



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova-Republic of Kosovo
Qeveria - Vlada - Government
Zyra e Kryeministrit - Ured Premijera - Office of the Prime Minister

Date: 01/05/2023

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Mr. Fabian Salvioli
Special Rapporteur on the promotion of
truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of
non-recurrence

Ms. Alice Jill Edwards,
Special Rapporteur on torture and other
cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or
punishment

Ms. Reem Alsalem
Special Rapporteur on violence against
women and girls

Ms. Dorothy Estrada-Tanck
Chair of the UN Working Group on
discrimination against women and girls

Dear Mr. Salvioli,
Dear Ms. Edwards,
Dear Ms. Alsalem,
Dear Ms. Estrada-Tanck,

Thank you for your letter Ref.: AL OTH 18/2023. Please note that I welcome and appreciate your interest in our Government's actions to ensure that the rights of the victims of the war in Kosova are fully respected.

The Government is committed to the establishment of rule of law, democracy and human rights. In light of this we advocate for truth, justice and effective remedies, by continuously strengthening our legal, institutional and administrative framework, while providing support to survivors in their quest for justice, and respecting their rights, needs and aspirations.

Allow me to present some of the initiatives our Government has undertaken in this regard.

The mandate of the Government Commission for the Recognition and Verification of the Status of Victims of Sexual Violence during the war in Kosovo has been extended. Furthermore, amendments to the current legislation have been initiated, in order to secure continuation of the application process of the Commission. While focusing on the needs and demands of survivors for holistic support, we have produced the first National Strategy for Transitional Justice, to be released soon for public consultation. We have drafted it with the effective participation and meaningful role of victims' groups, including survivors of sexual violence, particularly women and girls, thus bringing survivor voices and perspectives to the forefront of the design of our future policy. Dealing with the past has been one of our primary concerns throughout our mandate, and we absolutely stand firmly behind the principle that no statute of limitation applies in cases of crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide.

We are financially supporting four women's organizations that specialize in matters of sexual violence, to support survivors during the application process for status recognition. The total number of applications received thus far is 1,939.

It should be acknowledged, however that, the number of victims of sexual violence is much higher than the official figures indicate, as sexual crimes remain unreported due to the stigma attached to them. In this respect the Government has been working with the Commission and civil society organizations to create space for survivors to speak freely. Additionally, we are continuing outreach efforts that put survivors at the center and serve to stimulate public discourse on the devastating phenomenon of sexual violence used as a weapon of war. In this regard, the Government has also declared April 14 the National Memorial Day of survivors of sexual violence during the last war in Kosovo.

Committed to exposing the truth of human rights abuses and crimes committed by Serbia during the war in Kosovo, we have approved the Law on the Establishment of the Institute for Crimes Committed During the War. The upcoming process of war crimes documentation aims to provide a meaningful opportunity for survivors to have their stories heard and to provide them, as much as possible, with a sense of closure and justice.

Regrettably, some survivors have still not been able to avail themselves of this opportunity, due to the inefficiency of justice institutions in the past two decades. Every story is important — every story matters. This is why our Government is determined to put survivors and their stories at the center of the process, and to help them obtain an adequate response from an efficient justice system. In order to achieve this, we are working on reforming the system; and some of these reforms aim to give increased priority to addressing war crimes. Thus, we have raised the budget for the Special Prosecutor's Office, in the department for war crimes, in order to increase human and professional capacities. And, given Serbia's categorical refusal to cooperate with our justice system in criminal matters — including the refusal to hand over war criminals — we have updated our law to allow accused war criminals to be tried in absentia, in accordance with international standards. With the new structure of the Police, we have raised the police sector to the level of the War Crimes Investigation Directorate and have increased the number of war crimes investigators from 19 to 41.

Furthermore, the Agency for Gender Equality, under the auspices of the Prime Minister's Office, is leading the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 Action Plan, part of the Program for Gender Equality, which was among the first decisions our Government took in 2020. It addresses access to justice for survivors of sexual violence, takes measures to aid their rehabilitation, and foresees activities aiming to increase society's awareness through advocacy.

The Government remains committed to truth and to strengthening of the judiciary, so that perpetrators are held accountable and justice is brought to the victims.

With highest consideration,



Albin Kurti

Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosova