



The Human Rights Advisory Panel

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OPINION

Date of adoption: 12 September 2013

Cases No 145/09

Ž. I.

against

UNMIK

The Human Rights Advisory Panel, sitting on 12 September 2013, with the following members taking part:

Mr Marek NOWICKI, Presiding Member
Ms Christine CHINKIN
Ms Françoise TULKENS

Assisted by

Mr Andrey Antonov, Executive Officer

Having considered the aforementioned complaint, introduced pursuant to Section 1.2 of UNMIK Regulation No. 2006/12 of 23 March 2006 on the establishment of the Human Rights Advisory Panel,

Having deliberated, including through electronic means, in accordance with Rule 13 § 2 of its Rules of Procedure, makes the following findings and recommendations:

I. PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE PANEL

1. The complaint was introduced on 1 April 2009 and registered on 30 April 2009.
2. On 13 January 2010, the Panel requested further information from the complainant. The complainant did not respond.

3. On 4 May 2010, the Panel communicated the case to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG)¹ for UNMIK's comments on the admissibility of the case.
4. On 7 June 2010, UNMIK provided its response.
5. On 7 July 2010, the Panel forwarded UNMIK's response to the complainant, for comments. The complainant did not respond.
6. On 21 October 2010, the Panel declared the complaint admissible.
7. On 27 October 2010, the Panel forwarded its decision to the SRSG requesting UNMIK's comments on the merits of the complaint.
8. On 19 November 2010, the SRSG provided UNMIK's response.
9. On 5 August 2011, the Panel was informed that on 21 March 2011 the complainant had passed away. The Panel subsequently accepted her sister, Ms V.I., as the person entitled to pursue the complaint. For practical reasons, the Panel will continue to name Ms Ž. I. as the complainant, even though that capacity should now be attributed to Ms V.I.
10. On 18 August 2011, the Panel requested UNMIK for copies of all relevant investigative files concerning the case.
11. On 6 September 2011, UNMIK presented the requested files to the Panel.
12. On 10 September 2013, the Panel requested UNMIK to confirm whether the disclosure of files concerning the case could be considered final.
13. On 12 September 2013 UNMIK provided its response.

II. THE FACTS

A. General background²

14. The events at issue took place in the territory of Kosovo after the establishment of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), in June 1999.
15. The armed conflict during 1998 and 1999 between the Serbian forces on one side and the

¹ A list of abbreviations and acronyms contained in the text can be found in the attached Annex.

² The references drawn upon by the Panel in setting out this general background include: OSCE, "As Seen, as Told", Vol. 1 (October 1998 – June 1999) and Vol. II (14 June – 31 October 1999); quarterly reports of the UN Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo; UNMIK Police Annual Reports (2000, 2001); Humanitarian Law Centre, "Abductions and Disappearances of non-Albanians in Kosovo" (2001); Humanitarian Law Centre, "Kosovo Memory Book" (<http://www.kosovomemorybook.org>); UNMIK Office on Missing Persons and Forensics, Activity Report 2002-2004; European Court of Human Rights, *Behrami and Behrami v. France and Saramati v. France, Germany and Norway*, nos. 71412/01 and 78166/01, decision of 2 May 2007; International Commission on Missing Persons, "The Situation in Kosovo: a Stock Taking" (2010); data issued by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, (available at www.unhcr.org) and by the International Committee of the Red Cross (available at <http://familylinks.icrc.org/kosovo/en>).

Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and other Kosovo Albanian armed groups on the other side is well documented. Following the failure of international efforts to resolve the conflict, on 23 March 1999, the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) announced the commencement of air strikes against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY). The air strikes began on 24 March 1999 and ended on 8 June 1999 when the FRY agreed to withdraw its forces from Kosovo. On 9 June 1999, the International Security Force (KFOR), the FRY and the Republic of Serbia signed a “Military Technical Agreement” by which they agreed on FRY withdrawal from Kosovo and the presence of an international security force following an appropriate UN Security Council Resolution.

16. On 10 June 1999, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1244 (1999). Acting under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, the UN Security Council decided upon the deployment of international security and civil presences - KFOR and UNMIK respectively - in the territory of Kosovo. Pursuant to Security Council Resolution No. 1244 (1999), the UN was vested with full legislative and executive powers for the interim administration of Kosovo, including the administration of justice. KFOR was tasked with establishing “a secure environment in which refugees and displaced persons can return home in safety” and temporarily ensuring “public safety and order” until the international civil presence could take over responsibility for this task. UNMIK comprised four main components or pillars led by the United Nations (civil administration), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (humanitarian assistance, which was phased out in June 2000), the OSCE (institution building) and the EU (reconstruction and economic development). Each pillar was placed under the authority of the SRSG. UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999) mandated UNMIK to “promote and protect human rights” in Kosovo in accordance with internationally recognised human rights standards.
17. Estimates regarding the effect of the conflict on the displacement of the Kosovo Albanian population range from approximately 800,000 to 1.45 million. Following the adoption of Resolution 1244 (1999), the majority of Kosovo Albanians who had fled, or had been forcibly expelled from their houses by the Serbian forces during the conflict, returned to Kosovo.
18. Meanwhile, members of the non-Albanian community – mainly but not exclusively Serbs, Roma and Slavic Muslims – as well as Kosovo Albanians suspected of collaboration with the Serbian authorities, became the target of widespread attacks by Kosovo Albanian armed groups. Current estimates relating to the number of Kosovo Serbs displaced fall within the region of 200,000 to 210,000. Whereas most Kosovo Serbs and other non-Albanians fled to Serbia proper and the neighbouring countries, those remaining behind became victims of systematic killings, abductions, arbitrary detentions, sexual and gender based violence, beatings and harassment.
19. Although figures remain disputed, it is estimated that more than 15,000 deaths or disappearances occurred during and in the immediate aftermath of the Kosovo conflict (1998-2000). More than 3,000 ethnic Albanians, and about 800 Serbs, Roma and members of other minority communities went missing during this period. More than half of the missing persons had been located and their mortal remains identified by the end of 2010, while 1,766 are listed as still missing by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) as of October 2012.

