



Syrian Commission for Transitional Justice Visits Bosnia and Herzegovina

[The Syrian Commission for Transitional Justice \(SCTJ\)](#) in cooperation with the [International Commission on Missing Persons \(ICMP\)](#) organized a study visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina, which ran between December 1 and 6, 2014. The SCTJ delegation included the Syrian Interim Government's Minister for Justice, a member of the legal bureau of the Syrian National Coalition, in addition to a number of Syrian judges, lawyers, and representatives of Syrian NGOs involved in the documentation of human rights violations. The aim of the visit was to learn about the Bosnian experience in addressing the issue of missing persons in the aftermath of the Bosnian war 1992-1995.

This visit is a part of the Syrian Commission for Transitional Justice's endeavors to contribute to the capacity building of legal and judiciary professionals, in the context of its work on programs of enforced disappearance, and in light of its work establishing the Syrian Special Court.

The delegation visited ICMP's DNA laboratories, which work to match the DNA of the families of missing persons with the skeletal remains of anonymous victims exhumed from mass graves. Through such work, it has been possible to identify more than 17,700 missing persons. To learn about the process, the delegation was able to tour the ICMP's premises in Sarajevo and Tuzla.

The delegation also visited the Potocari Memorial Center in Srebrenica, and met representatives of local societies for the families of victims. The delegation met a representative of the Missing Persons Institute which, on behalf of the government, is responsible for affairs concerning missing persons, and also met speakers from the Croatian Office of Detained and Missing Persons, which worked on DNA matching and identification prior to the establishment of the ICMP. The delegation also had the opportunity to meet representatives of civil society institutions involved in peace building.

All speakers stressed the importance of building a legislative and institutional system, as well as establishing a comprehensive national vision concerning missing persons' affairs, before the commencement of field work.

SCTJ also made a brief presentation on the latest developments in its electronic system for the documentation of human rights violations in Syria. This system was built as a comprehensive central database for all human rights violations, and works in coordination with Syrian organizations currently documenting such abuses.

The delegation from the Syrian Commission for Transitional Justice included representatives of the Free Independent Judicial Council, the Free Lawyers Union, the Free Lawyers Gathering, the Syrian Network for Human Rights, in addition to a number of independent judges, allowing the knowledge and expertise of different groups and organizations to be shared and disseminated.

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For more information about the Syrian Commission for Transitional Justice, please contact: info@syriatransitionaljustice.org