



The Human Rights Advisory Panel

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OPINION

Date of adoption: 27 November 2013

Cases Nos. 90/09 and 103/09

Olivera VITOŠEVIĆ and Arsenije VITOŠEVIĆ

against

UNMIK

The Human Rights Advisory Panel, on 27 November 2013,
with the following members taking part:

Mr Marek NOWICKI, Presiding Member

Ms Christine CHINKIN

Ms Françoise TULKENS

Assisted by

Mr Andrey ANTONOV, Executive Officer

Having considered the aforementioned complaints, introduced pursuant to Section 1.2 of UNMIK Regulation No. 2006/12 of 23 March 2006 on the establishment of the Human Rights Advisory Panel,

Having deliberated, including through electronic means, in accordance with Rule 13 § 2 of its Rules of Procedure, makes the following findings and recommendations:

I. PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE PANEL

1. The complaint of Mrs Olivera Vitošević (case no. 90/09) was introduced on 8 April 2009. The complaint of Mr Arsenije Vitošević (case no. 103/09) was introduced on 13 April 2009. Both complaints were registered on 30 April 2009.

2. On 9 December 2009, the Panel requested additional information from both complainants. No response to those requests was received.
3. On 24 October 2009, in accordance with Rule 20 of the Panel's Rules of Procedure, the Panel decided to join the cases.
4. On 8 December 2010, the Panel repeated the request for additional information to the complainants. On 13 December 2011, Mrs Olivera Vitošević, provided a response.
5. On 25 March 2011, the Panel communicated cases nos. 90/09 and 103/09 to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG)¹, for comments on the admissibility of the complaints. On 18 June 2011, the SRSG provided UNMIK's response.
6. On 12 August 2011, the Panel declared the complaints admissible.
7. On 15 August 2011, the Panel communicated the decision on admissibility to the SRSG, inviting UNMIK's observations on the merits of the case together with the investigative files.
8. On 12 February 2012, on 29 April 2012 and on 17 June 2013, the Panel reiterated its request to the SRSG for comments on the merits and for the investigative files.
9. On 8 July 2013, the SRSG submitted UNMIK's response along with the available investigative files.
10. On 5 August 2013, the Panel requested from the SRSG additional information and comments on the merits of the complaints.
11. On 4 September 2013, the SRSG provided UNMIK's response.
12. On 16 September 2013, the Panel requested UNMIK to confirm whether the disclosure of the investigative files concerning the cases could be considered final. On the same day, UNMIK provided its response.
13. On 25 November 2013, the SRSG's provided additional information and comments on the merits of the complaint.

II. THE FACTS

A. General background²

¹ A list of abbreviations and acronyms contained in the text can be found in the attached Annex.

² The references drawn upon by the Panel in setting out this general background include: OSCE, "As Seen, as Told", Vol. 1 (October 1998 – June 1999) and Vol. II (14 June – 31 October 1999); quarterly reports of the UN Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo; UNMIK Police Annual Reports (2000, 2001); Humanitarian Law Centre, "Abductions and Disappearances of non-Albanians in Kosovo" (2001); Humanitarian Law Centre, "Kosovo Memory Book" (<http://www.kosovomemorybook.org>); UNMIK Office on Missing Persons and Forensics, Activity Report 2002-2004; European Court of Human Rights, *Behrami and Behrami v. France* and *Saramati v. France, Germany and Norway*, nos. 71412/01 and 78166/01, decision of 2 May 2007; International Commission on Missing Persons, "The Situation in Kosovo: a Stock Taking" (2010); data

14. The events at issue took place in the territory of Kosovo during the conflict and after the establishment of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), in June 1999.
15. The armed conflict during 1998 and 1999 between the Serbian forces on one side and the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and other Kosovo Albanian armed groups on the other is well documented. Following the failure of international efforts to resolve the conflict, on 23 March 1999, the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) announced the commencement of air strikes against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY). The air strikes began on 24 March 1999 and ended on 8 June 1999 when the FRY agreed to withdraw its forces from Kosovo. On 9 June 1999, the International Security Force (KFOR), the FRY and the Republic of Serbia signed a “Military Technical Agreement” by which they agreed on FRY withdrawal from Kosovo and the presence of an international security force following an appropriate UN Security Council Resolution.
16. On 10 June 1999, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1244 (1999). Acting under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, the UN Security Council decided upon the deployment of international security and civil presences - KFOR and UNMIK respectively - in the territory of Kosovo. Pursuant to Security Council Resolution No. 1244 (1999), the UN was vested with full legislative and executive powers for the interim administration of Kosovo, including the administration of justice. KFOR was tasked with establishing “a secure environment in which refugees and displaced persons can return home in safety” and temporarily ensuring “public safety and order” until the international civil presence could take over responsibility for this task. UNMIK comprised four main components or pillars led by the United Nations (civil administration), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (humanitarian assistance, which was phased out in June 2000), the OSCE (institution building) and the EU (reconstruction and economic development). Each pillar was placed under the authority of the SRSG. UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999) mandated UNMIK to “promote and protect human rights” in Kosovo in accordance with internationally recognised human rights standards.
17. Estimates regarding the effect of the conflict on the displacement of the Kosovo Albanian population range from approximately 800,000 to 1.45 million. Following the adoption of Resolution 1244 (1999), the majority of Kosovo Albanians who had fled, or had been forcibly expelled from their houses by the Serbian forces during the conflict, returned to Kosovo.
18. Meanwhile, members of the non-Albanian community – mainly but not exclusively Serbs, Roma and Slavic Muslims – as well as Kosovo Albanians suspected of collaboration with the Serbian authorities, became the target of widespread attacks by Kosovo Albanian armed groups. Current estimates relating to the number of Kosovo Serbs displaced fall within the region of 200,000 to 210,000. Whereas most Kosovo Serbs and other non-Albanians fled to Serbia proper and the neighbouring countries, those remaining behind became victims of systematic killings, abductions, arbitrary detentions, sexual and gender based violence, beatings and harassment.

19. Although figures remain disputed, it is estimated that more than 15,000 deaths or disappearances occurred during and in the immediate aftermath of the Kosovo conflict (1998-2000). More than 3,000 ethnic Albanians, and about 800 Serbs, Roma and members of other minority communities went missing during this period. More than half of the missing persons had been located and their mortal remains identified by the end of 2010, while 1,766 are listed as still missing by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) as of October 2012.
20. As of July 1999, as part of the efforts to restore law enforcement in Kosovo within the framework of the rule of law, the SRSG urged UN member States to support the deployment within the civilian component of UNMIK of 4,718 international police personnel. UNMIK Police were tasked with advising KFOR on policing matters until they themselves had sufficient numbers to take full responsibility for law enforcement and to work towards the development of a Kosovo police service. By September 1999, approximately 1,100 international police officers had been deployed to UNMIK.
21. By December 2000, the deployment of UNMIK Police was almost complete with 4,400 personnel from 53 different countries, and UNMIK had assumed primacy in law enforcement responsibility in all regions of Kosovo except for Mitrovicë/Mitrovica. According to the 2000 Annual Report of UNMIK Police, 351 kidnappings, 675 murders and 115 rapes had been reported to them in the period between June 1999 and December 2000.
22. Due to the collapse of the administration of justice in Kosovo, UNMIK established in June 1999 an Emergency Justice System. This was composed of a limited number of local judges and prosecutors and was operational until a regular justice system became operative in January 2000. In February 2000, UNMIK authorised the appointment of international judges and prosecutors, initially in the Mitrovicë/Mitrovica region and later across Kosovo, to strengthen the local justice system and to guarantee its impartiality. As of October 2002, the local justice system comprised 341 local and 24 international judges and prosecutors. In January 2003, the UN Secretary-General reporting to the Security Council on the implementation of Resolution 1244 (1999) defined the police and justice system in Kosovo at that moment as being “well-functioning” and “sustainable”.
23. In July 1999, the UN Secretary-General reported to the Security Council that UNMIK already considered the issue of missing persons as a particularly acute human rights concern in Kosovo. In November 1999, a Missing Persons Unit (MPU) was established within UNMIK Police, mandated to investigate with respect to either the possible location of missing persons and/or gravesites. The MPU, jointly with the Central Criminal Investigation Unit (CCIU) of UNMIK Police, and later a dedicated War Crimes Investigation Unit (WCIU), were responsible for the criminal aspects of missing persons cases in Kosovo. In May 2000, a Victim Recovery and Identification Commission (VRIC) chaired by UNMIK was created for the recovery, identification and disposition of mortal remains. As of June 2002, the newly established Office on Missing Persons and Forensics (OMPF) in the UNMIK Department of Justice (DOJ) became the sole authority mandated to determine the whereabouts of missing persons, identify their mortal remains and return them to the family of the missing. Starting from 2001, based on a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between UNMIK and the Sarajevo-based International Commission

of Missing Persons (ICMP), supplemented by a further agreement in 2003, the identification of mortal remains was carried out by the ICMP through DNA testing.

