

SIT Graduate Institute/SIT Study Abroad

SIT Digital Collections

Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection

SIT Study Abroad

Spring 2020

Internship Paper: Completed at the Humanitarian Law Center Kosovo

Julia Herzfeld
SIT Study Abroad

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection



Part of the [Eastern European Studies Commons](#), [European History Commons](#), [European Languages and Societies Commons](#), [Human Rights Law Commons](#), and the [Peace and Conflict Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Herzfeld, Julia, "Internship Paper: Completed at the Humanitarian Law Center Kosovo" (2020).
Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection. 3271.
https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection/3271

This Unpublished Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the SIT Study Abroad at SIT Digital Collections. It has been accepted for inclusion in Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection by an authorized administrator of SIT Digital Collections. For more information, please contact digitalcollections@sit.edu.

Internship Paper: Completed at the Humanitarian Law Center Kosovo

Student: Julia Herzfeld

Internship Coordinator: Stevan Tatalović

Academic Director: Dr. Orli Fridman

Smith College

Major: Sociology

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Serbia, Bosnia, and Kosovo: Peace
and Conflict Studies in the Balkans, SIT Study Abroad, Spring 2020

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	2
Contextualization and Organizational Profile.....	3
Internship Focus and Objectives.....	7
Work and Tasks Completed.....	8
Positionality and Ethics	10
Critical Reflection.....	12
Analysis of Critical Issues and Themes.....	15
Conclusions and Recommendations.....	17
Bibliography.....	18
Appendix	20

Abstract

This paper discusses my experiences while online interning with the Humanitarian Law Center Kosovo, an organization based out of Prishtina and works to support inclusive and victims-centered transitional justice in Kosovo. I worked primarily on two research projects, one on the Transitional Justice Strategy of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the other on the status of criminal complaints filed by the Humanitarian Law Center in Belgrade to the Serbian justice system related to war crimes committed in Kosovo. While the circumstances surrounding my online internship were not ideal due to the Covid-19 pandemic, my experience greatly enhanced my knowledge of the concepts I had gained over the course of the semester by giving me new practical understandings, and I learned valuable lessons about transitional justice and NGO work on the ground.

Contextualization and Organizational Profile

My online internship was completed with the Humanitarian Law Center Kosovo (HLC Kosovo; *Fondi për të Drejtën Humanitare Kosovë, Fond za Humanitarno pravo Kosovo*), a non-governmental organization (NGO) based in Prishtina. Its mission is to “support the implementation of a holistic, inclusive and victim-centred transitional justice framework in Kosovo in order to restore the dignity of victims and contribute peace building and state building in Kosovo” (HLC Kosovo, 2020). The HLC Kosovo is organized into two main programs -- transitional justice and regional cooperation -- under which many projects and publications are housed, with three essential elements guiding its activities: monitoring judicial procedures related to the consequences of the recent conflict; locating victims and their families, and representing them in the courts of Kosovo and Serbia; and spreading knowledge on transitional justice within both professional and non-professional communities (HLC Kosovo, 2020). This section will detail the organization’s history and operations, as well as the cultural context in which it operates.

The Humanitarian Law Center was established in Serbia in 1992 by human rights activist Nataša Kandić as an NGO that would document the human rights violations perpetrated on a massive scale across former Yugoslavia during the armed conflicts in Croatia, Bosnia, and later, in Kosovo (HLC, 2020). The HLC Kosovo was established in Prishtina in May 1997 as a branch office of the HLC, and has been operating as an independent organization since April 2011 (HLC Kosovo, 2020). Thus, it is primarily a national organization, focusing on issues of transitional justice in Kosovo, but by the nature of these issues and the prevalence of the international community both in Kosovo and in

the judicial systems of postwar former Yugoslavia, it must incorporate international elements.

Prior to the 1998-1999 conflict in Kosovo, the HLC Kosovo focused on documenting police repression of Kosovo Albanians, investigating cases of torture and illegal detention of Kosovo Albanians, and political trials. Once the conflict began, despite having had to briefly relocate their offices to Montenegro during the NATO intervention, the HLC Kosovo worked to document killings and disappearances of Kosovo Albanians as well as Serbs and members of other ethnic groups, and to document atrocities committed by Serb forces (HLC Kosovo, 2020). During this time, fear was widespread in Kosovo and NGOs were very much suppressed -- the HLC and the Women in Black activists were the main organizations working to document killings and atrocities and fight for the rights of all citizens of Kosovo and Serbia. Both groups were frequently attacked and threatened for their work, often through state-sponsored threats (Djurić et. al., 2017).

