



Coalition for RECOM Takes Charge of Creating List of War Victims on the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia

At its 9th Session, held on 15 December 2019 in Zagreb, the Assembly of the Coalition for RECOM passed a decision on restructuring the Initiative for RECOM, by which the Statute of RECOM, which was harmonised in 2014 through the joint efforts of the representatives of the presidents of Croatia, Serbia, two members of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the presidents of Montenegro, Kosovo and Macedonia, and experts from the Coalition for RECOM, ceased to apply or symbolise the political will of the leaders of the post-Yugoslav countries to establish jointly the Regional Commission Tasked with Establishing the Facts about All Victims, War Crimes and Other Serious Human Rights Violations Committed on the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia from 1 January 1991 to 31 December 2001 (RECOM). Bearing in mind that in the existing political constellation in Croatia there is no support for founding RECOM, that reconciliation and the founding of RECOM are no longer the priorities of the Bosniak and Croatian members of the Presidency of BH, that the Republic of Srpska does not accept the rulings of the Hague Tribunal as grounds for establishing the facts about victims, and that Slovenia believes that there are no war victims on Slovenian soil and that therefore there are no grounds for its taking part in the creation of the list of war victims, the Coalition for RECOM is prepared to take charge of creating the nominal list of the victims of the wars of the 1990s on the territory of the former Yugoslavia.

The Coalition for RECOM has achieved significant results in documenting war victims and detention sites: Documenta has established the identities and circumstances of death of at least 7,000 victims of the war in the territory of Croatia; the Humanitarian Law Center (HLC) has additionally established the identities and circumstances of death of another 1,100 war victims in the territory of Croatia (citizens of Serbia and Montenegro); the HLC and the Humanitarian Law Center Kosovo (HLCK) have registered more than 13,500 victims related to the war in Kosovo - to date, investigators from the latter two organisations have verified the identities and circumstances of death of at least 8,000 victims, and the additional investigation and verification of data pertaining to the circumstances of death/disappearance of around 5,500 victims during the period from 1 January 1999 to 31 December 2000 is at present underway;

the Research and Documentation Center (RDC) has gathered data on 96,000 victims in the war on the territory of BH, publishing four volumes in 2012 with support from the HLC; by the end of 2019, the Association for Transitional Justice, Accountability and Remembrance (TJAR) and the Center for Democracy and Transitional Justice (CDTJ) had documented more than 1,000 detention sites in the territory of BH where more than 100,000 civilians were detained and subjected to inhumane treatment during the war.

Other civil society organisations, such as Croatian Helsinki Committee for Human Rights (2001), the Association of Families of Captured and Missing Persons in the Zvornik Municipality, the Izvor Association and the Association of Former Camp Detainees from Prijedor, are also a significant source of information about the victims.

We bear in mind that the Hague Tribunal trial chambers have established beyond a doubt the identities and formations responsible for the deaths of a least 14,000 war crimes victims, and that the domestic trial chambers have established the identities of around 2,000 war crimes victims.

Commitment to the creation of a nominal list of victims

The Coalition for RECOM believes that by refusing to create a joint interstate commission (RECOM), the leaders and governments of the post-Yugoslav countries have made another political mistake. The response of the Coalition for RECOM is that the nominal list of victims cannot be abandoned. It is taking charge of and assuming the responsibility for seeing this task through to the end. The Assembly of the Coalition for RECOM has committed to:

- 1) stepping up the process of documenting war crimes by increasing the number of investigators and analysts teams, involving academic institutions in the investigation work, expanding the existing databases, and drawing more public attention to the victims' perspective;
- 2) strengthening the network for reconciliation and transitional justice in the 2020-2023 period, by including in its activities at least 100 organisations in local communities, and
- 3) providing expert support to youth organisations in their opposition to untrue depictions of facts established by the courts, false historiography and the production of "national truths".

Assembly of the Coalition for RECOM
Zagreb, 15.12.2019