



02 March 2020

Consultation on IPA CSF 2020 KRCT inputs

The Kosova Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims (KRCT) is an organization that for almost 20 years protects and promotes human rights for survivors of torture and other forms of ill-treatment through, rehabilitation, psycho-social and legal services, monitoring of closed institutions, documentation and so on. Based on our experience and expertise, beneficiaries' needs and in fully compliance to national strategies, we deem that following inputs should be taken into account for forthcoming interventions:

I.

Expend of psycho-social and legal services and support to victims of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) – as regard survivors of sexual violence it is necessary to enlarge the time frame. KRCT has noted that survivors of sexual and gender-based violence which are not linked to the wartime are asking regularly for psycho-social and legal support. This is an increasing category of population.

Gender based violence and gender related discrimination remains one of the most evident and widespread human rights violations worldwide. According to World Health Organization is estimated that worldwide one in three women will experience physical or sexual abuse in her lifetime. So, violence against women and girls is one of the most prevalent human rights violations in the world and does not know social, economic or national boundaries. Gender-based violence is a complex problem with many underlying drivers and causes, deep-rooted in gender inequality and discrimination. Women and girls continue to suffer from enormous abuses at home, in the workplace and worst still in conflict...women and girls have been raped, abused, sexually harassed, married against their will and some have died as a result of complications during child birth.

According to available facts and data coming from the Report on Evaluation of Kosovo Program against Domestic Violence “domestic violence continues to be one of the prevalent forms of violence that affect mainly women and children”. Official police data shows of more than 1,000 victims assisted by institutions on an annual basis. In more than 80% of the cases victims are women, followed by children and elderly people, covering demographically the Kosovo territory. The socio-economic situation of women, children and elderly people makes them traditionally dependent on other family members, and consequently more vulnerable to violence.

II.

Documentation and transitional justice - the Kosovo institutions have not taken any concrete initiative to document the cases of war crimes and massive human rights violations. Instead, the manipulation with the number of victims and the truth about the war have been at the core of nationalist narratives propagated by both, Serbs and Albanians, whilst the victims of other ethnic groups have remained absent from the public discourse and social acknowledgment.

In addition, there has been no initiative to provide a comprehensive documentation of the cases of wartime sexual violence, whilst the victims of sexual violence facing a great social stigma have remained excluded from social and institutional recognition long after the end of the war. The 2014, amended Law on the status and the rights of the martyrs, invalids, veterans, members of Kosova Liberation Army, civilian victims of war and their families recognizes the rights of the victims of wartime sexual violence for financial support through pensions and other benefits. Whilst, the recently commenced process of verification of the status of war sexual violence victims by the Government provides a great momentum for a comprehensive documentation of the cases of sexual violence.

The documentation of the wartime cases of sexual violence is a direct contribution to the truth-telling process in Kosovo as fundamentally important aspect for the victims and the whole society. Furthermore, the process of truth-telling through documentation of the cases might potentially contribute to the access to justice for the victims of sexual violence.

III.

Addressing the phenomenon of religious extremism – we consider that through inclusive approach, in cooperation with responsible authorities (correctional and security), to develop rehabilitation and reintegration programs for detained population, build management and professional staff capacities in challenging aspects of human rights. Intervention should be directed in preventing such phenomenon by combating institutional and social stigma in cooperation with community, education sector, media and public.

Various countries, especially in the Balkans, now face the challenge of managing the return of their citizens who have fought in the Iraq and Syria conflicts. As of early December 2016, for example, at least 117 Kosovars, more than one hundred Bosnians, and eighty-six North Macedonians have returned to their home countries. According to official data, eight hundred nationals of these three Balkan countries have traveled to Iraq and Syria since 2012.

According to analysts, Kosovo has been one of the largest per-capita contributors of European fighters to ISIS, and the government considers potential attacks to be a key national security threat. Once the state realized the extent of Kosovar involvement in Islamist terrorist groups in Syria, it cracked down hard. Today, Kosovo appears to have backed away from the jihadism precipice. As of August, 2018, Kosovo was the only country in the Balkans with a drafted rehabilitation plan to treat returnees in the prison system, and is very active in punitive efforts to counter Islamic extremism.

The National Strategy on Prevention of Violent Extremism and Radicalism that Lead to Terrorism and the Action Plan (2015-2020) require to “enhancing the security of prisoners detained for activities related to extremism in order to prevent them from recruiting other



prisoners”. This activity will be implemented by the Ministry of Justice (Correctional Service), with the involvement of experts in the field of violent extremism and radicalism. As an organization that monitors human rights situation in closed institutions, KRCT considers that forthcoming intervention should create rehabilitative and reintegration opportunities for these extremist offenders. Likewise, we might help violent extremist offenders to disengage from violence and improve the likelihood that at the end of their sentences they will peacefully transition back into their community and family.