
BOSNIA SIGNS MISSING PERSONS SEARCH AGREEMENTS WITH CROATIA, SERBIA

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Bosnia's Council of Ministers signed separate agreements in Sarajevo on Tuesday with the governments of Serbia and Croatia on working rules and procedures as part of a protocol intended to make the search for the remaining thousands of missing persons from the 1990s wars more effective.

The move is intended to improve the process of finding missing persons and hidden graves, to enhance the sharing of information and enable joint exhumations.

Nikola Perisic, the chairman of the board of directors of Bosnia's Institute for Missing Persons, said it would not be possible to complete the process of finding all the remaining missing persons from the war without cooperation between states.

The absurdity of this situation is best explained by the example that in the former Yugoslavia, people lived and worked in one country, they disappeared and their remains were found in other ex-Yugoslav countries, while their families live in third ones, Perisic said.

Without institutional frameworks and cooperation, the mission to find their remains would be impossible, he added.

The head of the Serbia government's Missing Persons Commission, Veljko Odalovic, said that the search for missing persons must continue because families are still trying to find out what happened to their loved ones.

We cannot stop this issue at administrative and state borders. We need to find mechanisms like these so that we can all work together, primarily for the sake of families and victims, without administrative obstacles or any other obstacles stopping us, Odalovic said.

But Stjepan Sucic, the assistant minister for missing persons at the Croatian War Veterans Ministry, cautioned that previous agreements have not delivered the expected progress.

It is easy to come and sign certain agreements and protocols. However, when the time comes to act according to them, then various disputes arise, Sucic said.

I do not expect anything spectacular if there is no goodwill and if no real, sincere step is taken towards addressing the issue of missing persons as a priority, humanitarian issue, in which politics should not be involved, he added.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the search is still ongoing for around 7,200 people who are still missing

from the 1990s war, while in Serbia there are more than 3,000 people still missing, and in Croatia, 1,892 people have yet to be found.

<https://balkaninsight.com/2019/07/30/bosnia-croatia-serbia-sign-missing-persons-search-agreements/>

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