

Kosovo: West Obstructs Trial Over Murder-For-Organ Crimes

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Trial over Human Organs Business in Kosovo

by **Pyotr Iskenerov**

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Hillary Clinton and Hashim Thaci

Dick Marty who, as the PACE [Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe] special rapporteur, submitted in late 2010 an explosive report on the grisly crimes committed by Kosovo separatists, spoke for the first time in Pristina at the trial unfolding over illicit human organ business in the province. The scope of the inquiry, which opened in the summer of 2011, so far remains confined to the Medicus clinic which was shut down in 2008 after the EU and a number of international organizations became aware of kidney extractions secretly performed at the facility. Crucially in the context, Dick Marty says there are serious reasons to believe that the illicit human organ business in Kosovo was at full swing already in the late 1990s, much earlier than the information surfaced and the scandal erupted.

Evidence in the case being absolutely convincing, chances are still slim that the trial held in Pristina and supervised by the EU would help Serbia or Kosovo Serbs some day see justice prevail. The likelier outcome is that, as when the International Court of Justice rolled out an advisory opinion on the unilateral proclamation of Kosovo's independence, the verdict resulting from the trial underway in Kosovo will exemplify the deep crisis into which the architects of the new world order have thrown the system of international law as a whole. In today's world, national interests can only be protected with the backing from powerful international blocs, and, in this regard, Serbia's only reasonable option is strategic partnership with Russia.

Marty's report was the first internationally accepted document to shed light on the atrocities

perpetrated by the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) in the breakaway province. The document contained revelations about forced extractions from people held by the KLA – mostly ethnic Serbs – for illicit sale in Europe. According to Marty, in a makeshift clinic in the town of Fushe-Kruje, near the Albanian capital, some are said to have been killed and their organs removed to be sold on the international market. “As and when transplant surgeons were confirmed to be in position and ready to operate, the captives were brought out of the ‘safe house’ individually, summarily executed by a KLA gunman, and their corpses transported swiftly to the operating clinic”.

Carla del Ponte’s accounts identify the locale used for the human organs extractions as a “yellow house” near Burrel, in the northern part of Albania. Neither Marty nor del Ponte managed to tease out of the Albanian administration consent for the necessary on-site investigations. Albanian premier Sali Berisha expressed the curious view that Marty’s investigation was “completely racist and defamatory” and Albanian parliamentarian and delegate to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe Shpetim Idrisi somehow traced the Swiss lawyer’s findings to Serbia and Russia. Eulex [European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo] representatives who oversee the probe tend to cast their skepticism in a more cautious form. “There is no evidence whatsoever in this case...No bodies. No witnesses”, said head of the war crimes unit of the mission Matti Raatikainen.

The problem is that the lack of evidence is due to the Western countries’ and international groups’ reluctance to seriously unearth the facts. Under the conditions, the Albanian and Kosovo administrations have no difficulty declining to cooperate in the investigation, and the EU mission to Kosovo chose to simply ignore the storyline involving the Serbs’ plight and to focus narrowly on the Medicus clinic, asserting that the case was limited to donors being deceived and surgeries performed without licenses, as if hundreds of Serbs were not held in captivity and mowed down.

The crimes that did come into the probe’s spotlight are still gross and punishable offenses, but it is also clear that the extremely diluted version of the drama serves to insulate from criticism the wider Kosovo independence project and to shield Hashim Thaci and other key figures involved from due inquiries.

Carla del Ponte’s statements like “NATO and UNMIK did not allow us to access important documents on Kosovo, while Albania did not let us enter its territory” cannot be taken at face value. As the Hague Tribunal persecutor she – and the powers behind her – surely had the leverage it would have taken to expand the investigation and to piece together the entire picture with all the finishing touches.

Big politics factored into the situation at all phases, and now justice only hangs over a crew of minor players like an Israeli go-between, a Turkish surgeon, a Kosovo urologist, and another fellow – a ministerial clerk – from the province. The individuals actually implicated in the framework generated by Marty’s report continue to be at the top of the political hierarchy, and Belgrade should steer its own course cleverly, mindful of what has happened to Serbs in Kosovo.

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