

REPORT ON THE ICMP WORKSHOP

“PREJUDICES, STEREOTYPES, LIVING MEMORIALS AND THE NEXT STEPS”

Distribution:
General
Sarajevo, 25 March 2014
ICMP.JCSI.122.1.doc

**REPORT ON THE ICMP WORKSHOP
“PREJUDICES, STEREOTYPES, LIVING MEMORIALS AND THE NEXT STEPS”**

**9-12 March, 2014
Hotel Emerald, Laplje Selo, Pristina**

- Facilitator:** Matthew Holliday (ICMP)
- Co-facilitators/Translators:** Ylber Morina (ICMP)
Abdullah Ferizi (forum ZFD Kosovo)
- Participants:** Haki Kasumi, Head of Coordination Council for FA’s in Kosovo
Bajram Qerkini, FA “Parents voice”, Mitrovica
Shadije Kasumi, Secretary Coordination Council for FA’s in Kosovo
Gjyle Haziri, Secretary FA “Parents Voice”, Mitrovica
Sevdije Frangu, FA Kacanik
Elhame Pireva, FA Gjilan
Latif Mehmeti, FA Podujevo
Atifete Bytyqi, FA Klina
Verica Tomanovic, Family Association for missing, Belgrade Office
Natasa Scepanovic, Family Association for missing, Belgrade Office
Gordana Djikanovic, Family Association for missing, Belgrade Office
Snezana Zdravkovic, Family Association for missing, Prokuplje Office
Brankica Antic, Family Association for missing, Kraljevo Office
Gordana Ristic, Family Association for missing, Nis Office
Milorad Trifunovic, Family Association for missing, Mitrovica Office
Negovan Mavric, Family Association for missing, Velika Hoca Office
- Youth members:
Zahir Qerkini, Head of youth board of FA “Parents Voice”, Mitrovica
Xhevahire Peci, Secretary of youth boards of FA Parents Voice
Snezana Scepanovic, Family Association for missing, Belgrade Office
Katarina Patrnogic, Family Association for missing, Belgrade Office

N.B. Collectively the aforementioned people are described in this report as “the group”.

Workshop objectives

- To strengthen solidarity between Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb families of missing persons.
- To consolidate cooperation between Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb families of missing persons.
- To help Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb families of missing persons identify and overcome prejudice, stereotype and discrimination, which impede the development of cooperation between the two.

I. DAY 1: SUNDAY, 9 MARCH 2014

1.1. Welcome, Introduction and Updates from ICMP and Family Associations

1. Participants arrived at 16:00 and at 17:00 the session started with a walk through the agenda and because two KA and two KS youth members were joining the group for the first time each participant was asked to introduce him/herself and the family association that he or she represents.

2. Matthew Holliday gave a briefing related to ICMP activities, since November 2013 till now. He furthermore updated the families related to Justice and Civil Society plan of activities for 2014.
3. Haki Kasumi, Coordinator of KCCFA's brief participants related to their activities, highlighting the round table organized in Hotel Grand and as well the protests in the front of Government Building in the New Year eve.
4. Natasa Scepanovic, Head of FA of kidnapped and missing from 1998-2000 said that recently members of the previous association were not satisfied with changes in the leadership of the association, with Simo Spasic returning to the position of head of the association, so they decided to establish a new association. She furthermore said that they want to continue the cooperation with KA family associations as in the past.
5. Snezana Zdravkovic, Co-Head of Family Associations of kidnapped and missing Serbs, stressed as well the changes in the association. She has decided to remain a member of the family association that is now led by Simo Spasic.
6. Bajram Qerkini, Head of FA "Parents Voice" said that after the misunderstandings and insult from Verica Tomanovic at the last workshop on Kopaonik in November 2013 he thought that he would not participate in such workshops again, but ICMP convinced him to come back to the process and give his contribution. He briefed the group related to meetings organized by Parents' Voice with head of the Kosovo GCMP, families, the Parliamentary Commission related to implementation of Law of Missing. Furthermore, he stressed that families are anxious and will be difficult to calm them, especially with the news related to human remains being received from a clandestine gravesite at Raska Rudnica.
7. The meeting finished at 19:00 with briefing related to the Living Memorial and clarifying who will share their stories with the group.

