

Podgorica, 24 November 2010

### **REACTION ON RADAN NIKOLIĆ'S PRESS CONFERENCE**

With the regard to a yesterday's held press conference, at which the president of the Association of War Veterans from 90s Radan Nikolic made a series of unfounded accusations related to the work of the Coalition for RECOM, of which he is a member, as well as the activities carried out in order to finally establish the facts about all the victims of wars that occurred in the former Yugoslavia from 1991 to 2001, we want to direct on a few facts that were incorrectly interpreted or understood although they are very precisely specified in the draft Statute of RECOM.

First of all, it is important to emphasize that this is a working document, which group of distinguished experts from all the countries in the region continually reworks and changes in accordance with the recommendations of all participants of consultation process, and other stakeholders who wish to contribute to the foundation and operation of the Commission to deal on the first place with establishing of facts rather than judicial prosecution and prosecution, as said at yesterday's press conference. The draft Statute is not founded by the Assembly Coalition for RECOM, but members of Assembly and other stakeholders of the VII Regional Forum on Transitional Justice presented the second version of the document that is not yet final. This draft of the Statute of the almost identical form has been in the focus of the discussion also of 8 parliamentary clubs in the Parliament of Montenegro, on the consultations which were held on 30 June in the Parliament, and none of them had seen anything not even close to the assessment of Mr. Nikolic, who sensationally announced that he will inform about everything even the President of the country.

At yesterday's conference it was mentioned that the Commission will have the status of an international organization, as well as that Coalition for RECOM wants to impose its model of the Commission to the states. In fact, it is **the proposal of establishment of (inter-)governmental regional commission, independent and impartial, modeled to many previous commissions for truth telling and reconciliation. Such an independent and impartial bodies are so far, based on law or other founding document, established in about 40 countries in the world, from Argentina, South Africa, Germany, to Chile, Morocco, Canada, Sierra Leone or East Timor.** So, it is a creation of the states, and thereforen it is naturally expected to

cooperate and support the body that they have created.

Coalition for RECOM is also accused that wants to impose its truth about wars. About this unfounded claim speaks enough fact that the Coalition is open to all who wish to participate in the process of reconciliation and truth-seeking. There were more than a hundred consultations with different groups in society in all countries in the region. Big steps forward are made so as the people who suffered in each of the countries in the region has given the space in which they can openly, freely and what is the most important to talk with each other about what happened '90 years in the former Yugoslavia.

We believe that any discussion that leads to improving the process of fact-finding and reconciliation in the region is valuable, but it mustn't be based on manipulation or arbitrary charges baseless. Particularly is problematic in this section to criticize anyone for political or other opinion because it indicates intolerance and is directly contrary to the principles of the Coalition. More than a thousand organizations and individuals from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, Croatia, Macedonia, Slovenia and Serbia have the aim for next year to propose to the states the establishment of a regional commission that would allow victims to have their voices heard not only within but also outside their state.

In addition, the Commission would, in a joint report inventory and determine the facts about war crimes and serious violations of the human rights committed in the territory of Yugoslavia and thus contributed to the political elite and society in the contracting states to accept the facts.

The Commission's aim is also to shed light on the fate of all missing persons, to recognize the injustice inflicted on the victims and build a culture of solidarity and compassion, to realize the rights of victims and to prevent the recurrence of crimes and violations of human rights, as proposed in the draft Statute.

Sincerely,

Mirela Rebronja,  
PR of initiative for RECOM in Montenegro