

Children born of war status

AJNA JUSIĆ

PRESIDENT OF FORGOTTEN CHILDREN OF WAR,
MEMBER OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE OF STAND
SPEAK RISE UP!

« We want a solidary and inclusive society without violence, in which the rule of law is respected »

During the war aggression in Bosnia and Herzegovina, between 30,000 and 50,000 women, girls and men were raped. As a result of these war crimes, children were born. As for the children born because of the war, we are often called a hidden population because if people knew we were born, we would be exposed to stigmatization and discrimination. **We are still exposed to social condemnation, including political and legal rejection.** Precisely because of this, our mothers try to hide our father's identities very wisely, making it more difficult to map and gather children born due to rape in a certain country.

In order to legally and socially recognize and respect children born of war, through activism, public advocacy, research, networking, and the arts, we contribute to the elimination of stigmatization and discrimination against this social category. Our vision is that Forgotten Children of War (ZDR) is a global organization in Bosnia and Herzegovina that advocates for the legal and social recognition of children born of war based on positive practices from BiH. We want a solidary and inclusive society without violence, in which the rule of law is respected.

In the previous period, the Association worked on raising awareness of the existence and problems faced by children born as a result of war. In addition, through our work, **we ensured that in the Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina, children born due to wartime rape are a legally recognized category of civilian victims of war.** Furthermore, it is necessary to ensure that children enjoy the necessary rights and benefits, primarily through

facilitated access and financing of their education, as well as the provision of benefits and support measures during employment and their housing.

In the future, it is necessary to change the existing legal framework and existing practices when announcing all kinds of public invitations in order to positively discriminate against children whose mothers survived wartime sexual violence in order to provide this category with benefits during education, employment, and their housing, as is the case with children of other categories of war victims (eg children of fallen combatants and war invalids).

Currently, the Association is working on legal recognition of this category in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, where success was already achieved in July 2022 when the Government of the Federation adopted the Draft Law on the Protection of Civilian Victims of War, in which children are recognized as civilian victims of war. After the Federation, our efforts and capacities will be directed toward the Republic of Srpska.

In the future, apart from the social inclusion of this category, the Association will work on the unification of legal solutions that will provide equal opportunities for every child, regardless of whether the mother enjoys the status of a civilian victim of war. We believe that children are independent individuals who must not suffer additionally as a result of discrimination due to which, in most cases, mothers and survivors do not have the status that grants them the corresponding rights as survivors of wartime sexual violence.



HRH the Grand Duchess with survivors during the Stand Speak Rise Up! gala in Biarritz, 2022