20. As of July 1999, as part of the efforts to restore law enforcement in Kosovo within the framework of the rule of law, the SRSG urged UN member States to support the deployment within the civilian component of UNMIK of 4,718 international police personnel. UNMIK Police were tasked with advising KFOR on policing matters until they themselves had sufficient numbers to take full responsibility for law enforcement and to work towards the development of a Kosovo police service. By September 1999, approximately 1,100 international police officers had been deployed to UNMIK.
21. By December 2000, the deployment of UNMIK Police was almost complete with 4,400 personnel from 53 different countries, and UNMIK had assumed primacy in law enforcement responsibility in all regions of Kosovo except for Mitrovicë/Mitrovica. According to the 2000 Annual Report of UNMIK Police, 351 kidnappings, 675 murders and 115 rapes had been reported to them in the period between June 1999 and December 2000.
22. Due to the collapse of the administration of justice in Kosovo, UNMIK established in June 1999 an Emergency Justice System. This was composed of a limited number of local judges and prosecutors and was operational until a regular justice system became operative in January 2000. In February 2000, UNMIK authorised the appointment of international judges and prosecutors, initially in the Mitrovicë/Mitrovica region and later across Kosovo, to strengthen the local justice system and to guarantee its impartiality. As of October 2002, the local justice system comprised 341 local and 24 international judges and prosecutors. In January 2003, the UN Secretary-General reporting to the Security Council on the implementation of Resolution 1244 (1999) defined the police and justice system in Kosovo at that moment as being “well-functioning” and “sustainable”.
23. In July 1999, the UN Secretary-General reported to the Security Council that UNMIK already considered the issue of missing persons as a particularly acute human rights concern in Kosovo. In November 1999, a Missing Persons Unit (MPU) was established within UNMIK Police, mandated to investigate with respect to either the possible location of missing persons and/or gravesites. The MPU, jointly with the Central Criminal Investigation Unit (CCIU) of UNMIK Police, and later a dedicated War Crimes Investigation Unit (WCIU), were responsible for the criminal aspects of missing persons cases in Kosovo. In May 2000, a Victim Recovery and Identification Commission (VRIC) chaired by UNMIK was created for the recovery, identification and disposition of mortal remains. As of June 2002, the newly established Office on Missing Persons and Forensics (OMPF) in the UNMIK Department of Justice (DOJ) became the sole authority mandated to determine the whereabouts of missing persons, identify their mortal remains and return them to the family of the missing. Starting from 2001, based on a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between UNMIK and the Sarajevo-based International Commission of Missing Persons (ICMP), supplemented by a further agreement in 2003, the identification of mortal remains was carried out by the ICMP through DNA testing.
24. On 9 December 2008, UNMIK’s responsibility with regard to police and justice in Kosovo ended with the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) assuming full operational control in the area of the rule of law, following the Statement made by the President of the United Nations Security Council on 26 November 2008 (S/PRST/2008/44), welcoming the continued engagement of the European Union in Kosovo.

25. On the same date, UNMIK and EULEX signed a MoU on the modalities, and the respective rights and obligations arising from the transfer from UNMIK to EULEX of cases and the related files which involved on-going investigations, prosecutions and other activities undertaken by UNMIK International Prosecutors. Shortly thereafter, similar agreements were signed with regard to the files handled by international judges and UNMIK Police. All agreements obliged EULEX to provide to UNMIK access to the documents related to the actions previously undertaken by UNMIK authorities. Between 9 December 2008 and 30 March 2009, all criminal case files held by the UNMIK DOJ and UNMIK Police were handed over to EULEX.

B. Circumstances surrounding the killing of Mrs M.I.

26. The complainant was a daughter of M.I. She stated that late in the night of 16 June 1999, her mother was killed by unknown person or persons in her home in Pjetërq i Epërm/Gornji Petrić village. As the complainant was hiding in the house, with her small child, she heard gunshots, but did not see the assailants. The following morning, she found her mother dead and immediately reported the killing to Italian KFOR. A KFOR patrol arrived at the scene and took away the body. The complainant stated that she was never informed of any investigation into the killing of her mother, and that her mother's mortal remains were never returned.

27. The complainant also stated that she had likewise reported the killing of her mother to the Serbian Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Kosovo Police Service, the ICRC and some human rights organisations.

28. On 29 April 2003, the ICRC opened a tracking request for M.I.

29. The complainant's sister informed the Panel that in 2003 or 2004 she went to Pejë/Peć UNMIK Police Regional Headquarters, to check the status of the investigation, where she met an UNMIK Police investigator, but was given no information. She also stated that she had received the mortal remains of her mother and subsequently buried them, she thinks sometime around 2009.