24. On 9 December 2008, UNMIK's responsibility with regard to police and justice in Kosovo ended with the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) assuming full operational control in the area of the rule of law, following the Statement made by the President of the United Nations Security Council on 26 November 2008 (S/PRST/2008/44), welcoming the continued engagement of the European Union in Kosovo.
25. On the same date, UNMIK and EULEX signed a MoU on the modalities, and the respective rights and obligations arising from the transfer from UNMIK to EULEX of cases and the related files which involved on-going investigations, prosecutions and other activities undertaken by UNMIK International Prosecutors. Shortly thereafter, similar agreements were signed with regard to the files handled by international judges and UNMIK Police. All agreements obliged EULEX to provide to UNMIK access to the documents related to the actions previously undertaken by UNMIK authorities. Between 9 December 2008 and 30 March 2009, all criminal case files held by the UNMIK DOJ and UNMIK Police were handed over to EULEX.

B. Circumstances surrounding the abduction of Mr Srđan Vitošević

26. The complainants state that their son, Srđan Vitošević, went missing on 17 July 1998. On that day, at around 18:00, he left his home in Rahovec/Orahovac by car, going towards a pharmacy in the town centre.
27. The complainants explain that after their son left his home, a gun battle started in the town between the police forces and the KLA. He was allegedly subsequently taken by members of the KLA. His car was later found in Rahovec/Orahovac, damaged in the front, but without visible traces of blood inside.
28. Mrs Vitošević informed the Panel that a number of other persons were also kidnapped around the same time. Two of these people who had managed to escape told her that they had seen her son in the KLA detention centre in Malishevë/Mališevo. In 2005, a friend told her that he had seen Srđan Vitošević and his cousin in Albania, working on loading and unloading goods, and that their names had been changed.
29. The complainants state that they reported the abduction of their son to the District Public Prosecutor in Prizren and the ICRC, but to date have received no response.
30. On 24 July 1998, the ICRC opened a tracing request for Srđan Vitošević. His name likewise appears in the online database maintained by the ICMP³, in the database compiled by the OMPF, as well as in the memoranda that included the list of missing persons sent by the ICRC to UNMIK, dated 12 October 2001 and 11 February 2002.
31. Mrs Olivera Vitošević states that she has also filed a criminal report regarding the abduction of her son with the UNMIK International Prosecutor of the District Public

³ The database is available at: http://www.ic-mp.org/fdmsweb/index.php?w=mp_details_popup&l=en (accessed on 21 November 2013).

Prosecutor's Office in Prizren sometime in 2002 or 2003 and given a statement in the UNMIK Office in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica in 2004 or 2005.

32. According to information provided by the SRSG, the mortal remains of Srđan Vitošević were located and identified on 7 February 2006. However, the complainants have refused to accept that these mortal remains are those of their son and maintain that the whereabouts of Srđan Vitošević are unknown.

C. The investigation

33. In the present case, the Panel received from UNMIK investigative documents previously held by the UNMIK OMPF and UNMIK Police (MPU and WCIU). The Panel notes that UNMIK has confirmed that all available documents have been provided.

34. Concerning disclosure of information contained in the files, the Panel recalls that UNMIK has made available investigative files for the Panel's review under a pledge of confidentiality. In this regard, the Panel must clarify that although its assessment of the present case stems from a thorough examination of the available documentation, only limited information contained therein is disclosed. Hence a synopsis of relevant investigation steps taken by investigative authorities is provided in the paragraphs to follow.

1) Search for victim, identification and handover of his probable mortal remains

35. The investigative files reveal that on 12 November and 2 December 2004, the OMPF, assisted by KFOR, conducted an assessment at a possible gravesite near the town of Malishevë/Mališevo following information from a witness. However, the information in the investigative file shows that these site visits were negative with respect to possible burial sites.

36. The investigative files indicate that on 18 May 2005, unidentified mortal remains taken from an undisclosed gravesite were autopsied. They were later identified as those of Srđan Vitošević. The cause of death was identified as "gunshot injury to the head".

37. On 7 February 2006, based on the results of DNA analysis and on the comparison of ante-mortem and post-mortem information, the UNMIK OMPF issued a confirmation of identity certificate for Srđan Vitošević. On the same day, the OMPF issued a death certificate for Srđan Vitošević. Death was stated as caused by a "gunshot injury to the head and right thigh".

38. According to the SRSG, no information could be found concerning the process of handing over the mortal remains identified as those of Srđan Vitošević in the period between their identification on 7 February 2006, and 9 December 2008, marking the end of UNMIK's executive mandate in the justice area in Kosovo.

39. It transpires from information provided by the SRSG that, after 9 December 2008, EULEX Department of Forensic Medicine on several occasions contacted the complainants to hand over the mortal remains to them. However, they refused to accept the mortal remains as those of their son.

40. On 17 December 2010, the mortal remains identified as those of Srđan Vitošević were received by a representative of the Serbian Government's Commission for Missing Persons.

2) *Investigation with regard to the perpetrators*

41. The investigative file contains an UNMIK Police memorandum, dated 29 March 2004, titled "Release of information regarding the Klečka massacre from the Serbian Police". In the memorandum the investigator refers to a KLA detention centre in Drenovc/Drenovac village, Rahovec/Orahovac municipality. The investigator states that witnesses have told about many Serbian and Albanian prisoners who were kept there by members of the KLA on or around 23 July 1998. The memorandum concludes by asking whether the Liaison Office has any "knowledge about additional (eye) witnesses, who are able to give relevant information about victims and perpetrators".

42. The investigative file includes a document printed from the Human Rights Watch website dated 12 February 2004. This document, titled "Abductions of Ethnic Serbs by the KLA", details various allegations regarding KLA activity against ethnic Serbs in Kosovo. A paragraph headed "Abductions in Rahovec/Orahovac" is highlighted, as is the name of Srđan Vitošević who is included in a detailed summary of these events.

43. The investigative file contains a summary, dated 23 March 2005, of an interview with Mr J.L. who claims to have been detained with Srđan Vitošević and other Kosovo Serbs on 17 July 1998 in a detention centre in or around Malishevë/Mališevo. He describes how on 18 July 1998 he, along with Srđan Vitošević and two other Serbs, was taken from the detention centre by KLA members in a white van to a wooded area some 30 minutes away. There he recalls the vehicle stopping and there being ordered out of the van along with the other Kosovo Serbs. At that moment Mr J.L. was able to escape. The conclusion an investigative officer was that "The information obtained clearly indicates on the criminal character of Vitosevic, Srdjan disappearance".

44. The investigative file contains two printouts from an UNMIK Police database, both dated 9 March 2005, with copies of the criminal reports filed by the complainant Mrs Olivera Vitošević with the International Prosecutors of the District Public Prosecutor's Office in Prizren and Prishtinë/Priština. The file also contains a signed copy of a witness statement from the complainant Olivera Vitošević, dated 21 May 2005. In it, she describes the events leading up to the abduction of Srđan Vitošević.

45. An UNMIK WCIU Case Report, dated 13 July 2005, describes briefly the events leading to the abduction of Srđan Vitošević and states that "On this day there was also an attack by KLA in Rahovec/Orahovac that supposedly lasted 3 days and nights".

46. The investigative file contains a document titled "Appendix Witness Summaries" with a sub-heading "Rahovec". The document lists 23 witnesses, with summaries of their statements in "bullet point" form. Included in this document are the names of the complainants and their report regarding Srđan Vitošević. In addition, the document also contains the name of a witness A.A. who describes seeing "people from Rahovec" being taken to "S. C.'s farm". A comment next to this description refers to this possibly being the location referred to by Mr J.L. as "Crvenica".

47. The investigative file contains a criminal report filed by the complainant Mrs Olivera Vitošević to the “International Prosecutor of the District Public Prosecutor’s Office in Prizren”. The complaint details the events in question, the alleged crimes that have been committed and requests that those responsible for Srđan Vitošević’s abduction be prosecuted.
48. The investigative file also contains an undated document generated from the WCIU. This document, titled “Mass Murder, July 1998, Team 5, Orahovac Region”, provides an index of witness statements. Included in the list are the complainants and Mr J.L.
49. The investigative file contains a document titled “List of witnesses from Orahovac”, dated 16 January 2006. Included in this list of eight persons are both the complainant Mrs Olivera Vitošević and Mr J.L. In addition, the document contains a list titled “Victims from Orahovac-Roadblocks (17-21/07/98). Included in this list is the victim, Srđan Vitošević.
50. On 25 October 2007, the investigation was reviewed by the WCIU, as documented by a Case Analysis Report contained in the investigative file. Under one of the headings of “Case Status: Inactive” the document summarises the events regarding the abduction of Srđan Vitošević. It concludes that no action appears to have been taken regarding follow up on the interview of the witness Mr J.L. It states that “this witness has good, first hand information that should be followed up on by the WCU or Missing Persons”.
51. The investigative file contains a document from one V.Z. signed as “President of the Court” identifying all the persons who were abducted from Rahovec/Orahovac in July 1998 and identifies the commander of the KLA in this region as ultimately being responsible for these abductions.

III. THE COMPLAINTS

52. The complainants complain about UNMIK’s alleged failure to properly investigate the abduction of Srđan Vitošević. In this regard the Panel deems that they invoke a violation of the procedural limb of Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).
53. The complainants also complain about the mental pain and suffering allegedly caused to themselves by this situation. In this regard, the Panel deems that the complainants rely on Article 3 of the ECHR.

