



**Centar za građansko obrazovanje**  
**Centre for civic education**

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## **STATE MUST PROTECT ITS CITIZENS AND THEIR RIGHTS**

**Centre for Civic Education (CCE) assess that Montenegro as a civic state should provide all the rights and freedoms of all its citizens, including the right to enjoy their own religion and practice of religious customs.**

In that light, and inspired with the latest developments concerning the position of the Islamic community in Montenegro, CCE calls the respective local authorities and citizens of Tivat to respect the Constitution and international conventions that establish the best practices in protection of human rights and promote the culture of human rights.

CCE welcomes the effective action of the Police Directorate and the High State Prosecutor's office in the identification and further processing of the recent attack on the Islamic community in Tivat. The expressions of primitivism and violations of religious communities threaten democratic development and healthy interpersonal relationships among the citizens of Montenegro and therefore they should be severely penalized.

CCE express regrets that Basic Prosecutor Office in Kotor did not have more sensibility for the seriousness of this incident when it qualified it as only "damaging or destroying other people's staff", even though it is clear from the nature of this act that it unquestionably provokes and promotes religious hatred.

In an open democratic society, citizens have the right to conduct their religious activities in an appropriate manner. State authorities are the ones obliged to provide that even when there is absence of the encouraging atmosphere within the communities by part of the population.

CCE will continue, in line with its practice, to advocate, through its alternative education programmes, the idea of tolerance between people regardless of what religion they belong, as long as they act with the regulations of the country.

**CCE urges the authorities to be efficient in prevention of the expression of religious, national or any other intolerance towards any citizen of Montenegro and to use powers to fully protect the rights of the citizens. Additionally, CCE calls all public officials to restrain from public statements that could be interpreted as hate speech towards any group because their responsibility is to build democratic political culture and with that responsibility and not daily political games with one part of voters that have to be guided within public policies shaping and their implementation.**

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