

# WAR IN THE BALKANS

Dervis Auclaja. 54. A Kosovan Muslim has lived all his life in the Kosovan city of Pec. Over this lifetime he has developed friendships with his neighbours, a mix of ethnic Albanians and Serbs. In the first week of April a few years ago, Serb paramilitary units drove into his neighbourhood, went to the door of every Albanian home and told them to meet in Korza, the city's main square. A crowd of 15,000 was herded to a sports stadium, where they spent the night in silent fear. The next morning, the Serb police told them they could go home safely, but by then most of their homes were in flames. Dervisa's home was already in ashes yet he still wanted to stay in Pec.

He moved in with relatives next door and asked his Serb neighbours for protection, but no one was willing to offer him this. By now most of the Muslim homes were burning and the Serb soldiers surrounded the area. Dervis, having lost all hope in his neighbours, his home burnt and his possessions gone, put his paralysed daughter in a wheelchair and began walking away from Pec. He managed to escape to Montenegro.

"In a place where your neighbours burn your houses there can be no survival", he said fighting back tears as he sat in a corner of a factory in Rozaje, Montenegro. His daughter was propped nearby, clothes covered in dirt and soot, with no food and little hope. (Reported by R.Ramesar in Time magazine April 12th 1999)

Dervis' poignant story is not dissimilar from thousands of other Kosova refugees now living in squalid conditions in the neighbouring countries of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania. Thousands of women have been raped and disgraced by the Serbs in front of their families. Mothers and wives tell of how their young men were separated from them and taken away. The refugees talk about mass graves and dead bodies they saw on their track out of Kosova. In fact most of the 1.8 million Kosovans, mostly Muslims (85%) have now been expelled from their homes and displaced.

One wonders what happened to the humanity of the Serbian Government, army and people! Do they no longer have a tender heart, compassion for old friends (like Dervis), for neighbours, for citizens and for fellow countrymen?

One can only lament at the loss of compassion for fellow human beings. Why does he become a cruel beast? It appears that the Serbs have lost completely all sense of justice and fairness. When groups or nations become oppressors like this, there is only one way of knocking them to their senses and that is the use of force. To re-establish justice and peace, force has to be used.



[www.balkanpeace.org](http://www.balkanpeace.org)

Islam makes it absolutely clear that one must help both the oppressor and the oppressed: the Companions enquired we understand about helping the oppressed but how can we help the oppressor? The blessed messenger ﷺ said by stopping him from committing his atrocities. This action is called jihad in Islamic terminology. "The fundamental object of jihad is to establish peace and justice and it has zero-tolerance for what it calls Fitna and Fasaad". (Impact International, March 1999)

The Fitna (mischief) and Fasaad (corruption) refer to transgression, oppression and unjust killings. All this is happening right now in Kosovo against innocent people. The world has shown that it is determined to punish the criminals (Milosevic and his army). The Muslims should also support NATO in its outward action and also give aid to the refugees. Aid agencies are working hard in Albania and Macedonia to relieve the sufferings of these people. Even individuals with spirit of love for humanity are rallying round.

The new Islamic year begins with Muharram, which is a month of sacrifice. In particular the great sacrifice of Syeddanna Iman Hussain the grandson of the Rasulallah ﷺ. He stood up against a tyrant, and an oppressor, Yazid. The battle he fought in 60 AH reminds us that tyrants, oppressors and bullies must be dealt with firmly.