

MISSING PERSONS IN SOUTHEAST EUROPE

HEARINGS BEFORE THE COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH CONGRESS FIRST SESSION

AUGUST 1, 2003 AND SEPTEMBER 18, 2003

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MISSING PERSONS IN SOUTHEAST EUROPE PART I

AUGUST 1, 2003

**COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE
WASHINGTON, DC**

The Commission met in Room 334, Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC, at 9:15 a.m., Hon. Christopher H. Smith, Chairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, presiding.

Commissioners present: Hon. Christopher H. Smith, Chairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Witnesses present: Gordana Jaksic, Member of the Board of Directors, Association of Parents and Families of the Arrested, Captured and Missing, Novi Sad, Serbia; Cedomir Maric, President, The Association of Families of Missing Persons from Krajina, Belgrade, Serbia; Olgica Bozanic, Member of the Presidency, Association of Family Members of Missing and Kidnapped Individuals, Belgrade, Serbia; and Verica Tomanovic, Member of the Presidency, Association of Family Members of Missing and Kidnaped Individuals, Belgrade, Serbia.

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, CHAIRMAN, COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Mr. SMITH. The hearing will come to order and good morning to everybody.

Today's hearing of the Helsinki Commission is focusing on the plight of those in Southeastern Europe who have relatives and loved ones missing as a result of the conflicts associated with Yugoslavia's disintegration in the 1990s. The personal and heart-rending stories we will hear today are an important reminder that the wounds of war have a lasting and deep impact on societies. Families feel the pain, not only in this generation, but right on to the next.

Our panel consists of four individuals. Two of our panelists are from Kosovo and remain displaced from their original homes. One has many family members who were abducted by Kosovar militants in 1998 before NATO intervention, and the other has a family member who was abducted in June of 1999, immediately after the NATO intervention.

Regarding the two other panelists, one is originally from Croatia, with a family member missing since being captured by Croatian troops retaking the Krajina area in 1995. The last individual is from Serbia proper, with a family member captured in Bosnia, while serving in the Yugoslav Army, and last known to have been held in Croatia.

The group is here today on the State Department's international visitors program, and is being organized by Meridian International Center. The Commission is very grateful that they are available for this hearing this morning.

It is estimated that as many as 40,000 persons are missing as a result of a decade of deadly conflict in the former Yugoslavia beginning in 1991. Mass graves continue to be uncovered like the one in Republika Srpska reported just two days ago. All the while, the quest for information on lost relatives continues with government officials and possible witnesses to the acts of war or crimes. In some cases the quest for truth and the unknown about the fate of loved ones have brought together individuals representing a variety of ethnic groups.

Our panelists today all happen to be Serbs, but their ethnic background, frankly, is irrelevant. Families are the same the world over, with hopes and dreams shared with parents and siblings, spouses and children. When we hear their personal testimonies this morning, we can and we must empathize with their shattered dreams and their shattered hopes. When we hear your stories this morning, we will join you ever more earnestly in the quest for truth.

In addition to their own stories, these individuals represent nongovernmental organizations composed of others who want to find answers to questions about the fate of friends and relatives. They are part of civil society, individuals seeking healing for their losses. We are also asking them to speak about these groups and their ability to communicate with their own government, with authorities of other countries of concern, and the international community in advocating their cause.

Of course, this hearing touches on only one aspect of the larger issue of missing persons in Southeastern Europe. The Commission considers this issue a very high priority. Like the prosecution of war crimes and crimes against humanity, the resolution of missing persons cases can help bring at least some closure and help individuals recover from their tragic loss.

On this day, the 28th anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act, nothing is more appropriate for the Helsinki Commission than to have a public hearing not about policies and programs, but about real people who have suffered so much.

I welcome our panel to the hearing this morning. Due the House of Representatives not being in session, and the unavoidably short notice for this hearing, the turnout to hear your testimony is admittedly limited. I can assure you, however, that in addition to the media coverage that we have here, your testimony will be transcribed and available on our Commission's web site and will be widely disseminated to Members of the House, the Senate and to the executive branch. It should be on our web site by Monday.

We will undertake other efforts as well to ensure that your concerns that you will raise today are heard by the highest number of people and the widest possible audience.

First, we will hear from Gordana Jaksic, who is from Serbia, and previously worked with the internal revenue service office in her country. Her son was serving his one year of service in the Yugoslav Army in 1992 when he was sent to Bosnia. There he was captured and moved to Croatia where he was last seen. Ms. Jaksic is a member of the board of directors of the Association of Parents and Families of the Arrested, Captured and Missing.

Next, we will hear from Cedomir Maric, formerly a high school teacher in what is today Croatia. His son has been missing since 1995, when Croatia re-took the Krajina region. He is president of the Association of Families of Missing Persons in Krajina.

We will then hear from Olgica Bozanic, who is from Kosovo, where she worked for a pharmaceutical company. Displaced by the situation in Kosovo, she has been widely regarded and respected as an advocate not only of learning the fate of 14 members of her own family missing since 1998, but of other missing persons and their families. She is a colleague of Ms. Tomanovic of the Presidency of the Association of Family Members and Missing and Kidnapped Individuals.

Finally, we will hear from Verica Tomanovic, the wife of university professor Andrija Tomanovic, who was abducted in Pristina, Kosovo in June of 1999, despite the presence of KFOR. She herself is a retired history teacher and a member of the Presidency of the Association of Family Members of Missing and Kidnapped Individuals.

Finally, I would like to note the presence this morning of Ambassador of Serbia and Montenegro to the United States, Ambassador Vujacic. Mr. Ambassador, we are very glad to see you and we are grateful that you came here. We look forward to hearing you. You made a submission that we will make a part of the record as well and we thank you for that.

I would like now to ask our first witness if she would begin her testimony.

**GORDANA JAKSIC, MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS,
ASSOCIATION OF PARENTS AND FAMILIES OF THE ARRESTED,
CAPTURED AND MISSING, NOVI SAD, SERBIA**

Ms. JAKSIC [Through interpreter]. Honorable Congressmen, I want to thank you and everybody else who appeared here today to hear our story about our suffering. It is very difficult after 11 years to collect our thoughts and to present our story, but I will try to do it this morning. I will try to use this short time allowed to me to present my pain to everybody here. I have given a great promise to myself today that I will not shed a tear. I hope I will be strong enough to fulfill it. My name is Gordana Jaksic. I represent an association of the captured and disappeared people of Serbia-Montenegro. Our association is looking for 560 people who disappeared in the far gone 1991 and 1992. I want to emphasize the story of the group called "54 Plus 19." All these people were captured alive and we have plenty of evidence for that.

I want to talk about the destiny of the Serbs of Vukovar, the group of 19 Serbs who disappeared and we still do not know anything about their fate. Croatian police even before any war started, any fighting started, entered houses and workplaces of more prominent Serbs and they were all taken away. All of those people who abducted those Serbs are still walking around freely in Croatia today, but the destiny or the fate of those poor 19 people is still unknown.

I want to talk about the group from Savnic and Niksic, 13 reservists of the Serbian or the Yugoslav National Army who were also abducted. They were captured in April of 1992 in Mostar in Herzegovina. They were taken to a very bad prison called Lora, in Split, where they were brutally tortured and murdered. I want to give you a couple of examples of what happened to them. Their ears were cut off. On their foreheads

they carved Cyrillic letters, the S letters. I do not want to mention any more of these horrible deeds. This case has been very well known in Croatia, but the tribunal in The Hague never did anything about it. The case was allowed to be tried in Croatia, and it turned into a mockery.

We are looking for five pilots of the Yugoslav People's Army. We have evidence that two of them were captured alive by the Croatian forces. There are many individual cases, but I will talk about one. It is a personal tragedy that I am suffering. My son, Slobodan Jaksic, was captured on May 2, 1992. He was a conscript of the Yugoslav People's Army. He was not even 19 years old. Together with him, nine other soldiers were captured. I emphasize that this is the Yugoslav People's Army because all nationalities were represented in it at that time. With them, there was a soldier of Croatian ethnicity, Sinisa Fris, but one day after their capture, he was freed because he was Croatian.

We have lots of witnesses about this, and three soldiers who were exchanged in June. In June of that year, they testified that they were with our children and they were alive. I also have a tape, a video recording, which I kept copies from TV broadcast showing prisoners in a Croatian camp in Bosanski Brod.

I want to emphasize that my son was captured by the Croatian forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina. This was the Croatian Army, which was in the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and then they were transferred to Slavonski Brod, which is in Croatia. They were kept there for four or five days. Unfortunately, later the group that my son was with was brought back to Bosanski Brod. I also want time to say the fact that all of this happened before the date for withdrawal of the Yugoslav People's Army expired.

I could talk to you for days. Eleven years is a very long time, but before I close I would like to thank the American Ambassador to Serbia and Montenegro in Belgrade, Mr. Montgomery, who made it possible for us to go out of our country so that for the first time the rest of the world can hear our truth. I want to thank also the people who came here today. I want to say that I do not ask for pity. I do not need anyone's pity. I want to awake in people's minds and consciousness so that they raise their voices with mine so that we can reach that truth.

I beg you to use all of your influence to help us, so that we can reach the basic human right, the right to truth.

Thank you very much.

Mr. SMITH. Ms. Jaksic, thank you very much for that moving testimony. You have the Commission's sympathy. Increasingly you have our understanding because I think that there is much more that we need to be doing in this area. Your presence here and the presence of your friends, the three additional witnesses, helps to focus our attention on this very important issue. We have raised it in the past, but I think the time has come for closure, and the only way that there will be closure is if the political will exists on all sides to get to the bottom of this.

We have in America, as you know, our own POW-MIA issue left over from the Vietnam War as well as the Korean War. The difference here is that we had no access to that battlefield. There are still 1,948 MIAs from that American conflict in Vietnam about which we know very little. At least here we have access to each of these countries, like Croatia. It seems to me that this ought to be easier, rather than more difficult.

The agony of the families that I have met with over the many years in this room from America's conflict in Vietnam really raises, or underscores that we have got to be much more aggressive in trying to get to the bottom of this.

So I would pledge to you and to your colleagues and your friends that we will do more. We have raised it before, but we will do more. Your presence here today is the catalyst for that.

I would like to now ask Mr. Maric if he would present his testimony.

**CEDOMIR MARIC, PRESIDENT,
THE ASSOCIATION OF FAMILIES OF MISSING PERSONS
FROM KRAJINA, BELGRADE, SERBIA**

Mr. MARIC [Through interpreter]. Thank you very much, honorable Congressman. Thank you very much for giving us this opportunity to express our truth in this House so that we can talk about our stories, our tragedy that has lasted 10 or more years. I want to thank everybody present who came to hear our stories. I hope that our stories will come out of the chains in which they were shackled for more than 10 years.

My name is Cedomir Maric. I represent an association of the families of the missing people from Krajina, within the Republic of Croatia. I represent 2,824 families. All of them are refugees in Yugoslavia. Some of them are not in Yugoslavia anymore. They have gone all over the world, many of them to the United States. After 1995, a large number of families immigrated as refugees to this country.

In the period between 1991 to 1995, 6,179 people were either killed or disappeared in Croatia. Serbs have disappeared; 2,264 were civilians; 885 were women; and 28 children below the age of 14. The disappearance of the Serbs in Croatia started in 1991. Prominent Serb citizens were taken away. They were taken from the cities where they lived, for example in Vukovar, Gospic, and even in Zagreb. In 1991, there were already 2,219 Serbs who disappeared in Croatia.

We who lived in Croatia at that time understood this as a threat. The largest number of dead people and the disappeared happened in 1995—2,310. All of this happened during the very famous operations of the Croatian military called Lightning and Storm. The first exodus happened in Western Slavonia, where all Serbs were ethnically cleansed, and then later the rest were cleansed from Krajina. Even though 8 years have passed since the war ended, we still do not know the fate of 2,224 people.

Since 1995, my dedication to this problem, this was caused by the disappearance of my son, Zelimir. In August 1995, he was captured in Knin where we lived in Krajina, in Croatia. Since then, my struggle has been to find anything about what happened to my son—but not only about my son, but about all other sons and children who are on this long list. All of those years I have tried to be strong and to keep on. Thank God so far I have managed to do this, because something in me kept me strong, and this thing that is strong is the pain for my lost son. This is the source of my strength, that gives me the strength to continue and to remain sane and reasonable so that I can help other families as well—those families who are suffering greatly and cannot do the same thing as the time passes since their sons or families have been gone.

Our struggle has been going on for 8 years, but it will continue until we find our loved ones. Our wish is to find our loved ones. As time passes, we become more conscious of the fact that maybe we will not reach the day, we will not live to see the day when we wait for them at home and they come back alive, but we want to continue the struggle to get the remains of our children, so that we know where we can bury them and go to light the candle according to our rite.

I want to use this opportunity to appeal that the transfer of the remains stop from one grave to another. This is done so that the truth is blocked, or to cover up a crime. My goal here is not to talk about a crime, but I want to talk about those things that limit us in our search for the truth. I will give you an example of a place called Paulin-Dvor in Croatia which will testify to the fact that this removal of remains from one grave site to another exists.

In 1991, 19 civilians were killed in Paulin-Dvor. Six women were among these civilians. The youngest one was 37 years old and the oldest was 83 years old. In 1997, during the night, their remains were exhumed. They were put in plastic barrels and transferred far away to the mountains of Velebit. The families were lucky (if I may use this word that they were lucky under these conditions). Thanks to the help from the Tribunal in The Hague, the remains were recovered, and on the July 15 this year, their remains were buried in a dignified manner.

Once more, I want to appeal that we stop these things from happening. This will be the greatest help for us to find the truth.

In the end, I want to thank Mr. Montgomery, the Ambassador of the United States in Belgrade, who made it possible for our story, for our truth, to be heard here. As sad and sorrowful as it can be, but this is our story. I want to thank you for your patience in hearing us.

Thanks.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Maric, thank you very much for your testimony and for your tenacity in dealing with your pain in such a constructive way, not only to help your own son, but also to try to help so many others who are so paralyzed, as you point out, by their own grief that they are unable to do so. So you are doing a great humanitarian effort.