IV. THE LAW

A. Alleged violation of the procedural obligation under Article 2 of the ECHR

1. The scope of the Panel’s review

54. In determining whether it considers that there has been a violation of Article 2 (procedural limb) of the ECHR, the Panel is mindful of the existing case-law, notably that of the European Court of Human Rights. However, the Panel is also aware that the complaints

before it differ in some significant ways from those brought before that Court. First, the respondent is not a State but an interim international territorial administration mandated to exercise temporary responsibilities in Kosovo. No suspicion attaches to UNMIK with respect to the substantive obligations under Article 2 of the ECHR. Second, as in a limited number of cases before the European Court, those suspected of being responsible for the alleged killings and/or abductions are in all cases before the Panel non-state actors, mostly but not exclusively connected to the conflict. These are factors for the Panel to take into consideration as it assesses for the first time the procedural positive obligations of an intergovernmental organisation with respect to acts committed by third parties in a territory over which it has temporary legislative, executive and judicial control.

55. Before turning to the examination of the merits of the complaint, the Panel needs to clarify the scope of its review.
56. The Panel notes that with the adoption of the UNMIK Regulation No. 1999/1 on 25 July 1999 UNMIK undertook an obligation to observe internationally recognised human rights standards in exercising its functions. This undertaking was detailed in UNMIK Regulation No. 1999/24 of 12 December 1999, by which UNMIK assumed obligations under the following human rights instruments: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights and Protocols thereto, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
57. The Panel also notes that Section 1.2 of UNMIK Regulation No. 2006/12 of 23 March 2006 on the Establishment of the Human Rights Advisory Panel provides that the Panel “shall examine complaints from any person or group of individuals claiming to be the victim of a violation by UNMIK of (their) human rights”. It follows that only acts or omissions attributable to UNMIK fall within the jurisdiction *ratione personae* of the Panel. In this respect, it should be noted, as stated above, that as of 9 December 2008, UNMIK no longer exercises executive authority over the Kosovo judiciary and law enforcement machinery. Therefore UNMIK bears no responsibility for any violation of human rights allegedly committed by those bodies. Insofar as the complainants complain about acts that occurred after that date, they fall outside the jurisdiction *ratione personae* of the Panel.
58. Likewise, the Panel emphasises that, as far as its jurisdiction *ratione materiae* is concerned, as follows from Section 1.2 of UNMIK Regulation No. 2006/12, it can only examine complaints relating to an alleged violation of human rights. This means that it can only review acts or omissions complained of for their compatibility with the international human rights instruments referred to above (see § 56). In the particular case of killings and disappearances in life-threatening circumstances, it is not the Panel’s role to replace the competent authorities in the investigation of the case. Its task is limited to examining the effectiveness of the criminal investigation into such killings and disappearances, in the light of the procedural obligations flowing from Article 2 of the ECHR.
59. The Panel further notes that Section 2 of UNMIK Regulation No. 2006/12 provides that the Panel shall have jurisdiction over complaints relating to alleged violations of human rights

“that had occurred not earlier than 23 April 2005 or arising from facts which occurred prior to this date where these facts give rise to a continuing violation of human rights”. It follows that events that took place before 23 April 2005 generally fall outside the jurisdiction *ratione temporis* of the Panel. However, to the extent that such events gave rise to a continuing situation, the Panel has jurisdiction to examine complaints relating to that situation (see European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), Grand Chamber [GC], *Varnava and Others v. Turkey*, nos. 16064/90 and others, judgment of 18 September 2009, §§ 147-149; ECtHR, *Cyprus v. Turkey* [GC] no. 25781/94, judgment of 10 May 2001, § 136, ECHR 2001-IV).

2. The parties' submissions

60. The complainants in substance allege violations concerning the lack of an adequate criminal investigation into the abduction of Srđan Vitošević. The complainants also state that they were not informed as to whether an investigation was conducted and what the outcome was.
61. The SRSB notes in his submission dated 8 July 2013 that in this case UNMIK has been able to obtain a copy of the case file compiled by the UNMIK OMPF, as well as information from files compiled by the former War Crimes Unit (WCU). However, he states that “there is the possibility that additional and conclusive information exists, beyond the documents mentioned above”.
62. In his comments on the merits of the complaint under Article 2, the SRSB notes that the abduction of Srđan Vitošević occurred in July 1998, while the conflict was ongoing. At this time, the responsibility for investigating the matter lay with the Federal and Yugoslav authorities. The SRSB accepts that from 11 June 1999 onwards UNMIK took over the responsibility to conduct an investigation. In the words of the SRSB, “the essential purpose of such investigation is to secure the effective implementation of the domestic laws which protect the right to life, as defined by UNMIK Regulation No. 1999/1 On the Authority of the Interim Administration in Kosovo of 25 July 1999 and subsequently, by UNMIK Regulation No. 1999/24 On the Law Applicable in Kosovo of 12 December 1999, as amended”.
63. The SRSB further observes that when determining applications under Article 2, procedural part, consideration must be given to not imposing an impossible or disproportionate burden on UNMIK. In this regard, the SRSB recalls the judgment of 15 February 2011 rendered by the European Court of Human Rights in the case *Palić v. Bosnia and Herzegovina*, stating at paragraph 70:
- “The Court takes into account the complex situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, notably in the first ten years following the war. In such a post-conflict situation, what amounts to an impossible and/or disproportionate burden must be measured by the very particular facts and context. In this connection, the Court notes that more than 100,000 people were killed, almost 30,000 people went missing and more than two million people were displaced during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Inevitably choices had to be made in terms of post-war priorities and resources.”
64. In the view of the SRSB, UNMIK was faced with a very similar situation in Kosovo as the one in Bosnia in the aftermath of that conflict. The SRSB states that thousands of people

were displaced or went missing. Many of the persons who went missing were abducted, killed, and buried in unmarked graves inside or outside Kosovo, which made it very difficult locating and recovering their mortal remains.

65. In June 2002, UNMIK created the OMPF with the mandate to determine the fate of the missing; however its work was faced with many challenges at the beginning of the operations, due to the work previously done mostly by actors independent from UNMIK. In particular, the SRSG states that the collection of evidence of war crimes began with the arrival of NATO in 1999 with independent teams from several countries operating under the loose coordination of the ICTY. A lack of standard operating procedures or centralisation led to problems with the evidence gathered in this phase. In 2000, the ICTY launched a large, centralised forensic operation, based at the Rahovec/Orahovac mortuary, with standard operating procedures for all forensic teams except the British one, which operated independently out of Prishtinë/Priština. The SRSG states that, in the effort to demonstrate that crimes were systematic and widespread, the ICTY teams conducted autopsies on as many bodies as possible, carrying out little or no identification work; moreover, unidentified bodies exhumed in 1999 were reburied in locations still unknown to the OMPF. After the ICTY closed their operation in 2000, the UNMIK Police MPU continued small-scale investigations on missing persons “*ex-officio*, without any broader prosecutorial strategy”. As a consequence, a large amount of unstructured information was collected. The SRSG states that, taking into account the difficulties described above, “the process of dealing effectively with disappearances and other serious violations of international humanitarian law has been understandably incremental” in Kosovo as it is reflected in the *Palić* case referred to above. The SRSG concludes that the work of the OMPF contributed greatly to determining the whereabouts and fate of the missing from the Kosovo conflict; however it was not possible to locate all the missing within the timeframe and resources available at that time.
66. The SRSG further argues that fundamental to conducting effective investigations is a professional, well trained and well-resourced police force and that such a force did not exist in Kosovo in the aftermath of the conflict. In the policing vacuum following the end of the conflict, UNMIK had to build a new Kosovo Police Service from scratch, a long and challenging task which, according to the SRSG, is still in progress. The SRSG also states that UNMIK Police faced numerous challenges in exercising law enforcement functions gradually transferred to it by KFOR in 1999-2000. In this regard, he refers to the UNMIK Police Annual Report of 2000 describing the situation as follows:

“UNMIK Police had to deal with the aftermath of war, with dead bodies and looted and burnt houses. Ethnic violence flared through illegal evictions, forcible takeovers of properties, the burning of houses and physical violence against communities all over Kosovo. Tempers and tensions were running high amongst all ethnic groups, exacerbated by reports of missing and dead persons. It became imperative for UNMIK Police to establish order and to quickly construct a framework to register and investigate crimes.

All of this had to be done with limited physical and human resources. Being the first executive mission in the history of the UN, the concept, planning and implementation was being developed on the ground. With 20 different contributory nationalities at the

beginning, it was a very challenging task for police managers to establish common practices for optimum results in a high-risk environment.”

