



THE BYTYQI BROTHERS

Justice delayed. Justice denied.

Statement of Fatose Bytyqi on the 15th Anniversary of the War-Crime Murders of Ylli, Agron, and Mehmet Bytyqi

Embargoed for Release on July 7, 2014

Fifteen years ago, half of my family was brutally extinguished in one day. Ylli, Agron, and Mehmet Bytyqi were each born in the United States and lived in Long Island. When they were kidnapped and executed, they were unarmed and escorting neighbors to a safe area in the chaos that occurred at the end of the war between Kosovo and Serbia. No one denies this. Nor does anyone deny that it was Serbian authorities who kidnapped and executed my brothers back then, and it is Serbian authorities who are now failing in their responsibility to investigate and prosecute their murderers.

For a long time now, my family and many others in the Serbian and U.S. government have known who was ultimately responsible for my brothers' murders – Goran "Guri" Radosavljevic. Guri Radosavljevic was present and in command of the facility where my brothers were kidnapped and detained and he commanded the officers that fired bullets into the back of my brothers' heads. Yet, Guri Radosavljevic remains free and shielded from responsibility while my family remains in an endless state of mourning. We have no justice. Without justice, we cannot have closure. Without closure, we cannot heal. Without healing, we cannot move on.

Since July 1999, my family and I have done our best to find answers and demand accountability. My brother Ilir and I have met with State Department and U.S. Embassy officials dozens of times. They have assured us that the case is raised in every high-level meeting and is their highest priority. The unresolved case of three murdered U.S. citizens certainly seems sufficient grounds for the U.S. government to act. Yet, no progress has been made.

We have also made more than fifty trips to Belgrade to push Serbian authorities directly. During these visits, we have received countless promises. In December 2013, now Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic promised me and U.S. Embassy officials that he would personally see that progress was made in the case. Yet, no progress has been made.

After fifteen long years, promises, commitments, and assurances are no longer enough. They can no longer be used as substitutes for action. That is what we demand— action now. We urge the U.S. and Serbian governments to act now.

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