

*tive answer because they request medical results and opinions from 1992 and 1993 which none of us can submit because nobody thought about going to a doctor's office after being released from the camp. And who can guarantee that this commission will help us get our compensation?*

**Statement:** Redžo Isić, Association of Concentration Camp Prisoners in Central Bosnia, Local consultations with associations of prisoners of war, concentration camp prisoners, and combatants, and fallen fighters, Novi Travnik, BiH, June 6th 2009.

### **The most important issue is to find mass graves and mortal remains of the missing.**

*A dead head is worth nothing, at least where I come from and I am pretty sure in the entire BiH society. We all have had our property rights violated but the most important issue, as you mentioned today, is to know where the grave of the loved one is. It is important to find out where your loved one is, where is the body when you know that the person is dead. I would like to apologize to concentration camp prisoners, they did sustain a blow, but the harshest blow was dealt to the victims – just the thought that I no longer have my son.*

**Statement:** Kulaš Haso, Association of the families of šehids and killed combatants of the Army of BiH, BiH, Local consultations with associations of prisoners of war, concentration camp prisoners, and combatants, and fallen fighters, Novi Travnik, BiH, June 6th 2009.

*I would like to salute this initiative to create the commission simply because it may help find the missing and satisfy the victims i.e. the families of the killed and missing.*

**Statement:** Zilha Imamović, Association of the Families of the Killed from Kiseljak, Local consultations with associations of prisoners of war, concentration camp prisoners, and combatants, and fallen fighters, Novi Travnik, BiH, June 6th 2009.

## **39. Local consultation with civil society on the Initiative for RECOM**

Leskovac, Serbia,  
June 11th 2009

The consultation was organized by the non-governmental organization Žene za mir from Leskovac (Serbia) and attended by 30 participants: 21 activists from non-governmental organizations, two members of the Democratic Party, one member of the Serbian Renewal Movement, a war veterans representative, a representative of

the municipal authorities, two journalists, and activists of non-governmental organizations. Maja Pešić (Women in Black, Serbia), Nataša Kandić (Humanitarian Law Center, Serbia) and Staša Zajović (Women in Black, Serbia) opened the gathering. Jelena Cakić, a Women for Peace activist from Vlasotince moderated the debate. Bogdan Ivanišević, an International Center for Transitional Justice consultant monitored the consultation. All participants supported the initiative for establishing RECOM. TV Leskovac, TV Studio MT, TV K1, and JUGpress.com reported on the consultation.

### **RECOM should not include government representatives or members of political parties.**

*Nor should it happen that there are representatives of government [in RECOM]. I keep mentioning this at these gatherings because in this case the commission wouldn't be the same as it would be if it only included independent intellectuals, celebrities, and persons with integrity. So, we should be very careful when we suggest people who should chair this truth commission.*

**Statement:** Dobrosav Nešić, Human Rights Committee Leskovac, Serbia, Local consultation with civil society, Leskovac, Serbia, June 11th 2009.

*It is very important that representatives of governments do not chair this commission. From the moment government representatives penetrate these regional commissions; they will pollute everything, simply because there isn't a worse kind of people than politicians (...) That's why I think that commissioners should be people with great integrity, people who have proved to be successful in their area of expertise, who are not affiliated with certain parties or members of certain parties.*

**Statement:** Vjačeslav Nešić, Serbian Renewal Movement, Serbia, Local consultation with civil society, Leskovac, Serbia, June 11th 2009.

### **War veterans are bothered by generalizations referring to them, and they do not deny that among them there were some who killed and looted, but there are also victims among them.**

*There are a lot of victims among war veterans as well, there have been a lot of stances presented that I have taken note of, there are a lot of generalizations, which bother us as well, veterans do not deny that there were some who stole, looted, killed, and so forth, but that does not mean that all veterans did this.*

**Statement:** Vesna Karanfilović, Veterans of Serbia for Peace Association, Serbia, Local consultation with civil society, Leskovac, Serbia, June 11th 2009.

**As long as we do not speak up about what happened, we are considered accomplices.**

*I will remind you of the fact how roofs in Leskovac became all white because of satellite dishes installed during the Battle of Kosovo, the one from 1999. Do you think that any of these satellite dishes were bought? I was offered any car I wanted for a hundred marks in the street. As long as we remain silent about this, we will remain accomplices.*

**Statement:** Srđan Dimitrijević, Movement for Leskovac, Serbia, Local consultation with civil society, Leskovac, Serbia, June 11th 2009.

*We should put every little crime, from pillaging to the destruction of other peoples' property, within the framework of RECOM jurisdiction and see who did all this: the reasons behind it the crimes.*

**Statement:** Aleksandar Mihajlović, Democratic Party, Serbia, Local consultation with civil society, Leskovac, Serbia, June 11th 2009.

**We should make a precise definition of who can be considered a victim. We must not forget about forcibly mobilized refugees and citizens, as well as deserters who ended up in prisons.**

*I think it is very important not to forget about refugees, who were just hunted down in Macedonia and taken back to frontlines in Croatia and Bosnia. I also think we should pay some attention to those people, who did not want to go to the frontlines, but were forced in various ways or ended up in prisons.*

**Statement:** Ljiljana Stojanović, Centre for Democracy and Development of Southern Serbia, Serbia, Local consultation with civil society, Leskovac, Serbia, June 11th 2009.

**RECOM mandate should encompass the time before the war in Slovenia started.**

*We have often been told the beginnings of the conflict: the one I had the chance to learn about recently was the story of the Yugoslav flag being set on fire at the football game in 1989. Therefore, we cannot relate solely to Slovenia 1991; it all started much much earlier.*

**Statement:** Nebojša Kitanović, Serbian Renewal Movement, Serbia, Local consultation with civil society, Leskovac, Serbia, June 11th 2009.