Today, the HLC Kosovo continues to pursue this documentation project, but has greatly expanded its sphere of operation. Currently, it works on six main, overarching projects: documenting human losses (particularly through the Kosovo Memory Book), monitoring war crime trials and ethnically and politically motivated crimes, carrying out non-formal education on dealing with the past, running the Documentation Centre Kosovo, working with the RECOM Initiative, and seeking to establish the right to reparations. It also publishes frequent reports on topics related to war crimes processing and transitional justice in Kosovo and holds events and workshops to engage the public (HLC Kosovo, 2020).

The need for an organization such as the HLC Kosovo comes out of the contested past of the region, both through historical narratives and the more recent narratives of the war, and the judicial and political situation within Kosovo. Selective and opposing versions of history have been produced by Serb and Albanian elites -- a key example being the narratives surrounding the Kosovo Myth, which has created Kosovo as “an ontic space that serves as the material extension of the self” for Serbia (Ejdus, 2020: 149). This ideological conflict has “provided a fertile ground for opportunistic politicians to exploit grievances and fears and to promote intolerance, militarization, and ultimately, war” (Blakaj & Degruson, 2015: 215). Furthermore, there has been very little success in building civic trust in Kosovo. Corruption and problems with maintaining the rule of law remain serious issues, opposing narratives of victimization among Kosovo Albanians and Serbs have led to a deeply separated society, and the political parties of Kosovo are overwhelmingly conservative and market capitalist in orientation (Ramet, 2014). Citizens profoundly distrust their public institutions and politicians, regardless of ethnicity, and due to the physical separation and high levels of mistrust between ethnic Albanians and Serbs, they have no sense of belonging to the same nation (Blakaj and Degruson, 2015).

From the peacebuilding and reconciliation side, the picture has been marked by the absence of holistic transitional justice efforts undertaken by official governmental and international channels. When constructing the process of delivering justice, “the ‘international community’ opted for reconciliation without its core premise, which is ‘truth-telling,’” and thus, the reconciliation project pursued in Kosovo “has been premised on ‘forgetting’ the past, rather than confronting it” (Krasniqi, 2014: 155). Therefore, Kosovo institutions are neither unified nor motivated to deal with the past holistically and bring

transitional justice measures to Kosovo society, leaving citizens affected by the war with limited institutional support.

The HLC Kosovo, through their many projects promoting transitional justice in various forms and spheres, is attempting to deal with the past in a way that is truth-telling and eschews the official political narratives surrounding the conflict in Kosovo -- so it can properly confront the past and bring justice to all of its victims, regardless of ethnicity. By admitting that “there are no unitary conceptions of victimhood or of justice,” they hope to “address the needs of all survivors of the war” and “contribute to the reconciliation of formerly opposed communities in Kosovo, so that they can envisage a common future” (Blakaj and Degruson, 2015: 201). Thus, the work they do toward furthering transitional justice in Kosovo seeks to fill the large gaps official government channels have neglected, encouraging reconciliation in a young, divided country.

Internship Focus and Objectives

My work as an online intern for the HLC Kosovo was aimed at helping with the organization's efforts within the Kosovo Coalition for Reconciliation. The EU-funded coalition is made up of three Kosovo-based NGOs -- the HLC Kosovo, Aktiv, and ArtPolis -- as well as one Croatian NGO, Documenta, and is intended to help improve cross-ethnic relations and encourage reconciliation in Kosovo (EWB, 2019). As part of this Coalition, and in line with their goals for the future, the HLC Kosovo has begun developing a report encapsulating the transitional justice work and processes that have been carried out in Kosovo since the war, including by civil society organizations, the government of Kosovo, and regional courts and apparatus (such as Serbian courts and the ICTY). Currently, the HLC Kosovo is in the research phase for this report, with the intention of completing it by the end of 2020. In 2021, using the findings of the report, they will begin to draft a national strategy for transitional justice in Kosovo, which has been discussed by many parties in the past without much action, for use by both civil society and the government.

I contributed to research for this report by looking into two topics -- the Transitional Justice Strategy of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the status of criminal complaints filed by the HLC in Belgrade to the Serbian justice system related to war crimes committed in Kosovo -- and preparing a synthesis paper for each topic on my findings with key points that will be useful for the HLC Kosovo's report.

