages". Sensitive ethnic issues should be dealt with

<sup>1</sup> For more information, see here <http://www.telegrafi.com/lajme/jabllanoviqi-i-quan-egersira-protestuesit-ne-gjakove-video-2-56413.html>

<sup>2</sup> For more information, see ECMI Kosovo's statement here <http://www.ecmikosovo.org/?p=5970>

<sup>3</sup> For more information, see here <http://www.rtklive.com/en/?id=2&r=283>

<sup>4</sup> For more information, see here <http://www.telegrafi.com/lajme/jabllanoviq-s-kam-gene-ne-dijeni-per-humbjet-katastrofike-ne-gjakove-2-56481.html>

<sup>5</sup> For more information, see here <http://koha.net/?id=27&l=40234>

<sup>6</sup> For more information, see ECMI Kosovo's statement here <http://www.ecmikosovo.org/?p=5970>

carefully and with due respect for all sides and victims and their family members should be treated with the respect that they deserve by all Kosovo institutions and society.

ECMI Kosovo calls upon the media not to fuel the rhetoric while reporting on the developments. We also caution the political parties not to use ethnic issues as a springboard for political wrangling. Political representatives and media should strive to at all times take into consideration the sensitivities of all communities in Kosovo in their work for Kosovo society.

## **Further reports and political analysis:**

[ECMI Kosovo condemns the violent blockage of entrance to the Serb Orthodox Church in Gjakovë/Đakovica](#)

**January 7, 2015**

<http://goo.gl/RQZ5A1>

[A Political Update: The Formation of the New Government of Kosovo, Minority Community Representation and Challenges Ahead](#)

**December 10, 2014**

<http://goo.gl/ztDfOI>

[ECMI Kosovo Information Bulletin-An Overview of the Recent Security Situation in Kosovo](#)

**November 4, 2014**

<http://goo.gl/3RyIIC>

[ECMI Kosovo Short Update on Political Developments: Minority Communities Want the Stalemate Over](#)

**October 23, 2014**

<http://goo.gl/sBf53x>

[Minority Communities' Political Parties in Kosovo's Changing Political Landscape](#)

**July 31, 2014**

<http://goo.gl/sSc7dn>

[ECMI Kosovo Calls for Calm in Face of Escalating Ethnic Tensions after Serbia Albania Football Match](#)

**October 15, 2014**

<http://goo.gl/88dOMR>

[Press Release – Bridging the Divide: Establishing a Joint Board for the city of Mitrovica](#)

**June 27, 2014**

<http://goo.gl/d6XKws>

[General Elections in Kosovo : A View of Issues, Challenges and the Political Scene ahead of Voting on June 8th](#)

**June 2, 2014**

<http://goo.gl/qlrHmd>

[An Overview of some of the Changes in the Draft Law on General Elections in the Republic of Kosovo](#)

**April 17, 2014**

<http://goo.gl/nufjM0>

[Transitional Justice, Minority Rights and Communities in Kosovo](#)

# PRESS RELEASE

March 28, 2014

<http://goo.gl/tiQJcF>

[Kosovo Local Elections 2013: Lessons Learnt for Minority Communities](#)

December 20, 2013

<http://goo.gl/p2MmME>

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## About ECMI Kosovo

ECMI Kosovo is the principal non-governmental organisation engaged with minority issues in Kosovo, with the overarching aim to develop inclusive, representative, community-sensitive institutions that support a stable multi-ethnic Kosovo. ECMI Kosovo contributes to the developing, strengthening and implementation of relevant legislation, supports the institutionalisation of communities-related governmental bodies, and enhances the capacity of civil society actors and the government to engage with one another in a constructive and sustainable way.