

# STATEMENT BY THE AMBASSADORS OF THE STEERING BOARD OF THE PEACE IMPLEMENTATION COUNCIL, EUFOR, NATO HQ SARAJEVO, OSCE, UNHCR, EUPM, EU DELEGATION, COUNCIL OF EUROPE AND UNDP

Peace Implementation Council

Steering Board Ambassadors

## International Support for Missing Persons Institute

Of an estimated 30,000 persons missing as a result of the 1992-95 armed conflict, the remains of over 20,000 have been accounted for, a much higher proportion than in any former conflict zone in the world. However, the job is not yet finished, and thousands of families from within and outside Bosnia and Herzegovina still await the opportunity to resolve the fate of their loved ones with dignity.

The International Community, including through its support for the BiH Missing Persons Institute (MPI), is determined to ensure that the work of finding and identifying the remains of the approximately 10,000 persons still missing, is conducted in an orderly fashion, free of political pressure. In this regard, the work of the MPI is critical in ensuring that the victims of the crimes of the 1990s are located and honoured and in helping ensure that the perpetrators of those crimes are brought to justice. MPI plays an important role in peace

implementation, strengthening the rule of law, and safeguarding against historical revisionism. Working towards the resolution of the remaining cases within a reasonable time frame is essential for the reconciliation process.

The MPI has the full support of the International Community. The BiH Missing Persons Institute was established following a process of consultation and negotiation which included the State of BiH, the two entity governments, Brcko District, the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP) and the families of the missing. The MPI allows the State of BiH to search for missing persons in accordance with international norms and without regard to their ethnic, religious or national origin.

The international organizations that are signatories to this statement deplore efforts underway to obstruct or delay the work of MPI, to politicise the process of searching for the missing, and to apply personal pressure on individuals employed by the MPI. The signatories call on all relevant authorities in BiH to ensure the MPI and its staff and families are afforded their full protection and support.