Work and Tasks Completed

My first task was to research and write a report on the Transitional Justice Strategy of Bosnia and Herzegovina. I met with my mentor, Kaltrina Shala, via Zoom to discuss the task and how my research will be incorporated into the HLC Kosovo's report, and she also sent me a document with guiding questions. This was informative because I wanted to make sure my research would actually be useful and that I would not leave holes that would create extra work for the HLC Kosovo team in the future. The Strategy is relevant to the HLC Kosovo's report because Bosnia and Herzegovina, as another post-conflict society in the Balkans, has a context and history that can be compared to Kosovo's context and history, and is the only country in the Balkans to have indicated that it would adopt any sort of transitional justice strategy and to have drafted such a strategy. As a result, the Strategy can serve as a point of reference for what has worked and what has not. Therefore, I was primarily seeking to answer the following questions: Who was involved in the drafting process? What is included in the Strategy and what is not? How is it being implemented? What is the dialogue and criticism surrounding it?

My second task was to compile a list of all the criminal charges and complaints filed by the HLC in Belgrade with the Office of the War Crimes Prosecutor of the Republic of Serbia in relation to the conflict in Kosovo, and research the status of the charges and complaints with the goal of creating an overview. When we met to discuss this assignment, Kaltrina explained to me that the general attitude among Kosovo Albanians is that not enough perpetrators have been prosecuted and punished for their crimes in Serbia and as a result there has been no justice for the victims and their families. Therefore, it is important for the HLC Kosovo to know the status of relevant cases and what their outcomes have

been. With this information, they can determine the extent to which the beliefs of Kosovo Albanians are grounded in real, tangible conditions when considering this widely accepted public narrative. Having a summary of all the complaints will also allow them to be presented succinctly in the HLC Kosovo's report on transitional justice in Kosovo, and to have the information on hand for future reference, as the information on the complaints is scattered across the HLC's website and published reports. For each of the twelve complaints, I aimed to answer the following questions: Against whom and for what have the criminal complaints or charges been filed? Have they led to an indictment or final judgment? If so, what was the outcome?

These two research projects filled the bulk of my time with the HLC Kosovo, and were the extent of my responsibilities. Recognizing the difficulties of working for an organization without having ever entered their offices, however, Kaltrina also sent me links to the HLC Kosovo's activities on Facebook for the National Day of Missing Persons, April 27. I read the details for their event to turn out the lights for two minutes at 20:00 that day to mark 20 years since the war, and watched their animated video about the disappearance of 20 men in the village of Goden, in the Municipality of Gjakovë/Djakovica, on March 24, 1999.

Positionality and Ethics

As a college student coming from the U.S. with a parent from Croatia and Serbia, I was very aware of my positionality and perspective in taking on an online internship in Kosovo. My background means that I am often both an outsider and not when it comes to issues around the Balkans -- I am familiar with culture and life here, yet I was born and grew up in the U.S. and carry different experiences and privileges as a result. It is important for me to be aware of and to balance this position while working with the HLC Kosovo. I have seen the way the Balkans are represented in the U.S. and in Western narratives, and am familiar with the “kind of romanticization of the battleground which seems to make the Balkans interesting for [only] as long as the fighting lasts” (Goldsworthy, 2002:31). I have often been asked if it’s safe for me to visit Serbia, for example, and in responding, I have seen how easy it is to revert to popular and oversimplified tropes about the Balkans. Yet prior to this program, I knew little about Kosovo and its specific public discourses, and since I was interning with an organization directly focused on the after-effects of the conflict in Kosovo and was writing reports that were critical of both Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, I was frequently thinking about the dynamics of Balkanism and the way I may or may not have been reproducing them in the narratives I created. I tried to be careful to reflect only what I had learned from my research in my analyses, and to direct that research to meet the needs of the HLC Kosovo.

Furthermore, I was also aware of my position coming from a country that has such a huge say in international politics, particularly in Kosovo. The process of delivering justice there has been driven by international actors, and therefore, truth-telling processes have failed to contribute to any sort of internal social solidarity (Krasniqi, 2014). As an

American student with Balkan origins, coming from the U.S. and interning with a Kosovo-based organization attempting to develop locally-anchored truth-telling and transitional justice processes, I tried my best to be cautious of unintentionally reproducing such dynamics and to acknowledge what it means for me.

