

**Statement:** Bruno Čavić, a Croat war veteran, Croatia, Fifth Regional Forum on Transitional Justice, Budva, Montenegro, May 29th - 30th 2009.

*Therefore, it is one thing if someone mentions a name during his or her testimony, but it is a completely different thing if this name stands in a report. Quantity of evidence matters in both cases. Because one can be held accountable for libel, one can be free from libel charges if one had sufficient grounds to believe the authenticity of what one had said. Hence, if RECOM could establish enough evidence on the basis of its facts in a situation like this it would be able to name these perpetrators and I think it should do so in such situations.*

**Statement:** Tea Gorjanc-Prelević, Human Rights Action, Montenegro, Fifth Regional Forum on Transitional Justice, Budva, Montenegro, May 29th - 30th 2009.

#### **Victims' families should decide on amnesties for perpetrators.**

*All those who do good, those who should be rewarded, should be amnestied. I think that our families should have an exclusive right to decide about whether to grant amnesty or not. God will punish all those who did evil and every perpetrator has a name.*

**Statement:** Verica Tomanović, Family's association of kidnapped and missing person on Kosovo and Metohija, Serbia, Fifth Regional Forum on Transitional Justice, Budva, Montenegro, May 29th - 30th 2009.

#### **There is a dilemma whether to call representatives of institutions to testify in public or not.**

*Should we organize public hearings of representatives of institutions? I don't think so.*

**Statement:** Ljupka Kovačević, Anima, Montenegro, Fifth Regional Forum on Transitional Justice, Budva, Montenegro, May 29th - 30th 2009.

*As far as the issue of public hearings of representatives of institutions is concerned, I think it is a very relevant issue because if we manage to hear the representatives of institutions, we would establish a specific contact with them, i.e. with institutions that should institutionally deal with war crimes, reparations, injured parties, and so forth.*

**Statement:** Velija Murić, Montenegro Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights, Fifth Regional Forum on Transitional Justice, Budva, Montenegro, May 29th - 30th 2009.

*If we are to establish facts and come to conclusions based upon these facts that will deter us and our children from committing war crimes, then I believe people who want to speak only because they are looking for amnesty themselves should come clean: I agree that these people should be given an opportunity to speak the truth.*

**Statement:** Dragoljub Duško Vuković, a journalist from Montenegro, Fifth Regional Forum on Transitional Justice, Budva, Montenegro, May 29th - 30th 2009.

#### **Non-governmental organizations and associations of victims should encourage victims to participate in public hearings.**

*The role of non-governmental organizations and associations of victims is to encourage victims to testify.*

**Statement:** Ljupka Kovačević, Anima, Montenegro, Fifth Regional Forum on Transitional Justice, Budva, Montenegro, May 29th - 30th 2009.

### **38. Local consultation with associations of prisoners of war, concentration camp prisoners, and combatants, and fallen fighters on the Initiative for RECOM**

Novi Travnik, BiH,  
June 6th 2009

The consultation was organized by the Citizens' Forum of Tuzla (BiH) and attended by 24 representatives of associations of concentration camp prisoners, šehid families, families of killed combatants, as well as a representative of one association of civil victims of war. On this occasion representatives of Croatian and Bosniak associations of concentration camp prisoners from the local community met for the first time. Vehid Šehić (Citizens' Forum of Tuzla, BiH), Eugen Jakovčić (Documenta, Croatia) and Bogdan Ivanišević (International Center for Transitional Justice) opened the consultation. Portal live.ba announced the event.

**For most participants RECOM is an opportunity to find out about the events in their area, to allow ordinary citizens to talk about it, and to stop the separation of children.**

*Crimes must not be forgotten but they must be*

*forgiven. I have been taught ever since I was a little boy that one of the most valued characteristics in every man is his ability to forgive his adversary or his enemy. For that reason I believe that RECOM will make it possible for all of us to learn and tell about the things that happened in this region.*

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

*You can help us legalize our status as concentration camp prisoners because we could not do it through the Association of Concentration Camp Prisoners of BiH. You help us now and we will help you later. This initiative is good and we need it (...) We should not forget that our children are being separated, too and this thing should be done as soon as possible to avoid an irreparable damage in the relationship between our children. Please bear in mind that Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs have different education systems while we don't even have a law on education.*

**Statement:** Husejin Plivčić, Association of Concentration Camp Prisoners of Vitez municipality, Local consultations with associations of prisoners of war, concentration camp prisoners, and combatants, and fallen fighters, Novi Travnik, BiH, June 6th 2009.

*We support the creation of this regional commission simply because one component does not want to cooperate with another one, that is our problem, not the people, but presidents and politicians (...) Let concentration camp prisoners, the families of killed combatants, and the handicapped tell us what is on their mind. Once the commission is created a huge problem will be solved.*

**Statement:** Mirsad Dizdarević, Association of Concentration Camp Prisoners of BiH, office in Jajce, BiH, Local consultations with associations of prisoners of war, concentration camp prisoners, and combatants, and fallen fighters, Novi Travnik, BiH, June 6th 2009.

*The criminals who wronged us are at large, living freely, even occupying high state positions in this government that's not doing anything for us who suffered fighting in the homeland war. It is very important to mention that the judiciary and the Prosecutors' Offices are not doing anything in BiH to protect the victims of the homeland war, and especially not for us, concentration camp prisoners. I believe that this commission will help serve the justice and discover the truth and help us exercise the rights concentration camp prisoners are entitled to according to the Geneva Convention.*

**Statement:** Marko Krajina, Croatian Association of Concentration Camp Prisoners from Fojnica, BiH, Local consultations with associations of prisoners of war, concentration camp prisoners, and combatants, and fallen fighters, Novi Travnik, BiH, June 6th 2009.

