



Consulat Général de la République du Kosovo à Strasbourg

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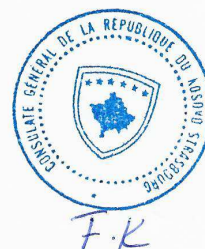
Strasbourg, 04.04.2019

NOTE VERBALE

The Consulate General of the Republic of Kosovo in Strasbourg expresses its compliments to the Head of Parliamentary Committee for Foreign Affairs and has the honor to enclose herewith a Non Paper on the 20th anniversary of the NATO air strikes.

The Consulate General of the Republic of Kosovo in Strasbourg avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Head of Parliamentary Committee for Foreign Affairs the assurances of its highest consideration.

To: Head of Parliamentary Committee for Foreign Affairs



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Natasa Kandic: "I have personally witnessed Serbian crimes"

The best known Serbian human rights activist, Natasa Kandic, a founder of the Humanitarian Law Centre, speaks about bombing and the Kosovo war. She often visited Kosovo during the war.

Natasa Kandic, Serbian human rights activist

"Soon after the commencement of NATO bombing, on 25 March, in the early hours of the morning, at around two or three o'clock, the phone rang", recalls Natasa Kandic. "It was Nekibe Kelmendi. She told me that the police had entered into their house and took with them her husband, Bajram, a very well-known Lawyer, and their two sons. I do not know what to do. I told her that it is good that telephone lines are operational and on the next morning I should go to the police or to the Secret Service and ask for clarification...I will never forget this conversation. One day later, they found the lifeless bodies of Bajram and of the two sons, next to a gas station, on the exit of Prishtina. The Police stated that investigations were initiated. But this was only covering-up of the crime, because there were no investigations here, there was nothing. Nekibe Kelmendi passed away in 2011 and she never understood officially who had killed her husband and two of her sons. Only her daughter was left behind who still seeks the truth. We, in the Humanitarian Law Centre, are seeking the truth, but unsuccessful."

Natasa Kandic was one of the rare persons in Belgrade, who justified the NATO intervention in 1999 and she stated this openly. Afterwards, she also supported the independence of Kosovo, declared in February 2008. She was the only guest from Serbia to the Assembly, in the ceremony of declaring the independence.

Establishment of the Humanitarian Law Centre

"The Humanitarian Law Centre was established in 1992", said Kandic, "with the aim of documenting crimes and violation of human rights in Serbia, where ethnic groups – Albanians in Kosovo and Muslims in Sandzak - live."

gasoline, because there was insufficient at that time. We somehow arrived in Bujanovc, but I did not know how to go to Prishtina. I asked the taxi driver to drive me there. He was very scared, but when I told him that there were there only Serbian forced, he agreed.

Our office was demolished, computers were robbed. I found our associates at their homes, all of them were very scared, and they did not know what to do. I proposed them to go together to Macedonia, but this was proven as a bad plan and it was not implemented. It was horror in Prishtina, there were no Albanians on the street any longer. When I went to look for an associate of the Centre, a lot of people were gathered before her premise. The police officers were taking them out of the premise forcefully, and ordered them to go towards the railway station, and afterwards towards Albania. After four days of staying in Prishtina, four Albanians and I set off to Belgrade. The taxi driver was a good person, he noticed what they were doing to Albanians. He did not use to talk much. I asked him whether he was willing to transport four Albanians to Belgrade, because we had to pass through police check-points. Let us try, he said. We passed the first check-point without a problem. At the second check-point, they stopped us. I was silent, while the taxi driver asked the police officer where he could find fuel as he did not have any. The police officer was concentrated on the question and he did not control us at all. We made it."

Prolongation of war

NATO strategists had planned a shorter war. The Serbian Military and Police did not make any significant resistance to the NATO bombing, but they hid well and avoided huge losses. The war was prolonged, while the sufferings of the people of Kosovo was increasing from day to day.

„I went to Kosovo almost in every ten day", recalls Natasa Kandic. "Always with the same taxi driver, who learned the road and acquainted the people on the road. I went to look for my Albanian friends, I checked whether they were still alive. I was in Prishtina at some friends, when the news arrived about the apprehension of Fehmi Agani, his wife and their son. They informed me that they have taken him with, while his lifeless body was found one day later. Agani was killed, meanwhile Milosevic allowed Rugova to leave the country. Fehmi Agani thought that he should also leave Kosovo and join Rugova. The whole power of Rugova was in the wisdom of Fehmi Agani. The death of Agani is an extremely great loss not only for Albanians, but for the whole region. If he was alive, positive changes would take place faster and everything would be different."

stopping the actions of the police and the military, killings, burns and destructions in Kosovo."

National "Truth"

Following the intense diplomatic efforts of the Troika led by Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari, including the US and Russian diplomats Strobe Talbot and Viktor Chernomyrdin, in June 1999, Slobodan Milosevic accepted the NATO conditions. On June 9, 1999 in Kumanovo, an agreement was signed for the withdrawal of Yugoslav troops from Kosovo and the deployment of a KFOR peace mission in Kosovo. The war ended, while a large number of Serbs left Kosovo due to the fear of revenge. The remaining ones lived in fear of the possibility of crimes, which occurred from time to time even a year later. The Centre also collected facts about these crimes.

"Today, we see that there is only "a truth" in Serbia, the national truth. A committee has been established to investigate the consequences of NATO bombing, with the aim of proving that Serbia was a victim. There are presented figures that are not related to the facts and it is completely forgotten the responsibility of Serbian forces for a large number of people killed there," says Kandic. "It is forgotten why and how it came to the NATO intervention. What preceded the intervention and what was Serbia's role in this regard. The NATO intervention was a drastic measure, but the only tool to stop the Serbian army and police. "

Natasa Kandic has received a large number of international appraisals for her work. In 2003, she was also on the list of 36 European heroes, published in "Time" magazine. In 2005, she was declared a Sarajevo honorary citizen and the person of the year in Bosnia and Herzegovina, according to "Slobodna Bosna" magazine. In 2013, she was honored with the award Hrant Dink in Turkey, while the American congressmen Eliot Engel and Roger Viker nominated Natasa Kandic in 2018 for the Nobel Peace Prize.