67. The SRSG states that UNMIK international police officers working on cases of missing persons had to adjust to conducting investigations in a foreign territory and country, with limited support from the still developing Kosovo Police. He further states that these investigators were often faced with situations where individuals holding relevant knowledge on the whereabouts and fate of missing persons did not want to disclose this information. According to the SRSG, all these constraints inhibited the ability of UNMIK Police to conduct investigations according to the standards that may be expected from States with more established institutions and which are not faced with the high number of cases of this nature associated with a post-conflict situation.
68. With regard to locating the mortal remains, the SRSG states that UNMIK investigative efforts led to the location and identification of the mortal remains of Srđan Vitošević, which took place in February 2006. At that time, an autopsy was conducted which established the cause of death; however the mortal remains identified as those of Srđan Vitošević were handed over by EULEX to a representative of the Serbian Government’s Commission on Missing Persons in 2010. In this regard, the SRSG states that “for the period commencing from 7 February 2006 and ending on 9 December 2008, the date when the responsibility of UNMIK with regard to police and justice in Kosovo ended”, “no information exists in the files as to any reason for the retention of mortal remains by UNMIK”. The SRSG states that “UNMIK also does not have any information on a formal notification of the family or a procedure in case of refusal to accept remains”.
69. With regard to identifying and bringing the perpetrators to justice, the SRSG specifically argues that “an investigation was opened by UNMIK Police” and that it transpires from the investigative files that “the case of the disappearance and death of Mr. Srđan Vitošević was part of an investigation on mass murder which had happened in the Orahovac region”. The SRSG states that in 2005 the investigators recommended that “the investigative file remain open and pending with the WCU, presumably to be considered further should additional witnesses come forward or additional information become available”.
70. The SRSG finally argues that “it is evident that UNMIK Police did conduct investigative efforts in accordance with the procedural requirements of Article 2 ECHR, aiming at bringing the perpetrators to justice”.

3. The Panel’s assessment

71. The Panel considers that the complainants invoke a violation of the procedural obligation stemming from the right to life, guaranteed by Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) in that UNMIK Police did not conduct an effective investigation into Srđan Vitošević’s abduction.

a) Submission of relevant files

72. The SRSG observes that all available files regarding the investigation have been presented to the Panel. However, in his comments dated 8 July 2013, the SRSG suggests that the files could be incomplete (see § 61 above).

73. The Panel notes that Section 15 of UNMIK Regulation No. 2006/12 states that the Panel may request the submission from UNMIK of any documents and that the SRSG shall cooperate with the Panel and provide the necessary assistance including, in particular, in the release of documents and information relevant to the complaint. The Panel in this regard refers to the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights that inferences shall be drawn from the conduct of the respondent party during the proceedings, including from its failure “to submit information in their hands without a satisfactory explanation” (see ECtHR, *Çelikkilek v. Turkey*, no. 27693/95, judgment of 31 May 2005, § 56).
74. The Panel also notes that the proper maintenance of investigative files concerning crimes such as killings and disappearances, from the opening of the investigation to their handing over, is crucial to the continuation of such investigations and could thus raise *per se* issues under Article 2. The Panel likewise notes that UNMIK has not provided any explanation as to why the documentation may be incomplete, nor with respect to which parts.
75. The Panel itself is not in the position to verify the completeness of the investigative files received. The Panel will therefore assess the merits of the complaint on the basis of documents made available (in this sense, see ECtHR, *Tsechoyev v. Russia*, no. 39358/05, judgment of 15 March 2011, § 146).
- b) *General principles concerning the obligation to conduct an effective investigation under Article 2*
76. The Panel notes that the positive obligation to investigate disappearances is widely accepted in international human rights law since at least the case of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights *Velásquez-Rodríguez* (see Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACtHR), *Velásquez-Rodríguez v. Honduras*, judgment of 29 July 1988, Series C No. 4). The positive obligation has also been stated by the HRC as stemming from Article 6 (right to life), Article 7 (prohibition of cruel and inhuman treatment) and Article 9 (right to liberty and security of person), read in conjunction with Article 2(3) (right to an effective remedy) of the ICCPR (see HRC, General Comment No. 6, 30 April 1982, § 4; HRC, General Comment No. 31, 26 May 2004, §§ 8 and 18, CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add. 13; see also, among others, HRC, *Mohamed El Awani v. Libyan Arab Jamahiriya*, communication no. 1295/2004, views of 11 July 2007, CCPR/C/90/D/1295/2004). The obligation to investigate disappearances and killings is also asserted in the UN Declaration on the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearances (A/Res/47/133, 18 December 1992), and further detailed in UN guidelines such as the UN Manual on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-Legal Arbitrary and Summary Executions (1991) and the “Guidelines for the Conduct of United Nations Inquiries into Allegations of Massacres” (1995). The importance of the obligation is confirmed by the adoption of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance in 2006, which entered into force on 23 December 2010.
77. In order to address the complainant’s allegations, the Panel refers, in particular, to the well-established case-law of the European Court on Human Rights on the procedural obligation under Article 2 of the ECHR. The Court has held that “[The] obligation to protect the right to life under Article 2 of the Convention, read in conjunction with the State’s general duty under Article 1 of the Convention to “secure to everyone within [its] jurisdiction the rights

and freedoms defined in [the] Convention”, requires by implication that there should be some form of effective official investigation when individuals have been killed (see, *mutatis mutandis*, ECtHR, *McCann and Others v. the United Kingdom*, judgment of 27 September 1995, § 161, Series A no. 324; and ECtHR, *Kaya v. Turkey*, judgment of 19 February 1998, § 105, *Reports of Judgments and Decisions* 1998-I; see also ECtHR, *Jasinskis v. Latvia*, no. 45744/08, judgment of 21 December 2010, § 71). The duty to conduct such an investigation arises in all cases of killing and other suspicious death, whether the perpetrators were private persons or State agents or are unknown (see ECtHR, *Kolevi v. Bulgaria*, no. 1108/02, judgment of 5 November 2009, § 191).

78. The European Court has also stated that the procedural obligation to provide some form of effective official investigation exists also when an individual has gone missing in life-threatening circumstances and is not confined to cases where it is apparent that the disappearance was caused by an agent of the State (see ECtHR [GC], *Varnava and Others v. Turkey*, cited in § 59 above, at § 136).
79. The authorities must act of their own motion once the matter has come to their attention, and they cannot leave it to the initiative of the next-of-kin either to lodge a formal complaint or to take responsibility for the conduct of any investigative procedure (see ECtHR, *Ahmet Özkan and Others v. Turkey*, no. 21689/93, judgment of 6 April 2004, § 310; see also ECtHR, *Isayeva v. Russia*, no. 57950/00, judgment of 24 February 2005, § 210).
80. Setting out the standards of an effective investigation, the Court has stated that “beside being independent, accessible to the victim’s family, carried out with reasonable promptness and expedition, affording a sufficient element of public scrutiny of the investigation and its results, the investigation must also be effective in the sense that is capable of leading to a determination of whether the death was caused unlawfully and if so, to the identification and punishment of those responsible (see ECtHR [GC], *Varnava and Others v. Turkey*, cited in § 59 above, at § 191; see also ECtHR, *Palić v. Bosnia and Herzegovina*, no. 4704/04, judgment of 15 February 2011, § 63). This is not an obligation of results but of means. The authorities must take whatever reasonable steps they can to secure the evidence concerning the incident, including, *inter alia* eye-witness testimony, forensic evidence and, where appropriate, an autopsy which provides a complete and accurate record of injury and an objective analysis of the clinical findings, including the cause of death. Any deficiency in the investigation which undermines its ability to establish the cause of death or the person or persons responsible will risk falling foul of this standard (see ECtHR, *Ahmet Özkan and Others v. Turkey*, cited in § 79 above, at § 312; and *Isayeva v. Russia*, cited in § 79 above, at § 212).
81. In particular, the investigation’s conclusion must be based on thorough, objective and impartial analysis of all relevant elements. Failing to follow an obvious line of enquiry undermines to a decisive extent the investigation’s ability to establish the circumstances of the case and the identity of those responsible (see ECtHR, *Kolevi v. Bulgaria*, cited in § 77 above, at § 201). Nevertheless, the nature and degree of scrutiny which satisfy the minimum threshold of the investigation’s effectiveness depend on the circumstances of the particular case. They must be assessed on the basis of all relevant facts and with regard to the practical realities of the investigation work (see ECtHR, *Velcea and Mazărev. Romania*, no. 64301/01, judgment of 1 December 2009, § 105).

82. Specifically with regard to persons disappeared and later found dead, the Court has stated that the procedures of exhuming and identifying mortal remains do not exhaust the obligation under Article 2 of the ECHR. The Court holds that “the procedural obligation arising from a disappearance will generally remain as long as the whereabouts and fate of the person are unaccounted for, and it is thus of a continuing nature” (ECtHR, *Palić v. Bosnia and Herzegovina*, cited in § 80 above, at § 46; in the same sense ECtHR [GC], *Varnava and Others v. Turkey*, cited in § 59 above, at § 148, *Aslakhanova and Others v. Russia*, nos. 2944/06 and others, judgment of 18 December 2012, § 122). However, the Court also stresses that this procedural obligation “does not come to an end even on discovery of the body ... This only casts light on one aspect of the fate of the missing person and the obligation to account for the disappearance and death, as well as to identify and prosecute any perpetrator of unlawful acts in that connection, will generally remain” (ECtHR, *Palić v. Bosnia and Herzegovina*, cited above, at § 46; in the same sense ECtHR [GC], *Varnava and Others v. Turkey*, cited in § 59 above, at § 145). While the location and the subsequent identification of the mortal remains of the victim may in themselves be significant achievements, the procedural obligation under Article 2 continues to exist (see ECtHR, *Palić v. Bosnia and Herzegovina*, cited above, at § 64).
83. On the requirement of public scrutiny, the Court has further stated that there must be a sufficient element of public scrutiny of the investigation or its results to secure accountability in practice as well as in theory. The degree of public scrutiny required may well vary from case to case. In all cases, however, the victim's next-of-kin must be involved in the procedure to the extent necessary to safeguard his or her legitimate interests (see ECtHR, *Ahmet Özkan and Others*, cited in § 79 above, at §§ 311-314; ECtHR, *Isayeva v. Russia*, cited in § 79 above, at §§ 211-214 and the cases cited therein; ECtHR [GC], *Al-Skeini and Others v. the United Kingdom*, judgment of 7 July 2011, no. 55721/07, § 167, ECHR 2011).
84. The Court has also underlined the great importance of an effective investigation in establishing the truth of what transpired, not only for the families of victims, but also for other victims of similar crimes, as well as the general public, who have the right to know what occurred (ECtHR [GC], *El-Masri v. The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, no. 39630/09, judgment of 13 December 2012, § 191). The United Nations also recognises the importance of the right to truth. In the words of the United Nations Secretary-General, “the right to truth implies knowing the full and complete truth about the violations and the events that transpired, their specific circumstances and who participated in them. In the case of missing persons ... it also implies the right to know the fate and whereabouts of the victim.” (see Report of the UN Secretary-General, Missing Persons, A/67/267, 8 August 2012, § 5; see also UN Human Rights Council, Resolutions 9/11 and 12/12: Right to the Truth, 24 September 2008 and 12 October 2009).

