KWN: Publication of wartime sexual violence photos, violation of the dignity of survivors

May 16, 2019

Pristina - Kosovo Women's Network (KWN) followed with concern the today’s publication of a photograph that proves the rape of a woman by Serbian military forces during the wartime in Kosovo, disclosed for public by Member of Parliament Florina Brovina.

KWN considers that Mrs.Brovina by this action has violated the principle of dignity of the survivors, recalling that the body of the survivor of sexual violence during the wartime in Kosovo is also exposed by this photography. Besides, Mrs.Brovina has violated the Article 23 of the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, which stipulates that human dignity is inviolable and is the basis of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The picture illustrating the woman being raped in front of her family, besides being emotionally difficult and disturbing, can also affect the deterioration of this survivor’s emotional and psychological state. Furthermore, it may discourage other wartime sexual violence survivors from reporting and also serve as a dangerous precedent for all women and girls reporting sexual violence what they can expect from the process.

KWN calls upon the media to remove and stop disseminating this picture which violates the victim’s dignity, protected by the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo which may serve as evidence to the justice institutions, but it should never be circulated in public this way.

KWN calls on everyone’s attention to extend their support to survivors, and to work on preserving their dignity by not re-traumatizing them and their family members. KWN calls upon the Kosovar institutions on their initiatives to be comprehensive, without anyone’s exclusion, such as the voted [Resolution in the Assembly of Kosovo](http://kuvendikosoves.org/?cid=2,159,8031). For 20 years, women’s organizations have provided support for those men and women, while institutions for 17 years have remained voiceless.

In a media statement, Mrs.Brovina claims that these evidences were presented to the judiciary, but according to her, neither the Special Prosecution nor EULEX interviewed these victims. If this is the case, KWN strongly and without any reserve supports any institutional path seeking justice for the survivors of sexual violence during the wartime in Kosovo, however this action of Mrs.Brovina has not contributed to achieving justice, finding perpetrators of such crimes or to a dignified treatment of the survivors of sexual violence during the wartime in Kosovo.

Through this Press Release KWN seeks from Kosovo’s Parliament Members that in order to fulfil obligations within their mandate to demand accountability from the Courts, both national and international, for the lack of institutional response and dignified treatment of wartime sexual violence cases committed during the recent war in Kosovo.