Your point about the transfer of graves is something that I had not heard before and we will take that up, so we do appreciate your insight on that.

Ms. Bozanic?

**OLGICA BOZANIC, MEMBER OF THE PRESIDENCY,
ASSOCIATION OF FAMILY MEMBERS OF MISSING AND
KIDNAPPED INDIVIDUALS, BELGRADE, SERBIA**

Ms. BOZANIC [Through interpreter]. My name is Olgica Bozanic, maiden name Kostic. I want to thank the Honorable Congressman Smith for making it possible for us, and for me, to tell my truthful story in this House. I want to thank everybody who came here who found time to hear our story, our truth.

I want to represent an association of the families of the missing people from Kosovo and Metohija from 1998 until this very day. Personally, I have participated in all activities of this association because of my personal tragedy. I am searching for 14 members of my closest family, of the Kostic family, among whom are my two brothers, Todor and Lazar. I am also searching for all the kidnapped people who are on the list of our association.

I want to emphasize the fact that kidnappings and abductions of Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija started in the spring of 1998 before the war started in Kosovo and for the rest of the world to make reference that this happened before the Racak tragedy happened. Serbs were kidnapped everywhere. They were stopped along the roads of Kosovo. They were taken from buses, from public places, from their houses, from their fields where they were farming, regardless of their age and regardless of their occupation.

One of the most drastic cases happened in the period between July 17–24, 1998, when the KLA attacked the city of Orahovac and the villages in the vicinity of Velika Hoca, Racak, Retimlje, Zociste, Opterusa, and some other villages. This is the case of my family tragedy. During the attack of Orahovac, in this attack the KLA captured and took to their camps the whole population of two villages, Opterusa and Retimlje. Around 100 civilians, citizens of this area, people who lived in this municipality, were kidnapped.

On July 22, 1998, a delegation of the International Red Cross came from Pristina and liberated 35 civilians. My mother was in this group. My grandmother was in this group, and all my aunts and some elderly men as well, from the villages of Zociste, Opterusa, and Retimlje, together with eight monks from the Zociste monastery.

We still have hope that our loved ones are alive because there are witnesses who survived the capture and release, and we have some other cases where people were captured and put in those camps for a couple of days and exchanged later, and they are still alive today. They testified before the investigators of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague. Everybody—even those who were released from the camps—still has somebody who is in the camps, who remains in the camps, and we still have no information about our loved ones.

During this period of time, in 1998, the mission [OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission] led by William Walker was in Kosovo and Metohija. We had a couple of meetings with him. We had no results regarding the case of my family. This is the OSCE mission in Kosovo, and they liberated two journalists from camp number eight. This gave us hope that our people, our family members were in some other camp and alive.

The family members of the captured people gathered together and organized a march of peace, and in 1998 in December we walked about 10 miles on foot, marching to the village of Dragobilje to negotiate with the KLA members in that area. The purpose was to try to get the release of the kidnapped people from them. We did not succeed, unfortunately.

The brothers Savelic were released by OSCE. One of them died soon afterwards from the torture he suffered, but his brother is still alive. He can testify and tell the story, his Golgotha. Our hope that our people are alive does not stop. We keep getting information that there are still camps in existence. September 11, 1998, is a very memorable day for my family because this is the day when the commanders of the KLA used a group of my family who were kidnapped as hostages to provide safe passage for them through Montenegro to Albania.

Unfortunately, after the peacekeepers arrived in Kosovo and Metohija, I had to leave my home town of Orahovac because I feared that my children would share the fate of my brothers and the rest of my family. But my struggle has not stopped, even though I am living in exile now as a refugee.

We met mostly on the premises of the International Committee of the Red Cross and their service for searching for missing people. Mr. Peter Stocker was very understanding of our suffering, and he helped us create this association. We are functioning today.

We kept getting witnesses and evidence from the people who survived the camps in 1999. These are individual people and whole groups. Since I do not have much time here, I hope that you will be willing afterwards to receive information from us—the testimonies of the people who were in camps and who can testify about their suffering.

In the presence of the peacekeepers, whole families were kidnapped and massacred. The most drastic case is the village of Dojnica. This was the same fate that my village went through when one day 17 Serbs were kidnapped. Only one remained to testify. We do not know anything about those people either. There are many drastic cases all over. I do not have time to talk about them all. But I want to tell you that we have managed in our country to raise our problem to the level of the state, to make it national. So we managed to get access to the diplomats of other countries in our country and representatives of the international community.

We met Mrs. Carla Del Ponte a couple of times. I begged her to shorten my suffering and at least indict the kidnappers. We have testimonies of eyewitnesses who testified about the kidnappings. I wanted to have them arrested because my family is dying out. Eight of the survivors have already withered away from suffering and pain and have died. I wanted to achieve something while people in my family were still alive, but Carla Del Ponte answered that they cannot arrest anybody or indict anybody because they have no evidence. I asked what they considered as evidence. I was told that if there are no bodies, there is no evidence.

I beg you to shorten our agony and our suffering so that the correct way is found, so that we can find the truth. My colleague will talk about our association.

I want to thank you for your understanding. Moreover, I would like to thank Ambassador Montgomery for his understanding because he understood my goal and shared my suffering. He made it possible for me to cross the ocean so that the rest of the world could hear this true story about the suffering of the Serbian people.

Thank you all.

Mr. SMITH. Ms. Bozanic, thank you very much for your testimony. Frankly, we will be sure to advise Ambassador Montgomery on all of your very kind remarks that you have made regarding him. I think it speaks well of our ambassador that all of you have mentioned, both previously when we met in my office and again today, his good work. I think he will be encouraged and I think he will want to do even more, frankly, as does this Commission.

So thank you for your testimony.

Ms. Tomanovic?

**VERICA TOMANOVIC, MEMBER OF THE PRESIDENCY,
ASSOCIATION OF FAMILY MEMBERS OF MISSING AND
KIDNAPED INDIVIDUALS, BELGRADE, SERBIA.**

Ms. TOMANOVIC [through interpreter]. My name is Verica Tomanovic, professor of the school of music in Pristina, temporarily exiled to Belgrade.

In the name of 1,303 families of people who were kidnapped in Kosovo and Metohija from 1998 up to today, I want to express my great gratitude and our great gratitude to you, Mr. Smith, for making it possible for us to come out publicly with the truth about the suffering of the Serbian people in Kosovo and Metohija.

Our organization was established in March 2000 after useless individual struggles to find out anything about our kidnapped loved ones. We went to all bodies of power in our country. We went to all international organizations, to humanitarian organizations. We visited with all statesmen and chiefs of missions of the United Nations. We talked to the International Red Cross and everybody else.

We are a nongovernmental humanitarian organization, and our only goal is to find the truth about the fate of our loved ones. We believe that our problem is the problem of 1,303 families of the people who disappeared in Kosovo and Metohija. There are many processes going on in Kosovo right now—processes of reintegration, processes of creating new institutions and trying to establish security and safety for everybody who lives there—but we want this question to be the priority for everybody, the question of the disappeared, because it has been thousands of nights for some mothers, who have not slept at all since their loved ones disappeared. There are children who are waiting for their fathers. There is so much pain and suffering, and this anxiety is more horrible than any truth.

We beg you to use all of your forces so that we can find the truth. As I said, there are 1,303 families who have complete data about the manner of kidnapping—the place and the time and, in many cases, the names of the kidnappers. One hundred and fifty people we found out have been killed out of this number. Three hundred and sixty-four managed to escape somehow or were exchanged. We are still looking for 789 people.

You heard the story about 1998 when innocent civilians were kidnapped and abducted and taken away. The first large group was kidnapped on May 14, 1998. These were miners who were at work in the mine near Obilic, close to Pristina. The next great tragedy was the tragedy of the citizens of the city of Orahovac and nearby villages. This is the story of the Kostic family. These are abductions of civilians. There were no reasons for those people to be kidnapped. These people were citizens of the villages. They were kidnapped because they were of a different nationality. That was the reason they were taken away in an unknown direction.

I want to focus specifically on the period following June 12, 1999. This date is very important for all of our families, because around 90 percent of our people were kidnapped after the international peacekeeping forces came to Kosovo and Metohija.

My family suffered a tragedy, too. My husband, a great humanist, Professor-Doctor Andrija Tomanovic, chief surgeon of the surgery section of the hospital in Pristina and the full-time professor at the School of Medicine of Pristina, vice president of the Red Cross of Serbia and of Kosovo and Metohija, stayed with his patients, trusting fully the proclaimed mission of the United Nations that he would be protected because Resolution 1244 guaranteed safety and security for everybody. He remained in his hospital and he was kidnapped on the June 24, 1999 at one o'clock in the afternoon from the hospital, even though they had to

take him through three checkpoints that were manned by British soldiers, and they were around the hospital. He was taken through it and disappeared.

I have to mention that none of the organizations who were present in Kosovo at that time ever reacted to those abductions and kidnappings. I immediately went to the KFOR police. I talked to General Bailey. He expressed his sorrow because he said that he met my husband personally. On the phone, he told me the following, "I had the honor of meeting the most wonderful man in Kosovo and Metohija."

After that, I appealed to the mission of the United Nations, the chief of the UNMIK, the chief of KFOR. Never there was any answer. Two days after my husband was kidnapped, the whole university, all the professors of the university and all intelligentsia of Kosovo, of Pristina, left the city.

All of these kidnappings and abductions had the same goal, which was the cleansing of Kosovo and Metohija of Serbs, but we were good neighbors to those people before. We tried to help them in any manner possible and we did not expect this end. We still, in spite of everything, appeal to the leaders of the Albanians to do their best and to show some good will, to help our families to find and liberate all Serbs and other non-Albanians.

I have to say that our association is a multi-ethnic association. We are trying to find Serbs, Montenegrins, Muslims, Gypsies or Romany people, Gorani people, and even Albanians have joined our association. We do not make any differences between people. All we want is to have the basic human right of every human being and that is the right to live freely. We want everybody under the sun to live equally, and before that to find the truth. We must find the truth about the members of our families.

We want to appeal, in this House, to you to move all institutions, to use all of your forces so that this problem of kidnapping, of the abducted, becomes a task of the highest priority before any other talks are started in Kosovo and Metohija or are concluded in Kosovo and Metohija.

We came here with the purpose and the goal to remind everybody that we want peace between nations. We know that this tragedy cannot be forgotten, but our sufferings can be lessened. We want to find out where our loved ones are, where our fathers, brothers are. We want to bury the dead ones in a dignified manner. We ask you to help us. We want to find peace for our souls.

Thank you very much for your understanding.

Mr. SMITH. Mrs. Tomanovic, thank you very much for your very moving testimony, and for all of you for raising this issue in such a profound way.

When you mentioned, Ms. Tomanovic, that 90 percent of the kidnapping had occurred after the peacekeeping troops had arrived, that is a very serious indictment, not just on the mission itself, but on our response, because obviously it did not all happen overnight. It happened over the course of several weeks and months.

When you talked to General Bailey—is he the British commander? Because Pristina was under the British control. I was wondering, what did he actually do? He expressed solidarity, I am sure, with you and said your husband is a great man, but what did he actually do?

Ms. TOMANOVIC [through interpreter]. He took some action. They printed leaflets with a picture of my husband on them, and all police stations had those leaflets and the picture of my husband on their walls. They threw those leaflets from planes over the city, but we never received any answer after that. I have to emphasize that we have a very active cooperation with the UNMIK office in Belgrade, but we are not satisfied with this cooperation because there is no result. For four years, we have not found anything. Only about 50 bodies have been returned, and these bodies were given to us beheaded without legs and arms. Sometimes we received just a couple of bones. On all the official forms stating the reason of death, it says "unavailable" or "unknown."

Mr. Maric asked me to ask you whether he can say something more.

Mr. SMITH. Please do.

Mr. MARIC [through interpreter]. I apologize for interrupting you, but I think that this should be on the record.

I talk for 6,179 killed and disappeared Serbs in Croatia; 63 percent, 3,904 of the dead and the killed and the disappeared were within the U.N.-protected zones, which the United Nations was supposed to protect, to keep safe. I thought that this fact is very important to be included, because I wanted to emphasize the trust and the belief of our people in the United Nations, and this trust has been broken.

Thank you very much.

Ms. TOMANOVIC [through interpreter]. In this period, only 41 bodies have been given to us. From 2001 until 2003, only 41 bodies, remains, have been given to our families.

I would like to make sure that nobody misunderstands me. We are not indicting anyone here. Somebody else will do it and make a list very long. We just want to appeal to all people, in this case I mean Albanians. I want to tell them that we have remained the same as we have been before. We still have the same friends. We count them as friends as we hope that we will be able to meet with them and talk with them freely.

I want to be in my city with my neighbors with whom I lived all my life. I think that everybody who committed crimes should be indicted and brought to trial, but the peaceful citizens should continue living together next to each other as they have lived for centuries. We created a multi-ethnic association because we live in a multi-ethnic society there and we have accustomed ourselves to that.

Mr. SMITH. How many of the kidnappers have been hunted down and indicted and convicted of crimes?

Ms. BOZANIC [through interpreter]. We have provided lists of kidnappers, together with the list of our kidnapped people, but not one has been indicted or arrested. I personally had an opportunity to meet the kidnappers of my family. On June 20, 2002, I went to Prizren, and this was on the level of the Prizren municipality. The gentlemen from the United Nations were present at this meeting. They observed this and they listened to our talks. There was an investigator from The Hague Tribunal present as well. Unfortunately, I did not find out anything from the people accused of kidnapping because they denied that they participated in kidnapping. They did not tell the truth. We have people who are still alive who are witnesses and they named those people as kidnappers.

For us, this means that UNMIK and the international community has not helped Serbs—not once—to resolve even one case. I believe that we can find the truth very quickly if those people who kidnapped our loved ones are arrested. They have the answers. They took them from us. They took them somewhere. They know who ordered them to do this. In many cases, we know the names of the commanders. Whether our people alive or dead, these people have the answers.

We ask you again to use your influence to transmit this message of ours, this truth to others. I possess documents. I will leave them with you. I have documentation about this meeting with the kidnappers. I am begging you to help me to get them indicted so that we can find the truth.

