

ment of Serbia to stop denying war crimes (...) If the entire region is not included in the establishment of facts in order to force the non-democratic parts of the Serbian society to stop denying war crimes, and to start talking about them, what do you think a Kosovo commission can do? You had the best commission ever, the Goldstone Commission which no one ever had anywhere in the world. You have ICTY judgements for highest ranking Serbian Army and police officials. That means that you are officially recognized as victims and there is no dispute about that. But what the non-governmental organizations from Serbia and Croatia want is to make it a public knowledge.

Statement: Nataša Kandić, Humanitarian Law Center, Serbia, National consultation with artists, Prishtinë/Priština, Kosovo, May 10th 2009.

Whether Kosovo wants it or not, it should by all means be a part of this commission simply because if we create national commissions and if there are victims in Serbia, how can we go to Serbia and ask people there to cooperate with us in searching for the victims. (Nora Ahmetaj, human rights activist, Kosovo, National consultation with artists, Prishtinë/Priština, Kosovo, May 10th 2009.)

I understand the frustration which is fully justified because Kosovo football players cannot play in Belgrade. That is not fair. But I think that a way to have a football match between representations of Serbia and Kosovo is an initiative like this (...) You should be aware of the danger that you, victims of the Kosovo battle myth may create a new myth about the Albanian Kosovo battle which will in the future harm other people.

Statement: Haris Pašović, a theatre director from Sarajevo, BiH, National consultation with artists, Prishtinë/Priština, Kosovo, May 10th 2009.

There are people here who claim that there were no Serbian victims, not a single one. That is why I think it is very important to have a commission like this which will enable the truth to be heard on the regional level so that a farmer in Šumadija will know what happened to a victim in the Dubravë/Dubrava prison, where Serbian forces killed prisoners.

Statement: Bekim Blakaj, Humanitarian Law Center, Kosovo, National consultation with artists, Prishtinë/Priština, Kosovo, May 10th 2009.

Artists have hard time finding motives to deal with war themes and it is necessary to help them get involved in this initiative.

There was some kind of negative influence on artists if they chose to tackle war topics. That was politics. I don't want to say most, but some artists who dealt with war themes got involved or involved themselves in politics so that it is really discouraging for us.

Statement: Zana Hoxha Krasniqi, a film director, Kosovo, National consultation with artists, Prishtinë/Priština, Kosovo, May 10th 2009.

Maybe there are ways for artists to get involved and help people open up and speak because that is for their own good, that is their right, that is how they will ease their suffering, and maybe later, even obtain some financial compensation. In this case I think we should be getting more money for artistic performances, plays, films, and so on.

Statement: Visar Krusha, a screen writer, Kosovo, National consultation with artists, Prishtinë/Priština, Kosovo, May 10th 2009.

It is necessary to exert pressure on the public through the media and through the international community on the governments in the region to help create RECOM.

I think that the media should pressure the public to understand our efforts, and on the other hand The European union, the Office of the United States of America [in Kosovo] should exert pressure on our governments to help create a commission like this (...) These issues cannot be solved without a government decision and the western powers should use a little arm-twisting and tell Tadić, for example, well, we are not going to give you the money or you can't go to Europe until you do this, and they will have to do it. That's the way things are done.

Statement: Petrit Çarkayhiu, Oxygen, Kosovo, National consultation with artists, Prishtinë/Priština, Kosovo, May 10th 2009.

34. Local consultation with civil society on the Initiative for RECOM

Prijedor, BiH,
May 13th 2009

The consultation was organized by Association of Women from Prijedor Izvor (BiH) and was attended by 21 representative of the local community in Prijedor and surrounding villages and five OSCE observers. Edin Ramulić (Association of Women from Prijedor Izvor, BiH), Vesna

Teršelić (Documenta, Croatia), Bogdan Ivanišević (International Center for Transitional Justice) and Branko Todorović (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in the Republic of Srpska, BiH). Kozarac.ba announced the event.

Participants supported the initiative for RECOM.

On behalf of the Association I belong to, I would like to support the initiative for the establishment of RECOM and to tell you that we are going to be at your disposal with all our capacities, whatever they are.

Statement: Sudbin Musić, Association of concentration camp prisoners Prijedor '92, BiH, Local consultation with civil society, Prijedor, BiH, May 13th 2009.

I support this initiative and I believe that one day it will come into being as a regional fact-finding commission.

Statement: Sabahudin Garibović, Association of Concentration Camp Prisoners Kozarac, BiH, Local consultation with civil society, Prijedor, BiH, May 13th 2009.

I salute this Initiative for the establishment of the commission and I am glad that I am here today with you and I hope that all of us here are ready to tell the truth and face the truth in order to make the future for our children better than the present. That is why we need to have this commission.

Statement: Senka Jakupović, DIAKOM Association, BiH, Local consultation with civil society, Prijedor, BiH, May 13th 2009.

I think that all those who still have doubts or who want to bring any kind of confusion into the work of this Coalition should give up now. This should be a positive Coalition, a positive process, maybe even the most positive in the entire region, and it should only be joined by people who honestly want to give their contribution.

Statement: Šefika Muratagić, Ključ budućnosti Association, BiH, Local consultation with civil society, Prijedor, BiH, May 13th 2009.

RECOM should help discover the truth about the fate of missing persons.

My husband was taken in 1992 and last year I found some of his bones which we buried according to our rituals. Ever since then, my children and I, we have a place to go to pay our respects. And we found some peace. And I would want all people searching for their loved ones to be able to find the peace after so many years and to know where their loved one

is resting eternally. I care a great deal about this commission.