II. DAY 2: MONDAY, 10 MARCH 2014

2.1. Personal Narratives/Living Memorial

8. Five members of the Group voluntarily decided to share their narratives with the group, where three of them brought personal belongings that belonged to their missing family members: Gjyle Haziri, Gordana Ristic, Natasa Scepanovic, Brankica Antic and Atifete Bytyqi. The aforementioned members of the Group were briefed prior to the Living Memorial session. They were told that they should limit their talk to ten minutes, and that it should focus not on the disappearance or death of their missing relatives but instead celebrate their lives and focus on how their family members would want to be remembered.
9. Gjyle Haziri, talked about her missing husband, using a hand watch of her husband. She said that her life with him was really good, respecting each other and having a beautiful son. Her husband worked in the Trepca factory and was a hard worker, everybody liked him and he had a lot of friends, neighbors, etc. Her husband was missing until 2008 when his remains were identified by ICMP using DNA technology.
10. Gordana Ristic, talked about her missing son, using a lighter as her son was a smoker. Her son worked at the library in Pristina. She said that her family lived very well together and with their Albanian neighbors. Everybody liked her son, family, friends, neighbors and she remembers him with great love. She said she would like to have had grandchildren but her son had none.
11. Brankica and Atifete talked about their missing husbands and how difficult it is to raise the kids

without head of family, especially in the Balkans. They both commented on how widows in this region have a very difficult life and face many challenges.

12. Natasa Scepanovic, talked about parents that are missing, using handcrafts that her mother had made – embroidery and lace. Both of her parents had a very good relationship with Albanian neighbors. She talked about her father who worked as a director of the secondary school in Istog. She cannot understand why they were disappeared since they had very good relations with everybody.

2.2. Reflections and Insights about the Living Memorial

13. Snezana Zdravkovic: The personal narratives today went much better compared to Kopaonik. We got the experience and all of them concentrated on celebrating their lives.
14. Sevdije Frangu: I was not in Kopaonik and I do not know what happened there, but the narratives touched me a lot. Only we that experienced the same stories know the feeling and pain. I want just to criticize Natasa Scepanovic because of her tears, as I lost my daughter, father and husband and my mother never cried in front of me, neither did I.
15. Gordana Djikanovic: It was very good that Matthew recorded the Living Memorial, and we can produce a documentary that can play an important role for raising the public awareness.
16. Bajram Qerkini: Today the living memorial went very well, but in Kopaonik the story telling was destroyed by two “philosophers”, Verica and Haki. I liked Gordana Ristic’s story, because the pain that parents have for missing child is different from the others. The group agreed, but noted the hard life of the widows.

2.3. QA Session – 5 things “the other group” cannot understand about us

17. The group was divided by ethnicity into working group to discuss among them 5 things that other group cannot understand about them that can be from politics, tradition, culture, etc. First, the two groups complained that they are used to working in mixed groups and that the organizers are trying to make a conflict that they do not want. ICMP explained the objective of the exercise.
18. Groups were working for 60 minutes and Albanian group came with the 5 things that other group cannot understand, while Serb group with 4 things that other group cannot understand. The group approached the organizers requesting that they should present in brief their group work and facilitate the session strictly. They feared that this session would harm their cooperation. We facilitate strictly, but as well gave them opportunity to discuss several topic, especially the term “Kosovo and Metohija” and “Republic of Kosovo”. Both of the group tried to defend their terms.
19. Gordana Djikanovic: I was using the term Kosovo and Metohija for 50 years that I was living in Kosovo and now I will use the same term as it is difficult to forget. Our Serb associations are registered in that name.
20. Haki Kasumi: The term Kosovo and Metohija is a political term, I will use always republic of Kosovo whenever the other group is using the term Metohija. We agreed that to use only Kosovo.

2.4. Learning

21. It is apparent that the majority of the group does not want to tackle certain issues that they believe will harm their further cooperation. Such issues include: the experience of Kosovo Albanians in the 1980s and 1990s, the nature of the conflict in 1998-2000, the issue of organ trafficking of non-Albanians,

among others. On the other hand a minority of members of the group were in favor of discussing these tough topics. They argued that only by putting all issues on the table and addressing them would the group become stronger. In the event, the majority view held out and it was accepted that the difficult issues should not be discussed even though they may reappear and pose an obstacle to the group's cooperation in the future.

III. DAY 3: TUESDAY, 11 MARCH 2014

3.1. Stereotypes, Prejudices, Discrimination

22. In this session the organizers briefed the group on what is stereotype, prejudice and discrimination and then continued the session by dividing the group into three mixed groups to discuss their examples and to present to the other groups. The presentation of the youth was particularly inspiring:
- Mundemi – Mozemo/Can – We **can** live together and work together;
 - Duhet – Moramo/Have to – We **have to** know what happened in the past;
 - E Ardhmja – Buducnost/Future – We should look to the joint **future**;
 - Femijet – Deca/Children – Should grow in the peace and prosperity.

3.2. Insights

23. Verica Tomanovic: “We should leave alone prejudice, stereotype and discrimination and focus on the issue of missing persons”.
24. Snezana Zdravkovic: “We cannot fulfill our broader goals related to the missing persons issue without overcoming the challenges that prejudice and stereotype pose to our cooperation”.