These factors are of course complicated by the online element of this internship. With everybody working from home due to Covid-19 pandemic restrictions, I was unable to experience the HLC Kosovo's working environment and interact with its staff regularly or informally. Though I tried my best to interact as much as I could, and to hear from Kaltrina about her experiences, it wasn't possible for me to immerse myself in the HLC Kosovo's work to the same extent as would have been possible had we all been physically present in their offices. Since I was primarily conducting research on my own and only communicated with Kaltrina roughly once or twice a week, I made an effort to regularly remind myself what my goals were and what the larger ramifications of the HLC Kosovo's report are. It was important to me to do my best to make meaningful contributions and not create extra work for the staff, as I understood how, particularly in these times, taking on a non-native intern and finding tasks for me could present additional challenges.

Critical Reflection

Going into the beginning of my online internship, I felt I understood what type of work I would be doing and was excited to take on so much research on topics that interested me, but I was also uncertain on what my relationship with the HLC Kosovo would look like, given the physical distance. At the start, it was hard for me to do anything but think about the sorts of experiences I would be missing out on without being able to be in their offices and being part of day-to-day dynamics -- a struggle I felt echoed by Kaltrina, since everyone at the HLC Kosovo was adjusting to the markedly different dynamics of working from home when I joined them. As I began my research, however, I found it was easier to let go of what I was missing and focus on the experiences I was still able to have. I gained valuable experience interning for a well-established NGO whose work I greatly respect and deepened my understanding of transitional justice in practice. Both of the research projects I undertook challenged me to think critically and required me to strengthen my research skills, and I am proud of the work I was able to produce.

With both of my research projects, I had to work to unravel the bureaucratic tangles surrounding my topics to be able to identify and summarize the most important details, which improved my analytic skills. The research involved skimming through many long dossiers and reports and paring my notes down to the essentials. The project on the Transitional Justice Strategy of Bosnia and Herzegovina especially required me to first have a solid understanding of the bigger picture before I could begin to synthesize it for the HLC Kosovo's purposes. Though I started this research in English, I found there was very little written about the critical reception and different perceptions of the Strategy after its publication, and here I found that my knowledge of Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian was

particularly useful. I was able to find several articles in Bosnian that allowed me to fill the gaps in my research, and working my way through them also helped me to further my BCS reading comprehension skills and learn the vocabulary around transitional justice in the language. I was able to strengthen both my research skills and my language skills, which was deeply gratifying.

My research on the criminal complaints and charges filed by the HLC in Belgrade required me to become familiar with specific elements of the Serbian justice system and also focus on the details of specific cases. As a sociology student, my focus in research generally tends to be more oriented toward societal implications and dynamics of power and privilege; I do not have much law experience, and at first it was a struggle to understand the implications of what I was reading. It's not that the sociological frameworks were absent in this research -- in fact, it was necessary for me to keep them and the larger picture in mind and center my writing around the impact on people of the legal status of the criminal complaints and charges -- but I didn't have much experience digging through court cases. This research project helped me to develop the skills to better juggle both the minute details and the larger picture in my writing.

Taking on this internship in the online format we were unfortunately restricted to required me to adapt. While I was incredibly excited about the work I was doing, it was particularly difficult to get myself started on a task without the structure that a working day generally brings. I found that keeping myself to a routine helped me to stay on time and focused with my work. Both my reports ended up being longer than I had anticipated, both in length and in the time they took to research, and I worked hard to really address all the

relevant aspects of my topics. Working with the HLC Kosovo has been a deeply meaningful experience, and I hope this has been reflected in my work.

Analysis of Critical Issues and Themes

Throughout my time with the HLC Kosovo, I found that the knowledge and understanding of themes such as peacebuilding and transitional justice that I had gained from class and excursions helped give me a foundation for the work I was doing. Our excursion to Kosovo was vital for my understanding of the context the HLC Kosovo is operating within -- the opportunity to be there while learning about its specific history and position and to hear the perspectives of so many experts and activists, as well as having been able to see the HLC Kosovo's exhibit on children killed during the war and hear from Bekim Blakaj, the organization's executive director, meant that I was better able to grasp the significance of the HLC Kosovo's activities while I was interning with them. Furthermore, having spent most of a semester discussing topics such as dealing with the past, reconciliation, peace, and transitional justice -- both in theory and in relation to the Balkans -- I could better understand the HLC Kosovo's work.

