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Coalition for RECOM calls for end of the silence about secret graves and fate of missing persons

On the occasion of the International Day of the Disappeared, the Coalition for RECOM calls all governments of the post-Yugoslav countries to end the silence about secret graves, since it extensively contributes to the maintenance of public culture of silence on the events from the past.

The Coalition warns that the absence of the victim's bodies has a fatal effect on the creation of a coherent culture of memories on the victims. When there is no physical presence of the dead persons, mortal remains, burials and traditional funeral rituals, how to remember the dead persons? Absence of the victim's body denies physical symbol of memories of the victims for families and society. It's the cornerstone for the maintenance of the public culture of silence about the difficult legacy of the past, responsibility and justice for the victims.

Consequently, the Coalition for RECOM requires that priorities in regional cooperation should be disclosure of mass graves, exhumation, identification and giving of the mortal remains to victims' families.

Facts

According to the data of International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), during the wars at the territory of SFRY **34,883** persons have disappeared. The search for the mortal remains of **12,656** persons who are missing is ongoing. For **1.762** missing persons location on graves are known, while the fate of **10,894** people is still unknown.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina 8.603 persons are still missing¹. **The Republic of Croatia** is still looking for **2.282** persons missing in the period 1991-1995². According to the data of the ICRC the total number of missing persons during the period of conflict in Kosovo is **1.771**, and **1.842** according to the data of the Humanitarian Law Centre. HLC data indicate that amongst the missing Albanians is **1.326** persons, and missing Serbs, Roma and members of other non-Albanian ethnic communities **516** persons.

¹ According to the data of Commission for Missing Persons of the Government of the Republic of Serbia **96** persons of this number were citizens of Serbia, and according to data of HLC **131** persons were citizens of Serbia and Montenegro.

² According to the data of HLC, **66** persons were citizens of Serbia and Montenegro at the time of missing.