3.3. Future Steps

25. In the afternoon session the group was divided into two mixed groups with the task for Group 1: to discuss and present a plan of activities for lobbying and advocacy until the end of the year; while the task for Group 2 was: to discuss and present the plan activities related to the Legacy.
- Group 1
 - Continuation of cooperation with international and national institutions
 - Increasing contact with the media
 - Follow-on meetings with Embassies, USA, EU, UK, etc.
 - Follow-on meetings with EULEX in Pristina and War Crime Court in Belgrade
 - Visit and meeting in Brussels with Catherine Ashton
 - Meeting in United Nations
 - To achieve these objectives the family associations need to raise funding from ICMP, Embassies, GCMP, etc.
 - Group 2
 - Joint wider meetings, including more participants in this group as well with youth
 - Gathering lists of missing from other FAs to keep in the archive for the young generation that want to be involved in this issue
 - Preparation of the young generation that want to be engaged in this issue
 - Exchange visits of the youngsters in the different FAs
 - Contacts of the youngsters with all the relevant organizations and institutions
 - More frequent contact with media

IV. DAY 4: WEDNESDAY, 12 MARCH 2014

4.1. Finalization of the activities till the end of the year and Evaluation

26. The group planned the following activities to the end of December 2014:

- March – Preparation Meeting with the youngsters;
- April – Exchange visit to FA Parents Voice and FA Velika Hoca;
- June – Meetings in the Embassies;
- August – Meeting with Prime Ministers of Kosovo and Serbia and Presidents.

4.2. Evaluation

- The Group highlighted the participation of the youngsters in workshop and they want to broaden the group with more youngsters.
- The Group unanimously agreed “The workshop had strengthened the Group’s ability to deal with conflict/s within the Group”.
- The Group unanimously agreed “The joint workshops need to take place more often”.
- The Group is communicating among themselves without ICMP. Kosovo Albanian family members are assisting their counterparts who live in Serbia to access social and economic benefits to which they are entitled in Kosovo.
- The Group is helping each other for resolving different issues/documents, etc. in Belgrade and Pristina.

4.3. Next Steps

- ICMP to provide guidance on lobbying for the reactivation of the Policy Group (see annex 1).
- Second half of May, ICMP to organize a workshop on dealing with the past, with facilitation by Jonathan Sisson, subject to his availability. Other issues to be addressed: the drafting of an MOU.
- First half of June, ICMP to facilitate a retreat to the Nansen Dialogue Center in Lillehammer, Norway. The purpose is to bring on board new “skeptical” members of Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb FAs.

**Background information on
the Policy Group on Missing Persons of the Kosovo Government**

The Policy Group was established in 2009 as an initiative of the Kosovo Government. The Group was composed of EULEX, ICRC, ICMP and Government Commission on Missing Persons. In 2009 the Policy Group met twice. Group was chaired by the former Deputy Prime Minister of the Kosovo Government Mr. Rame Manaj and was active until October 2010 when the coalition government PDK-LDK ended its cooperation and the government was reformed. The level of representation included the Heads of institutions involved. The objective of the Policy Group was to address the underlying problems in regard to the virtual standstill and sharp decline in excavations and identifications of missing persons from Kosovo conflict. Another objective of the Policy Group was to ensure that the missing persons process is fully handed over to Kosovo authorities, including elements, which are currently a reserve power of EULEX. That includes all data and other information is handed over to Kosovo authorities in a manner that will allow Kosovo to carry out this work in the future.

At the second meeting, the Policy Group on missing persons requested that all organizations involved, in particular EULEX, ICRC and ICMP analyze the reasons why progress had met an impasse and that they work together to develop a strategic plan to address the underlying problems. In 2009, ICMP for its part proposed a joint strategic review that would allow for a comprehensive analysis of all available data and documents that may help shed light on the problem and identify a way forward. ICMP considers that a joint exercise of cross referencing its own data with data from EULEX including excavation records, autopsy reports, death certificates and a thorough inventory of mortal remains in the Pristina mortuary¹ as well as a sharing of EULEX's own stock taking efforts would permit a better understanding of the situation, including the extent of errors in those identifications made without the use of DNA.

In 2011 ICMP made extensive efforts to encourage the Kosovo Government in reinstating the Policy Group. Despite the efforts and promises from the highest level of the Kosovo Government the Policy Group was never reinstated. Since ICMP issued its Stock Taking Report in 2010 little progress has been achieved. Reactivation of the Policy Group will create a forum where all stakeholders are accountable and where much needed information can be shared between organizations involved in the process, so that a joint plan for the future can be formulated.

¹ ICMP's proposal for the Joint Review was rejected from EULEX DFM. However DFM conducted the inventory of mortal remains in 2012 and the report was issued in March 2013. Inventory process failed to answer several questions in regard to the unmatched bone and blood profiles as well as the discrepancies in numbers.