My internship experiences also gave me new perspectives on the understandings I gained during our class sessions. While we did talk about some concrete transitional justice measures, most of our discussions centered more around the theoretical -- which was important, because we needed a theoretical understanding first. My time with the HLC Kosovo, however, helped reveal more of the practical elements of these concepts. As an organization deeply entrenched in supporting victims and working for transitional justice for more than 20 years, the HLC Kosovo has been working on the ground to try to put the theory into practice, and working with them, as well as the research I did, helped me to understand what attempting -- or not attempting -- to deal with the past actually looks like from various NGOs and government institutions. As Kaltrina has said several times during

our calls, it's easy to make transitional justice sound good in theory and in academia, but it's much messier in practice. I saw this through my research and my conversations with Kaltrina. It's impossible to please everyone involved and to include everybody's viewpoints -- especially since they are sometimes in direct opposition, "success" is hard to measure, and making the leap from theoretical ideas to practical ones to implementation is extremely difficult. Though this was not at all surprising, digging into the bureaucratic discourse around transitional justice and seeing concrete legislation and recommendations have helped me visualize these leaps and help me to understand what common issues often occur, and where.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Over the course of my online internship with the HLC Kosovo, I learned valuable lessons about transitional justice in practice, the back-and-forth between civil society and government institutions, and the shape of war crimes trials related to Kosovo in Serbia. I also learned from Kaltrina about the ways in which an NGO like the HLC Kosovo operates on a more practical level: what the office atmosphere is like under regular circumstances, her own experiences working with the organization, and donor relations and the ways in which the HLC Kosovo receives and maintains its funding. All of this helped me build a more practical understanding of transitional justice work and NGO work more broadly.

While the circumstances surrounding my online internship were not ideal, and due to the Covid-19 pandemic I was not able to have the kind of experience I would have had I been physically present, I am incredibly appreciative for the opportunity I had working even remotely with the HLC Kosovo. I am also grateful to Kaltrina for spending extra time on our calls to simply talk with me about the HLC Kosovo and her time with them, as it helped me feel more fully integrated into the organization and allowed me to better situate myself.

Through this internship, I was able to build my research and communication skills while improving my understanding of transitional justice concepts and the region. I would recommend that future interns put effort into listening to the first-hand experiences of the people working at the HLC Kosovo. I am confident that any future intern would learn a great deal from an internship with the HLC Kosovo, and their experiences would only be enhanced by being on site.

Bibliography

- Blakaj, B., & Degruson, L. (2015). *Manual on Transitional Justice: Concepts, Mechanisms and Challenges* (pp. 214–313). Humanitarian Law Center Kosovo. https://www.hlc-kosovo.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/hlc_tj_publication_final-19.1-MANUAL-eng.pdf
- Djurić, V., Osmani, T., Šper, D., Popović, M., & Kljajić, S. (2017). *Albanke su Naše Sestre (Albanian Women are Our Sisters)* [Film].
- Ejdus, F. (2020). Dissonance and Avoidance: Serbia's Quest for a New Normal. In *Crisis and Ontological Insecurity: Serbia's Anxiety over Kosovo's Secession* (pp. 127–159). Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- EWB. (2019, July 12). EU-backed Kosovo Coalition for Reconciliation established in Pristina. *European Western Balkans*. <https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2019/07/12/eu-backed-kosovo-coalition-for-reconciliation-established-in-pristina/>
- Goldsworthy, V. (2002). Invention and In(ter)vention: The Rhetoric of Balkanization. In D. I. Bjelić & O. Savić (Eds.), *Balkan as metaphor: Between globalization and fragmentation* (pp. 25–38). Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Humanitarian Law Center. (n.d.). Retrieved April 3, 2020, from <http://www.hlc-rdc.org/>
- Humanitarian Law Center Kosovo. (n.d.). Retrieved April 3, 2020, from <https://www.hlc-kosovo.org/>
- Krasniqi, V. (2014). Kosovo: Topography of the Construction of the Nation. In P. Kolstø (Ed.), *Strategies of symbolic nation-building in South Eastern Europe* (pp. 139–163). Farnham: Ashgate.

Ramet, S. P. (2014). Civic and uncivic values in Kosovo: An Introduction. In S. P. Ramet, A. A. Simkus, & O. Listhaug (Eds.), *Civic and uncivic values in Kosovo: History, politics, and value transformation* (pp. 1–25). Budapest/New York: Central European University Press.