Statement: Senka Jakupović, DIAKOM Association, BiH, Local consultation with civil society, Prijedor, BiH, May 13th 2009.

The Coalition should try hard to earn the trust of victims.

And we have to be trusted by all those who know the truth, the victims, so that they come forward and tell us the truth. And we will earn their trust only if we tell the truth ourselves. We should not wait for the politicians to back us up. We need people who suffered the horrors of war and their truth, and we will impose that truth upon the politicians and they will have to accept it eventually.

Statement: Senka Jakupović, DIAKOM Association, Local consultation with civil society, Prijedor, BiH, May 13th 2009.

RECOM should help victims tell their stories and make sure it is record as part of our historical heritage.

People who live in Bijeljina like I do may never find out what happened in Livno or in Prijedor even, let alone some other places. For that reason (...) this commission should create opportunities for people to tell their stories, give as many details as possible, and to make sure their suffering becomes not only part of our history but the a part of our existence, as well.

Statement: Branko Todorović, Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in the Republika Srpska, BiH, Local consultation with civil society, Prijedor, BiH, May 13th 2009.

Victims' associations have a moral strength to be active participants in consultations and give their unwavering support to the creation of RECOM.

Representatives of victims' associations almost always fully agree on everything. Why? It is because they have a moral strength and every other strength to be active participants of this process and to give their unwavering support to this project. This gives us hope that we will reach the goal that we set before us.

Statement: Nedeljko Mitrović, Republic organizations of the families of the detained, killed, and missing soldiers and civilians of Republika Srpska, BiH, Local consultation with civil society, Prijedor, BiH, May 13th 2009.

RECOM can use new information and evidence for a revision of tried war crime cases, allowing victims to gain another chance at achieving justice.

In cases where defendants were acquitted of charges for war crimes, the court did not deny the commitment of a war crime, but instead described the crime in detail. So, in that domain, if there are people who believe that the judgements failed, that something was overlooked or that something was recognized as a war crime which in fact was not a war crime, that is where I see an opportunity for RECOM to step in and revise the judgements.

Statement: Bogdan Ivanišević, International Center for Transitional Justice, Local consultations with civil society, Prijedor, BiH, May 13th 2009.

Most judgement can be amended. Unfortunately, most of these judgements failed to identify by name all victims of a particular crime and they especially failed to process all other facts relevant for the suffering of these victims.

Statement: Edin Ramulić, Association of Women from Prijedor Izvor, Local consultation with civil society, Prijedor, BiH, May 13th 2009.

Special attention should be paid to avoid political instrumentalization of RECOM.

First of all, I think that all of you will agree that the entire project must be free from politics. It doesn't mean that we will not include political institutions because we can't do without them. But when I say free from politics I mean free of manipulation and instrumentalization.

Statement: Nedeljko Mitrović, Republic organizations of the families of the detained, killed, and missing soldiers and civilians of Republika Srpska, BiH, Local consultation with civil society, Prijedor, BiH, May 13th 2009.

It is necessary to stress the points of agreement of participants in the consultations process instead of instating on their disagreements.

RECOM is a mechanism which is a motive or an initiative for all of us here today. We should not analyse each and every person's motives, initiative, or willingness to do this and we should not create reasons to disagree but conditions for the verification of our collective will to work and use the methodology which will satisfy everything that does not project dissatisfaction.

Statement: Enes Alibegović, Association of civilian victims of war, BiH, Local consultation with civil society, Prijedor, BiH, May 13th 2009.

Some participants believe that reconciliation should be the main goal of RECOM and some believe that reconciliation should be every person's personal decision.

I think it is crucial to achieve reconciliation.

Statement: Nikola Drljača, Municipal organization of detained and killed war veterans of Novi Grad, BiH, Local consultation with civil society, Prijedor, BiH, May 13th 2009.

I don't know if the word 'reconciliation' will find its way in the documents we plan to submit to our governments simply because people who have suffered a lot may feel they are being forced to accept it. And I think that a decision to reconcile is a deeply personal decision and that fact-finding will certainly help people make such a decision.

Statement: Vesna Teršelić, Documenta, Croatia, Local consultation with civil society, Prijedor, BiH, May 13th 2009.

Participation of young people in the consultative process is an opportunity for them to develop a feeling of compassion for others.

Since 1992 a new generation of young people has grown in all former Yugoslav nations. They grew up in a ghetto, without much contact with other nationalities. Their participation in gatherings like this one could help them get to know other nationalities and the facing with the past feeling could really do them good. And let's not forget, they are the future.

Statement: Ervin Blažević, Mladost Youth Association, BiH, Local consultation with civil society, Prijedor, BiH, May 13th 2009.

Special attention must be given to Bosnia and Herzegovina because of a very deep division between people in the communities where they live.

Special attention must be given to Bosnia and Herzegovina regardless of situation in other parts of former Yugoslavia. Unfortunately, Bosnia and Herzegovina is still very deeply divided.

Statement: Sudbin Musić, Association of concentration camp prisoners Prijedor '92, BiH, Local consultation with civil society, Prijedor, BiH, May 13th 2009.

35. National consultation with civil society on the Initiative for RECOM

Podgorica, Montenegro,
May 18th 2009

The consultation was organized by the non-governmental organization Institute Alternative (Montenegro) and attended by 28 representa-