

My advice for RECOM is to include war veterans because war veterans already cooperate among themselves. Yesterday, Croat war veterans and Serb war veterans had a discussion: and already there is a level of cooperation among them. I think they should also be included because they can provide firsthand [information].

Statement: Nenad Vezmar, League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina Youth, Serbia, Local consultation with young people, Novi Sad, Serbia, June 12th 2009.

RECOM should not offer amnesty to perpetrators.

RECOM (...) should disregard amnesties. Because I don't believe that a confession alone should absolve a perpetrator: justice is not served. Because I can't free a man from punishment, not me, not anybody; if he committed genocide against civilians, soldiers, prisoners of war, then I cannot accept anything less than justice. I do not believe that because of an admission of guilt, we should say "Ok, it's forgotten thanks for helping, you are free now". No, he should not be sentenced to 20 years, but he should be sent to jail for five to ten years minimum.

Statement: Nenad Vezmar, League of the Social Democrats of Vojvodina Youth, Serbia, Local consultation with young people, Novi Sad, Serbia, June 12th 2009.

A TV station with regional frequency bands should be established, dealing solely with crimes.

I suggest that you make a regional TV station where only this topic shall be deliberated because, until we have RECOM set up and running, governments may change, we may have a different RTS: programming may be different.

Statement: Nenad Vezmar, League of the Social Democrats of Vojvodina Youth, Serbia, Local consultation with young people, Novi Sad, Serbia, June 12th 2009.

41. National consultation with women's groups

Prishtinë/Priština, Kosovo,
June 25th 2009

The consultation was organized by the non-governmental organization Partners Kosova (Kosovo). A total of 24 women's organization representatives participated, in order to discuss human rights and provide support to victims. The film *Dealing with the Truth: Truth Commissions and Societies in Transition* was screened. Shukrie Gashi (Partners Kosova, Kosovo), Nora Ahmetaj (human

rights activist, Kosovo), Suzana Kunac (B.A.B.E. Association, Croatia) and Gazmir Raci, (Pro Peace Platform, Kosovo) opened the gathering.

The majority of participants supported the civil initiative for RECOM and believe that the involvement of institutions in the region is essential.

I want to congratulate you on this initiative. This is a great accomplishment (...) We should look for greater involvement of the parliament, as well as relevant ministries and parliamentary committees. Their participation will bring us to the creation of documents, to the implementation of these documents and the implementation of recommendations.

Statement: Belgjzare Muharremi, Open Door, Kosovo, National consultation with women's groups, Prishtinë/Priština, Kosovo, June 25th 2009.

I received a message today and from now on I will be an advocate of this commission. Why do I say this? First of all, to treat myself because it's been ten years and if we don't meet in one group regardless of the level, we will end up in a war again.

Statement: Sakibe Doli, Safe Home, Gjakovë/Đakovica, National consultation with women's groups, Prishtinë/Priština, Kosovo, June 25th 2009.

One asked a question if it is a good time for establishing RECOM considering the political instability in Kosovo and problems arising in Serbia.

When were these commissions established in other countries? Right after the conflict or sometime after the conflict? Was the conflict over? One of the challenges for establishing this commission or a coalition in general is, for sure, political instability, which at the moment prevails in Kosovo, and problems coming from Serbia perhaps are representative of resistance from certain groups, when we speak about the work of this coalition.

Statement: Eli Krasniqi, a sociologist, Kosovo, National consultation with women's groups, Prishtinë/Priština, Kosovo, June 25th 2009.

The Coalition for RECOM should demand an apology from states that started the wars, especially from Serbia, which would have an impact on the strengthening of victims' trust in RECOM.

During the commission establishing phase, the coalition should demand that the states responsible for starting the wars by committing crimes, Serbia in this case, offer a public apology. This is very important for victims themselves. This will have an impact on them being involved in the process of testifying if they know that this commission at least asked for a public apology.

Statement: Veprora Shehu, Medica Kosova, Kosovo, National consultation with women's groups, Prishtinë/Priština, Kosovo, June 25th 2009.

If RECOM recommends that governments pay pecuniary compensation to victims, this will motivate victims to support RECOM.

I am interested the fact that the mandate will provide compensation or reparations for victims. I think it is a significant motive, besides the objective to establish social justice.

Statement: Veprora Shehu, Medica Kosova, Kosovo, National consultation with women's groups, Prishtinë/Priština, Kosovo, June 25th 2009.

The issue of rape must be in RECOM's mandate. The role of women's groups is to encourage victims to testify.

Rape as a war crime must be in the mandate of the commission. I believe that it is important and that without it the commission would not be authentic and that there is a gender dimension to the war.

Statement: Suzana Kunac, B.A.B.E. Association, Croatia, National consultation with women's groups, Prishtinë/Priština, Kosovo, June 25th 2009.

Representatives of various organizations working with women have a moral and a human obligation to work with female war victims in order to give them an opportunity to be heard in a dignified way. If they don't want it [testimony] to be given in the presence of the other party or other people, any form [of testimony] that they accept is useful because it helps them free themselves in the spiritual and psychological sense.

Statement: Shukrie Gashi, Partners Kosova, Prishtinë/Priština, National consultation with women's groups, Prishtinë/Priština, Kosovo, June 25th 2009.

Commissioners elected to sit in this commission should have extensive knowledge. It is not necessary that they are psychologists, but they need to have knowledge about traumas, especially when we speak about the trauma caused by sexual abuse during the war. This means that the process of

testifying and approaching these victims is very important.

Statement: Veprora Shehu, Medica Kosova, Kosovo, National consultation with women's Groups, Prishtinë/Priština, Kosovo, June 25th 2009.

Women are a part, an essential part of society according to international humanitarian law: their rights are violated not only when they are a direct objective or a target of the regime in various ways, but their rights are also violated in the physical and psychological sense. Women must lead this process because they know what they need. They are double victims and the main component of transitional justice.

Statement: Nora Ahmetaj, human rights activist, Kosovo, National consultation with women's groups, Prishtinë/Priština, Kosovo, June 25th 2009.

RECOM should help the families of the missing in implementing their rights that derive from the basis of death, that is, disappearance of their closest family members.

Wives of missing persons (...) could not say that their husbands are deceased because they did not see them or receive their bodies and unfortunately all their efforts to declare them dead were misinterpreted by their husbands' families. We did something with the International Committee of the Red Cross in order to make it easier for them to access legal rights even in cases when the mortal remains were not sent, but this is not enough. Maybe this could also be included in the scope of the commission's work.

Statement: Veprora Shehu, Medica Kosova, Kosovo, National consultation with women's groups, Prishtinë/Priština, Kosovo, June 25th 2009.

RECOM should have a mandate to assess what kind of a conflict occurred between the countries in question because victims' reparations depend on this.

Was it a genocide, or was it ethnic cleansing? There is a big confusion in this sense (...) The sole definition of this as a conflict or a war gives you a right to claim compensation. If it is a conflict, there is no compensation. Forget about it, there is no reason for establishing a commission. This should be called a war, and a war with intent to commit genocide and ethnic cleansing.

Statement: Veprora Shehu, Medica Kosova, Kosovo, National consultation with women's groups, Prishtinë/Priština, Kosovo, June 25th 2009.