Appendix

Project Overviews	Project Tasks	Timeframe	Deliverables	Comments
<i>List the projects that your organization was implementing during your internship month</i>	<i>What project activities and tasks have you finalized?</i>	<i>How much time did you spend working on these tasks?</i>	<i>What was the outcome of your work (documents, website inputs, blog entries, conference notes etc.)</i>	<i>Add any additional comments such as: challenges, reflections, collaborators</i>
Transitional Justice Strategy of Bosnia and Herzegovina report (April 13-24)	Research -- finding sources, compiling information	14 hours	Elements of both of my papers will be used in the HLC Kosovo's report on transitional justice in Kosovo since the war, which will hopefully be published in early 2021.	I definitely hit a block a few times in my research, and learned how to better navigate BiH governmental and reporting networks.
	Writing the report	10 hours		N/A
Status of Kosovo-related criminal complaints in Serbia report (April 27-May 8)	Research -- finding sources, compiling information	18 hours	In addition to the above, this document will allow the HLC Kosovo to have a brief summary of all the criminal complaints filed by the HLC in Belgrade in one place for reference.	It was really challenging to find all the relevant information. Amer Alija, the HLC Kosovo's legal analyst and monitor of war crimes trials, helped me with some legal knowledge and pointed me towards some sources.
	Writing the report	9 hours		It was hard to judge how much detail to go into -- I ended up focusing on giving the general picture of each case.

Below is an excerpt from my report on the Transitional Justice Strategy of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), discussing its post-publication reception and implementation:

Post-Publication and Implementation

The Strategy quickly proved to be controversial among the politicians responsible for its implementation, who argued that, with an estimated nine million euro cost -- not even taking into account the full costs of the reparation program or the construction of memorials, it was far too expensive to back (Džidić 2012). The Republika Srpska also felt it created very specific definitions of victims versus aggressors, despite arguments otherwise from the members of the expert working group. As a result, discussing the Strategy was continuously pushed off to the following year, and has thus never been formally adopted on the country-level (Čarkadžić 2018).

Though the window for implementing the Strategy had been 2012-2016, the governmental institutions of BiH were essentially inactive on the Strategy through 2016. In 2015, the EU Council in BiH passed an action plan for human rights and democracy for 2015-2019, which included strengthening transitional justice as one of its goals and was partially aimed at implementing the Strategy, framing it as in line with EU goals and therefore relevant to BiH's EU integration goals. Still, a 2018 European Commission report on BiH stated that the Strategy had yet to start being implemented. A new 2018-2022 window for implementation was planned, but no new progress was made in 2018, and 2019 was spent forming coalitions and consolidating governmental authorities. Civil society organizations feel the lack of implementation indicates a lack of political will and a deprioritization of transitional justice among the government institutions of BiH. The Strategy has been continually mentioned and listed in plans at the governmental level, but according to the Council Ministers, nothing has ever been enacted or adopted as a result of political contestation and the prioritization of other agenda items (Išerić 2018).

Below is an excerpt from my report on the criminal complaints filed by the HLC in Belgrade. It summarizes one of the criminal complaints and is indicative of the type of writing I was doing for this project:

Criminal Complaint: Krushë e Vogël/Mala Kruša (Municipality of Prizren)

On March 14th, 2013, the HLC filed a criminal complaint against a member of the MUP for a war crime against a civilian population committed in the village of Krushë e Vogël/Mala Kruša on March 28th, 1999. The complaint was filed based on the reasonable suspicion that the member of the MUP killed two male Kosovo Albanian civilians in the presence of a number of witnesses.¹

This crime was committed during an operation carried out by the 549th YA MtBr and members of the MUP (the 4th, 5th, and 37th Detachments of the SPU) in the Municipalities of Rahovec/Orahovac and Prizren from March 25th to March 28th, 1999. Over the course of the operation, 660 Kosovo Albanian civilians were killed -- 318 of whom are still registered as missing.² The ICTY has indicted, convicted, and sentenced several of the highest ranking military and police officials for having aided and abetted in the execution of crimes against humanity during this period.³ No investigations, however, have been opened by the OWCP into the immediate perpetrators of the mass killings or their immediate superiors, including the perpetrator of this crime, despite the HLC's criminal complaint.⁴

¹ "Criminal Complaint for Murder of Two Albanian Civilians in Mala Krusha on March 28th, 1999," Humanitarian Law Center, March 15, 2013, <http://www.hlc-rdc.org/?p=22679&lang=de>.

² Ibid.

³ See Šainović *et al.* (IT-05-87), at <https://www.icty.org/en/case/milutinovic#ind>, accessed on: 2 May 2020.

⁴ "Criminal Complaint for Murder of Two Albanian Civilians in Mala Krusha on March 28th, 1999," Humanitarian Law Center, March 15, 2013, <http://www.hlc-rdc.org/?p=22679&lang=de>.