Thank you very much, and I apologize again for interrupting the proceedings.

Mr. SMITH. Do not apologize. That is why we are here.

The point that you make, that no one has been indicted, can you allow this impunity to continue? If one can kidnap, kill, maim, incarcerate and there is no penalty for that, the message that goes out is that you can continue to kidnap, kill and maim because there is no penalty. So we will press.

If, as you pointed out, initiating a prosecutorial effort is very likely to yield results in terms of the whereabouts, whether individuals are dead or alive, it seems to me that initiating that effort needs to be done very much in earnest.

When I previously used the word “indictment” in regards to our mission, it was not to say there ought to be an indictment. It was to be used in a more generic sense—that it is a blemish. It is a black mark on our efforts if we are not pursuing aggressively those who commit such atrocities and continue to do it. I mean that figure, 90 percent of the kidnapped after the peacekeepers had arrived is a very, very serious fact, and I would hope that we could get to the bottom of that and press for indictments of those who have kidnapped and abused these individuals.

I do have two additional questions, then I will yield to Mr. Hand for some questions that he might have.

The first is, the Embassy of Serbia and Montenegro, as I indicated earlier, has provided a paper to us which we will make a part of the record, summarizing the efforts of the government’s coordination center and the committee of the council of ministers for humanitarian issues and missing persons. It refers to recent agreements with the Croatian Government and with the U.N. civilian force in Kosovo. My question would be, do you believe these developments will lead to intensification of efforts to resolve the missing persons? Does it give you hope, or has this not been an effective initiative?

All or any of you who would like to respond to that, please.

Ms. JAKSIC [through interpreter]. All I want to say is in one sentence which will be a counter-question, actually. Do you think that after 12 years we would be here if they had done anything before?

TRANSLATOR. I just kept it clear because of the language. I did not understand what she meant by “they.” She meant if the Croatian authorities and their Commission had done anything to help us, that do not you think that we would be here if the Croatian authorities had done anything before, not Serbian authorities.

Ms. JAKSIC [through interpreter]. All of those years, Croatia has had the support of the international community, as opposed to Serbia and Montenegro, which were constantly under some sort of pressure. Our side has provided lots of answers to many cases. They have sent back remains and excavated some grave sites. But our cases have not been resolved. Not one case that happened in 1991 or 1992 has been resolved.

Mr. MARIC [through interpreter]. I would like to participate in answering your question, if I may, since we are talking about the questions or the problems that happened in Croatia. The first exhumations in Croatia were in 2001 and they were done by The Hague war crimes tribunal. They exhumed 301 bodies or remains. Again, under the pressure of the tribunal in The Hague, the Croatian Commission exhumed some more sites, again in the presence of The Hague people, and in Korenica they exhumed 28 bodies; in Gracac, 156 bodies. As I mentioned earlier, the Velebit group in the barrels, 19 bodies.

As my friend Gordana said, had there been any will on the Croatian side, all of these things could have been done earlier and in a higher number. During exhumations, we discovered that there had been much concealment regarding the numbers of the killed, because there would be one cross—one mark for the grave, and then unknown to everyone, there would be three bodies buried in it.

Ms. BOZANIC [through interpreter]. I would like to say what this government body can do, how they can help us in this organization. I have been active from the very beginning of the creation of this bureau for the missing and kidnapped people of Kosovo and Metohija. I have participated in many meetings when we signed protocols with the UNMIK. We, the members of the families, were the ones who were pushing for any action. We are very well aware that we cannot do anything without working together with them. We have to cooperate. We want to cooperate because we want to liberate those people and find the truth, because they are the ones through whose channels we can have communication. They are the diplomats who can visit and communicate. We are the ones who give them information, who give them the facts. Only together can we come to the conclusion or to our goal.

Thank you very much.

Mr. SMITH. Let me ask one question. I know that you are running out of time because you need to be at your next appointment I think at 11 o'clock. So I will be very brief. I have some additional questions, and Mr. Hand, you may want to ask one as well. Then, if you could keep your answers short.

Obviously, Mr. Maric, you made a point about the pain, which is so obvious, but not fully appreciated, I think, by many people. You are here. The four of you are strong. You are willing to speak out on behalf of this terrible unresolved issue which affects you so deeply, and your family members. But so many of the other family members are in paralysis, I am sure. Young people have to be hurt, perhaps because they cannot process in their own minds the loss of a brother or a father or a mother and other loved ones.

What do your organizations do with regards to that need? Obviously, you are tenaciously looking to recover and to get an accounting and hopefully to bring back, if they are incarcerated, your missing loved ones. But do the organizations also provide emotional help? Is there a great deal of unmet need that the international community needs to assist on with regard to this terrible pain and this great wound?

Mr. MARIC [through interpreter]. Thank you.

Since those exhumations started, we have concentrated on preparing the families for those processes. Our families have to go to identify the remains in Zagreb. They have to go to the official court examiners office, the forensic science center. Our association organizes the following. We organize meetings before they go to identify those bodies. We meet with those families. We invite pathologists and those people, forensic scientists who travel together with the families. We invite psychiatrists as well. We also invite representatives of the International Red Cross. They also have representatives of our association who go with them.

The main goal is to prepare those families for what is awaiting them so that they can perform this identification process as well as possible, and also that they can overcome their great grief and pain which will hit them after this is done.

Mr. SMITH. Go ahead.

Mr. HAND. If I could ask very quickly, maybe one of the two of you from Kosovo could answer, and then also one of you regarding Croatia.

Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell, our Co-Chairman, was unable to be here, but he did provide a statement for the record. In that statement, he notes his efforts to try to improve law enforcement abilities in Southeast Europe and throughout the OSCE region. Of course, law enforcement has a lot to do with investigating missing persons cases.

I was wondering specifically in Kosovo, and again if it could be maybe just as short an answer as possible, maybe just yes or no, have you met with the missing persons unit of the U.N. civilian police? Do you get the sense that the people there have the ability to investigate cases and that they are trying their best to resolve them?

Then in terms of Croatia, since the cases that you have raised were related to abductions by the Croatian military or maybe paramilitary units, have any of you have been able to actually meet with people in the Croatian military, including maybe people who were there at the time, and whether they have tried to be helpful or provide any additional answers, if not full answers, to the fate of the people you are searching for.

So if we could just have two people maybe give a quick answer to those questions. Thank you.

Ms. BOZANIC [through interpreter]. Yes.

Mr. MARIC [through interpreter]. No. There were no possibilities to meet with anybody in Croatia.

Mr. HAND. Do they refuse? Have you tried?

Ms. JAKSIC [through interpreter]. The only opportunity we have had in Croatia was a chance to meet with the president of their Commission for the missing people. Once we met the prime minister, Mr. Kostovic. They were very, very polite in listening to us, but there were no results.

Mr. SMITH. I know your next meeting will be with people from the Pentagon. I would hope that you would raise that issue, because we do have very strong military-to-military contacts. It seems to me that if we are to have faith in the military of Croatia, the least they can do is to be absolutely aggressive and thorough and transparent in resolving missing persons issues as it relates to their military. So I would hope that you would raise that. We will raise it and amplify your concerns in that venue as well.

Again, I would love for this hearing to continue, but I know that you are under a very tight time constraint. But I thank you so much for your testimony. We will have a part two of this hearing at which we will receive testimony from the U.S. Department of State and other interested individuals, especially from the NGO community.

We will further energize and reinvigorate our efforts in this regard. Your meeting here is timely and as much as I can say it, we all, our hopes and our prayers are with you. We will do everything we can, and God bless you, and thank you for your courage in coming forward the way you have.

The hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 10:42 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

**PREPARED STATEMENT OF
HON. BEN NIGHTHORSE CAMPBELL, CO-CHAIRMAN,
COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE**

Today's hearing is on a topic of deep interest to me. While we are saddened by the stories our witnesses will tell of relatives missing—some for many, many years, we are also be inspired by their courage and leadership as they forge ahead seeking truthful answers regarding what happened not only to their loved ones but also to the loved ones of the many others they represent.

Serving as Co-Chairman of this Commission, I have taken great interest in international civilian police and law enforcement efforts, in southeastern Europe and elsewhere. In Kosovo, Bosnia and Croatia, the OSCE and other organizations have been working to build the capacity for local police forces providing law and order and, at the same time, respecting the rule of law themselves. In Kosovo, the United Nations has also deployed its own civilian police force to do this job until such time that the Kosovo Police Service can perform all these functions on its own. I had the opportunity to visit the OSCE school for training police cadets in Kosovo in 2001, and was impressed by the work being done there.

The topic of today's hearing, therefore, also interests me from this perspective. Investigation of cases of missing persons is a task for law enforcement agencies, and I would like to hear from the witnesses whether police investigators, either local or international, have been of any assistance to them in their search, and whether there might be some opportunity here for our country and perhaps others to provide the police and other law enforcement personnel with greater training and expertise to investigate missing persons cases more thoroughly.

Of course, since most of the individual cases which the Commission is examining today took place during a period of conflict, the circumstances surrounding these cases are more complex and involve a wide variety of offices and organizations. Still, there is a role that law enforcement can and should play.

In closing, I express my hope that, through this hearing and other efforts, the Commission will encourage the State Department and the international community, to make the resolution of missing persons cases, regardless of ethnicity, a priority task. Such would help promote stability and reconciliation in the region. More importantly, though, the families and communities involved would welcome the commitment to uncover the facts.

**MATERIALS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD
BY THE HIS EXCELLENCY IVAN VUJACIC, AMBASSADOR OF
SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO TO THE UNITED STATES**

**THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COORDINATION CENTER
OF SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO
AND THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA FOR KOSOVO AND METOHIA,
AND OF THE COMMITTEE OF
THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO
FOR HUMANITARIAN ISSUES AND MISSING PERSONS,
IN RESOLVING THE PROBLEM OF
MISSING AND KIDNAPPED PERSONS**

After the political changes in the FR Yugoslavia, resolving the issue of missing persons was given highest priority, as a humanitarian issue of enormous significance for the families of the missing persons, but also from the political point of view as an indicator of actual democratization of the society and the state, its readiness to respect human rights and achieve highest standards of their protection. The issue of the missing persons is directly related to the resolution of other humanitarian and political issues, such as the return of internally displaced persons and refugees, the rebuilding of confidence between nations, ethnic and religious communities and normalization of political relations between states in the territory of former SFRY.

The uncertain destiny of families whose members are missing in the territory of former Yugoslavia has persisted for over a decade. This uncertainty is no longer a tragedy just for the families, but it endangers the overall efforts of us politicians to achieve reconciliation and lasting peace.

At the level of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro, the issue of resolving the destiny of the kidnapped and missing persons is dealt with by the Coordination Center of Serbia and Montenegro and the Republic of Serbia for Kosovo and Metohia, and of the Committee of the Council of Ministers of Serbia and Montenegro for humanitarian issues and missing persons.

The Coordination Center has supported the continuation of the Committee for humanitarian issues and missing persons at the level of the new state union and has provided assistance in organizational and functional aspects.

By signing the General Framework Peace Agreement for Bosnia and Herzegovina in November 1995, armed conflicts in the territory of former Yugoslavia have stopped. However, the frightening consequences of these conflicts have remained, as well as numerous grave humanitarian issues that need to be resolved, in order to mitigate such consequences.

On the list of missing persons that Serbia and Montenegro are searching for in Bosnia and Herzegovina, there are 125 persons, most of whom are soldiers and commanders of the ex Yugoslav Army, victims of events that took place in May 1992 in Sarajevo and Tuzla, during the withdrawal operations which were carried out in accordance with the achieved political agreements and with guarantees of the international community. We cannot be satisfied with the degree of cooperation with the state commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Agreements and memorandums of understanding have been signed between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Croatia, at the state level and at the level of the Committee of the Council of

Ministers of Serbia and Montenegro for humanitarian issues and missing persons, which specify the obligation that the parties have undertaken until the final resolution of all cases of missing persons on the lists of both sides.

Serbia and Montenegro are searching for 2700 missing persons of Serbian nationality, citizens of the Republic of Croatia, including also victims of the campaigns of the Croatian military and police "Lightning" and "The Storm", since the greatest number of their families, as refugees, presently live in Serbia and Montenegro, and the destiny of 520 persons from the list of FR Yugoslavia is still unknown, among whom are the pilots of the former Yugoslav Army and persons for whom the FR Yugoslavia had, and provided to Croatian side, evidence that they were living in their prisons and under their authority.

A significant step forward in resolving the destiny of the missing persons is the readiness of all relevant actors to provide information about the locations of mass graves and the readiness to pass over to the interested party the bodies, after which the bodies are taken over by the families. Based on the agreements concerning monitoring it has been made possible for representatives of the Yugoslav Committee and forensic experts to attend exhumations in Republic of Croatia at locations that the Yugoslav side is interested in. The Committee of Serbia and Montenegro has information about 1300 registered graves and about most of the mass graves in the Republic of Croatia, in which persons of Serb nationalities are buried. Their exhumation has started only in the year 2001, at the initiative of the Hague Tribunal.

In the period from 2001 to 2002, 559 persons have been exhumed, in locations Knin—301, Graèac—154, Korenica—27, Rizvanuša—18, Slavonski Brod—59 persons. About 170 persons have been identified at these locations. The identification process is in progress for victims exhumed in the Knin graveyard, and so far 152 persons have been identified. Based on the agreement concerning monitoring, exhumations are attended by representative of the Committee of Serbia and Montenegro and Yugoslav forensic experts, in the capacity of observers.

At locations in the Republic of Serbia, on municipal graveyards in Novi Sad, Sremska Mitrovica, Šabac and Loznica exhumations have been completed, attended by representatives and forensic experts of the Bureau of the Republic of Croatia and the Committee for missing persons of the Republic Srpska. A total of 223 bodies have been exhumed, who arrived to the territory of Serbia from the territories under war conflict by water (the rivers Danube, Sava and Drina).

The Croatian side has undertaken that in the future period it will perform exhumation, obduction and will initiate the process of identification for another 500 bodies, who have been found later in mass graves and in individual graves in the Republic of Croatia.