30. On the Panel's request, on 11 September 2013, the EULEX Department of Forensic Medicine (the successor of the UNMIK OMPF) confirmed by e-mail that the mortal remains of M.I. were exhumed by the OMPF from a cemetery in Pejë/Peć municipality, on 13 November 2004. After DNA identification, the mortal remains were handed over to the complainant's sister, Ms V.I., on 14 December 2007.

31. The name of M.I. appears in the online database maintained by the ICMP³. When first accessed by the Panel, on 26 June 2012, it had read in relevant fields "Sufficient Reference Samples Collected" and "ICMP provided information on this missing person on 09-21-2007 to authorised institution. To obtain additional information, contact EULEX Kosovo Headquarters." However, when accessed by the Panel on 9 Sep 2013, it had already inserted the date "9-28-2012" in the field relating to passing of the information to EULEX.

³ The ICMP database is available at: http://www.ic-mp.org/fdmsweb/index.php?w=mp_details&l=en

C. The investigation

32. In the present case, the Panel received from UNMIK some investigative documents previously held by the UNMIK Police WCIU.
33. Concerning disclosure of information contained in the files, the Panel recalls that investigative documents have been made available for the Panel's review under a pledge of confidentiality from UNMIK. In this regard, the Panel must clarify that although its assessment of the present case stems from a thorough examination of the available documentation, only limited information contained therein is disclosed. Hence a synopsis of relevant investigative steps taken by investigative authorities is provided in the paragraphs to follow.
34. The investigative file contains a copy of an English translation of an undated criminal report submitted by the complainant to an International Public Prosecutor in the Pejë/Peć District Public Prosecutor's Office. This document was translated by an UNMIK DOJ interpreter, on 15 October 2005.
35. In addition to what has been stated in relation to the killing of M.I. above, the summary of facts in that criminal report states that those who entered the victim's house on 16 June 1999 were "of Albanian ethnicity", and that there were some neighbours amongst them. In the morning, the complainant saw her mother had been shot four times. The complainant was not aware of the motives for that crime. She was also not able to obtain any information with regard to the killing, nor any information on the units or officers responsible for the protection of public peace and order in the area at that time, nor of those responsible for the investigation.
36. A printout from the relevant entry in the WCIU database, dated 5 October 2007, shows that the case was entered into the WCIU database on 2 September 2005. It contains a description of the incident and the names of the complainant, as the reporting party, and M.I., as the victim.
37. A WCIU Case Analysis Report, dated 5 October 2007, repeats the details of the incident, categorising it as a "murder". It is mentioned that at the time the mortal remains of M.I. were still missing and that a report in this respect had been made to KFOR. It has "one" in the field "Number of Victims", but "zeroes" in the fields related to the numbers of victims' statements, witnesses, witness statements, and known suspects. The field "Brief Description of Evidence" reads: "No evidence, no forensic report, no autopsy report. Only a criminal report to the international prosecutor". The conclusion of this report is: "After checked the case file it is understood that no investigation was conducted no effort in regards to investigation has been made up to now. Victim is still missing. I recommend that an investigator should be assigned to this case and investigation processes should be commenced. After the initial investigation some facts will come to light".
38. Another case review was undertaken by a EULEX international prosecutor, on 6 March 2009. A report in that regard states that a body was still missing. The prosecutor recommended contacting Italian KFOR regarding the body of M.I., locating statements of witnesses or re-interviewing them, in order to identify suspects.

39. No documents related to locating, identification and return of M.I.'s mortal remains have been presented to the Panel.

III. THE COMPLAINT

40. The complainant complained about UNMIK's alleged failure to properly investigate the killing of M.I. In this regard, the Panel deems that the complainant invoked a violation of the procedural limb of Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

41. The complainant also complained about the mental pain and suffering allegedly caused to her and her family by the lack of investigation into the killing of her mother, as well as by the subsequent prolonged failure of the authorities to return to her the mortal remains of her mother. In this regard, the Panel deems that the complainant relied on Article 3 of the ECHR.

IV. THE LAW

A. Alleged violation of the procedural obligation under Article 2 of the ECHR

1. The scope of the Panel's review

42. Before turning to the examination of the merits of the complaint, the Panel needs to clarify the scope of its review.

43. In determining whether it considers that there has been a violation of Article 2 (procedural limb) and of Article 3 of the ECHR, the Panel is mindful of the existing case-law, notably that of the European Court of Human Rights. However, the Panel is also aware that the complaints before it differ in some significant ways from those brought before that Court. First, the respondent is not a State but an interim international territorial administration mandated to exercise temporary responsibilities in Kosovo. No suspicion attaches to UNMIK with respect to the substantive obligations under Article 2 of the ECHR. Second, as in a limited number of cases before the European Court, those suspected of being responsible for the alleged killings and/or abductions are in all cases before the Panel non-state actors, mostly but not exclusively connected to the conflict. These are factors for the Panel to take into consideration as it assesses the procedural positive obligations of an intergovernmental organisation with respect to acts committed by third parties in a territory over which it has temporary legislative, executive and judicial control.