c) *Applicability of Article 2 to the Kosovo context*

85. The Panel is conscious of the fact that the abduction of Srđan Vitošević took place during the Kosovo conflict in July 1998, approximately 11 months before UNMIK's deployment in Kosovo. UNMIK became aware of the matter in the aftermath of armed conflict when crime, violence and insecurity were rife.

86. On his part, the SRSG does not contest that UNMIK had a duty to investigate the present case under ECHR Article 2. However, according to the SRSG, the unique circumstances pertaining to the Kosovo context and to UNMIK's deployment in the first phase of its mission shall be taken into account when assessing whether this investigation is in compliance with Article 2 of the ECHR. In substance, the SRSG argues that it is not possible to apply to UNMIK the same standards applicable to a State in a normal situation.
87. The Panel considers that the SRSG's arguments raise two main questions: first, whether the standards of Article 2 continue to apply in situation of conflict or generalised violence and, secondly, whether such standards shall be considered fully applicable to UNMIK.
88. As regards the applicability of Article 2 to UNMIK, the Panel recalls that with the adoption of the UNMIK Regulation No. 1999/1 on 25 July 1999 UNMIK undertook an obligation to observe internationally recognised human rights standards in exercising its functions. This undertaking was detailed in UNMIK Regulation No. 1999/24 of 12 December 1999, by which UNMIK assumed obligations under certain international human rights instruments, including the ECHR. In this respect, the Panel has already found that it is true that UNMIK's interim character and related difficulties must be duly taken into account with regard to a number of situations, but under no circumstances could these elements be taken as a justification for diminishing standards of respect for human rights, which were duly incorporated into UNMIK's mandate (see HRAP, *Milogorić and Others*, nos. 38/08 and others, opinion of 24 March 2011, § 44; *Berisha and Others*, nos. 27/08 and others, opinion of 23 February 2011, § 25; *Lalić and Others*, nos. 09/08 and others, opinion of 9 June 2012, § 22).
89. Concerning the applicability of Article 2 to situations of conflict or generalised violence, the Panel recalls that the European Court on Human Rights has established the applicability of Article 2 to post-conflict situations, including in countries of the former Yugoslavia (see, among other examples, ECtHR, *Palić v. Bosnia and Herzegovina*, cited in § 80 above, and ECtHR, *Jularić v. Croatia*, no. 20106/06, judgment of 20 January 2011). The Court has further held that that the procedural obligation under Article 2 continues to apply in "difficult security conditions, including in a context of armed conflict" (see ECtHR [GC], *Al-Skeini and Others v. the United Kingdom*, cited in § 83 above, at § 164; see also ECtHR, *Güleç v. Turkey*, judgment of 27 July 1998, § 81, Reports 1998-IV; ECtHR, *Ergi v. Turkey*, judgment of 28 July 1998, §§ 79 and 82, Reports 1998-IV; ECtHR, *Ahmet Özkan and Others v. Turkey*, cited in § 79 above, at §§ 85-90, 309-320 and 326-330; *Isayeva v. Russia*, cited in § 79 above, at §§ 180 and 210; ECtHR, *Kanlibaş v. Turkey*, no. 32444/96, judgment of 8 December 2005, §§ 39-51).
90. The Court has acknowledged that "where the death [and disappearances] to be investigated under Article 2 occur in circumstances of generalised violence, armed conflict or insurgency, obstacles may be placed in the way of investigators and concrete constraints may compel the use of less effective measures of investigation or may cause an investigation to be delayed" (see, ECtHR [GC], *Al-Skeini and Others v. the United Kingdom*, cited above, at §164; ECtHR, *Bazorkina v. Russia*, no. 69481/01, judgment of 27 July 2006, § 121). Nonetheless, the Court has held that "the obligation under Article 2 to safeguard life entails that, even in difficult security conditions, all reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that an effective, independent investigation is conducted into alleged breaches of the right to life (see, amongst many other examples, ECtHR, *Kaya v. Turkey*,

cited in § 77 above, at §§ 86-92; ECtHR, *Ergi v Turkey*, cited above, at §§ 82-85; ECtHR [GC], *Tanrikulu v. Turkey*, no. 23763/94, judgment of 8 July 1999, §§ 101-110, ECHR 1999-IV; ECtHR, *Khashiyev and Akayeva v. Russia*, nos. 57942/00 and 57945/00, judgment of 24 February 2005, §§ 156-166; ECtHR, *Isayeva v. Russia*, cited in § 79 above, at §§ 215-224; ECtHR, *Musayev and Others v. Russia*, nos. 57941/00 and others, judgment of 26 July 2007, §§ 158-165).

91. Similarly, the HRC has held that the right to life, including its procedural guarantees, shall be considered as the supreme right from which no derogation is permitted even in time of public emergency which threatens the life of the nation (see, HRC, General Comment No. 6, cited in § 76 above, at § 1; HRC, *Abubakar Amirov and Aizan Amirova v. Russian Federation*, communication no. 1447/2006, views of 22 April 2009, § 11.2, CCPR/C/95/D/1447/2006). Further, the HRC has stated the applicability of Article 2 (3), 6 and 7 of the ICCPR with specific reference to UNMIK's obligation to conduct proper investigations on disappearances and abductions in Kosovo (see HRC, Concluding Observations of the Human Rights Committee: Kosovo (Serbia), 14 August 2006, §§ 12-13, CCPR/C/UNK/CO/1).
92. The Panel appreciates the difficulties encountered by UNMIK during the first phase of its deployment. The Panel notes that the appropriate importance attached to the issue of missing persons in Kosovo meant that UNMIK had to take into account both the humanitarian and criminal dimensions of the situation. In particular, the Panel considers that the importance attached to the criminal investigations and the difficulties in Kosovo that limited the abilities of investigating authorities to conduct such investigations, made it crucial that UNMIK establish from the outset an environment conducive to the performance of meaningful investigations. This would involve putting in place a system that would include such elements as the allocation of overall responsibility for the supervision and monitoring of progress in investigations, provision for the regular review of the status of investigations, and a process for the proper handover of cases between different officers or units of UNMIK Police. Such a system should also take account of the protection needs of victims and witnesses (see, *mutatis mutandis*, ECtHR, *R.R. and Others v. Hungary*, no. 19400/11, judgment of 4 December 2012, §§ 28-32), as well as to consider the special vulnerability of displaced persons in post-conflict situations (see ECtHR [GC], *Sargsyan v. Azerbaijan*, no. 40167/06, decision of 14 December 2011, § 145; and ECtHR [GC], *Chiragov and Others v. Armenia*, no. 13216/05, decision of 14 December 2011, § 146). While understanding that the deployment and the organisation of the police and justice apparatus occurred gradually, the Panel deems that this process was completed in 2003 when the police and justice system in Kosovo was described as being “well-functioning” and “sustainable” by the UN Secretary-General (see § 22 above).
93. In response to the SRSG's objection that Article 2 must be interpreted in a way which does not impose an impossible or disproportionate burden on the authorities, either in the context of policing activities or that of priorities and resources, the Panel takes into account that the European Court has established that what amounts to an impossible and/or disproportionate burden must be measured by the very particular facts and contexts (see ECtHR, *Palić v. Bosnia and Herzegovina*, cited in § 80 above, at § 70; *Brecknell v. The United Kingdom*, no. 32457/04, judgment of 27 November 2007, § 62).

94. The Panel further notes that its task is not to review relevant practices or alleged obstacles to the conduct of effective investigations *in abstracto*, but only in relation to their specific application to the particular circumstances of a situation subject of a complaint before it (see ECtHR, *Brogan and Others v. the United Kingdom*, judgment of 29 November 1988, § 53, Series A no. 145-B). The Panel therefore determines that the nature and degree of scrutiny to determine whether the effectiveness of the investigation satisfies the minimum threshold depends on the circumstances of the particular case. For these reasons, the Panel considers that it will establish with regard to each case if all reasonable steps were taken to conduct an effective investigation as prescribed by Article 2, having regard to the realities of the investigative work in Kosovo.

d) *Compliance with Article 2 in the present case*

95. Turning to the circumstances of the present case, the Panel notes that there were obvious shortcomings in the conduct of the investigations since their inception, having in mind that the initial stage of the investigation is of the utmost importance. However, in light of the considerations developed above concerning its limited temporal jurisdiction (see § 59), the Panel recalls that it is competent *ratione temporis* to evaluate the compliance of the investigations with Article 2 of the ECHR only for the period after 23 April 2005, while taking into consideration the state of the case at that date (ECtHR, *Palić v. Bosnia and Herzegovina*, cited in § 80 above, at § 70). The period under review ends on 9 December 2008, with EULEX taking over responsibility in the area of administration of justice (see § 24 above).