In April 2001, the Federal Government and the Government of the Republic of Serbia have established the Coordination Center for Kosovo and Metohia, which has devoted great care to the issue of kidnapped and missing persons through the Bureau for Kidnapped and Missing Persons and the Bureau for Exhumation and Identification.

According to data of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the UNMIK, since the beginning of 1998, when the first cases of kidnapped and missing persons were recorded in the AP Kosovo and Metohia, the total number of registered cases is 5769, of which 4697

Albanians and 1072 other nationality. Of the total number of missing persons, the number of unresolved cases is 3696 persons, of which 2836 Albanians and 860 persons of other nationalities, while the number of resolved cases is 2073 persons, of which 1861 Albanians and 212 members of other nationalities.

Through its bureaus, the Coordination Center has established a higher level of cooperation with UNMIK police and administration in the field of resolving the issue of destiny of kidnapped and missing persons, which has of course been politically verified in form of a Memorandum of Understanding signed on 11 February 2002, previously adopted by the Federal government and the Government of the Republic of Serbia, specifically:

1. Memorandum of Understanding on joint verification teams for hidden prisons;
2. Memorandum of Understanding on the exchange of forensic experts and expert opinions;
3. Memorandum of Understanding on cross-border repatriation of identified bodily remains.

After the signing of the above Memorandums of Understanding, the activities with UNMIK police have become more intensive and a possibility was opened up for the attendance by pathologists on behalf of the Coordination Center in the process of exhumation and obduction in Kosovo and Metohia, which resulted in finding and identification of unidentified bodies in mass graves in Kosovo and Metohia and their transfer to family members.

REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES OF THE BUREAU FOR EXHUMATIONS AND IDENTIFICATION ON LOCATIONS IN SERBIA PROPER				
Mass graves in Serbia	No. of exhumed bodies	No. of bodies with obduction done	No. of identified bodies	Transferred to family members
Petrovo Selo	81	81	33	33
Bajina Bašta	48	48	0	0
Batagica	707	707	80	80
TOTAL:	836	836	113	113
REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES OF THE BUREAU FOR EXHUMATIONS AND IDENTIFICATION ON LOCATIONS IN KOSOVO AND METOHIA				
Mass graves in Kosovo and Metohia	No. of exhumed bodies	No. of bodies with obduction done	No. of identified bodies	Transferred to family members
	201	189	59	52

With the view to alleviate sufferings of all, and fully committed to the highest standards in the field of the protection of human rights, the Republic of Serbia undertook the following:

1. Transferred ethnic Albanians who were serving their prison sentences in Serbia proper, in the spirit of the European Convention on the Transfer of Convicts;
2. Disclosed facts on the existence of mass graves in Serbia, exhumed 836 bodies and started the identification procedure;
3. Passed the Law on the Cooperation with the ICTY, and acts in compliance with the provisions;
4. Arrested political leaders charged with war crimes and handed then over to the ICTY;
5. Rendered all the necessary documents to the ICTY;
6. Initiated criminal procedure against a number of individuals charged with war crimes against ethnic Albanians, before Yugoslav judiciary authorities;
7. Started the elaboration of a unique missing persons list for the territory of Serbia and Montenegro, including Kosovo and Metohija;
8. Passed the Law on the organization and competence of the state organs in procedures against war crime perpetrators.

Taking as a point of departure the fact that resolution of the question of kidnapped and missing persons is of invaluable importance for the building of mutual trust, and respecting the principle that each and everyone is entitled to knowing the truth, we would suggest that in the autumn 2003 the US Congress dedicated one of its hearings to this topic.

**MISSING PERSONS IN SOUTHEAST EUROPE
PART II**

SEPTEMBER 18, 2003

Note: Hearing proceedings were cancelled
due to the Federal Government's closure.

WITNESS BIOGRAPHIES

NOTE: Hearing Proceedings were cancelled due to Federal Government closure on September 18, 2003.

MR. SHEREMET ADEMI, PRESIDENT, COORDINATION COUNCIL OF THE FAMILY ASSOCIATIONS OF KOSOVO

Mr. Ademi has been involved in the issue of missing persons since the end of the Kosovo war in the late 1990s. He serves as President of the Coordination Council of the Family Associations of Kosovo and is the founder and Chair of a Mitrovica-based association of families of missing, the “Kujtesa” (Memory) Foundation. He was elected to head the Kosovar Associations of Families of the Missing, resulting in his appointment as UNMIK advisor on the missing. In accordance with his positions, he could very well be the most important coordinator between families of the missing and governmental structures, both UNMIK and PISG. Mr. Ademi received his B.A. from the University of Pristina, Law, in 1984. He was born in 1958 in Mitrovica, Kosovo, where 159 persons are still listed as missing. Mr. Ademi had three missing family members who have recently been identified.

MS. NESRETE KUMNOVA, CHAIR, MOTHERS APPEAL ASSOCIATION (THIRRJET E NENAVE)

Ms. Kumnova is a founding member and the current Chair of the Gjakova-based NGO, “Thirrjet e Nenave” (Mothers Appeal), an association of families of missing. She is the highest profile woman involved in the issues of the missing, frequently appearing on television as an immediately recognized, effective, emotionally powerful spokesperson for the cause of the missing. She is also a presidency member of the Kosovar Association of Families of Missing and a member of the Coordination Council of the Association of the Families of the Missing. Ms. Kumnova has been the figurehead of most demonstrations and strikes organized since 1999 aiming to put pressure on governmental structures to focus on the fate of missing. She is also a trader/small businessperson in her native town of Gjakova, where there are still 667 persons missing. Ms. Kumnova has eight missing family members, including her son.

MR. AGRON LIMANI, PRESIDENT, ASSOCIATION OF MISSING PERSONS, “26 MARS 1999”

Mr. Limani is a founding member and the current Chair of “26 Marsi 1999” (March 26, 1999), the Association of Families of the Missing, in his village, Krusha e Vogel, and a member of the Kosovar Association of the Families of Missing since its establishment in 2002. He received his B.A. in electronics from the University of Pristina in 1990 and has published various articles for *Epoka e Re* and *Zeri* newspapers. Mr. Agron serves as a schoolteacher in his native Prizen. In his adopted village, Krusha e Vogel, there are still 112 persons missing and approximately seventy percent of the men over the age of sixteen have been abducted; it is believed that their bodies were burned and then thrown into the river, leaving little possibility of DNA testing for identification. Mr. Limani has 11 missing family members, including his father and brother.

**MR. MEHMETALI PEROLLI, HEAD,
OFFICE OF THE IMPRISONED AND MISSING PEOPLE**

Mr. Perolli is the head of the Office for Imprisoned and Missing People, based in Gjakova. He has been proactive in rallying for support in highlighting the fate of missing, publishing and archiving, among other activities, various lists, appeals, and 14 booklets with detailed records and statistics about crimes committed in Gjakova municipality. Today, 667 are still missing in Gjakova.

**PREPARED STATEMENT OF
HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, CHAIRMAN,
COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE**

This morning, the Helsinki Commission continues its focus on the plight of those in southeastern Europe who have relatives and loved ones missing as a result of the conflicts associated with Yugoslavia's disintegration in the 1990s.

Last month, we heard compelling testimony from four people who lost one or more family members during those conflicts. They happened to be ethnic Serbs. Today, we hear from four others, who happen to be ethnic Albanians. I mention their ethnicity simply to repeat the point I made at the last hearing that their ethnic backgrounds are actually irrelevant. What is relevant is that family and friends of those who are missing have a right to know the fate of their loved ones.

Our four witnesses today all come from Kosovo, the scene of harsh repression which lasted for many years under the regime of Slobodan Milosevic and culminated in a brutal conflict beginning in 1998 and a massive ethnic cleansing campaign in 1999. During that time, they lost not just one but several members of their families. As part of the personal search for answers, they emerged as representatives of many other families through their leadership in non-governmental organizations. We have asked each of them to say a few words about their own family tragedy and then to describe the organizations they represent and what, if any, progress they have achieved.

I welcome you here this morning and want you to know we join you in the quest for truth. Through the Helsinki Commission, we have pressed very strongly over the years to see those responsible for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide to be brought to justice. We were active in pressing for the release of the Kosovar Albanians who were unjustly held in Serbian prisons even after Milosevic was ousted. We will be similarly engaged in encouraging our government, other governments and international organizations to make the resolution of missing persons cases a priority. In fact, the issue was raised already in hearings the Commission had with the Dutch Foreign Minister currently chairing the OSCE, and with senior State Department officials.

**PREPARED STATEMENT OF
HON. BEN NIGHTHORSE CAMPBELL, CO-CHAIRMAN,
COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE**

The concern expressed by Chairman Smith and other members of this Commission about the plight of the families of missing persons in Southeastern Europe is one which I share completely.

Ultimately, the international community's success in the Balkans will be determined not by how much money is pumped into the region, how many troops are sent or which local leaders are supported. Whether or not we really help the people who actually live in the region to recover from past conflict, live in freedom, and find opportunity for economic advancement will determine success.

That is one reason I have been so supportive of the OSCE-run school for the Kosovo Police Service, and the emphasis in Kosovo on the police serving the public rather than doing the dirty work of those holding political power, as was the case in the past.

Resolving missing persons cases accomplishes the same end. It helps close an ugly chapter in the history of the region so that the people and governments alike can all begin looking to the better future.

It is also simply the right thing to do. Foreign policy cannot be based solely on the personal emotions of those who make it, but it also cannot be void of sympathy and caring for those from other countries who have been the victimized. Indeed, one of the assets of democracy in the United States is that the values and compassion of the American people are reflected in U.S. foreign policy through the promotion of human rights. It is for that reason that, today, elected representatives of the American people will listen to the compelling stories of people who have faced unimaginable tragedy and loss.

In closing, I again express my hope that, through this hearing and other efforts, the Commission will encourage the State Department and the international community to make the resolution of missing persons cases, regardless of ethnicity, a priority task.

**PREPARED STATEMENT OF
HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, RANKING MEMBER,
COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE**

I join the Chairman in welcoming our witnesses and the audience to today's hearing of the Helsinki Commission, which will focus on the issue of missing persons in Southeast Europe.

As a member of the Commission, I have carefully followed developments in this region of Europe. Most of my efforts have focused on encouraging cooperation with international efforts to prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide which took place in parts of the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s. Justice, however, is not simply an end in itself; the trials held in The Hague and now domestically bring some closure to those surviving victims of brutal ethnic cleansing campaigns. Justice allows victims and their families to move on, rebuild and, we hope, help keep a tragic period of history from repeating itself.

Locating and identifying missing persons can accomplish this same end. For those who have relatives that disappeared during conflict, the desire to know what happened to their missing loved ones must be overwhelming. The unknown often perpetuates and exacerbates the suffering they have already experienced during the conflict. Like justice, knowing the fate of missing loved ones can help bring closure to surviving friends and family.

The international community must make the effort to resolve missing persons cases a priority. The International Commission for Missing Persons and other organizations leading the search and providing counseling to families deserve strong support. The non-governmental organizations composed of surviving family members—like those represented by our witnesses today—also deserve our support. By working together, these families can help each other cope with tragedy and rebuild a society torn by conflicts in which civilian populations were primarily and intentionally targeted.

I look forward to hearing the testimony of our panel of witnesses this morning, and to learn what more the Helsinki Commission can do to ensure that answers are found to the questions they and the families they represent have regarding missing relatives.

**PREPARED STATEMENT OF
SHEREMET ADEMI, CHAIRMAN,
MITROVICA-BASED NGO "MEMORY" AND
KOSOVAR ASSOCIATION OF FAMILIES OF THE MISSING, AND
ADVISOR TO THE UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN KOSOVO
[UNMIK] ON ISSUES RELATING TO MISSING PERSONS**

Ladies and gentlemen, respected and honorable participants:

On my behalf, and that of the people of Kosovo, allow me first to express the most sincere condolences for the victims of September 11. We share the pain of their family members and all American people.

As you already know, as a consequence of the war in Kosovo (1998-1999) about 11,000 civilians were murdered and massacred; thousands of people were injured; 5,000 others were either abducted or disappeared; about one million Kosovars were evicted from their homes; 200,000 housing units were destroyed, etc. The intervention of the international community led by the U.S.A. put an end to the genocide and brought long-awaited liberty to the people of Kosovo.

Dear participants, even though more than four years have passed since it ended, the wounds of the war are not yet healed. To this day Kosovo is faced with the absence of 43,233¹ civilians detained and abducted in an organized manner by the Serbian military, police and paramilitary forces during the war period. In both Kosovo and Serbia hundreds of mass graves have been discovered with the bodies of killed and massacred Albanian civilians by Serbian forces and dozens of others that are waiting to be exhumed.

In order to hide their traces of crime, Serbian forces transferred the killed and massacred persons to different regions of Serbia; after the discovery of the mass graves, these bodies are being returned to their families in Kosovo.

Dear participants, we feel that the issue of the abducted and missing persons continues to be a wound that gets more aggravated with each passing day and by not resolving it we are faced with psychological, emotional and social violence not only against their families, but against all Kosovo and its democratic processes.

Unfortunately, the continued requests of the family members directed towards the international community to apply pressure on Belgrade officials and clarify the fate of this category have not brought results, just like the unwillingness of Serb officials to resolve this matter as stipulated in international agreements.

Dear participants, this matter not only a humanitarian problem; it is also a political and legal problem for the resolution of which we have to engage the international community and especially the government of the U.S.A. Thousands of families in Kosovo are looking forward to learning about their loved ones; thousands of children wait every moment to find out the fate of their parents.

Dear participants, we have a common obligation to tell the truth to our children no matter what that is and how painful it could be. The continuing strikes, protests, requests and appeals of family members to learn about the fate of their loved ones have until now fallen on deaf ears in the international community though it is bound by international agreements to resolve these matters.

¹ According to the Office for Missing Persons/UNMIK

Respected participants, knowing your humanity and the support that you have given to my people in the most difficult days of its history, I make an appeal to use all your authority and that of your institutions to elucidate the fate of the abducted and missing Kosovars and to resolve once and for all this important matter, to which the liberty and future of Kosovars and their democratic processes are held hostage.

I am aware that your support, and that of the American people in general, just like in the past, will serve the well-being and prosperity of humanity, and in this case of the Kosovars, too.