44. The Panel notes that with the adoption of the UNMIK Regulation No. 1999/1 on 25 July 1999 UNMIK undertook an obligation to observe internationally recognised human rights standards in exercising its functions. This undertaking was detailed in UNMIK Regulation No. 1999/24 of 12 December 1999, by which UNMIK assumed obligations under the following human rights instruments: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights and Protocols thereto, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against

Women, the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

45. The Panel also notes that Section 1.2 of UNMIK Regulation No. 2006/12 of 23 March 2006 on the Establishment of the Human Rights Advisory Panel provides that the Panel “shall examine complaints from any person or group of individuals claiming to be the victim of a violation by UNMIK of (their) human rights”. It follows that only acts or omissions attributable to UNMIK fall within the jurisdiction *ratione personae* of the Panel. In this respect, it should be noted, as stated above, that as of 9 December 2008, UNMIK no longer exercises executive authority over the Kosovo judiciary and law enforcement machinery. Therefore UNMIK bears no responsibility for any violation of human rights allegedly committed by those bodies. Insofar as the complainants complain about acts that occurred after that date, they fall outside the jurisdiction *ratione personae* of the Panel.
46. Likewise, the Panel emphasises that, as far as its jurisdiction *ratione materiae* is concerned, as follows from Section 1.2 of UNMIK Regulation No. 2006/12, it can only examine complaints relating to an alleged violation of human rights. This means that it can only review acts or omissions complained of for their compatibility with the international human rights instruments referred to above (see § 44). In the particular case of killings and disappearances in life-threatening circumstances, it is not the Panel’s role to replace the competent authorities in the investigation of the case. Its task is limited to examining the effectiveness of the criminal investigation into such killings and disappearances, in the light of the procedural obligations flowing from Article 2 of the ECHR.
47. The Panel further notes that Section 2 of UNMIK Regulation No. 2006/12 provides that the Panel shall have jurisdiction over complaints relating to alleged violations of human rights “that had occurred not earlier than 23 April 2005 or arising from facts which occurred prior to this date where these facts give rise to a continuing violation of human rights”. It follows that events that took place before 23 April 2005 generally fall outside the jurisdiction *ratione temporis* of the Panel. However, to the extent that such events gave rise to a continuing situation, the Panel has jurisdiction to examine complaints relating to that situation (see European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), Grand Chamber [GC], *Varnava and Others v. Turkey*, nos. 16064/90 and others, judgment of 18 September 2009, §§ 147-149; ECtHR, *Cyprus v. Turkey* [GC] no. 25781/94, judgment of 10 May 2001, § 136, ECHR 2001-IV).

2. The Parties’ Submissions

48. The complainant in substance alleged a violation concerning the lack of an adequate criminal investigation into the killing of her mother. The complainant also stated that she was not informed as to whether an investigation was conducted and what the outcome was, if any.
49. In his comments on the admissibility of the complaint of Ms Ž.I., the SRSG put forward a number of issues to consider with respect to the merits of the case.
50. As an outset, the SRSG accepted there was a general obligation of UNMIK to investigate the killing of Mrs M.I. The SGRG also accepts that in this case no investigation appears to have been done at all. However, notwithstanding UNMIK’s responsibility for policing, “special circumstances” affecting UNMIK’s ability to investigate crimes, in particular in the initial phase of its mission, must also be acknowledged.

51. In particular, it shall be taken into account that during the initial phase of its mission, UNMIK could not rely on a functioning police apparatus or on specialised personnel who were able to investigate into all committed crimes. The SRSG states that the international police force of UNMIK was very slow to deploy. By mid-September 1999 UNMIK had approximately 1,300 international police officers on the ground, while a proper police structure, including a system of criminal investigation units throughout Kosovo, was established only in the following months. In the meantime, the police were required to perform multiple tasks, from investigation of crimes, maintaining law and order, to policing traffic and other tasks.
52. The SRSG states that another circumstance to take into account in assessing the effectiveness of the investigation in the present case is the fact that the killing of M.I. occurred when the crime rate in Kosovo was at its highest, that is in June 1999, in the aftermath of the NATO bombing. According to the SRSG, during the years 1999 and 2000 UNMIK received hundreds of reports on disappearances and killings of Kosovo Serbs which were particularly challenging to investigate due to the limited resources as well as to a lack of leads, such as in the present case. A mass departure of Kosovo Serbs to Serbia proper had made locating witnesses particularly challenging.
53. As the UN does not have a standing police force of its own and has to rely on contributions of forces from UN member States, UNMIK had no control over the recruitment of international police officers, who often had insufficient experience in investigating crimes with an inter-ethnic aspect in a post-conflict context. Similarly, the rotation of police officers, who were assigned only for periods of six months to one or two years, hampered the continuity of investigation.
54. The SRSG concludes that because of the constraints, the investigations conducted by UNMIK Police cannot be compared to a member state's police investigations. Therefore, according to the SRSG, "the standards set by the ECHR for an effective investigation cannot be the same for UNMIK as for a State with a functioning, well-organized police apparatus in place and with police officers it can carefully select, recruit, and train."
55. In his comments at the merits stage, the SRSG, does not raise any additional objection with regard to this part of the complaint.

3. The Panel's assessment

56. The Panel considers that the complainant invoked a violation of the procedural obligation stemming from the right to life, guaranteed by Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) in that UNMIK did not conduct an effective investigation into the killing of M.I.

a) Submission of relevant files

57. The SRSG provided the Panel with copies of very limited investigative and other relevant documents, on 6 September 2011.

