

**REPORT ON THE STATE OF
HUMAN RIGHTS IN BOSNIA AND
HERZEGOVINA IN THE YEAR 2009**

**IZVJEŠĆE O STANJU LJUDSKIH
PRAVA U BOSNI I HERCEGOVINI
ZA 2009. GODINU**

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of Bishop Conference B&H.

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PREFACE

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina is still not being discussed often in the countries of the European Union. For many reasons political attention is directed to the pressing problems in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and in other countries. Bosnia and Herzegovina are living in the shadow of the bright spotlights of the interests of the world community. If one considers the connection between social and political attention as well as the political capacity to act, as it is characteristic of democratic societies, this growing blind spot should set us thinking. Is it possible that many have come to terms with the ethnic segregation of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the quiet, despite all official declarations, following a mixture of reluctance in view of the poor developments and the deceptive hope that things will change for the better some day?

This year's report on the situation of human rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina illustrates the difficult social and political situation as well as the growing tension in the country. The population in Bosnia and Herzegovina feels the effects of the International Financial Crisis. 30 % of the people are living in extreme poverty. Especially affected are women, children and old people. The report shows in a sobering way the specific problems of a post-war society that at the same time is marked by 40 years of communist dictatorship. The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina took place 15 years ago, but peace has not been achieved yet. One gets the impression that peace is still a very long way off. The ethnic segregation still continues. Unless this process is stopped, the fragile union of Bosnia and Herzegovina will be threatened. This union, however, was and is one of the objectives of the international community of states, that has contributed to overcome the effects of the war and to build up a democratic society in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The commitment of the states, however, has not always been successful.

The Commission for Justice and Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina demonstrated sound judgment when they asked for the foundations and prerequisites for a sustainable peace and a fair development in their country. With perseverance the commission points at the basic mistakes of the Dayton Agreement. The question of a revision or a substantial further development has still got to be answered. The political reluctance to approach this subject matter and with this the own mistakes and responsibilities, which can often be found, indicates that there is still a long way to go. To leave out the subject matter or to refer to the responsibility of the local active people would mean not to do justice to one's own responsibility. The assumption of this joint responsibility will require the creation of a resilient political determination and a continuous, sometimes even contentious dialogue on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

This is why I am glad to be able to present, also this year, the report on the situation of human rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina by the local Commission for Justice and Peace. It is an offer and a challenge to carry out a necessary dialogue. If this report promotes the necessary talks about Bosnia and Herzegovina and with Bosnia and Herzegovina, it will have fulfilled its purpose. I would like to express my gratitude to the Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina for initiating this talk and for their willingness to independently and unimpressed by the political situation, pose the question of the perspectives for a peaceful development in Bosnia and Herzegovina for discussion.

+ Bishop Dr. Stephan Ackermann
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