Dear participants, finally by expressing my special considerations for you and for the American people, please allow me to remind you that thousands of families are waiting to find out about the fate of their loved ones.

Thank you.

THE SITUATION OF THE FAMILIES OF WAR VICTIMS IN MITROVICA MUNICIPALITY

Hundreds of families did not enjoy the happiness of peace in Mitrovica. Because of the fact that they lost their beloved or they do not have any information about the fate of their beloved. More than 200 women are widowed. More than 600 children have lost their parents. There is a great lost in the intellectual and working classes.

The emotion and social position of these families is very hard.

- The families that have war hostages live with anxiety and hope. Their expenses are very high too.
- Families with missing persons live under someone.
- Lot of families did not find the dead bodies of their loved ones to rebury them.
- Families that have buried their loved ones. They need material and social support.
- Foundation Kujtimi is trying to help in this mission. We are not supporting them with money. We offer them only service. We are addressing all people who are interested in supporting them in any way
- We will wait for you in your sacred mission.

Foundation Kujtimi was founded immediately after the war in Kosova. This was an imperative period. This foundation was registered by UNMIK on 03.01.2000 under registry number 5200012-2.

It has these activities:

- Offer judicial support to the families of war victims.
- Help in identification of the dead bodies and war graves.
- Gather information for disappeared persons antemortem and post-mortem.
- Investigate the movement of dead bodies and missing persons.
- Help families to identify and bury the bodies of their loved ones.
- Maintain graves and memorial houses.
- Help families with psychological programs.
- Collect data for the truth and war consequences [publishing events and evidence].
- Arrange for peace to be achieved through justice.

As well as activities that favor peace over war.
“Kujtimi” Foundation cooperates with:

- UNMIK Office for Missing Persons and Forensic Medicine
- OSCE, Human Rights Department
- Council for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms
- International Red Cross
- UNMIK Police for Missing Persons
- Other government and non-government associations

Foundation Kujtimi is corporate.
With OMPF, OSCE
International Red Cross
UNMIK Police for Missing Persons
Other NGOs and GOs

May the loyal angels of freedom live eternally!
Our dedication to their families is a duty.
Through this we preserve the values, past present and future, of our
nation and the democratic world that defended the most treasured hu-
man values.
The memory of devoted angels to be forever.
Our concerning to their families obligation.
This is the way to keep the values of past, present and future of the
nation, democratic world who represent in protection of the human been.

Sheremet Ademi
Mitrovica, 9/09/2003

**PREPARED STATEMENT OF
NESRETE KUMNOVA, PRESIDENT,
GJAKOVA-BASED NGO "MOTHERS APPEAL"**

Dear participants, my name is Nesrete Kumnava and I am the Chairwoman of the non-governmental organization "Thirrjet e Nenave" (Calls of Mothers), an organization that gathers the families of abducted persons from the region of Gjakova. Gjakova now counts 394 persons abducted by the military, police and paramilitary Serb forces during the war period.

My family has eight missing members: my son, Albion (age 21); my sons-in-law Gezim Deva (age 29), and Halim Qerkezi (age 53); my nephews, Artan (age 25), Armend (age 24), Ardian (age 17), Edmond (age 13) and Artan Efendija (age 22). All of them were detained by Serb police on March 27 and 31, 1999 in their homes. Since that day, we do not know anything about their fate.

Most of the family members of the persons abducted in the region of Gjakova know the abductors of their loved ones (just to illustrate I can mention the abduction of 11 members of the Cerkezi family; other family members have recognized the Serb, Dragan Racic from Gjakova, among the kidnappers, who was wearing a police uniform.

ACTIVITIES OF THE ORGANIZATION

We, the family members of the abducted persons, immediately after the war, established the Parental Council in order to investigate the fate of our loved ones. In this direction, we organized the collection of data for all the abducted persons and organized protests, strikes and wrote petitions to raise awareness of the problem I mentioned.

The purpose of the organization is to secure information about abducted persons and to cooperate with local and international institutions in order to elucidate their fate.

With the intention of undertaking steps towards shedding light on the fate of our loved ones we have sent requests and petitions to international organizations including the U.N. Security Council, the European Parliament, to the governments of different countries, the International Commission for Missing Persons, the International Committee of the Red Cross and to human rights organizations but unfortunately until now we have not been able to learn anything about them.

The discovery and exhumation of some mass graves in Serbia brought the unfortunate news to some of the families from Gjakova whose loved ones were abducted along with the 378 Albanian civilians on April 27, 1999 in Meja of Gjakova.

We shall never cease searching for our loved ones and for this we request the help of all those who have a say in resolving such matters.

Along with its activities in connection with investigating the fate of abducted persons, our organization also supports their families by notifying all the institutions about their requests and daily problems.

The families of the abducted persons love and deserve FREEDOM; they love their CHILDREN and they love LIFE just as everybody else.

We ask again: WHERE ARE OUR LOVED ONES?

Dear participants, the information and other data on the abducted persons from the region of Gjakova can be found in brochures that our organization has prepared and that will be at your disposal.

**PREPARED STATEMENT OF
AGRON LIMANI, PRESIDENT,
“26 MARSII 1999” ASSOCIATION BASED IN KRUSHA E VOGEL**

I was born on 12/15/1966 in Krusha e Vogel (Prizren) where I still reside. I graduated from the Faculty of Electronics. At present, I teach electronics in the High School “Gjon Buzuku” in Prizren. I am married and have two children. During the liberation war in Kosovo, I was a member of the KLA. The Serbs abducted (kidnapped) my father (age 56), my brother (age 23), my uncle (age 71) and my uncle’s son (age 43, who is physically and mentally disabled) on 26 March 1999.

Our association keeps close contacts with the family members of abducted persons. After every meeting we have had with different delegations, after every bit of information at our disposal, before any initiative we intended to undertake, we have met with the family members of those abducted persons in order to inform and consult with them.

The main problem of this village has been and still is the investigation into the fate of the men who were abducted by Serb forces on March 25 and 26 of the year 1999. For this reason, when the war ended (in June 1999) we started our activity on this matter and established the association named the Association for the Research of the Abducted Persons “26 March 1999”.

The association has 150 members and a board of five members who are:

1. Agron Limani—Chairman
2. Sylejman Ramadan—Vice Chair
3. Gani Zylfiu—Secretary
4. Blerim Shehu—Member
5. Dashamir Asllani—Member

The association is registered with the appropriate organs of UNMIK.

On March 25 and 26, one of the biggest massacres in the contemporary history of Kosovo was committed as a result of the Serb aggression on the Albanian civilians of the village of Krusha e Vogel. In this massacre, 112 Albanians from ages 13 to 77, were abducted (missing). After the people returned from Albania, land mines left behind in the village killed a 12 year old child, so the total number killed here is 113.

Expressed as a percentage, in Krusha e Vogel about 70 percent of the males are missing from children age 13 and up. So, it is the largest massacre which occurred in Kosovo. As a result of this massacre there are 82 widows and 145 orphans. Ten families remain without any male in the house, without the possibility to reproduce in the future. Families have lost from one to nine members each.

The matter of the abducted persons is a big spiritual and mental burden, an anxiety, an unbearable wait first of all for their family members. A region that has hundreds and thousands of family members in this psychological situation cannot have sustainable peace and tranquility.

With the exception of the Serb minority, our relations with other ethnic groups (Roma, Bosnians, Turks, Ashkalis, etc.) are normal. The Serb minority has not denounced a single criminal from its own people; on the contrary it expresses an extraordinary consideration for the perpetrators. Because their majority participated in crimes against Albanians and none of them has yet been punished by the court in The

Hague or by the international court in Kosovo (because locals are not allowed to adjudicate Serb criminals); such people in Kosovo are viewed (certainly by our association and our village as well) as privileged criminals and the relations between the victims and the criminals cannot be other than abnormal.

In the framework of our activities to elucidate the fate of abducted persons, in our meetings with local and international authorities we have offered information about the perpetrators of the crimes in our village, hoping that their arrest would facilitate the resolution of this matter. In this context we have had some meetings with representatives of the American Office in Prishtina including the head of this office Mr. Reno Harnish, the Parliamentarian and Governmental Commission of Kosovo for Abducted and Missing Persons, the Kenova Police Unit for Missing Persons, the UNMIK Police Unit for Missing Persons, the Commission of Kosovo Districts Association for Missing Persons, the International Red Cross, the Hague Tribunal, the International Commission for Missing Persons (ICMP), etc. We have filed a lawsuit against the Serbs involved in this massacre with the Public Prosecutor's Office in Prishtina and Prizren.

Our success in this matter so far has been relatively small because the truth about our children can be found in the files of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Serbia and can be found out by the apprehension of Serb criminals. Both the files and the criminals cannot be found on some other planet but in Serbia. We do not have the power to intervene and the ones who have the power do not want to use it, which is why our success is relative.

- Takes care of the regulations of the cemetery and memorial houses;
- Assists the families with psychological social programs;
- Collects data about the truth and war consequences (by publishing events and testimony);
- Is committed to achieving peace through justice;
- And other activities that favor peace over war.

INFORMATION REGARDING THE MASSACRE IN KRUSHA E VOGEL

PART ONE

The village of Krusha e Vogel is part of Prizren municipality and it is located along the third kilometer of the Prizren-Gjakova highway. Its residents make their living mainly from farming. About 970 Albanians 60 Serbs and 15 Romas resided in the village.

From the time Kosovo lost its autonomy in March 1989, the Albanian residents of our village became subject to different forms of systematic violence (just as all the Albanian population in Kosovo.)

First, the Albanian workers lost their jobs. About 95 percent of the employed in our village were dismissed by force. They were replaced by Serbian workers from Krusha e Vogel and other areas (because there was not a sufficient number of Serbs from Krusha e Vogel that could fill in all the vacant positions of dismissed Albanian workers).

Within a very short period of time all Serbian families were armed with different types of weapons. In the meantime, all adult Serbs began to conduct military training.

Many Albanian homes were searched under the pretext of searching for weapons. Many young people were abused physically and many houses were demolished, but no weapons were found. Paying money to Serbs was a way to temporarily ward off violence. Because of the Serbian repression, some entire families were compelled to flee to Western countries.

There was not a single day that went by without the Serbs firing their weapons. They used this action as a form of intimidation in order to make our lives insecure and unbearable. It was particularly terrible when they fired weapons for hours late into the night, especially terrorizing women and little children.

In 1990, in the center of the village, exactly at the home of Dimitrije Nikolic, a police checkpoint was set up and the police who manned it abused physically, insulted, and threatened all Albanians who passed through it. Provoking Albanian women in various degrading ways became routine for the police.

In February 1999, in the face of a situation of escalating violence, Albanian parents asked Serbian parents to put an end to the violence their sons exerted (against Albanian civilians). Instead of condescending, they (the Serbian parents) answered, "Our sons know what they are doing."

PART TWO

The day after the NATO strikes of 03/24/1999, at about 4:00 a.m., the Serbian military, paramilitary and police forces were positioned right next to our village, supported by combat equipment, such as tanks, anti-aircraft (Praga), armored vehicles, etc. Soon after, the Serbs of our village gave a signal to those forces that came mainly from Prizren, and they started to march on the village, torching the first houses. In the face of such a situation, the Albanian villagers fled from their homes to the surrounding area in the hope of returning once the barbarous Serbs were done with pillaging the village. Nine people who did not leave their homes on 03/25/1999, (Sejdi Emrullahu, Isni Rashkaj, Nazmi Rashkaj, Demir Rashkaj, Sali Shehu, Reshat Shehu, Dervish Shehu, Raif Shehu and Nexhat Shehu), were taken away that day and their fate remains unknown. As there were many babies, just a few days and weeks old, pregnant women, small children and old people among the escapees, and as it was cold, especially in the evening, the villagers decided to spend the night at the home of Sejdi Batusha.

The next day, on 03/26/1999, at noon, the Serbs from our village, all of whom were armed, and the additional forces (arriving from Prizren) surrounded the Albanian civilians who were staying at Sejdi Batusha's house. Women and children, under the age of 12, were ordered to depart for Albania (using the road through the village of Bregdri) while the others were ordered to stay there.

Mothers, sisters and wives begged the local Serbs (yesterday's neighbors) to release the others, but it was useless because they were even more aggressive than the ones that had come to help them. Many children (when they were being separated) tried to go with their mothers, but they were snatched from them by force. Dorde Cvetkovic, a Serb from our village was the most active in this process.

After the women and young children headed towards the village of Bregdri, the male adults, from 13 years of age and up, were ordered to go to the home of Qazim Batusha. Q.B.'s house is about 150 meters away from S.B.'s house where they had stayed previously. On their way there, they were watched mainly by the local Serbs, so they could not escape.

Upon entering Qazim Batusha's house the Serbs seized their money and identification cards. There were 109 people that were brought into that house. It was a one-story house with two rooms and a hallway. The Serbs opened fire on them with automatic weapons and then set the house ablaze. There were people that were not hit by the bullets who (after pretending to be dead) got up and tried to escape from the crime scene. As they were trying to escape, some managed to get out of the house but they were gunned down; the number of those that finally survived is six.

The people who survived the massacre:

1. Lutfi Ramadani (witness in the Hague Tribunal)
2. Agim Asllani
3. Mehmet Krasniqi (witness in the Hague Tribunal)
4. Bajram Zylfiu
5. Qamil Shehu
6. Petrit Rashkaj

The witnesses who escaped from this massacre say that while they were escaping the house they left many injured persons who could not leave due to their wounds and they do not know what happened to them. The local Serbs, who were considerably assisted by the Roma of this village, led the whole massacre. During two days there were 112 Albanian civilians who were abducted (missing).

The house where the crime was committed was destroyed on 03/26/1999 and on its site there are two large craters, to create the impression that this massacre is a result of NATO air strikes.