58. The Panel notes that Section 15 of UNMIK Regulation No. 2006/12 states that the Panel may request the submission from UNMIK of any documents and that the SRSG shall cooperate with the Panel and provide the necessary assistance including, in particular, in the release of documents and information relevant to the complaint. The Panel in this regard refers to the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights that inferences shall be drawn from the conduct of the respondent party during the proceedings, including from its failure “to submit information in their hands without a satisfactory explanation” (see ECtHR, *Çelikkilek v. Turkey*, no. 27693/95, judgment of 31 May 2005, § 56).
59. The Panel also notes that the proper maintenance of investigative files concerning crimes such as killings and disappearances, from the opening of the investigation to their handing over, is crucial to the continuation of such investigations and could thus raise *per se* issues under Article 2. The Panel likewise notes that UNMIK has neither provided any explanation as to why the investigative file may be incomplete, nor with respect to which parts.
60. The Panel has no reason to doubt that UNMIK undertook all efforts in order to obtain the relevant investigative files. However, despite ample time given to UNMIK for that purpose (more than three years), neither a complete investigative file, nor a plausible explanation of the reasons for its absence, were presented to the Panel. Therefore, the Panel has no other course of action but to proceed with an examination of the merits of this complaint only on the basis of documents made available by the complainant and the scarce information provided by UNMIK, and to draw inferences from this situation (in this sense, see ECtHR, *Tsechoyev v. Russia*, no. 39358/05, judgment of 15 March 2011, § 146; compare the approach taken by the Human Rights Advisory Panel [HRAP] in case *B.A.*, no. 52/09, opinion of 1 February 2013, § 49).
- b) *General principles concerning the obligation to conduct an effective investigation under Article 2*
61. First, the Panel considers that the lack of any investigative files raises issues of the burden of proof. In this regard, the Panel refers to the approach of the European Court on Human Rights as well as of the United Nations Human Rights Committee (HRC) on the matter. The general rule is that it is for the party who asserts a proposition of fact to prove it, but that this is not a rigid rule.
62. Following this general rule, at the admissibility stage an applicant must present facts, which are supportive of the allegations of the State’s responsibility, that is, to establish a *prima facie* case against the authorities (see, *mutatis mutandis*, ECtHR, *Artico v. Italy*, no. 6694/74, judgment of 13 May 1980, §§ 29-30, Series A no. 37; ECtHR, *Toğcu v. Turkey*, no. 27601/95, judgment of 31 May 2005, § 95). However, the European Court further holds that “... where the events in issue lie wholly, or in large part, within the exclusive knowledge of the authorities ... The burden of proof may then be regarded as resting on the authorities to provide a satisfactory and convincing explanation” (see ECtHR [GC], *Varnava and Others v Turkey*, cited above in § 47, at §§ 183-184).
63. The European Court also states that “... it is for the Government either to argue conclusively why the documents in question cannot serve to corroborate the allegations made by the applicants, or to provide a satisfactory and convincing explanation of how the events in question occurred, failing which an issue under Article 2 and/or Article 3 of the Convention

will arise” (see ECtHR, *Akkum and Others v. Turkey*, no. 21894/93, judgment of 24 June 2005, § 211, ECHR 2005-II (extracts)). The Court adds that “... [i]f they [the authorities] then fail to disclose crucial documents to enable the Court to establish the facts or otherwise provide a satisfactory and convincing explanation, strong inferences may be drawn” (see ECtHR, *Varnava and Others v Turkey*, cited above, at § 184; see also, HRC, *Benaniza v Algeria*, views of 26 July 2010, § 9.4, CCPR/C/99/D/1588/2007; HRC, *Bashasha v. Libyan Arab Jamahiriya*, views of 20 October 2010, § 7.2, CCPR/C/100/D/1776/2008).

64. The Panel understands that the international jurisprudence has developed in a context where the Government in question may be involved in the substantive allegations, which is not the case with UNMIK. The Panel nevertheless considers that since the documentation was under the exclusive control of UNMIK authorities, at least until the handover to EULEX, the principle that “strong inferences” may be drawn from lack of documentation is applicable.
65. Second, the Panel notes that the positive obligation to investigate disappearances is widely accepted in international human rights law since at least the case of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights *Velásquez-Rodríguez* (see Inter-American Court of Human Rights [IACtHR], *Velásquez-Rodríguez v. Honduras*, judgment of 29 July 1988, Series C No. 4). The positive obligation has also been stated by the United Nations Human Rights Committee (HRC) as stemming from Article 6 (right to life), Article 7 (prohibition of cruel and inhuman treatment) and Article 9 (right to liberty and security of person), read in conjunction with Articles 2 (3) (right to an effective remedy) of the ICCPR (see United Nations Human Rights Committee (HRC), General Comment No. 6, 30 April 1982, § 4; HRC, General Comment No. 31, 26 May 2004, §§ 8 and 18, CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add. 13; see also, among others, HRC, *Mohamed El Awani, v. Libyan Arab Jamahiriya*, communication no. 1295/2004, views of 11 July 2007, CCPR/C/90/D/1295/2004). The obligation to investigate disappearances and killings is also asserted in the UN Declaration on the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearances (A/Res/47/133, 18 December 1992), and further detailed in UN guidelines such as the UN Manual on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-Legal Arbitrary and Summary Executions (1991) and the “Guidelines for the Conduct of United Nations Inquiries into Allegations of Massacres” (1995). The importance of the obligation is confirmed by the adoption of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance in 2006, which entered into force on 23 December 2010.
66. In order to address the complainant’s allegations, the Panel refers to the well-established case-law of the European Court on Human Rights on the procedural obligation under Article 2 of the ECHR. The Court has held that “[The] obligation to protect the right to life under Article 2, read in conjunction with the State's general duty under Article 1 of the Convention to “secure to everyone within [its] jurisdiction the rights and freedoms defined in [the] Convention”, requires by implication that there should be some form of effective official investigation when individuals have been killed (see, mutatis mutandis, ECtHR, *McCann and Others v. the United Kingdom*, judgment of 27 September 1995, § 161, Series A no. 324; and ECtHR, *Kaya v. Turkey*, judgment of 19 February 1998, § 86, Reports 1998-I; see also ECtHR, *Jasinskis v. Latvia*, no. 45744/08, judgment of 21 December 2010, § 71). The duty to conduct such an investigation arises in all cases of killing and other suspicious death, whether the perpetrators were private persons or State agents or are unknown (see ECtHR, *Kolevi v. Bulgaria*, no. 1108/02, judgment of 5 November 2009, § 191).
67. The European Court has also stated that the procedural obligation to provide some form of effective official investigation exists also when an individual has gone missing in life-