*I salute this initiative and I think we should consider it from a victim's point of view because our governments could have solved this problem had they wanted to. I really salute this initiative because I truly believe that through a constructive dialogue we'll be able to create a truly democratic society and the basic component of each democratic society is a powerful civil society sector able to recruit its recourse in reaching a shared idea.*

**Statement:** Sandra Velta, Croatian Association of Concentration Camp Prisoners from Busovača, BiH, Local consultations with associations of prisoners of war, concentration camp prisoners, and combatants, and fallen fighters, Novi Travnik, BiH, June 6th 2009.

*This is my signature supporting this idea and it represents 150 members from my association and me which means you have 151 votes for this initiative.*

**Statement:** Petar Madacki, Croatian Association of Concentration Camp Prisoners from Kiseljak, BiH, Local consultations with associations of prisoners of war, concentration camp prisoners, and combatants, and fallen fighters, Novi Travnik, BiH, June 6th 2009.

### **Associations of concentration camp prisoners should act jointly to exert pressure on the government to support the creation of RECOM.**

*Associations of concentration camp prisoners have their names and their different prefixes and they are usually opposed to each other. That just helps the governments who don't really want us to become part of the state system (...) We could create a mother organization through which we can fight for our rights, interests, truth, and goal because this relationship between us is a real impediment.*

**Statement:** Miralem Aletić, Association of Concentration Camp Prisoners of BiH Busovača, Local consultations with associations of prisoners of war, concentration camp prisoners, and combatants, and fallen fighters, Novi Travnik, BiH, June 6th 2009.

*A concentration camp prisoner is a concentration camp prisoner and if we are going to become part of the system, we should do it together. Our problems and our wounds are identical, and maybe we were tortured in the same way. What's the difference? Why do we have to be separated? It is in compliance with policies employed by nationalistic parties, from Belgrade to Zagreb, and it is very detrimental for us.*

**Statement:** Tahir Tahirović, Association of Concentration Camp

Prisoners of BiH Busovača, Local consultations with associations of prisoners of war, concentration camp prisoners, and combatants, and fallen fighters, Novi Travnik, BiH, June 6th 2009.

*We legalized that kind of politics by voting for them and at every election we give them more power. They don't come on their own. What is really an issue here is that we should be able to recognize the need to start talking about each and every crime in a civilized manner, regardless of who's the victim and who's the perpetrator.*

**Statement:** Fuad Kečo, Demobilized Combatants Association, BiH, Local consultations with associations of prisoners of war, concentration camp prisoners, and combatants, and fallen fighters, Novi Travnik, BiH, June 6th 2009.

*How to find a way to make our politicians, who are not interested to help us in any way, create this commission? It is contrary to their interests. So, let's not talk about who will finance it, who will be a member; let's find the ways to make representatives of our legislative and executive authorities to pass laws allowing us to form this commission.*

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

**Some participants believe that RECOM members should be experts and individuals who are able to conduct hearings of victims and perpetrators regardless of their nationality, while other believe that victims should be members of RECOM.**

*People that were not wounded or imprisoned, or those who did not take part in this bloody conflict should be members of the commission, because everybody waged a war on everybody (...) The commission should be made up of people immune, so to speak, from all kinds of conflict.*

**Statement:** Petar Madacki, Croatian Association of Concentration Camp Prisoners from Kiseljak, BiH, Local consultations with associations of prisoners of war, concentration camp prisoners, and combatants, and fallen fighters, Novi Travnik, BiH, June 6th 2009.

*I think that the regional commission should be made up of experts who are insensitive to national issues (...) They should be able to listen to these people who have been wronged, to be strong and patient to listen to the accused party and they should be primarily people who will not pay much attention to victim's name but how the victim was tortured and what the victim has been through. They should be able to see a big picture regarding what we need to*

*do in order to secure reconciliation.*

**Statement:** Matija Jakšić, Croatian Association of Concentration Camp Prisoners, Jajce, BiH, Local consultations with associations of prisoners of war, concentration camp prisoners, and combatants, and fallen fighters, Novi Travnik, BiH, June 6th 2009.

*I salute the initiative to create this commission and I hope the judiciary will make the necessary decisions. This commission should engage family members of the killed, šehid family members, members of families who lost a member or members, victims, concentration camp prisoners from any component, a Serb, a Croat, a Muslim, and become a member because the method of one's own experience is something quite different.*

**Statement:** Marjan Krajina, Croatian Association of Concentration Camp Prisoners and Prisoners of War, Fojnica, Local consultations with associations of prisoners of war, concentration camp prisoners, and combatants, and fallen fighters, Novi Travnik, BiH, June 6th 2009.

**Associations should help commission by providing access to information and documents they own.**

*The documentation, the numbers, all associations have some documents and they need to use it help the work of the commission.*

**Statement:** Tahir Tahirović, Association of Concentration Camp Prisoners of BiH, Busovača, Local consultations with associations of prisoners of war, concentration camp prisoners, and combatants, and fallen fighters, Novi Travnik, BiH, June 6th 2009.

**Some participants are afraid that RECOM will be manipulated if financed by the governments.**

*If our governments finance the operation of RECOM concentration camp prisoners will not be mentioned. Then our ministers will give those jobs to their family members, they will hire their own drivers, and we will continue to suffer the way we do today.*

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

**Some participants do not believe that the Commission will help concentration camp prisoners exercise their right to compensation.**

*The Central Bosnia Canton is the only canton with a special regime. You have to pay a fee in order to be examined and assessed by a commission of experts and you receive their positive or negative answer. The fee is 28 KM but you can never receive a posi-*

*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.*