
KOSOVO, SERBIA CONDEMN ATTACK ON SERB PILGRIMS

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The stoning of two buses taking Serbs to visit the ruins of a monastery near the village of Studenica, not far from the eastern Kosovo town of Istog/Istok on Sunday has drawn condemnation in both Kosovo and Serbia.

No injuries were reported as a result of the stone-throwing attack, which was carried out by unknown assailants.

Kosovo President Hashim Thaci said that everyone in the country should enjoy the right to freedom of movement.

The violation of this right is an unacceptable act, Thaci wrote on Facebook, calling on the police authorities to bring the perpetrators to justice.

Kosovo Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj said the attack was unacceptable no matter who the perpetrators or what the motives were.

Kosovo and its institutions are committed to peace and stability and any kind of attack on citizens is an attack on our joint European values, and as such it is harmful for our Republic, Haradinaj said.

In Belgrade, the head of the Serbian governments Kosovo office, Marko Djuric, called the attackers Albanian extremists who oppose religious tolerance and despise the Christian past of our southern municipality and monuments to Serb Orthodox heritage.

Europe must not remain blind and passive when facing the expansion of extremism and religious radicalism in Kosovo and Metohija, because this is a plague that knows no borders and could threaten European capitals tomorrow, Djuric said in a press release on Sunday.

Serbia's Trade Minister Rasim Ljajic said on Monday that Serbs should report all such attacks to international organisations.

This won't solve the problem, but it can draw attention to [their] difficult situation, Ljajic told Serbia's TV Prva, adding that this was an issue of basic rights and safety, not politics.

The OSCE Mission in Kosovo also condemned the incident, saying on Monday that society as a whole has a responsibility to preserve and uphold the principles of tolerance and good inter-community relations.

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