

ported and recognized. However, no response has been received, even though female members of the parliament were present at this gathering.

**Statement:** Ilirijana Hoti, Medica Kosova, Kosovo, Local consultation with civil society, Pejë/Peć, Kosovo, June 26th 2009.

*To my knowledge, some non-governmental organizations are actively dealing with this issue. However, there are no official institutions dealing with women victims of rape in comparison to those dealing with participants of the war. [Rape can be described as one of many] syndromes of war, not a syndrome of the Vietnam or Bosnian war alone. There are no institutions here dealing with this issue. And you know that the treatment is very expensive. This is our concern.*

**Statement:** Pren Marashi, Association of war veterans, Kosovo, Local consultation with civil society, Pejë/Peć, Kosovo, June 26th 2009.

*But when we talk about cases of sexual violence, when we speak about women, we also have to respect their reluctance to testify in public.*

**Statement:** Valdete Idrizi, Community Building Mitrovica, Kosovo, Local consultation with civil society, Pejë/Peć, Kosovo, June 26th 2009.

**Conflicting opinions were presented in relation to reconciliation as an objective of RECOM, as well as the task of truth-seeking.**

*We are not ready for reconciliation, we just want fact-finding. At the same time, the word truth, truth commission, what kind of a truth? Everyone has his or her own version of truth, and that is the reason why we are very careful when it comes to RECOM. It is a regional commission for fact-finding and confirmation of facts about crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia and other serious human rights violations (...) We have removed this word [reconciliation] on purpose.*

**Statement:** Valdete Idrizi, Community Building Mitrovica, Kosovo, Local consultation with civil society, Pejë/Peć, Kosovo, June 26th 2009.

*The conceivable objective or purpose of the work done by the commission seems to be reconciliation. I do not wish to speak lightly: however, it is my belief that this issue has negative connotations. The way we can solve our problems is through communication, by speaking about these problems. Maybe commissions like this one could help people open up about their experiences. I think this may have a psychological effect. We call it emotional catharsis; where all these emotional charges are being discharged.*

**Statement:** Lulzim Arapi, Association for Psychological and Social Support for Children and Families, Kosovo, Local consultation with civil society, Pejë/Peć, Kosovo, June 26th 2009.

*People who are here cannot ask for reconciliation because a victim is not looking for reconciliation. Please, make sure that this commission is not looking for reconciliation in the future and must not mention reconciliation because it focuses on victims and victims do not look for reconciliation.*

**Statement:** Pren Marashi, Association of war veterans, Kosovo, Local consultation with civil society, Pejë/Peć, Kosovo, June 26th 2009.

*We should not get involved in politics; we should find the perpetrators of crimes. As for a formal apology, there is time for that. French and Germans waited for thirty years and we might also reconcile after a certain period of time.*

**Statement:** Atdhe Berisha, Kalaja, Kosovo, Local consultation with civil society, Pejë/Peć, Kosovo, June 26th 2009.

### 43. Local consultation with associations of victims, concentration camp prisoners and NGOs

Trebinje, Bosnia and Herzegovina,  
June 27th 2009

The consultation was organized by the Centre for Civic Cooperation from Livno (BiH) and Solidarity for South from Trebinje (BiH). Out of 10 participants, one was a representative of the Medžlis of Islamic Community Trebinje.<sup>4</sup> Nataša Kandić (Humanitarian Law Center, Serbia) and Aleksandra Letić (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Republika Srpska, BiH) opened the gathering, while Sonja Garić (Centre for Civic Cooperation, BiH) and Stanko Buha (Solidarity for South, BiH) moderated the event. Radio Free Europe and RTV Republika covered the event. The participants<sup>5</sup> supported the idea of establishing RECOM. EuroBlic, Nezavisne novine Daily and SRNA published articles about the consultation.

**The Islamic Community of Trebinje supports the idea of establishing RECOM.**

*I want to say that I really honestly welcome the organization of this gathering. I support this idea. I signed the joining statement on behalf of the Trebinje Islamic Community Council, which gath-*

<sup>4</sup> The representative of the Medžlis of Islamic Community Trebinje signed the statement on accessing the Coalition for Establishing RECOM on behalf of the Council.

<sup>5</sup> Some participants had remarks in view of the organization of the consultation, for example, that they were not able to contact the Center for Civic Cooperation because the invitation contained an incomplete phone number. In their opinion, that was the main reason for the poor response of representatives of associations and nongovernmental organizations.

ers more than 600 families all over the world.

**Statement:** Husein Hodžić, Medžlis of Islamic Community Trebinje, BiH, Local consultation with associations of victims, concentration camp prisoners and NGOs, Trebinje, BiH, June 27th 2009.

