



Kosova Women's Network

Serving, Protecting and Promoting the Rights of Women and Girls

20 June 2011, Prishtinë

To: The Director of the Institute for War Crimes

Subject: KWN Welcomes the Establishment for the Institute for War Crimes

Dear Prof. Dr. Zejnullah Gruda:

Kosova Women's Network (KWN) congratulates you for opening the Institute for War Crimes. We believe that the Institute can play a crucial role in bringing about justice by uncovering the truth about crimes committed during the war. At the same time, we would like to bring your attention to the special circumstances and needs of women affected by war, particularly war rape.

More than a decade after the war, the estimated more than 10,000 women and girls who suffered war rape have yet to see justice. Investigation and prosecution of war rape and other crimes committed against women remains low. Few charges of war-time rape and other crimes against women have been brought against perpetrators; it has rarely been included in indictments at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

Neglecting instances of sexual violence in post-conflict areas negatively affects and slows the restoration of peace and feeling of security in the community. Further, United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2000) calls for the protection of women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other types of sexual abuse.

War-time violence has affected women's physical health and reproductive health. It also has had serious consequences for the mental health of people in Kosova. Research has suggested that approximately one-fourth (and some activists believe that as much as half) the population suffers from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Women and men whose family members disappeared during the war continue to suffer trauma. Women who have missing family members face additional challenges of accessing property and assets towards securing a living independently. Their losses during the war of both loved ones and property have yet to be compensated.

We would like to strongly encourage your public acknowledgement of war-time rape as a crime, and urge you to include these crimes in your investigation of crimes that took place in Kosova during the war. We would like to offer our full cooperation and assistance. As a network of 68 women's organizations throughout Kosova, we have access to women who have suffered crimes as well as trained experts who have a sensitive approach in working with women still dealing with trauma. We look forward to hopefully cooperating with you in the future.

Sincerely,

Igballe Rogova, Executive Director
Kosova Women's Network

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