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## ACTIVISTS DEMAND ANSWERS OVER BELGRADE BARRACKS KILLINGS

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Activists from the Serbian peace group Women in Black rallied outside the Topcider army barracks on Friday on the 14th anniversary of the unexplained killings of two young soldiers, calling on the defence and justice ministries to stop obstructing the investigation.

The state leadership continues with its shameful strategy of making false promises [to resolve the case], Women in Black said in a press statement.

The activists carried a banner with the slogan We will never forget the crime in Topcider.

They asked the Serbian authorities to finally announce the truth about whether or not the Serbian Army was hiding the Bosnian Serb wartime commander Ratko Mladic, who was on the run from the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia at the time, at the Topcider barracks.

Soldiers Dragan Jakovljevic and Drazen Milovanovic were killed on October 5, 2004, while they were on guard duty at the barracks.

After the murders, the Serbian Army and its military court launched an investigation which resulted in a ruling that one soldier killed the other and then committed suicide.

But another investigation, initiated by the dead soldiers families, found that a third person killed the two servicemen.

After another, independent investigation, the families claimed that they had received unofficial confirmation that the soldiers were killed because Mladic was hiding at the barracks.

In October 2014, when he was already in custody, Mladic was questioned about his possible involvement in the murder of two soldiers, but he denied that he was hiding at the barracks at the time.

The families of the men who were killed also urged the authorities to establish what really happened.

I am criticising our president [Aleksandar Vucic] because everything is in his power and he was supposed to do a lot about the Topcider case, but nothing has been done, Janko Jakovljevic, the father of Dragan Jakovljevic, told media at Fridays commemoration.

Petar Milovanovic, the father of Drazen Milovanovic, said that the state and the army are not interested in the case.

This is a shame for the state. The president received us two years ago, there were promises, but nothing has been done, he said.

Both fathers said that they believed there would be progress when a special commission to examine the case was set up in 2016, but since then nothing has happened.

Ahead of last years anniversary of the killings, President Vucic said that the commission had been working under great political pressure, without explaining further.

But he added that the commission was now completely free to work and has full support to get conclusions that are accurate and precise.

Serbias constitutional court ruled in February 2013 that the state denied the families the right to a fair hearing because it investigated the case for eight years but didnt press any charges.

Each family was awarded 5,000 euros in compensation.

Lawyers for the families told media on Friday that they will address the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg because the decision of the Constitutional Court has not been implemented.

The authorities ignored it; the Constitutional Courts ruling from five years ago is a dead letter on paper. Therefore, for several months now, we have been working on the preparation of an application for the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, said lawyer Predrag Savic.

<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/families-of-killed-serbian-soldiers-still-seeking-justice-10-05-2018>

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