

Dear Madam President,

I am writing to congratulate you on the launch of the National Council for the Survivors of Sexual Violence during War. As you know, this issue is very dear to me and I applaud all your work to push forward this important initiative.

The commitment of the National Council on access to justice, health care, psycho-social support, economic empowerment, awareness raising, and international cooperation, will be absolutely vital in the support to survivors (of sexual violence during the war) and in addressing impunity (of those responsible).

This initiative marks significant progress since my last visit in Kosovo last year when you shared with me that your country continues to face a number of challenges in addressing issues of sexual violence during the conflict. Survivors would still be recognized in the Law for Martyrs and Civil Victims of the War. The level of investigations and prosecutions related to sexual violence in conflict remained low and the social stigma associated with these crimes had slowed the rehabilitation, access to justice and socio-economic reintegration of the survivors. I hope that your National Council will address these issues.

I am grateful that during the launch of the National Council you will also express Kosovo's support for the Declaration of Commitment on the Prohibition of Sexual Violence in Conflict, which I've launched in the General Assembly of the United Nations last year. I am aware that the Council will initially have a one year term and will serve to engage key local and international stakeholders who are essential for a comprehensive approach on this issue. I welcome the contribution of Kosovo in the global commitment to prevent sexual violence in conflict, including the assistance in drafting the International Protocol for the Investigation and Documentation of Sexual Violence in Conflict.

The success of the Initiative for the Prevention of Sexual Violence globally continues to count on your support. I am grateful for what you have done so far, including the contribution of your officials during the entire process. I hope that you will continue to play an active role in our campaign, including the preparation for the Global Summit which will lead in June, along with UNHCR Special Envoy Angelina Jolie.

Sincerely,
William Hague