Table 1. LIST OF ABDUCTED PERSONS WHOSE FATE REMAINS UNKNOWN					
No.	Name	Father's name	Last name	Year born	Notes
1	Isni	Elez	Rashkaj	1943	
2	Nazmi	Elez	Rashkaj	1950	
3	Demir	Nazmi	Rashkaj	1982	
4	Kadri	Nazmi	Rashkaj	1984	
5	Rrefki	Sadik	Rashkaj	1982	
6	Ahmet	Manush	Berisha	1938	
7	Ramadan	Jup	Ramadani	1920	
8	Asllan	Ramadan	Ramadani	1966	
9	Hysen	Jup	Ramadani	1922	
10	Sabit	Hysen	Ramadani	1975	
11	Liman	Hazer	Limani	1928	
12	Avdyt	Liman	Limani	1956	Disabled
13	Nebi	Hazer	Limani	1941	
14	Luqan	Nebi	Limani	1970	

Table 1. LIST OF ABDUCTED PERSONS WHOSE FATE REMAINS UNKNOWN (Cont'd)

No.	Name	Father's name	Last name	Year born	Notes
15	Adem	Isuf	Asllani	1930	
16	Asim	Adem	Asllani	1966	
17	Feim	Adem	Asllani	1960	
18	Muharrem	Isuf	Asllani	1937	
19	Nusret	Muharrem	Asllani	1966	
20	Nexhat	Muharrem	Asllani	1969	
21	Perparim	Muharrem	Asllani	1970	
22	Murat	Bajram	Ramadani	1941	
23	Selajdin	Murat	Ramadani	1969	
24	Afrim	Lutfi	Ramadani	1971	
25	Bajram	Lutfi	Ramadani	1984	
26	Shani	Mahmut	Hajdari	1959	
27	Halil	Mahmut	Hajdari	1950	
28	Hysni	Halil	Hajdari	1978	
29	Qamil	Mahmut	Hajdari	1945	
30	Zenun	Qamil	Hajdari	1975	
31	Sait	Mahmut	Hajdari	1961	Paralysed
32	Abaz	Abedin	Hajdari	1956	
33	Abedin	Abaz	Hajdari	1988	
34	Halim	Abaz	Hajdari	1935	
35	Selajdin	Halim	Hajdari	1965	
36	Nazim	Halim	Hajdari	1969	
37	Basim	Halim	Hajdari	1974	
38	Vesol	Halim	Hajdari	1982	
39	Mursel	Hahm	Hajdari	1986	
40	Bali	Avdyli	Avdyli	1925	
41	Enver	Bali	Avdyli	1973	
42	Avdi	Bajram	Batusha	1953	
43	Enver	Avdi	Batusha	1977	
44	Visar	Avdi	Batusha	1983	
45	Asllan	Islam	Batusha	1955	
46	Islam	Bajram	Batusha	1968	

Table 1. LIST OF ABDUCTED PERSONS WHOSE FATE REMAINS UNKNOWN (Cont'd)					
No.	Name	Father's name	Last name	Year born	Notes
47	Syl	Sadik	Batusha	1955	
48	Bekun	Syl	Batusha	1981	Mentally ill
49	Muharrem	Dervish	Batusha	1926	
50	Beqir	Dervish	Batusha	1934	
51	Njazi	Beqir	Batusha	1959	
52	Zaim	Qazim	Batusha	1952	
53	Feim	Zaim	Batusha	1975	
54	Mercim	Zaim	Batusha	1988	
55	Ahmet	Qazim	Batusha	1957	
56	Burim	Ahmet	Batusha	1982	Mentally ill
57	Lirim	Ahmet	Batusha	1981	
58	Milaim	Qazim	Batusha	1966	
59	Haxhi	Rasim	Batusha	1970	
60	Sejdi	Mehmet	Batusha	1929	
61	Amrush	Sejdi	Batusha	1967	
62	Osman	Mehmet	Batusha	1938	
63	Skyfer	Osman	Batusha	1977	
64	Hysen	Magjun	Zylfiu	1935	
65	Nazim	Hysen	Zylfiu	1970	
66	Afrim	Hysen	Zylfiu	1972	
67	Hamdi	Dalip	Zylfiu	1938	
68	Hamit	Hamdi	Zylfiu	1975	
69	Halim	Haxhi	Zylfiu	1943	
70	Xhelal	Halim	Zylfiu	1982	
71	Nikolle	Shyt	Trenkaj	1950	
72	Nue	Shyt	Trenkaj	1961	
73	Sejdi	Ilashi	Emrullahu	1943	
74	Nuredin	Qazim	Shehu	1927	
75	Sefer	Nuredin	Shehu	1948	
76	Fadil	Nuredin	Shehu	1952	

Table 1. LIST OF ABDUCTED PERSONS WHOSE FATE REMAINS UNKNOWN (Cont'd)

No.	Name	Father's name	Last name	Year born	Notes
77	Xhafer	Nuredin	Shehu	1962	
78	Vesol	Nuredin	Shehu	1977	
79	Visar	Fadil	Shehu	1979	
80	Adnan	Sefer	Shehu	1980	
81	Ajvaz	Nuredin	Shehu	1988	
82	Xhelal	Sefer	Shehu	1985	
83	Ismail	Arif	Shehu	1939	
84	Arif	Ismail	Shehu	1968	
85	Ismet	Ibrahim	Shehu	1944	
86	Mentor	Ismet	Shehu	1983	
87	Ilaxhu	Avdyll	Shehu	1971	
88	Arben	Sadik	Shehu	1975	
89	Destan	Haki	Shehu	1934	
90	Shofqet	Destan	Shehu	1960	
91	Aziz	Haki	Shehu	1946	
92	Sami	Aziz	Shehu	1974	
93	Selami	Aziz	Shehu	1975	
94	Miftar	Haki	Shehu	1952	
95	Nehat	Miftar	Shehu	1976	
96	Mehmet	Miftar	Shehu	1982	
97	Shani	Qamil	Shehu	1965	
98	Veli	Qamil	Shehu	1960	
99	Sali	Shyqeri	Shehu	1945	
100	Sahit	Sali	Shehu	1970	
101	Reshat	Shyqeri	Shehu	1948	
102	Bekim	Reshat	Shehu	1972	
103	Dervish	Shyqeri	Shehu	1951	
104	Raif	Shyqeri	Shehu	1953	
105	Nexhat	Shyqeri	Shehu	1959	
106	Xhavit	Sali	Shehu	1974	
107	Driton	Sali	Shehu	1980	
108	Nail	Sali	Shehu	1982	

Table 1. LIST OF ABDUCTED PERSONS WHOSE FATE REMAINS UNKNOWN (Cont'd)					
No.	Name	Father's name	Last name	Year born	Notes
109	Kujtim	Reshat	Shehu	1982	
110	Burim	Rifat	Shehu	1977	
111	Flamur	Reshat	Shehu	1980	
112	Sinan	Faik	Shehu	1940	

In this massacre, there were 112 Albanians killed (missing), age 13 to 77. After the people returned from Albania, land mines left behind in the village killed a 12 year old child, so the total number killed here is 113.

Expressed in percentages in Krusha e Vogel about 70 percent of the males aged 13 and older are missing. So, it is the largest massacre that occurred in Kosovo. As a result of this massacre there are 82 widows and 145 orphans. Ten families remain without any male in the house, without the possibility to reproduce in the future. Families have lost from one to nine members each. Of 145 residences, only eight were saved from burning.

LIST OF SERBS FROM THE VILLAGE OF KRUSHA E VOGEL WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE MASSACRE OF THIS VILLAGE

Table 2-1. SERBS WHO COMMITTED THIS MASSACRE (EXECUTIONERS)					
No.	Last name	Name	Father's name	Mother's name	Birth date (dd/mm/yy)
1	Tasic	Sveta	Srecko	Jelena	03/04/66
2	Nikolic	Momcilo	Filip	Dužanka	04/02/66
3	Nikolic	Dimitrija	Lazar	Božka (Božana)	24/11/36
4	Nikolic	Sava	Živko	Radmila	21/01/67
5	Dordevic	Zlatko	Spiru	Bosilka	05/10/69
6	Cvetkovic	Dorde	Boško	Radmila	26/04/68
7	Nikolic	Ranko	Miloš	Mara	04/11/61
8	Petkovic	Rako (Culi)	Vukadin (Petko)	Deska	~ 1962
9	Nikolic	Zvezvadan	Dimitrije	Dosta	28/10/66
10	Dordevic	Gorulub (Gorci)	Mladen	Dosta	11/02/60

Table 2-2. SERBS WHO PARTICIPATED (ASSISTED) IN THE COMMISSION OF THIS CRIME

(Serbs Who Kept The Albanian Civilians Surrounded So They Could Not Leave)

No.	Last name	Name	Father's name	Mother's name	Birth date (dd mm yy)
11	Nikolic	Raško	Blagoje	Liljana	20 10 67
12	Nikolic	Krunoslav	Dimitrije	Dosta	00 06 61
13	Nikolic	Dragolub	Živko	Draga	17 09 53
14	Nikolic	Novica	Živko	Draga	14 02 60
15	Nikolic	Stanimir	Živko	Draga	09 03 52
16	Nikolic	Miladin	Živko	Draga	19 10 53
17	Nikolic	Vitko	Dušan	Leposava	28 08 53
18	Nikolic	Rado	Dušan	Leposava	08 01 44
19	Nikolic	Danilo	Ilija	Mirjana	23 06 73
20	Nikolic	Blagoje	Lazar	Božana (Boška)	18 03 39
21	Nikolic	Bogolub	Blagoje	Liljana	22 11 63
22	Nikolic	Goran	Živko	Radmila	15 01 60
23	Nikolic	Boban	Živko	Radmila	17 02 71
24	Nikolic	Miloš	dejan	Stana	27 08 22
25	Tasic	Srecko	Živko	Velika	26 01 39
26	Tasic	Darko	Srecko	Jelena	02 11 73
27	Petkovic	Stajko (Vuce)	Petar	Dobrila	08 04 45
28	Petkovic	Saša	Stajko (Vuce)	Darinka	11 01 69
29	Petkovic	Dojčilo (Dojer)	Petar	Dobrila	^ 1942
30	Petkovic	Dobri	Spasa	Živka	23 01 59
31	Petkovic	Prodrag	Spasa	Živka	27 11 49
32	Cvetkovic	Horislav	Boško	Radmila	31 01 70
33	Petkovic	Goran	Andelka	Milica	24 02 70
34	Petkovic	Nenad	Andelka	Milica	24 02 70
35	Petkovic	Golub	Dimitrije	Radmila	05 10 65
36	Petkovic	Dejan	Dimitrije	Radmila	^ 1972
37	Petkovic	Miloš	Andrija	Desanka	06 08 63
38	Petkovic	Stevan	Andreja	Desanka	08 12 68

Table 2-2. SERBS WHO PARTICIPATED (ASSISTED) IN THE COMMISSION OF THIS CRIME (Cont'd)

(Serbs Who kept the Albanian Civilians Surrounded So They Could Not Leave)

No.	Last name	Name	Father's name	Mother's name	Birth date (dd mm yy)
39	Cvetkovic	Goroluh (Trajce)	Cverko		21 01 72
40	Dordevic	Mladen	Miloš	Nasta	17 02 35
41	Dordevic	Boško	Slobodan	Leposava	23 03 55
42	Dordevic	Nebojša	Mladen	Dusta	06 04 55
43	Petkovic	Slavko	Stajko	Darinko	17 01 74
44	Petkovic	Jovan	Stajko	Darinko	25 02 70
45	Petkovic	Aleksandar (Gocku)	Lubomir	Sinda	17 04 68
46	Stankovic	Pera	Dorde	Olga	02 04 64
47	Stankovic	Stanislav	Dimirije	Nata	21 12 47
48	Nikolic	Krsta	Branko	Oveta	30 08 51
49	Nikolic	Dusko	Krsta		25 10 82
50	Nikolic	Nenad	Krsta		~ 1978
51	Nikolic	Blagoje	Todor	Živka	~ 1966
52	Nikolic	Cvetko	Todor	Živka	~ 1973
53	Gashi	Rajram	Xhemajli	Zylfie (Roma)	03 08 51
54	Gashi	Agim	Xhemajli	Zylfie (Roma)	20 01 59
55	Gashi	Lulzim	Xhemajli	Zylfie (Roma)	19 04 64
56	Nikolic	Jovan	Steva	Dana	~ 1936

Women and small children who were separated by their loved ones (brothers, children, spouses, etc.) ordered by the Serbs, were forced to leave their village; and on their way to Albania they first stopped in the village of Bregdri and stayed there for three days. This village overlooks our village from a distance of approximately two kilometers. People from this village say (as they observed with binoculars) that the next day on 03/27/1999, a group of 30 to 40 civilians were seen leaving the village of Krusha e Vogel. They were sent towards Prizren.

