

Association "Women-Victims of War" brings together sexually abused and raped women from 67 municipalities and men from 21 municipalities from the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The database shows that over 20,000 were raped and sexually abused women at the time of war crimes, aged 12-65 years (this includes the survivors, women that were killed after the abuse and women who have passed out in the meantime).

Current situation of impunity, 15 years after the war in BiH, is the major impingement on expectation on access to justice for thousands women-victims of war in BiH and it is a threat to spreading the prevention message and culture among the future generations.

Still 15 years after the end of war in BiH, we women-victims of war are faced with:

- The problem of international community - how to secure reparation for our suffering?;
- The international community must not forget the victims and their right to compensation because the BiH authorities failed to ensure access to justice and reparations of thousands of victims of sexual abuse and rape;
- Feeling of being forgotten and that our rights are ignored.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, war criminals, who have committed a war crime of sexual abuse and rape against us, who before our eyes have killed, slaughtered, burned alive and taken to the journey with no return our closest relatives, have fair and honest trials financially supported by the state of BiH. Greater paradox is that we women-victims also pay for their trials from our social contributions deducted from our salaries or pensions.

The regular practice is that the war criminals have 2 lawyers, while we women-victims are nobody's concern. Courts need us during the trial. Once we leave the courtroom nobody cares what our situation is like. An additional problem is despite the fact that courts in BiH have a right to provide to us - victims of sexual abuse and rape award reparation - non-pecuniary reparation, they always refer us to civil litigation if we wish to achieve such right. We have no financial support for lawyers, while the state is financing the defence of our rapist and murderers of our closest relatives.

So far, BiH has neither adopted a unique program nor any law that would allow women-victims of war adequate compensation and reparations.

We must have the right to reparation; we are forgotten by the international community and by the representatives of our executive and legislative authorities of the Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Despite the fact that our right to compensation is guaranteed by international laws, in Bosnia and Herzegovina there is no effective mechanism that would enable us to seek such compensation.

The National Strategy for Prosecution of War Crimes, adopted in 2008, stipulates that all war crimes should be prosecuted over the next 15 years. This is a dead letter. We are highly dissatisfied with the judicial institutions in BiH in dealing with cases concerning the war crimes, particularly those related to us, victims of sexual abused and rape.

The prosecution of war crimes should be only at the state level "because it concerns all BiH citizens". In arguments for such solution is stated that all investigations and prosecutions should be implement by the state. The Republika Srpska adopted the Decree on amnesty of war criminals and those that should be accused for war criminal of sexual abuse and rape are only prosecuted for a non-war rape. For 5 years of work in the region of Eastern Sarajevo, Republika Srpska - Department for War Crimes, which covers 14 municipalities, only 2 cases for 2 war criminals were prosecuted (one was acquitted, and others pending). It is the common scenario throughout the Republika Srpska. We believe that you should not leave the prosecution of war criminals to the entities. There is no effective control over such crimes and criminals, and current situation endangers the national interest for the effective management of the proceedings against the accused. If all investigations and processes occurred at the state level, the problem of applying different laws over the same matter would disappear, especially those related to the amnesty.

For us women-victims of war (rape and sexually abuse) punishment of war crimes is not the only satisfaction, but restoring our dignity by providing us with concrete assistance and support so that we can continue with our lives would represent complete satisfaction.

Due to the war criminals who mainly remain free today Return program has fallen. A large number of war criminals work as police officers nowadays, or are employed in justice, public administration, etc.

It is important to establish a commission at the state level to deal with applications for compensation to victims in accordance to the work of the ICTY.

Therefore, we urge you to endorse the establishment of a state commission to deal with filing claims for compensation - non-pecuniary compensation.

Therefore we ask the CEDAW to exert pressure on local authorities to arrest and prosecute the perpetrators of war rape and sexual abuse, but also to create a strategy for reparation of survivors suitable to our psychological, social, economic and health conditions.