96. The complainants state that their son's abduction was reported to the ICRC and, after their deployment, to UNMIK authorities. Lacking specific documentation in this regard, the Panel considers that UNMIK became aware of Srđan Vitošević's disappearance at the latest in October 2001, when his disappearance had been communicated by the ICRC to UNMIK (see § 30 above).

97. The Panel notes that, although the exact date of commencement of the investigation aimed at identifying the possible perpetrators does not appear from the case file, the first documented investigative activities were carried out by UNMIK in March 2004 (see § 41 above). The Panel also notes that witness statement of Mr J.L., who states that he was abducted along with Srđan Vitošević, but who managed to escape, was taken only in March 2005.

98. The Panel also notes that it is apparent from the case file that, starting from 2004, the investigators were aware that the case of Srđan Vitošević was part of a wider investigation regarding abductions, detentions and killings that took place in the area of Rahovec/Orahovac in 1998 and 1999. However, what is absent in the record of such an investigation involving a possible pattern of abductions, detentions and killings, is any evidence to suggest a systematic investigation into the case. The documents provided consist mostly of summary information identifying the facts, possible witnesses, and those persons from whom statements may have been taken, as well as information regarding events in Rahovec/Orahovac from an NGO. No formal statements from other witnesses are provided and no information is given regarding any formal investigative steps in attempting to locate the detention centre in Malishevë/Mališevo. In addition, the information received

from crucial witnesses identified in the investigation, such as Mr J.L., do not appear to have been followed up and investigated further.

99. Further, the Panel notes that other such activity, such as interviewing potential witnesses where the car was found, persons who had reported seeing the victim in the KLA detention centre in Malishevë/Mališevo, witness A.A., who appears to have corroborated the statement of J.L. and the person who claimed to have seen Srđan Vitošević in Albania, does not appear to have taken place.
100. Coming to the period within its jurisdiction, starting from 23 April 2005, the Panel notes that after that critical date the failure to conduct the necessary investigative actions persisted, thus, in accordance with the continuing obligation to investigate, bringing the assessment of the whole investigation within the period of the Panel's jurisdiction.
101. In addition, the Panel considers that, as those responsible for the crime had not been located, UNMIK was obligated to use the means at its disposal to regularly review the progress of the investigation to ensure that nothing had been overlooked and any new evidence had been considered, as well as to inform the relatives of Srđan Vitošević regarding any possible new leads of enquiry.
102. Indeed, the case of Srđan Vitošević was reviewed by WCIU in 2007, when the reviewing investigators qualified Mr J.L.'s testimony an important evidence that required further action. Of note is that this review, identifying this particular issue took place some two years after Mr J.L. had been initially interviewed. Also, it appears that no follow-up was ever made to the review.
103. With respect to the location of the mortal remains, the Panel notes that they were discovered in May 2005 and identified through DNA analysis on 7 February 2006. An autopsy, which was conducted on the same day, established the violent nature of Srđan Vitošević's death. The Panel also notes that no explanation is given as to why the handover of the mortal remains identified as those of Srđan Vitošević did not take place during the period under UNMIK's authority and what efforts were done by UNMIK in this regard.
104. The apparent lack of any adequate reaction from UNMIK Police may have suggested to perpetrators that the authorities were either not able, or not willing to investigate such criminal acts. Such an attitude of the authorities towards the gravest crimes in any society, and especially in post-conflict circumstances, inevitably creates a culture of impunity among the criminals and can only lead to a worsening of the situation. The problems which UNMIK had encountered at the beginning of its mission, which were discussed above, do not justify such inaction, either at the outset or subsequently.
105. In response to the SRSG's submission that, as of 2007 the WCIU investigators recommended that the case of Srđan Vitošević remain open and pending to be considered further in case additional witnesses or information had become available, the Panel holds that finding the necessary information to fill the gaps in an investigation is the main goal of any investigative activity. Therefore, a lack of information should not be used as an argument to defend inaction by the investigative authorities. As was shown, instead of actively searching for information and leads, UNMIK Police simply waited for further

information to appear by itself. In this situation it may have led to the loss of potential evidence. Indeed UNMIK Police did not follow up on the information that they had.

106. The Panel accepts that the duty to investigate is not breached merely because the investigation does not produce a satisfactory result. Nevertheless, such an investigation must be undertaken in a serious manner and not be a mere formality. The Panel must therefore conclude that with respect to the reasonable investigative steps and pursuing obvious lines of enquiry, serious deficiencies existed with respect to the effectiveness of this investigation.
107. The Panel considers that, having regard to all the circumstances of the particular case, not all reasonable steps were taken by UNMIK to identify the perpetrators and to bring them to justice. In this sense the Panel considers that the investigation was not adequate and did not comply with the requirements of promptness, expedition and effectiveness (see § 80 above), as required by Article 2.
108. As concerns the requirement of public scrutiny, the Panel recalls that Article 2 also requires the victim's next-of-kin to be involved in the investigation to the extent necessary to safeguard his or her legitimate interests.
109. The complainants state that they received no feedback from UNMIK on the investigation concerning their son. The Panel notes that in May 2005, UNMIK Police took a witness statement from the complainant Mrs Vitošević, who highlighted the circumstances surrounding her son's abduction. However, there is no indication in the case-files of further contacts with the complainants to inform them about the status of the investigation, not even after the discovery and identification of the mortal remained believed to be those of Srđan Vitošević. The Panel therefore considers that the investigation was not accessible to the complainants' family as required by Article 2.
110. In light of the deficiencies and shortcomings described above, the Panel concludes that UNMIK failed to carry out an effective investigation into the abduction of Srđan Vitošević. There has been accordingly a violation of Article 2, procedural limb, of the ECHR.

B. Alleged violation of Article 3 of the ECHR

111. The Panel considers that the complainants invoke, in substance, a violation of the right to be free from inhumane or degrading treatment, guaranteed by Article 3 of the ECHR.

1. The scope of the Panel's review

112. The Panel will consider the allegations under Article 3 of the ECHR, applying the same scope of review as was set out with regard to Article 2 (see §§ 54-59 above).
113. The Panel recalls that the European Court of Human Rights has found on many occasions that a situation of enforced disappearance gives rise to a violation of Article 3 in respect of close relatives of the victim. It emphasises that, concerning Article 3, "the essence of such a violation does not so much lie in the fact of the 'disappearance' of the family member but rather concerns the authorities' reactions and attitudes to the situation when it is

brought to their attention” (see, e.g., ECtHR [GC], *Çakici v. Turkey*, no. 23657/94, judgment of 8 July 1999, § 98, *ECHR*, 1999-IV; ECtHR [GC], *Cyprus v. Turkey*, no. 25781/94, judgment of 10 May 2001, § 156, *ECHR*, 2001-IV; ECtHR, *Orhan v. Turkey*, no. 25656/94, judgment of 18 June 2002, § 358; ECtHR, *Bazorkina v. Russia*, cited in § 90 above, at § 139; ECtHR, *Palić v. Bosnia and Herzegovina*, cited in § 80 above, at § 74; ECtHR, *Alpatu Israilova v. Russia*, no. 15438/05, judgment of 14 March 2013, § 69; see also HRAP, *Zdravković*, no. 46/08, decision of 17 April 2009, § 41). “It is especially in respect of the latter that a relative may claim directly to be a victim of the authorities’ conduct” (see, among others, ECtHR, *Er and Others v. Turkey*, no. 23016/04, judgment of 31 July 2012, § 94).

114. Lastly, where mental suffering caused by the authorities’ reactions to the disappearance is at stake, the alleged violation is contrary to the substantive element of Article 3 of the ECHR, not its procedural element, as is the case with regard to Article 2 (ECtHR, *Gelayevy v. Russia*, no. 20216/07, judgment of 15 July 2010, §§ 147-148).

2. The Parties’ submissions

115. The complainants allege that the lack of information and certainty surrounding the abduction of Srđan Vitošević, particularly because of UNMIK’s failure to properly investigate his disappearance, caused mental suffering to them and their family.

116. With respect to Article 3, the SRSG does not dispute the mental anguish and suffering of the complainants based on the abduction of Srđan Vitošević, but he argues that no evidence exists which suggests that UNMIK acted inappropriately when responding to enquiries by the complainants. Such a requirement, he argues, being a necessary element to a finding of a violation of Article 3.

117. Finally, the SRSG states that any mental anguish and suffering of the complainant cannot be attributed to UNMIK, but rather results from the abduction and probable killing of Srđan Vitošević. The SRSG concludes that the complainants’ suffering lacks a character distinct from the emotional distress which may be regarded as inevitably caused to the relatives of a victim of a serious human rights violation.