**The main objective of RECOM is to establish facts that cannot be challenged.**

*Depending on the town we sit in, depending on where we have discussions and with whom, this picture has thousands of faces; we have a situation today, which does not offer a comprehensive picture of what happened (...) It is necessary to establish the facts, so that no one can challenge them anymore and we will, simply because of the force of these facts, accept that this is what happened.*

**Statement:** Nataša Kandić, Humanitarian Law Center, Serbia, Local consultation with associations of victims, concentration camp prisoners and NGOs, Trebinje, BiH, June 27th 2009.

*So many painful issues have remained buried somewhere and we have never initiated an open communication, discussion and dialogue about this (...) We need to start talking about events. We should start a simple dialogue, a civilized dialogue, and present facts and see which issues we should work on.*

**Statement:** Alma Mašić, Youth Initiative for Human Rights, BiH, Local consultation with associations of victims, concentration camp prisoners and NGOs, Trebinje, BiH, June 27th 2009.

*All these facts should be written down. If we do not write down all that happened (...) our children will have to solve these same things in the future (...) Victims speak like politicians and politicians use victims for their pre-election campaigns and manipulate them. I think it is time for all of us to wake up and say, and write, all that has happened to us in the past, and to move on towards the future.*

**Statement:** Sonja Garić, Centre for Civic Cooperation, BiH, Local consultation with associations of victims, concentration camp prisoners and NGOs, Trebinje, BiH, June 27th 2009.

**RECOM is the last chance to hear the voices of the victims and victims should be members of the commission.**

*I haven't met a single victim that didn't have a need to have his or her story heard (...) The establishment of this commission for war crimes and human rights violations is a gift from the heavens for victims of war. This is the last chance for their stories to be heard, to be noted down, because*

*when these national oligarchies of ours make an agreement, no one will need us anymore.*

**Statement:** Izo Rokolj, a returnee to Trebinje, BiH, Local consultation with associations of victims, concentration camp prisoners and NGOs, Trebinje, BiH, June 27th 2009.

*I only want victims to participate in the election of commissioners (...) not to have those that committed crimes sitting on the commission. It is normal that he will prove that an event or a process happened in another way. What I'm trying to say is that a victim should be the main organizer for establishing RECOM: a living witness who can provide evidence.*

**Statement:** Borislav Hamović, Association of Concentration Camp Prisoners Trebinje, BiH, Local consultation with associations of victims, concentration camp prisoners and NGOs, Trebinje, BiH, June 27th 2009.

*Those who were detained in concentration camps have had such an experience that they never want to speak about all the things they went through. I have never insisted that my wife, with whom I still live, or my 15-year-old daughter, say anything (...). I only rely on you, on this commission, and I wish that you succeed, but only to tell the truth.*

**Statement:** Srećko Barićanin, the Committee of Disabled War Veterans, BiH, Local consultation with associations of victims, concentration camp prisoners and NGOs, Trebinje, BiH, June 27th 2009.

*Are we in favour of this commission or not? And what kind of a commission? I personally support the commission. I am for a multi-centred commission, which would not be seated in one place. I want the commission's work to be focused on telling the truth, personal stories and to prove things with personal stories to decision makers.*

**Statement:** Stanko Buha, Solidarity for South, BiH, Local consultation with associations of victims, concentration camp prisoners and NGOs, Trebinje, BiH, June 27th 2009.

**Establishing the facts about the war should include the preparations made before the war commenced.**

*This war was prepared long before it actually started (...) I claim now and I will have this opinion for as long as I live, that we should start from point zero, from the preparations of the war to see who is to blame.*

**Statement:** Kosta Kosović, Association of Concentration Camp Prisoners Trebinje, BiH, Local consultation with associations of victims, concentration camp prisoners and NGOs, Trebinje, BiH, June 27th 2009.

**Victims, perpetrators, and representatives of institutions should be involved in public hearings, but RECOM must provide protection for victims, especially victims of rape.**

*How can she publicly confront the perpetrators? I think we need to be very careful with this, especially when it comes to women victims of rape, people who suffer from posttraumatic stress disorder etc. We have to protect these people. Should we have public hearings of representatives of institutions? Of course, I would put all this in public: victims as well as perpetrators.*

**Statement:** Blažo Stevović, Alternative Club Trebinje, Local consultation with associations of victims, concentration camp prisoners and NGOs, Trebinje, BiH, June 27th 2009.

**RECOM mandate should encompass restitution of the usurped property.**

*Most of the property has been restored, but there are still cases of usurpation where an owner of an apartment, an inhabitant of an apartment received a decision, an order to leave the apartment against his wishes. There is not a force or law that would help Ekrem Kadrović restore his house at the Sunčani brijeg here in Trebinje. There you go, that is one example. The Islamic Community's property is being sold before restitution and nationalization, while the property of the Orthodox Church has restored all of its property and even received more. So, there are examples of the violation of human rights.*

**Statement:** Husein Hodžić, Medžlis of Islamic Community Trebinje, BiH, Local consultation with associations of victims, concentration camp prisoners and NGOs, Trebinje, BiH, June 27th 2009.

**The consultations continue.**