



Why RECOM?

War crimes trials before the Hague Tribunal and national courts are the only instrument for establishing individual criminal responsibility for war crimes, but they are not enough to create a factual record of everything that happened in the armed conflicts in the former Yugoslavia. We need a war crimes victim-centred body that will investigate and disclose the facts about everything that happened in the recent past.

The RECOM initiative is our path to a future without fear that crimes will happen again. It is the initiative of a regional coalition of non-governmental organizations, associations of victims and individuals that advocate the establishment of an official inter-state (regional) and independent commission that will investigate and disclose the facts about war crimes and other serious violations of human rights committed in the former Yugoslavia, including resolving the fate of the missing and locating their mortal remains.

Five objectives of the consultative process about the RECOM initiative

The RECOM initiative was launched on May 9th 2008 in Podgorica at a regional consultation with victims and representatives of associations of victims.

1. A public platform created for victims and civil society to speak about their needs and duties in relation to the crimes committed in the past
2. Support among citizens and governments in the post-Yugoslav countries for the establishment of RECOM strengthened
3. RECOM model developed.
4. Debate about everything that happened in the past launched among various social groups in local communities.
5. Climate favourable to changed social relation towards victims created (establishment of compassion and solidarity towards victims from other ethnic groups).

Why RECOM?

It can prevent the profusion of lies about the past in the public or refute the ones already presented to the public.

It can help build a public platform for the victims of war crimes to speak up which can eventually evoke sympathy from the public and the respect and solidarity with not only the victims with whom they already sympathise but also with those whom they were unable to recognize in the past.

It can build a data base of victims and human losses and forever prevent manipulation of the number of killed or otherwise victimised.

It can help offices of war crimes prosecutors by providing evidence, encouraging witnesses and victims to take part in war crimes trials, and it can also help organize files on certain cases.

It can help existing official missing person commissions to discover secret mass graves and contribute to clarifying the fate of the missing.

It can build greater understanding and tolerance and restore dignity to victims and their families.

RECOM

An official body formed by the governments of the states formed on the territory of the former Yugoslavia.

Entirely independent from its founders.

A regional body focusing on the experiences of the victims.

A temporary body formed with a finite mandate and located on the territory where the crimes were committed.

A non-judicial body mandated to deal with the most serious crimes committed in a clearly defined time frame.

A non-judicial body capable of conducting public hearings of victims.

A non-judicial body mandated to draw conclusions about the facts and about the events based on its own investigation and established court facts, without making legal conclusions.

An investigative body authorized to conduct interviews with anyone who can offer relevant information, authorized to conduct multidisciplinary investigations and invite individuals and representatives of institutions, political groups, and religious communities to appear on their own behalf and give information and present their own opinions on ways for overcoming the burden of the past.

An investigative body capable of providing evidence proving that certain institutions, individuals or groups, failed to protect human rights in the past.

A reliable body which will take into account only those war crime allegations which have been confirmed by at least two independent sources.

A body which will not judge but can name perpetrators and those responsible for the commitment of war crimes, and which can recommend mechanisms for their removal from state institutions.

Investigational body which conducts investigations about the destiny of the missing together with official missing person commissions.

A body issuing recommendations concerning ways to provide reparation for the victims, in terms of financial compensation, apology, building of tomb stones, building of memorial centres, and creating memory maps.

A credible body consisting of individuals eminent in their communities and in the region, representatives of different ethnic groups, religious communities, nominated and selected on the basis of carefully phrased criteria.