



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ivica Dacic has met today with the granddaughter of Mahatma Gandhi, Tara Gandhi Bhattacharjee, who is on a several-day visit to the Republic of Serbia at the invitation by Minister Dacic.

At a joint press conference, Tara Gandhi Bhattacharjee underlined that it was an honour for her to visit Serbia, adding that she received messages of trust, love and hospitality in Serbia, the country that should serve as a role model for learning lessons.

"Thank you for your warm welcome and for inviting me to a great country that represents the values of Yugoslavia and desires to be the successor of these values. You came to my home as a friend and such was the spirit in which I received you, and you invited me to visit Belgrade and said that my book would be translated to your language ", Tara Gandhi told the head of Serbian diplomacy.

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She added that she wanted to come to Serbia and that she realized today that she would miss a lot if she failed not do so.

"Seventy years ago, when the relations between the two countries were established, a message of peace was sent out and today it had to be sent from Serbia to the whole world," she said. She said that she was only 14 years old when her grandfather was killed and that she did not talk about Yugoslavia and the past in general with him, but that he was "a true grandfather", adding that she had heard from her father and other family members about Yugoslavia which was a large part of the history of her country.

"You are aware of the history of your country," she said, adding that she did not come here with the "policy of power." She recalled that Gandhi himself represented the power of a citizen, not the power of government, and that is why "Gandhi belongs to everyone".

The head of Serbian diplomacy voiced great satisfaction at the visit, saying that Gandhi did not mark only the history of India but of the entire mankind as well.

"I am grateful that Tara Gandhi accepted my invitation to visit Serbia which I extended to her on the occasion of my visit to her home in New Delhi last year. India and Yugoslavia had exceptionally good relations. We marked 70 years since the establishment of diplomatic relations. Yugoslavia helped India during its struggle for independence and was among the first countries to recognize it", Dacic said.

Minister Dacic stated that there was great interest in Serbia in Mahatma Gandhi's character and work and that Yugoslavia and India were practically the founders of the Non-Aligned Movement, the first conference of which was held in Belgrade.

"In two years' time, we will celebrate 60 years since the First Conference of the Non-Aligned Countries was held in Belgrade. One of the streets in this city was named by Gandhi, his bust was erected too and all of this is evidence of good relations between the two countries. It will also make an opportunity for the Serbian people and our country to get even closer to India", said Minister Dacic.

The Minister added that he prepared a "surprise" for his guest by inviting the grandson of Josip Broz Tito Joska to join them while Gandhi's granddaughter expressed the desire to give interviews with him.

Over the next few days, Tara Gandhi will present her book "Reflections of an extraordinary age", and visit the street and the bust of Mahatma Gandhi, the Museum of Yugoslavia, and attend the concert of the "Kolo" dancing group and will have various other appointments.

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