**Table 3. WOMEN WHO LOST THEIR SPOUSES
AND THEIR SONS**

No.	First and last names	Persons abducted from the family
1	Nexhmije Hajdari	Spouse and five sons
2	Ajsho Shehu	Spouse and four sons
3	Cerime Asllani	Spouse and two sons
4	Majdie Shehu	Spouse and three sons
5	Ilatishe Asllani	Spouse and a son
6	Xhyllferie Limani	Spouse and a son
7	Kimete Lumani	Spouse and a son
8	Shukrie Limani	Spouse
9	Vjollca Asllani	Spouse
10	Miserete Asllani	Spouse
11	Zyra Asllani	Spouse
12	Sofije Rashkaj	Son
13	Zarije Rashkaj	Spouse and two sons
14	Lumturie Asllani	Spouse
15	Edibe Shehu	Spouse
16	Xhyllferie Shehu	Spouse
17	Hanemshah Batusha	Three sons
18	Hytrisha Shehu (Sefer)	Spouse and two sons
19	Lavdie Shehu	Spouse
20	Fatime Shehu (Aziz)	Spouse and two sons
21	Fatime Shehu (Fadil)	Spouse and two sons
22	Serbezë Shehu	Spouse
23	Merita Shehu	Spouse
24	Liric Shehu	Spouse
25	Reamije Shehu	Spouse
26	Nasibe Shehu	Spouse
27	Vjollca Shehu	Spouse
28	Miserete Ramadani	Spouse
29	Miradhe Ramadani	Two sons
30	Xhyllferie Ramadani	Spouse and a son
31	Zylfie Batusha (Beqir)	Spouse and a son
32	Aferdita Ramadani	Spouse
33	Hajrie Shehu	Spouse
34	Sakibe Berisha	Spouse
35	Hajnije Hajdari	Spouse
36	Selvete Hajdari	Spouse
37	Shkurte Hajdari (Rasim)	Spouse

**Table 3. WOMEN WHO LOST THEIR SPOUSES
AND THEIR SONS (Cont'd)**

No.	First and last names	Persons abducted from the family
38	Drita Hajdari	Spouse
39	Sadije Hajdari	Spouse and a son
40	Fetije Hajdari	Spouse
41	Zamire Hajdari	Spouse
42	Hidajete Hajdari	Spouse and a son
43	Qelebie Hajdari	Spouse and a son
44	Shkurte Hajdari (Hysni)	Spouse
45	Akile Zylfiu	Spouse
46	Fiqerie Zylfiu	Father-in-law
47	Drita Batusha	Father-in-law
48	Yezire Batusha	Spouse and two sons
49	Remzie Batusha	Spouse
50	Akile Batusha	Spouse and two sons
51	Shemsie Batusha	Spouse
52	Hymere Batusha	Spouse
53	Zarie Batusha	Spouse
54	Letafete Batusha	Two sons
55	Nexhmie Batusha	Spouse and two sons
56	Xhyllie Batusha	Spouse
57	Burbuqe Batusha	Spouse
58	Xhyllerie Batusha	Spouse and a son
59	Lumnuje Ramadani	Spouse
60	Nazmije Ramadani	Spouse and a son
61	Ellore Ramadani	Spouse
62	Kade Ramadani	Spouse and a son
63	Roze Prenkaj	Spouse
64	Zeje Prenkaj	Spouse
65	Shukrie Shehu	Spouse
66	Sanije Shehu	A son
67	Flurie Shehu	Spouse
68	Fiqerie Shehu	Spouse and a son
69	Luljeta Shehu	Spouse
70	Naxhije Shehu (Ismet)	Spouse and a son
71	Naxhije Shehu (Ibrahim)	A son
72	Ilana Emrullahu	Spouse
73	Ziza Zylliu	Spouse and a son
74	Reahume Zylliu	Spouse
75	Zyllie Zylliu	Spouse and a son
76	Salrie Batusha	Spouse and a son

Table 3. WOMEN WHO LOST THEIR SPOUSES AND THEIR SONS (Cont'd)		
No.	First and last names	Persons abducted from the family
77	Zylfic Batusha (Muharrem)	Spouse
78	Violeta Krasniqi	Spouse and father-in-law
79	Azize Shehu	Spouse and a son
80	Zepa Shehu	Spouse and a son
81	Atije Shehu	Spouse and three sons
82	Nuric Rashkaj	Spouse
83	Hyrisha Shehu (Sadik)	A son
84	Behare Shehu	Spouse
85	Myvedete Shehu	Spouse

DECLARATIONS OF THE WITNESSES*

Serbian police, after having ordered the separation of males from the females, and after having ordered the females to depart for Albania, took all our money and identification documents. Afterwards they ordered us to leave the place where they had separated us and go to the house of Qazim Batusha. On our way to Qazim Batusha's house, we were guarded on both sides so as not to escape by well-armed Serbs, some in uniform and some in civilian clothing, mostly from our village. Among them I could recognize Nikolic Sava (4), Tasic Sveta (1), Nikolic Zvezdan (9), Cvetkovic Borislav (32), Dordevic Zlatko (5), Nikolic Momcila (2), Cvetkovic Dorde (6), Nikolic Dimitria (3), Petkovic Ranko (10), Nikolic Ranko (7) and others from our village and other places who had come to their assistance. After they herded us into that house (we were 109 persons), they opened fire on us through the windows and the door of that house. Many of the wounded were later executed by the Serbs with pistols who came into the rooms where they committed the massacre. Later, they threw a special substance on our bodies that ignited. After seeing the situation, I decided to get up (because I was lying pretending to be dead) and attempted to escape from the house where those killed started to be incinerated. When I came near one of the windows trying to escape from the house where the massacre occurred, I saw that a bit further away (about 50 meters) many Serbs from the aforementioned list were talking and laughing with one another. Taking advantage of their carelessness, I ran out of the house. Although they yelled for me to return when they saw me escape, and they shot at me trying to kill me, I managed to escape to the mountains and survived.—**Declaration by Lutfi Ramadani, one of the six survivors of this massacre and a witness at the Hague Tribunal.**

The Serbian police shot at us but the bullets missed me. I pretended to be dead. Bullets missed Shefqet Shehu also, who got up and when he saw Nikolic Momcil (2) at the window asked him, "Why are you doing this my neighbor, we have done nothing to you?" Nikolic Momcil (2)

without replying shot him with an automatic weapon and killed Shefqet Shehu.—**Declaration by Mehmet Krasniqi, one of the six survivors of this massacre and a witness at the Hague Tribunal.**

After I ran away from the house where the massacre occurred and hid in a house nearby, about noon time on 03/26/1999, near the house where human bodies were being incinerated, Cvetkovic Borislav (32) and Petkovic Slavko (43) Arrived. They started to pick up dry corn stalks which were nearby and throw them on the burning human bodies.—**Declaration by Mehmet Krasniqi, one of the six survivors of this massacre.**

Blagoje Nikolic (51), Nikolic Dushko (49) and a uniformed policeman who was not from our village, came to the yard of the house of Bali Avdyli where I was hiding and which was near the house where the massacre occurred. All four of them were heavily armed. They were observing the area near the house where the bodies were being incinerated. I could clearly overhear their conversation. They said that if they saw any survivors at the crime scene, they would kill them all without warning.—**Declaration by Mehmet Krasniqi, one of the six survivors of this massacre.**

The next day on 03/27/1999 I was still hiding in the mountain overlooking our village. At night I wanted to run further away, but my movements were detected from the village. After they saw me they began to pursue me. In this predicament, I ran up a distance, but because of my burns I could not run further, so I hid in a hole carved by a brook and covered by some heath (a subshrub that grows in the mountains). A few meters from my hiding place, I saw Cvetkovic Dorde (6), Agim Gashi (54) and Lulezim Gashi (55) chasing me. All three were armed with automatic weapons. After they went further away looking for me, I left my hiding place and headed in the direction of Krusha e Madhe. Though at a considerable distance from them, they spotted me and fired three times with their weapons, but fortunately they did not hit me. Then I went to the village of Nagavc.—**Declaration by Mehmet Krasniqi, one of the six survivors of this massacre.**

Fifteen minutes after we survived the massacre, while still on the run, I (Bajram Zylfiu) together with Lutfi Ramadani and Agim Asllani, found ourselves on a secondary road connecting our village with the village of Krusha e Madhe. On the other side, pursuing us to kill us were Nikolic Sava (4), Tasic Sveta (1), Nikolic Zvezdan (9), Cvetkovic Borislav (32), and Dordevic Zlatko (5). They had been chasing us in a white "Golf" and were positioned along the main road (highway) that connects our village with Krusha e Madhe. So they were positioned across from us about 100 meters away. After they saw us escaping, they started to shoot their weapons continuously in our direction (about 200 meters away), until we reached the mountain. —**Declaration by Bajram Zylfiu, one of the six survivors of this massacre.**

After we survived the massacre, together with Lutfi Ramadani, Gani Zylfiu and Safet Berisha, we stayed in the mountains of our village for a while and later we went to the village of Bregdri. This village is lo-

cated across from ours at a distance of one kilometer. After we arrived in this village, we found shelter in the old house of Shefki Collaku. We used that house only at night to prepare food and to sleep and during the day for security reasons we would leave and go to the mountain near the house. On 04/23/1999 at around 4:30 a.m., we had already left the house and were about 70 meters away from it. Half an hour after we left, the house was attacked with automatic weapons by Nikolic Sava (4), Tasic Sveta (1), Nikolic Zvezdan (9), Cvetkovic Borislav (32), and Dordevic Zlatko (5).—**Declaration by Bajram Zylfiu, one of the six survivors of this massacre.**

When they separated the women from the men, I was separated from my husband, Ahmet. Then, they ordered us to depart for Albania. While we were walking, near the gate of Rasim Batusha, Cvetkovic Dorde (6) ordered us to stop again. After he saw that my other two sons, Lirim and Burim, were with me, he ordered them to leave me and go with the group that was separated from us before. Although I cried and begged them not to take my sons, because they had already taken away my husband, Cvetkovic Dorde shoved the muzzle of his automatic weapon to my chest and threatened me saying, “If you speak one more time, I will kill you instantly.” My children, Liridon and Burim, were sent by force to the group who were separated from us before and since that day, 03/26/1999, I have not heard anything about their fate or that of my husband.—**Declaration by Vezire Barusha from Krusha e Vogel.**

A few minutes before, during the separation they took my two sons (Avdi, Islam) and my brother-in-law (Asllan). Afterwards they ordered us to get away from those they had separated from our group and go to Albania. I was walking assisted by my two nephews (Avdiu's sons) Visar and Enver who were holding my arms. They were helping me walk, because I was disabled after having broken my leg on the ice. When we arrived at the gate of Rasim Batusha, Cvetkovic Dorde (6) and Cvetkovic Borislav (32) ordered Visar and Enver to leave me and to go to the others whom they had separated from us before. I begged Dorde (6) and Borislav (32) to allow them to go with me because they were very young and I could not walk without help but they did not listen to that and answered that, “You could walk, and that their place is not with you, but with the ones up there,” (meaning the ones that they had separated before).—**Declaration by Letafete Batusha from Krusha e Vogel. Negjmije Batusha, Gjylje Batusha and Burbuqe Batusha give the same declaration also.**

When we were crossing the Kosovo-Albania border on 03/30/1999, at the village of Vermica, three Serbs arrived from the village of Krusha e Vogel: Tasic Sveta (1), Nikolic Momcilo (2) and Nikolic Sava (4) and asked the Serb Border Patrol if the people of Krusha e Vogel had crossed the border. After they got an affirmative answer from the border patrol they got extremely angry at them because they had let some people who survived the massacre (the six massacre survivors) go and cross the border.—**Declaration by Xhek Prekpalaj and Tom Prekpalaj from the village of Bregdri.**

We were at the house of Sejdi Batusha with all other inhabitants of the village. My husband, Hysen Ramadani, (age 77), had remained in our home. When he was coming to join us, he was shot three times by persons who were in the house of Muharrem Batusha. He died from the wounds. His murder caused us all who were in the house of Sejdi Batusha to panic. The men near me: Hysen Zylfiu, Sejdi Batusha, Nuredin Shehu and others, after looking in the direction where the gunfire originated, (the house of Muharrem Batusha), said that it was likely that the one who killed Hysen Ramadani was Nikolic Dimitria (3), because he was the one they saw at the window from which the shots originated.—**Declaration by Kade Ramadani from Krusha e Vogel.**

On 04/04/1999, Serb police gave an ultimatum to the inhabitants of the village of Xerxa to leave and to go to Albania. On our way, when we were passing by the cemetery of the village of Krusha e Vogel, I saw 20 to 30 new graves. That day we were ordered to return after getting halfway. The next day on 04/05/1999, they ordered us again to go to Albania. While we were passing near the graves, I saw a number of people digging the graves open and loading the exhumed corpses onto a truck.—**Declaration by Dritan Limani, resident of the village of Krusha e Vogel, sheltered in the village of Xerxa.**

After they fired their guns at us, the Serbs threw a substance in the room where we were which ignited. I was not wounded by the gunfire, but I was lying down as if I were dead. Assessing this situation, I thought that I would rather be killed by gunfire rather than by fire. When I went near the window trying to get out, a bit further away I saw Petkovic Ranko (8), Cvetkovic Dorde (6), and Nikolic Sava (4) who were talking to one another. I went out immediately and started to run quickly. Immersed in their conversation, they spotted me running rather late. When they noticed me escape, they shouted at me to halt, but I only ran faster. Then when they realized that I was not going to stop they fired at me, but fortunately they missed me. I ran towards the mountain and through the mountains I arrived in the village of Nagavc.—**Declaration by Petrit Rashkaj, one of the six survivors of this massacre.**

When they separated us from our sons and husbands, Muradije Ramadani fainted. Petkovic Ranko (8) was going at the place where the separated group was. When he walked near, we begged him to release our loved ones as he was going there. "Do not panic, because we will only keep them for five minutes to question them," Petkovic Ranko (8) answered.—**Declaration by Kimete Limani from Krusha e Vogel.**

While we were leaving the village, as ordered by the Serbs of our village and the others who had come to help them kill Albanian civilians, at the gate of Dushan we met Nikolic Rada (18) and his wife Kosara. Rada was wearing a uniform and was holding an automatic weapon in his hands while his wife was carrying a bag with juice and other food items that she had looted from the store of Nebi Limani after breaking in. Because Nikolic Rada (18) was my next-door neighbor (his house and my house were 10 meters apart), I asked him, "Why are you doing this to us? Why did you take our men?" (They had taken my husband and son). I begged him to release them. Instead of understand-

ing my begging, he answered: "Since you asked for NATO, let them come and save you. Do you see now what the NATO that you asked for brought you?"—**Declaration by Zylfie Batusha from Krusha e Vogel.**

On 03/26/1999, while we were staying with the other inhabitants of the village in the house of Sejdi Batusha, I remembered that my cows were locked in the barn. My sister-in-law, Fiqirie, and I started to walk to the house to release the cows. When we were nearby, we saw that near our house (in our neighbor's yard, Dordevic Mladen) there was a military tank in position. We were watching, but we did not dare to go inside the house. In the meantime, while we were watching, a tractor came out of my house driven by Petkovic Predrag (31). He was driving my family's tractor and he had loaded on the trailer (looted) everything he had found in my house such as the refrigerator, television set, electric stove, tables, chairs, etc. When we told him that what he was doing was shameful, he answered, "This is nothing compared to what will happen to you later." After we left the house we saw my home started to burn.—**Declaration by Nagije Shehu from Krusha e Vogel.**

