

## **TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF CRIME AGAINST REFUGEES WITHOUT MONUMENT OR MEMORIAL DAY**

**These days we will have a 20th anniversary of war crime of deportation of refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina that were illegally arrested and then deported from Montenegro in 1992.** At least 66 refugees of Bosniac nationality were taken to hostile army of Bosnian Serbs in this way, and only 12 of the deported people managed to survive torture in prison camps, while for many others it is still hasn't been determined even where their remainings lie.

Last year, around this time, we submitted two initiatives. The first one, towards Montenegrin Parliament, sent to the president of Parliament of Montenegro Mr Ranko Krivokapic and to presidents of all the parliamentary representative clubs, to declare **27 May as Memorial Day for victims of deportation of refugees in 1992 from Montenegro**. The second one, towards the Government of Montenegro, directed to Mr Igor Luksic, Prime Minister, as well as to Mr Ivan Brajovic, Minister of Interior, Mr Branislav Micunovic, Minister of Culture, and to the local parliament of Municipality of Herceg Novi Mr Dejan Mandic, president of that – to build a **Monument for victims of deportation of refugees in 1992 in front of the Police Department in Herceg Novi**. Additionally, this year we also sent an initiative for Montenegrin Police Department to issue an official apology for using police forces in aforementioned deportation of refugees from B&H.

All initiatives were based on principles of human rights and international humanitarian law, and especially on Resolution of UN General Parliament 60/147 "Basic principles of rights on legal justice and reparation for victims of criminal abuse of international law and serious abuse of international humanitarian law", as well as on Montenegrin legal framework. (Last year's initiatives are provided in appendix)

With first two initiatives, on the following day after they were submitted, we were informed through media about the positive reaction of a government representative, PR of Ministry of Culture Ms Danica Nikolic. At that occasion, she stated that "Ministry of Culture and other related institutions will try their best to build the memorial as soon as possible". The president of the Parliament of Montenegro Mr Ranko Krivokapic also publicly supported our initiative for establishment of a memorial day. However, further engagements regarding this matter haven't been done neither by the Government or Parliament.

In the meantime, Prime Minister Mr Igor Luksic opened a "Memorial Monument to all victims of wars from 1991-2001" on 11 July 2011. Although we support paying respect to all victims, we find it useless to put all the victims under the same umbrella, e.g. to put them all together under no name, which says absolutely nothing about what happened in that decade, who are the victims and who are people responsible for crimes. That is why a Memorial that was built last year cannot be considered a response to our initiative.

**One year after our initiatives, Montenegro is waiting the 20th anniversary of the deportation crime without any memorial and day of remembrance referring to victims of that crime.**

Twentieth anniversary is characterized by systematic resistance of public institutions to provide full reparations for victims, which, in line with the aforementioned resolution by UN, apart other than material consolation, are also entitled for individual criminal responsibility being found out for people responsible for this crime, as well as commemoration and paying respect to the victims. Nothing has been done to put these matters, which are integral part of human rights education, into trainings of military, police and judicial bodies. That also represents an important element of reparation for victims in order to prevent repetition of a similar crime.

"New generations need to hear what older generations refuse to tell them" said **Simon Weisenfeld** at one occasion, a man who survived nazi prison camps and dedicated his life to research and documentation of war crimes and criminals. Avoiding of paying respect to obvious victims in this way, and forever ongoing judicial processes leave a dark shadow on Montenegrin decision makers' dedication to face the past realistically and build a functional democracy based on rule of law.

Our citizens' responsibility is to create a culture of memory, as a roadmap for future social katarzy and prerequisite for achieving so often and so gladly mentioned European values and standards. Memorialization of crimes, by state of Montenegro, which is one way of justice fulfillment towards victims, does not exclude a comittment to turn to justice those who are individually responsible for this crime. Part of that responsibility is to mark a place from which buses were departing with deported refugees towards Bosnia and Herzegovina, and mark this event every year. We will keep reminding and insisting that institutionalization of memory of victims is done so that daily political banality is avoided regarding this matter, because they blur the essence of crimes that were done by employees of Montenegrin public institution towards at least 66 people and their families 20 years ago.

Tea Gorjanc-Prelevic, executive director NGO "Human Rights Action"  
Daliborka Uljarevic, executive director NGO "Centre for Civic Education"  
Aleksandar Zekovic, member of the Council for Civilian Control of the Work of Police  
Ljupka Kovacevic, coordinator NGO "Anima"