threatening circumstances and is not confined to cases where it is apparent that the disappearance was caused by an agent of the State (see ECtHR [GC], *Varnava and Others v. Turkey*, cited in § 47 above, at § 136).

68. The authorities must act of their own motion once the matter has come to their attention, and they cannot leave it to the initiative of the next-of-kin either to lodge a formal complaint or to take responsibility for the conduct of any investigative procedure (see ECtHR, *Ahmet Özkan and Others v. Turkey*, no. 21689/93, judgment of 6 April 2004, § 310, see also ECtHR, *Isayeva v. Russia*, no. 57950/00, judgment of 24 February 2005, § 210).
69. Setting out the standards of an effective investigation, the Court has stated that “beside being independent, accessible to the victim’s family, carried out with reasonable promptness and expedition, affording a sufficient element of public scrutiny of the investigation and its results, the investigation must also be effective in the sense that is capable of leading to a determination of whether the death was caused unlawfully and if so, to the identification and punishment of those responsible (see ECtHR [GC], *Varnava and Others v. Turkey*, cited in in § 47 above, at § 191; see also ECtHR, *Palić v. Bosnia and Herzegovina*, no. 4704/04, judgment of 15 February 2011, § 63). This is not an obligation of results but of means. The authorities must take whatever reasonable steps they can to secure the evidence concerning the incident, including, inter alia eye-witness testimony, forensic evidence and, where appropriate, an autopsy which provides a complete and accurate record of injury and an objective analysis of the clinical findings, including the cause of death. Any deficiency in the investigation which undermines its ability to establish the cause of death or the person or persons responsible will risk falling foul of this standard (see ECtHR, *Ahmet Özkan and Others v. Turkey*, cited above, at § 312, and ECtHR, *Isayeva v. Russia*, cited above, at § 212).
70. In particular, the investigation’s conclusion must be based on thorough, objective and impartial analysis of all relevant elements. Failing to follow an obvious line of enquiry undermines to a decisive extent the ability to establish the circumstances of the case and the identity of those responsible (see ECtHR, *Kolevi v. Bulgaria*, cited in § 66, at § 201). Nevertheless, the nature and degree of scrutiny which satisfy the minimum threshold of the investigation’s effectiveness depend on the circumstances of the particular case. They must be assessed on the basis of all relevant facts and with regard to the practical realities of the investigative work (see ECtHR, *Velcea and Mazăre v. Romania*, no. 64301/01, judgment of 1 December 2009, § 105).
71. Specifically with regard to persons disappeared and later found dead, the Court has stated that the procedures of exhuming and identifying mortal remains do not exhaust the obligation under Article 2 of the ECHR. The Court holds that “the procedural obligation arising from a disappearance will generally remain as long as the whereabouts and fate of the person are unaccounted for, and it is thus of a continuing nature” (ECtHR, *Palić v. Bosnia and Herzegovina*, cited in § 69 above, at § 46; in the same sense ECtHR [GC], *Varnava and Others v. Turkey*, cited in § 47 above, at § 148, *Aslakhanova and Others v. Russia*, nos. 2944/06 and others, judgment of 18 December 2012, § 122). However, the Court also stresses that this procedural obligation “does not come to an end even on discovery of the body This only casts light on one aspect of the fate of the missing person and the obligation to account for the disappearance and death, as well as to identify and prosecute any perpetrator of unlawful acts in that connection, will generally remain” (ECtHR, *Palić v. Bosnia and Herzegovina*, cited above; in the same sense ECtHR [GC], *Varnava and Others*

v. *Turkey*, cited in § 47 above, at § 145). While the location and the subsequent identification of the mortal remains of the victim may in themselves be significant achievements, the procedural obligation under Article 2 continues to exist (see ECtHR, *Palić v. Bosnia and Herzegovina*, cited above).

72. On the requirement of public scrutiny, the Court has further stated that there must be a sufficient element of public scrutiny of the investigation or its results to secure accountability in practice as well as in theory. The degree of public scrutiny required may well vary from case to case. In all cases, however, the victim's next-of-kin must be involved in the procedure to the extent necessary to safeguard his or her legitimate interests (see *Ahmet Özkan and Others v. Turkey*, cited in § 68 above, at §§ 311-314; *Isayeva v. Russia*, cited in § 68 above, §§ 211-214 and the cases cited therein).” ECtHR [GC], *Al-Skeini and Others v. United Kingdom*, no. 55721/07, judgment of 7 July 2011, § 167, ECHR 2011).

c) *Applicability of Article 2 to the Kosovo context*

73. The Panel is conscious that the killing of M.I. occurred shortly after the deployment of UNMIK in Kosovo in the immediate aftermath of the armed conflict, when crime, violence and insecurity were rife.