3. The Panel’s assessment

a) General principles concerning the obligation under Article 3

118. Like Article 2, Article 3 of the ECHR enshrines one of the most fundamental values in democratic societies (ECtHR, *Talat Tepe v. Turkey*, no. 31247/96, 21 December 2004, § 47; ECtHR [GC], *Ilaşcu and Others v. Moldova and Russia*, no. 48787/99, judgment of 8 July 2004, *ECHR*, 2004-VII, § 424). As confirmed by the absolute nature conferred on it by Article 15 § 2 of the ECHR, the prohibition of torture and inhuman and degrading treatment still applies even in most difficult circumstances.

119. Setting out the general principles applicable to situations where violations of the obligation under Article 3 of the ECHR are alleged, the Panel notes that the phenomenon of disappearance constitutes a complex form of human rights violation that must be

understood and confronted in an integral fashion (see IACtHR, *Velásquez-Rodríguez v. Honduras*, cited in § 76 above, at § 150).

120. The Panel observes that the obligation under Article 3 of the ECHR differs from the procedural obligation on the authorities under Article 2. Whereas the latter requires the authorities to take specific legal action capable of leading to identification and punishment of those responsible, the former is more general and humanitarian and relates to their reaction to the plight of the relatives of those who have disappeared or died.
121. The HRC has also recognised disappearances as a serious violation of human rights. In its decision of 21 July 1983, in the case *Quinteros v. Uruguay*, it stated that disappearances constitute serious violations of the rights of the disappeared person's relatives, who suffer from deep anguish which persists for as long as the uncertainty concerning the fate of their loved one continues, often for many years (see HRC, Communication No. 107/1981, U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/OP/2 at 138 (1990), § 14). Moreover, in its decision of 15 July 1994 in the case *Mojica v. Dominican Republic*, the HRC has deemed that "the disappearance of persons is inseparably linked to treatment that amounts to a violation of article 7 [of the Covenant]", also prohibiting torture, inhumane or degrading treatment and punishment (see HRC, Communication No. 449/1991, U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/51/D/449/1991 (1994), § 5.7).
122. With respect to the question whether a member of the family of a disappeared person can be considered the victim of a treatment contrary to Article 3 of the ECHR, the Panel refers to the case law of the European Court of Human Rights and to its own case law. The European Court accepts that this may be the case, depending on the existence of "special factors which give the suffering of the [family member] a dimension and character distinct from the emotional distress which may be regarded as inevitably caused to relatives of a victim of a serious human rights violation". The Court further holds that "relevant elements will include the proximity of the family tie, the particular circumstances of the relationship, the extent to which the family member witnessed the events in question, the involvement of the family member in the attempts to obtain information about the disappeared person and the way in which the authorities responded to those enquiries" (see ECtHR, *Basayeva and Others v. Russia*, nos. 15441/05 and 20731/04, judgment of 28 May 2009, § 159; ECtHR, *Er and Others v. Turkey*, cited in § 76 above, at § 94).
123. The Panel takes note that, when assessing the emotional suffering of the victims, the European Court also considers the following circumstances: the length of the disappearance itself and of the period with no information on the fate of the missing person and on the investigation undertaken by the authorities; the delay in initiation of criminal investigation into the disappearance; the absence of any "meaningful" action by the authorities, despite the fact that the complainants approached them to report the disappearance of their relative and to share with them the information they had; lack of any plausible explanation or information as to the fate of their missing relatives despite personal or written inquiries with official bodies (see, among others, ECtHR, *Er and Others v. Turkey*, cited in § 112 above, at § 96; ECtHR, *Osmanoğlu v. Turkey*, no. 48804/99, judgment of 24 January 2008, § 97). Another factor leading to a finding of violation of Article 3 of the ECHR is the continuous nature of the psychological suffering of relatives of a victim of a disappearance (ECtHR, *Salakhov and Islyamova v. Ukraine*, no. 28005/08, judgment of 14 March 2013, § 201).

124. The HRC has also considered the issue and recognised family members of disappeared or missing persons as victims of a violation of Article 7 of the Covenant: parents (*Boucherf v. Algeria*, Communication No. 1196/2003, views of 30 March 2006, § 9.7, CCPR/C/86/D/1196/2003), children (*Zarzi v. Algeria*, Communication No. 1780/2008, views of 22 March 2011, § 7.6, CCPR/C/101/D/1780/2008), siblings (*El Abani v. Libyan Arab Jamahiriya*, Communication No. 1640/2007, views of 26 July 2010, § 7.5, CCPR/C/99/D/1640/2007), spouses (*Bousroual v. Algeria*, Communication No. 992/2001, views of 30 March 2006, § 9.8, CCPR/C/86/D/992/2001), aunts and uncles (*Benaniza v. Algeria*, views of 26 July 2010, § 9.4, CCPR/C/99/D/1588/2007) (*Bashasha v. Libyan Arab Jamahiriya*, views of 20 October 2010, § 7.2, CCPR/C/100/D/1776/2008). It justifies this broad understanding of victim status by the suffering and distress that is caused to family members by the disappearance of an individual, which is often exacerbated by the authorities' insufficient efforts to investigate the disappearance in order to establish the fate of the victim and to bring perpetrators to justice (*Aboussedra v. Libyan Arab Jamahiriya*, Communication No. 1751/2008, views of 25 October 2010, § 7.5, CCPR/C/100/D/1751/2008). In the *Amirov v. Russian Federation* the Committee observed that "[w]ithout wishing to spell out all the circumstances of indirect victimisation, the Committee considers that the failure of a State party responsibly to discharge its obligations to investigate and clarify the circumstances of the harm suffered by the direct victim will be usually be a factor. Additional factors may be necessary. In the present case, the Committee notes the horrific conditions in which the author came to find his wife's mutilated remains (...), followed by the dilatory, sporadic measures undertaken to investigate the circumstances that have lead to the above findings of violations of articles 6 and 7, read together with article 2, paragraph 3. The Committee considers that, taken together, the circumstances require the Committee to conclude that the author's own rights under article 7 have also been violated" (HRC, *Abubakar Amirov and Aïzan Amirova v. Russian Federation*, cited in § 91 above, at § 11.7).
125. The Panel also takes into account that according to the European Court, the analysis of the authorities' reaction should not be confined to any specific manifestation of the authorities' attitudes, isolated incidents or procedural acts; on the contrary, in the Court's view, an assessment of the way in which the authorities reacted to the applicants' enquiries should be global and continuous (see ECtHR, *Açış v. Turkey*, no. 7050/05, judgment of 1 February 2011, § 45).
126. In this respect, it is the position of the European Court that findings under the procedural limb of Article 2 would also be of direct relevance in considering the existence of a violation of Article 3 (see ECtHR, *Basayeva and Others v. Russia*, cited in § 122 above, at § 109; ECtHR, *Gelayevy v. Russia*, no. 20216/07, judgment of 15 July 2010, § 147; ECtHR, *Bazorkina v. Russia*, cited in § 90 above, at § 140).
127. The Panel observes that the European Court has already found violations of Article 3 of the ECHR in relation to disappearances in which the State itself was found to be responsible for the abduction (see ECtHR, *Luluyev and Others v. Russia*, no. 69480/01, judgment of 9 November 2006, §§ 117-118; ECtHR, *Kukayev v. Russia*, no. 29361/02, judgment of 15 November 2007, §§ 107-110). However, in contrast, in the case under the Panel's consideration, in no way is UNMIK implicated in the actual disappearance and UNMIK cannot be held responsible for the applicant's mental distress caused by the commission of the crime itself.

128. The Panel is mindful that in the absence of a finding of State responsibility for the disappearance, the European Court has ruled that it is not persuaded that the authorities' conduct, albeit negligent to the extent that it has breached Article 2 in its procedural aspect, could have in itself caused the applicant mental distress in excess of the minimum level of severity, which is necessary in order to consider treatment as falling within the scope of Article 3 (see, among others, ECtHR, *Tovsultanova v. Russia*, no. 26974/06, judgment of 17 June 2010, § 104; ECtHR, *Shafiyeva v. Russia*, no. 49379/09, judgment of 3 May 2012, § 103).

b) Applicability of Article 3 to the Kosovo context

129. With regard to the applicability of the above standards to the Kosovo context, the Panel first refers to its view on the same issue with regard to Article 2, developed above (see §§ 54 – 59 above).

130. The Panel reiterates that a normally functioning law enforcement system should take into account the protection needs of victims and witnesses, as well as to consider the special vulnerability of displaced persons in post-conflict situations. The Panel has already considered the fact that by 2003 the police and justice system in Kosovo was described by the UN Secretary-General as being “well-functioning” and “sustainable” (see § 22 above).

131. The Panel again notes that it will not review relevant practices or alleged obstacles to the conduct of effective investigations *in abstracto*, but only in relation to their specific application to the complaint before it, considering the particular circumstances of the case.

132. For these reasons, the Panel considers that it has to establish with regard to each case whether the attitude and reactions of UNMIK authorities to the disappearance itself and to the complainants' quest for information with regard to the fate of their relatives and the criminal investigation, would amount to a violation of the obligation under Article 3, having regard to the realities in Kosovo at the relevant time.

c) Compliance with Article 3 in the present case

133. Against this background, the Panel discerns a number of factors in the present case which, taken together, raise the question of violation of Article 3 of the ECHR.

