

# Serbian Unity Congress

КОНГРЕС СРПСКОГ УЈЕДНЉЕЊА



June 26, 2008

The Reverend Sava  
Decani Monastery  
Kosovo & Metohija

Dear Father Sava:

It was with great dismay that we learned of the unlawful manipulations by the Decani municipality officials of the Decani cadastre and taking of church property, followed by outright defiance of UN instructions to return unlawfully expropriated properties etc.

As you know from your ongoing communication with Dusan Bilbija, our VP for Washington Affairs, we have been discussing this problem at various levels of the US government, both at the legislative and executive branches.

We are very concerned that there are more than verbal reprimands as consequences to illegal taking away of church property. If progress toward peace is going to have a chance then there must be effective oversight to guarantee that rule of law is in effect. That means that there must be clearly defined and consistently applied consequences that are meaningful so that it is understood that violators will not be able to perpetrate their crimes with impunity as has been the case since 1999.

In our meetings in Washington DC last week we agreed that we would look into this matter and obtain information on the cadastre problem as it may have similarly affected other church property throughout Kosovo. I am writing to inquire if you have or can obtain information from other Serbian Orthodox Churches in Kosovo on whether the cadastre manipulation and unlawful appropriation of church property has taken place elsewhere in Kosovo as in Decani?

As the country with most influence in Kosovo, it is incumbent upon us, the United States, to make sure that the rights of the Serbian minority in Kosovo are protected and that the rule of law is enforced. The Serbian Unity Congress is the voice of Serbian Americans in the US and we will stay on top of this issue until we are satisfied that our government and the international representation in Kosovo are effectively controlling and preventing this kind of crime against the Serbian Orthodox Church.

I look forward to receiving more information from you on this matter as it will allow us to more easily pursue more effective handling of the problem by the US.

Faithfully yours,

Mirjana Samardzija  
President

Cc: Senator George Voinovich, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
Senator Russell D. Feingold, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
Senator Robert Menendez, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
Senator Barack Obama, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
Representative Melissa Bean, Co-Chair Serbian Congressional Caucus  
Representative Dan Burton, Co-Chair Serbian Congressional Caucus  
Representative Ileana Ros-Lihtenen, Ranking Member, House Foreign Relations  
Committee  
Rosemary DiCarlo, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of European and  
Eurasian Affairs