74. On his part, the SRSG does not contest that UNMIK had a duty to investigate the present case under ECHR Article 2. However, according to the SRSG, the unique circumstances pertaining to the Kosovo context and to UNMIK’s deployment in the first phase of its mission shall be taken into account when assessing whether this investigation is in compliance with Article 2 of the ECHR. In substance, the SRSG argues that it is not possible to apply to UNMIK the same standards applicable to a State in a normal situation.

75. The Panel considers that this raises two main questions: first, whether the standards of Article 2 continue to apply in situation of conflict or generalised violence and, second, whether such standards shall be considered fully applicable to UNMIK.

76. As regards the applicability of Article 2 to UNMIK, the Panel recalls that with the adoption of the UNMIK Regulation No. 1999/1 on 25 July 1999 UNMIK undertook an obligation to observe internationally recognised human rights standards in exercising its functions. This undertaking was detailed in UNMIK Regulation No. 1999/24 of 12 December 1999, by which UNMIK assumed obligations under certain international human rights instruments, including the ECHR. In this respect, the Panel has already found that it is true that UNMIK’s interim character and related difficulties must be duly taken into account with regard to a number of situations, but under no circumstances could these elements be taken as a justification for diminishing standards of respect for human rights, which were duly incorporated into UNMIK’s mandate (see HRAP, *Milogorić and Others*, nos. 38/08 and others, opinion of 24 March 2011, § 44; *Berisha and Others*, nos. 27/08 and others, opinion of 23 February 2011, § 25; *Lalić and Others*, nos. 09/08 and others, opinion of 9 June 2012, § 22).

77. Concerning the applicability of Article 2 to situations of conflict or generalised violence, the Panel recalls that the European Court on Human Rights has established the applicability of Article 2 to post-conflict situations, including in countries of the former Yugoslavia (see, among other examples, ECtHR, *Palić v. Bosnia and Herzegovina*, cited in § 63 above, and

ECtHR, *Jularić v. Croatia*, no. 20106/06, judgment of 20 January 2011). The Court has further held that that the procedural obligation under Article 2 continues to apply in “difficult security conditions, including in a context of armed conflict” (see ECtHR [GC], *Al-Skeini and Others v. the United Kingdom*, cited in § 72 above, at § 164; see also ECtHR, *Güleç v. Turkey*, judgment of 27 July 1998, § 81, Reports 1998-IV; ECtHR, *Ergi v. Turkey*, judgment of 28 July 1998, §§ 79 and 82, Reports 1998-IV; ECtHR, *Ahmet Özkan and Others v. Turkey*, cited in § 68 above, at §§ 85-90, 309-320 and 326-330; *Isayeva v. Russia*, cited in § 68 above, at §§ 180 and 210; ECtHR, *Kanlibaş v. Turkey*, no. 32444/96, judgment of 8 December 2005, §§ 39-51).

78. The Court has acknowledged that “where the death [and disappearances] to be investigated under Article 2 occur in circumstances of generalised violence, armed conflict or insurgency, obstacles may be placed in the way of investigators and concrete constraints may compel the use of less effective measures of investigation or may cause an investigation to be delayed” (see ECtHR [GC], *Al-Skeini and Others v. the United Kingdom*, cited above, at §164; ECtHR, *Bazorkina v. Russia*, no. 69481/01, judgment of 27 July 2006, § 121). Nonetheless, the Court has held that “the obligation under Article 2 to safeguard life entails that, even in difficult security conditions, all reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that an effective, independent investigation is conducted into alleged breaches of the right to life (see, amongst many other examples, ECtHR, *Kaya v. Turkey*, cited in § 66 above, at §§ 86-92; ECtHR, *Ergi v Turkey*, cited above, at §§ 82-85; ECtHR [GC], *Tanrikulu v. Turkey*, no. 23763/94, judgment of 8 July 1999, §§ 101-110, ECHR 1999-IV; ECtHR, *Khashiyev and Akayeva v. Russia*, nos. 57942/00 and 57945/00, judgment of 24 February 2005, §§ 156-166; ECtHR, *Isayeva v. Russia*, cited above, at §§ 215-224; ECtHR, *Musayev and Others v. Russia*, nos. 57941/00 and others, judgment of 26 July 2007, §§ 158-165).
79. Similarly, the HRC has held that the right to life, including its procedural guarantees, shall be considered as the supreme right from which no derogation is permitted even in time of public emergency which threatens the life of the nation (see HRC, General Comment No. 6, cited in § 59 above, at § 1; HRC, *Abubakar Amirov and Aïzan Amirova v. Russian Federation*, communication no. 1447/2006, views of 22 April 2009, § 11.2, CCPR/C/95/D/1447/2006). Further, the HRC has stated the applicability of Article 2 (3), 6 and 7 of the ICCPR with specific reference to UNMIK’s obligation to conduct proper investigations on disappearances and abductions in Kosovo (see HRC, Concluding Observations of the Human Rights Committee: Kosovo (Serbia), 14 August 2006, §§ 12-13, CCPR/C/UNK/CO/1).
80. The Panel appreciates the difficulties encountered by UNMIK during the first phase of its deployment. The Panel notes that the appropriate importance attached to the issue of missing persons in Kosovo meant that UNMIK had to take into account both the humanitarian and criminal dimensions of the situation. In particular, the Panel considers that the importance attached to the criminal investigations and the difficulties in Kosovo that limited the abilities of investigating authorities to conduct such investigations, as described by the SRSG, made it crucial that UNMIK establish from the outset an environment conducive to the performance of meaningful investigations. This would involve putting in place a system that would include such elements as the allocation of overall responsibility for the supervision and monitoring of progress in investigations, provision for the regular review of the status of investigations, and a process for the proper handover of cases between different officers or units of UNMIK Police. Such a system should also take account of the protection needs of victims and witnesses (see, *mutatis mutandis*, ECtHR, *R.R. and Others v. Hungary*, no.