After we saw that our house was first looted and then torched, we went to the inhabitants of the village who were in the house of Sejdi Batusha. After an hour the Serbs separated us from the men. They took my husband, Ismet. After we started to march following the orders of the Serbs (who were mainly from our village but from other villages as well), at a distance of a few meters we were stopped again by Dordevic Zlatko (5). He started to select the children. Many children were separated from their mothers and sent to the previously separated group. While separating the children, Dordevic Zlatko (5) told me and Zepa Shehu to give him our children. We begged him not to take our children, but instead he threatened saying, "That if you don't keep on walking, I will kill you, too." He took my son, Mentor, and took Zepa's son, Ajvaz. After they took our sons, we knocked on many Serbian doors hoping that they would help up but without success. I also went to Spirra's house, telling him that his son, Dordevic Zlatko (5), had taken my child, Mentor, but he did not care and together with his wife told me, "Leave, because you could have the same fate." I hoped that the father of the policeman who took my son, Spirra, would go to his son, Dordevic Zlatko (5), and would release my son, because Spirra and my husband, Ismet, were shepherds together for many years, but instead of helping me he sided with the criminal act of his son. Since that day I don't know anything about the fate of my husband, Ismet, and my son, Mentor.—**Declaration by Nagije Shehu from Krusha e Vogel.**

After we left the house and were about 300 meters away, my wife told me that she had forgotten our six-week-old baby's bottle. I returned to the house to get it. When I was a few meters away from the house, from a hidden position, I saw that Petkovic Golub (35) and his brother, Petkovic Dejan (36), had positioned a machine gun at the window of their house and had pointed it towards my house. I did not know what to do. Because of the baby, I decided to go inside the house. Though I tried to sneak in, those two saw me and fired at me. I was lucky enough not to be shot. So I went back, because it was too dangerous to get inside my house.—**Declaration by Agron Limani from Krusha e Vogel.**

When he saw that the Serbian policemen led by Tasic Sveta (1) seized his five cousins (Salih, Reshat, Dervish, Raif and Nexhat) and executed them, Sinan Shehu decided to leave his house and go to his work place (the wine factory). When he arrived at the factory, he was not allowed to work, but instead Nikolic Krsta (48) and Petkovic Predrag (31), both armed, put him into a Lada Samara (property of Krsta) and drove him near the house where the people of the village were. So he joined the group for whom the biggest massacre in Kosovo lay in store the following day.—**Declaration by Xhafer Muaharremi from Krusha e Vogel.**

On 03/27/1999, around 3:00 p.m. while we were staying at the village of Bregdri, along the “Drini i Bardhe” river arrived an orange Mercedes Benz 508 truck, with a covered trailer from which three people got out: Tasic Srecko (25) and his two sons, Tasic Sveta (1) and Tasic Darko (26). These three people started to push the truck from the back with the intention of sinking it into the river (water). They did not succeed since only its front part went under water. Then Tasic Sveta (1) drove a tractor that was nearby and tried to push the truck as deep as he could. Since they were not successful even this time, they threw a substance into the truck that seemed like powder and set the truck on fire. When the covering of the trailer started to burn and expose its backside, we saw with the help of binoculars (at a distance of about 100 meters) that the truck was full of dead bodies. After they did this, they were picked up by a van and went to the village (Krusha e Vogel). The truck with the corpses continued to burn from 3:00 p.m. until the next morning. —**Declaration by Xhafer Muaharremi from Krusha e Vogel.**

Sylejman Collaku from the village of Bregdri also gave the same declaration about this case. After he described the event in the same manner as Xhafer Muaharremi (regarding the burning of the truck with corpses), he added, “While I was watching what was happening, the aforementioned people detected me watching from a corner of my house. After they detected me they fired twice in my direction. One bullet came through the window of one of my rooms and embedded in the internal wall of that room whereas the other went between my house and the one of my uncle’s. Then I left immediately. I took that bullet after the war and gave it to the investigators of the Hague Tribunal.”

“Because I worked at a hospital during the war, the Serb police ordered me to do the autopsy of 25 men. They were from 18 to 45 years old. The Prosecutor of the District of Prizren, Jugosllav Skenderi, was present there and he kept the complete autopsy report log. From the conversation between Serb police and the Prosecutor, Jugosllav Skenderi, (a Bosnian who left after the war in Serbia), I understood that the ones killed were from Krusha e Vogel.”—**Declaration Dr. Hidajet Lutfiu, a surgeon at the hospital of Prizren.**

On 03/27/1999 around 10:00 a.m., the person from Krusha e Vogel who worked at the municipal water utility, Nikolic Jovan (56) whom I knew very well, was in the same group with 12 to 15 persons on a “Zastava” small truck and got inside my “Flaka” warehouse, located near the high school in Prizren. When Nikolic Jovan (56) saw me at the warehouse the first words out of his mouth were, “Haven’t you left for

Albania, yet?" Then one of his friends told him to get rid of me, but Jovan said, "No, no, because he is my friend." This group as well as he had bandanas round their heads; many of them had blood on their faces and clothes. At a moment Nikolic Jovan (56) told me that, "We have killed and made soap out of all the Albanians of Krusha e Vogel. Among them we have also killed your brother-in-law Lutfi Ramadani." It would be good if Nikolic Jovan (56) told about what happened in Krusha e Vogel as a witness.—**Declaration Esat Guta, attorney from Prizren.**

On 03/25/1999 around 10:00 a.m. I saw six people among whom I recognized three: Sali Shehu, Reshat Shehu, Dervish Shehu. These people were taken from their homes by the Serb police and with their hands behind their heads were sent to the house of Selim Collaku. [The basement of this house is used as a shed.] In the entrance of the shed they stopped them and lined them up against the wall. Then one of the five or six Serbian policemen fired his weapon and all of them immediately fell under the gunfire. Then two of the police left the scene of the crime (execution) and went to the house of Srecko Tasic (25), about 80 meters away from my house. The two policemen spoke for a half hour outside the house with the owner of the house, Sreck and his wife, Jelena. Then the two policemen returned to the scene of the execution. When they arrived, after about 15 minutes, they set fire to the house where they had executed the six people. The crime scene is about 250 meters from my home. All my family members and I saw what happened from the house where we were in hiding. From the scene of the execution three policemen went to the house of Ali Emrullau and began to loot it. After they looted it, the three policemen went to the house of Dervish Shehu (near Ali's house). After they took what they could, they came towards my house. In the meantime (which was our good fortune) a truck arrived with weapons, stopped and asked for their assistance regarding where to send the weapons. They were very close (about 30 meters) and their conversation could be clearly heard. They got on the truck and drove to the entrance of the village. Then we stayed there until nightfall. As soon as it got dark, we left the house and went to Drini i Bardhe river bank. We stayed there until morning. Around 6 o'clock in the morning we crossed the river and went to the village of Bregdri and from there on to Albania.

In connection with the killings of the Albanian civilians of our village, a former member of the Serb police special unit testifies at the Hague Tribunal. The witness was protected under the code name "K25" and testified on Tuesday on 07/09/2002. In connection with the nine civilians killed on 03/25/1999, he declared, "On March 25, 1999, around 9 o'clock the members of his company captured six men, all members of the KLA;" (the witness, K25, attempts to mislead the Hague Tribunal trying to represent civilians as members of the KLA, for which we will also have reaction from families). "The six men (Sejdi Emrullahu, Sali Shehu, Reshat Shehu, Dervish Shehu, Raif Shehu and Nexhat Shehu) were then taken by three local police, were sent to a house and soon after we heard shots fired. "I personally went and saw the six men we left in the hands of the local MUP killed," he clarified. The other three "members" of the KLA met with the same fate; (he is talking about Isni Rashka, Nazmi Rashka and the student Demir Rashkaj; in this case we also have the reaction of the families about the attempts of the wit-

ness to disinform that they were allegedly members of the KLA).—**Declaration of Zecir Sallauka from Krusha e Vogel regarding the disappearance of six people: Sejdi Emrullahu, Sali Shehu, Reshat Shehu, Dervish Shehu, Raif Shehu and Nexhat Shehu**

On 03/25/1999, the Serbs started to burn down the houses of the Albanians. Since I was afraid that my family members and I would be burned, we left the house. Outside I saw Tasic Sveta (1) and Nikolic Sava (4) together with some Serbs who were wearing military uniforms. These two together with those soldiers burned the house of the Albanians while Tasic Sveta (1) and Nikolic Sava (4) were showing which ones were the houses of the Albanians. When I saw what was happening I asked, "Why are you burning down our houses? We have done nothing to you." "Have you asked for NATO? These are the good things that NATO brings you," they both answered.—**Declaration by Kadri Muharremi from Krusha e Vogel.**

We the family members of the missing persons have been looking around for four years trying to learn their fate but till now we have been unsuccessful. We have visited the International Red Cross offices in Prizren and Prishtina a hundred times, the Red Cross of Kosovo, UNMIK's offices in Prizren (the Regional Administrator Mr. Rudolf Hofman) but without success. Many families, even though they have very limited means of existence, have tried to do something with the assistance of Serb attorneys, but they have made promises just to take their money and have not resolved anything.

To resolve this problem we feel is relatively easy. The ones that abducted the 112 Albanian civilians, whose names are in the list and many others who are not in the list, but who came to assist those listed, do not live in another planet but in Serbia and Montenegro and we and the competent authorities in Serbia and Montenegro know where they live. That is why we consider that arresting these criminals would expedite enlightening the fate of these 112 residents of our village.

In the name of the family members of the abducted persons from Krusha e Vogel, we request the assistance of all those who can help enlighten the fate of these 112 people abducted (disappeared).

For any assistance in this direction, you would have the blessing of these families, the blessing of the mothers and orphaned children and this village would be grateful forever.

Association for the Investigation of Abducted Persons
"March 26, 1999", Krusha e Vogel
 Agron Limani, Chairman
 Tel: 044-243-426
 Krusha e Vogel
 04.02.2003

**PREPARED STATEMENT OF
MEHMETALI PEROLLI, HEAD,
GJAKOVA-BASED OFFICE OF THE IMPRISONED AND MISSING
PEOPLE**

My name is Mehmetali Perolli, I was born in Gjakova on 09/19/1967. Since 06/15/1999, I have been the chairman of the Office for Prisoners and Missing Persons in Gjakova.

**HISTORY OF THE OFFICE FOR PRISONERS AND MISSING
PERSONS (OPMP)**

The Office for Prisoners and Missing Persons in Gjakova started its work immediately after the arrival of the NATO troops, exactly on 06/15/1999. The Office for Prisoners and Missing Persons is represented in the Communal Assembly in Gjakova with the Speaker for Prisoners and Missing Persons who has held this position since 05/04/2001.

The duty of this Office is to collect data on abducted and missing persons and then send them out to the highest international institutions, so as to publicize and internationalize this issue and to shed light on their fate.

The Office for Prisoners and Missing Persons has organized protests at the municipal level and beyond; it has held meetings with the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Hague Tribunal for War Crimes, the ICMP, the Office for Missing Persons and Forensic Medicine, and Government and Parliamentarian Commissions of Kosovo. It is also a special status member of the Council of Family Associations for Missing Persons of Kosovo. The Office maintains regular contacts with various governmental and non-governmental organizations active in Kosovo and the region.

The main purpose of the Office for Prisoners and Missing Persons is to ensure that the issue of missing persons be treated with priority at governmental levels and by international and local organizational structures in Kosovo.

The Office for Prisoners and Missing Persons participated in the International Conference for Human Rights, organized by UNMIK and OSCE, which was held from December 10-11, 1999, in Prishtina, Kosovo and continues to participate in different round tables whose core subject is the issue of kidnapped and missing persons.

It must also be mentioned that this Office maintains contacts with important personalities around the world, such as Mr. James Rubin, spokesman for the United States Department of State, with U.N. Security Council members, Mr. Javier Solana, European Parliament human rights representatives, representatives of the US Office in Kosovo, United Nations special representatives in Kosovo, and so on.

The Office for Prisoners and Missing Persons is independent from the local government and its staff works entirely on a volunteer basis without any financial compensation.

The following organizations have assisted the Office for Prisoners and Missing Persons so far: IOM, CORDAID, USAID, and more recently ICMP. The Office for Prisoners and Missing Persons is grateful to all those mentioned above as well as to the families of missing persons and former prisoners from the Commune of Gjakova.

OPMP OBJECTIVES

- Continue to investigate and search for persons abducted during the war in Kosovo;
- The return of the remains still in Serbia;
- Involve Albanian experts in the process of exhuming and identifying the bodies;
- Urge international authorities to put pressure on Belgrade to open the files on crime;
- Bring justice for those who suffered during the war;
- Adjust the status of the family members of victimized persons;
- Reintegrate the family members of missing persons in the society; and
- Continue to investigate and search for persons abducted during the war in Kosovo;

OBSTACLES

The creation of a climate of understanding for those who suffered during the war is an indispensable prerequisite in accomplishing the objectives undertaken by the office. The obstacles to be overcome in accomplishing such objectives are as follows:

- The pursuit of a Serbian national homogenization logic by the present Belgrade authorities. Contrary to what international opinion already knows, i.e., the existence of mass graves in Serbia, Serbian authorities continue to express their cynical and uncaring attitude towards the lifeless bodies and their family members, who are awaiting the return of the remains of their loved ones;
- The insufficient pressure of international authorities in denouncing the Serbian regime;
- Slow actions of international authorities acting in Kosovo;
- Lack of integration of local institutions of Kosovo in the process of exhuming and identifying the bodies;
- A limited and partial perception of the nature of the issue of missing persons which results in this issue being reduced to a concern only for the family members that suffered during the war in Kosovo;
- The dissemination of death certificates for persons identified with incomplete data; and
- Failure to sustain continuity of the planned steps for the identification and search of the mass graves located in Kosovo.

WAYS OF RESOLVING THE ISSUE OF MISSING PERSONS

- Urge international decision-making mechanisms to undertake more decisive steps to continue denouncing the regime of Serbia;
- Open criminal files by the Serbian authorities;
- Apply comprehensive methods in the identification of the remains;
- Raise the issue of missing persons on an institutional level with the Kosovo government;
- Involve Albanian experts in the process of exhuming and identifying the remains; and

- File criminal law suits against the perpetrators of those crimes as well as demand compensation for the material and human losses caused during the war in Kosovo by the Milosevic regime.

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