**RECOM is expected to create a record of the**

**killed and missing Roma. The question is if the fact that Roma in Macedonia still do not have documents falls under the mandate of RECOM.**

*There is very little talk about the missing and killed Roma. Nobody is researching, as far as I, as far as I (...) I am sorry if it is so (...) Roma who took refuge in Macedonia still do not have any documents.*

**Statement:** Ašim Saitović, Municipality of Leskovac, Serbia, Local consultation with civil society, Leskovac, Serbia, June 11th 2009.

**Non-governmental organizations and members of the Coalition for RECOM should contact local authorities and prompt their involvement in the consultation process.**

*First as members [of the Coalition], as representatives of these non-governmental organizations, we should make contact with representatives of the local authorities, officials from our towns, and then, on the basis of our conclusions involve them more in the work of [the Coalition for] RECOM.*

**Statement:** Jasmina Mitrović, Democratic Party, Serbia, Local consultation with civil society, Leskovac, Serbia, June 11th 2009.

**Victims' families should make decisions regarding amnesties of perpetrators, who repented and provided information about mass gravesites.**

*I think that the opinion of victims and victims' family members about the perpetrators should be involved. This is very important simply because there is this idea that people who disclose information about mass gravesites or about places where people who are still missing on the territory of the former Yugoslavia are concealed are granted amnesties. I am not sure that the victims would have understanding for the involvement of perpetrators.*

**Statement:** Ljiljana Stojanović, Centre for Democracy and Development of Southern Serbia, Serbia, Local consultation with civil society, Leskovac, Serbia, June 11th 2009.

**The transparency of the process has great significance. Serbs have to be convinced that they are not the only ones who are guilty.**

*It will be very important for the media to cover this with a comprehensive transparency, so that people can get the impression that they are not the only ones who are guilty, that they are not the only ones accountable (...) I think that people would be more relaxed, and that the problem can be approached with more ease.*

**Statement:** Valentina Vukosavljević-Pavlović, Fund for

Development of Leskovac, Serbia, Local consultation with civil society, Leskovac, Serbia, June 11th 2009.

**RECOM should not avoid perpetrators. Their confessions are very important.**

*Victims always have a subjective approach to the event (...) With this regard, we should not avoid perpetrators; we should chase them, go after them and make them confess the crime (...) I do not mean that perpetrators should be involved in this way, but that in the course of the work of the commission, we should also have an opportunity to hear that side, I mean when a victim points a finger at someone, the commission should find this person and continue its research, and obtain at this side information that will give a comprehensive truth.*

**Statement:** Živojin Tasić, literature teacher from Leskovac, Serbia, Local consultation with civil society, Leskovac, Serbia, June 11th 2009.

#### **40. Local consultation with young people on the Initiative for RECOM**

Novi Sad, Serbia,  
June 12th 2009

The consultation was organized by Fractal (Serbia) and the Youth Dialogue Programme (Serbia). A total of 18 young people, representatives of non-governmental organizations from Vojvodina, three participants from the League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina Youth, and one representative of the province authorities participated in the consultation. Parts of the film *Dealing with the Past: Truth Commissions and Societies in Transition* (examples from South Africa and Morocco) were screened. Marijana Toma (Impunity Watch, Serbia), Mario Mažić (Youth Initiative for Human Rights in Croatia) and Maja Ledenac (Independent Journalist's Association of Vojvodina, Serbia) opened the gathering and Srđan Vezmar (Youth Dialogue Programme) and Filip Pavlović (Fractal) were moderators. Danas and MINA announced the consultation.

**The regional approach to fact-finding about crimes is important because of the responsibility we, as a society, bear with respect to victims.**

*It is very important to establish a commission like this one and establish facts because of the respon-*

*sibility we have with respect to survivors and all societies we live in. These facts are rather complex and the only way to observe it is to use a regional approach. Focusing on victims in the regional concept erases borders between these victims, makes them equal; and through this, the victims become our responsibility.*

**Statement:** Maja Ledenac, Independent Journalist's Association of Vojvodina, Serbia, Local consultation with young people, Novi Sad, Serbia, June 12th 2009.

**RECOM should deal first and foremost with the interests of victims.**

*There are at least three kinds of interests when it comes to commissions: perpetrators who want to avoid punishment and public humiliation, commissions who would like to play justice and equity, in my opinion, and the victims who want to learn the truth (...) It is very hard to satisfy the interests of all parties involved. I believe that the commission and commissioners should primarily be focused on victims because I believe that their story is of utmost importance.*

**Statement:** Dejan Rašeta, Youth Dialogue Programme, Serbia, Local consultation with young people, Novi Sad, Serbia, June 12th 2009.

**The public should be prepared for the establishment of RECOM through learning about examples of positive experiences gained in other societies.**

*The youth and the public will try very hard to exert pressure: this initiative will then again be left in the hands of institutions, and it is possible that it will be disrupted. I don't know if it can be avoided, in order to prevent this initiative from being left in the hands of politicians and political parties. (...) Better results can be gained by the commission if it gains the support of the public before it is established: public awareness could greatly contribute to the success of the commission. I think this should include the promotion of positive examples from around the world, so that the public can see that justice can be served, and that people can be held accountable for their deeds.*

**Statement:** Ruža Helać, Fund for the Development of the Non-profit Sector in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, Serbia, Local consultation with young people, Novi Sad, Serbia, June 12th 2009.

*I guarantee you that half of the students do not know exactly what Srebrenica represents. Because we, as a civil sector, are informed, we are not aware*