134. The Panel notes the proximity of the family ties between the complainants and Srđan Vitošević. The two complainants are the parents of the victim.

135. The Panel takes note of the delay of around 5 years between the location of Srđan Vitošević's mortal remains and the time when they were received by the Serbian Government's Commission for Missing Persons. The Panel notes the refusal of the complainants to accept these mortal remains as those of their son. Whilst the Panel cannot take any position on the validity of the DNA analysis, it can assess the length of time it took to return the mortal remains. In this regard, the Panel also notes that, for the time that falls within its jurisdiction, that is until 9 December 2008, no information or explanation has been provided by UNMIK as to the attempts made by UNMIK to contact the

complainants and hand over to them the mortal remains identified as those of Srđan Vitošević.

136. The Panel further notes that during the investigation itself it appears that the complainants were never contacted by either the UNMIK Police or prosecutors save for the one occasion when Mrs Olivera Vitošević provided a statement to UNMIK prosecutors. Indeed, the frustration felt by the complainants is evidenced in the fact that Mrs Olivera Vitošević filed a further criminal report to the District Public Prosecutor's Office in Prizren sometime in 2002 or 2003 and contacted the UNMIK Police in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica in 2004 or 2005. The Panel reiterates that from the standpoint of Article 3 it may examine UNMIK's reactions and attitudes to the complainants in its entirety.
137. Drawing inferences from UNMIK's failure to submit a complete investigative file (see § 61 above), or to provide another plausible explanation for the absence of sustained and regular contact with the complainants, or information about the criminal investigation into the abduction and probable killing of Srđan Vitošević, the Panel considers that this situation, which continued into the period of the Panel's temporal jurisdiction, caused grave uncertainty about his fate and the status of the investigation.
138. In view of the above, the Panel concludes that the complainants have suffered severe distress and anguish for a prolonged and continuing period of time on account of the way the authorities of UNMIK have dealt with their complaints and as a result of their inability to find out what happened to Srđan Vitošević, and the time taken to hand over the mortal remains. In this respect, it is obvious that, in any situation, the pain of parents who have to live in uncertainty about the fate of their son must be unbearable.
139. For the aforementioned reasons, the Panel concludes that, by its behaviour, UNMIK contributed to the complainants' distress and mental suffering in violation of Article 3 of the ECHR.

V. CONCLUDING COMMENTS RECOMMENDATIONS

140. In light of the Panel's findings in this case, the Panel is of the opinion that some form of reparation is necessary.
141. The Panel notes that enforced disappearances constitute serious violations of human rights which shall be investigated and prosecuted under any circumstances. The Panel also notes that UNMIK as the territorial administration of Kosovo from 1999 to 2008 had the primary responsibility to effectively investigate and prosecute those responsible for the abduction of Srđan Vitošević, and that its failure to do so constitutes a further serious violation of the rights of the victim and his next-of-kin, in particular the right to have the truth of the matter determined.
142. The Panel notes the SRSG's own concerns that the inadequate resources, especially at the outset of UNMIK's mission, made compliance with UNMIK's human rights obligations difficult to achieve.

143. It would normally be for UNMIK to take the appropriate measures in order to put an end to the violation noted and to redress as far as possible the effects thereof. However, as the Panel noted above (see § 24), UNMIK's responsibility with regard to the administration of justice in Kosovo ended on 9 December 2008, with EULEX assuming full operational control in the area of rule of law. UNMIK therefore is no longer in a position to take measures that will have a direct impact on the investigations that are still pending before EULEX or local authorities. Likewise, following the declaration of independence by the Kosovo Provisional Institutions of Self-Government on 17 February 2008 and subsequently, the entry into force of the Kosovo Constitution on 15 June 2008, UNMIK ceased to perform executive functions in Kosovo, this fact limiting its ability to provide full and effective reparation of the violation committed, as required by established principles of international human rights law.
144. The Panel considers that this factual situation does not relieve UNMIK from its obligation to redress as far as possible the effects of the violations for which it is responsible.

With respect to the complainants and the case the Panel considers appropriate that UNMIK:

- In line with the case law of the European Court of Human Rights on situations of limited State jurisdiction (see ECtHR [GC], *Ilaşcu and Others v. Moldova and Russia*, no. 48787/99, judgment of 8 July 2004, *ECHR*, 2004-VII, § 333; ECtHR, *Al-Saadoon and Mufdhi v. United Kingdom*, no. 61498/08, judgment of 2 March 2010, § 171; ECtHR [GC], *Catan and Others v. Moldova and Russia*, nos. 43370/04, 8252/05 and 18454/06, judgment of 19 October 2012, § 109), must endeavour, with all the diplomatic means available to it *vis-à-vis* EULEX and the Kosovo authorities, to obtain assurances that the investigations concerning the case at issue will be continued in compliance with the requirements of an effective investigation as envisaged by Article 2, that the circumstances surrounding the abduction of Srđan Vitošević will be established and that perpetrators will be brought to justice. The complainants and/or other next-of-kin shall be informed of such proceedings and relevant documents shall be disclosed to them, as necessary;
- Publicly acknowledges, within a reasonable time, responsibility with respect to UNMIK's failure to adequately investigate the abduction of Srđan Vitošević, as well as the distress and mental suffering subsequently incurred, and makes a public apology to the complainants and their family in this regard;
- Takes appropriate steps towards payment of adequate compensation to the complainants for the moral damage suffered due to UNMIK's failure to conduct an effective investigation as well as for distress and mental suffering incurred by the complainants as a consequence of UNMIK's behaviour.

The Panel also considers appropriate that UNMIK:

- in line with the UN General Assembly Resolution on "Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law" (A/Res/60/147, 21 March 2006), takes appropriate steps, through other UN

affiliated entities operating in Kosovo, local bodies and non-governmental organisations, for the realisation of a full and comprehensive reparation programme, including restitution compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition, for the victims from all communities of serious violations of human rights which occurred during and in the aftermath of the Kosovo conflict;

- Takes appropriate steps before competent bodies of the United Nations, including the UN Secretary-General, towards the allocation of adequate human and financial resources to ensure that international human rights standards are upheld at all times by the United Nations, including when performing administrative and executive functions over a territory, and to make provision for effective and independent monitoring;

FOR THESE REASONS,

The Panel, unanimously,

1. FINDS THAT THERE HAS BEEN A VIOLATION OF THE PROCEDURAL OBLIGATION UNDER ARTICLE 2 OF THE EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS;

2. FINDS THAT THERE HAS BEEN A VIOLATION OF THE SUBSTANTIVE OBLIGATION UNDER ARTICLE 3 OF THE EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS;

3. RECOMMENDS THAT UNMIK:

- a) **URGES EULEX AND OTHER COMPETENT AUTHORITIES IN KOSOVO TO TAKE ALL POSSIBLE STEPS IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT THE CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION INTO THE ABDUCTION OF SRĐAN VITOŠEVIĆ IS CONTINUED IN COMPLIANCE WITH ARTICLE 2 OF THE ECHR AND THAT THE PERPETRATORS ARE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE;**
- b) **PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGES RESPONSIBILITY FOR ITS FAILURE TO CONDUCT AN EFFECTIVE INVESTIGATION INTO THE ABDUCTION OF SRĐAN VITOŠEVIĆ, AS WELL AS FOR DISTRESS AND MENTAL SUFFERING INCURRED, AND MAKES A PUBLIC APOLOGY TO THE COMPLAINANTS;**
- c) **TAKES APPROPRIATE STEPS TOWARDS PAYMENT OF ADEQUATE COMPENSATION OF THE COMPLAINANTS FOR MORAL DAMAGE IN RELATION TO THE FINDING OF VIOLATIONS OF ARTICLE 2 AND ARTICLE 3 OF THE ECHR.**
- d) **TAKES APPROPRIATE STEPS TOWARDS THE REALISATION OF A FULL AND COMPREHENSIVE REPARATION PROGRAMME;**

- e) **TAKES APPROPRIATE STEPS AT THE UNITED NATIONS AS A GUARANTEE OF NON REPETITION;**
- f) **TAKES IMMEDIATE AND EFFECTIVE MEASURES TO IMPLEMENT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PANEL AND TO INFORM THE COMPLAINANTS AND THE PANEL ABOUT FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN THIS CASE.**

Andrey ANTONOV
Executive Officer

Marek NOWICKI
Presiding Member

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CCIU - Central Criminal Investigation Unit
CCPR – International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
DOJ - Department of Justice
DPPO - District Public Prosecutor’s Office
ECHR - European Convention on Human Rights
ECtHR- European Court of Human Rights
EU – European Union
EULEX - European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo
FRY - Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
HRAP - Human Rights Advisory Panel
HRC – United Nation Human Rights Committee
IACtHR– Inter-American Court of Human Rights
ICMP - International Commission of Missing Persons
ICRC - International Committee of the Red Cross
ICTY - International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia
KFOR - International Security Force (commonly known as Kosovo Force)
KLA - Kosovo Liberation Army
MoU - Memorandum of Understanding
MPU - Missing Persons Unit
NATO - North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OMPF - Office on Missing Persons and Forensics
OSCE - Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
RIU - Regional Investigation Unit
SRSG - Special Representative of the Secretary-General
UN - United Nations
UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNMIK - United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
VRIC - Victim Recovery and Identification Commission
WCIU - War Crimes Investigation Unit