19400/11, judgment of 4 December 2012, §§ 28-32), as well as to consider the special vulnerability of displaced persons in post-conflict situations (see ECtHR [GC], *Sargsyan v. Azerbaijan*, no. 40167/06, decision of 14 December 2011, § 145; and ECtHR [GC], *Chiragov and Others v. Armenia*, no. 13216/05, decision of 14 December 2011, § 146). While understanding that the deployment and the organisation of the police and justice apparatus occurred gradually, the Panel deems that this process was completed in 2003 when the police and justice system in Kosovo was described as being “well-functioning” and “sustainable” by the UN Secretary-General (see § 22 above).

81. The Panel further notes that its task is not to review relevant practices or alleged obstacles to the conduct of effective investigations *in abstracto*, but only in relation to their specific application to the particular circumstances of a situation subject of a complaint before it (see, ECtHR, *Brogan and Others v. the United Kingdom*, judgment of 29 November 1988, § 53, Series A no. 145-B). The Panel thus agrees with the SRSG that the nature and degree of scrutiny to determine whether the effectiveness of the investigation satisfies the minimum threshold depends on the circumstances of the particular case. For these reasons, the Panel considers that it will establish with regard to each case if all reasonable steps were taken to conduct an effective investigation as prescribed by Article 2, having regard to the realities of the investigative work in Kosovo.

d) Compliance with Article 2 in the present case

82. Turning to the circumstances of the present case, the Panel first addresses the issue of the burden of proof. At the admissibility stage, the Panel was satisfied that the complainant’s allegations were not groundless, thus it accepted the existence of a *prima facie* case: that M.I. was unlawfully killed and that, at the latest on 2 September 2005, UNMIK became aware of the matter (see § 36 above).

83. Accordingly, applying the principles discussed above (see §§ 61-64), the Panel considers that the burden of proof has shifted to the respondent, so that it is for UNMIK to present the Panel with evidence of an adequate investigation as a defence against the allegations put forward by the complainant and accepted by the Panel as admissible. UNMIK has not discharged its obligation in this regard, as it has neither presented any complete investigative file, nor has it in a “satisfactory and convincing” way explained its failure to do so. Accordingly, the Panel will draw inferences from this situation.

84. The Panel notes that according to the 2000 Annual Report of UNMIK Police, at least from June 2000 the complete executive policing powers, including criminal investigations, in Pejë/Peć region were under the full control of UNMIK. Therefore, it was UNMIK’s responsibility to ensure, *first*, that the investigation is conducted expeditiously and efficiently; *second*, that all relevant investigative material is properly handed over to the authority taking over responsibility for investigation (EULEX, see § 24 above); and *third*, that the investigative files could be traced and retrieved, should a need arise at any later stage.

85. The Panel infers from the absence of any investigative file that one of the following situations occurred: no investigation was carried out; the file was not properly handed over to EULEX; UNMIK failed to retrieve the file from the current custodian; or UNMIK opted not to present the file to the Panel, despite its obligation to cooperate with the Panel and to

provide it with the necessary assistance, including the release of documents relevant to the complaints under Section 15 of UNMIK Regulation No. 2006/12 (cited in § 45 above).

86. The Panel has already noted above that it has no reason to doubt UNMIK's good faith in seeking to provide the investigative file for the Panel's review. However, the Panel considers that whichever of these potential explanations is applicable, it indicates a failure, which is directly attributable to UNMIK, either when it was exercising its executive functions, or in its current capacity (See HRAP, *B.A.*, cited in § 60 above, at §§ 74-75).
87. Examining the particulars of this case, the Panel notes that the available documents show no investigative actions into the killing of M.I. appears to have ever been undertaken by UNMIK authorities, either in the period before or within the Panel's jurisdiction *ratione temporis* (explained in § 47 above). The SRSG likewise does not contest the complete lack of investigative activity with regard to this case.
88. In particular, there is no indication that UNMIK Police undertook any, even basic, investigative steps, which could have developed leads for further investigation, such as: crime scene examination and collection of physical evidence, interviews with the complainant, identifying and interviewing any potential witnesses from among the neighbours, compiling a list of properties that could have gone missing from the house (see § 37 above).
89. As those responsible for the crime had not been located, UNMIK was obligated to use the means at its disposal to regularly review the investigation to ensure that nothing had been overlooked and any new evidence had been considered, as well as to inform the relatives of the victim regarding the progress of the investigation. Despite that at least twice, in 2005 and in 2007 (see § 36 and 37 above), the circumstances of this killing, as well as the investigation undertaken to date, were reviewed by UNMIK Police, no subsequent action was undertaken.
90. The apparent lack of any adequate reaction from UNMIK Police may have suggested to perpetrators that the authorities were either not able, or not willing to investigate such criminal acts. Such an attitude of the authorities towards the gravest crimes in any society, and especially in post-conflict circumstances, inevitably creates a culture of impunity among the criminals and can only lead to a worsening of the situation. The problems which UNMIK had encountered at the beginning of its mission, which were discussed above, do not justify such inaction, either at the outset or subsequently.
91. Recalling the SRSG's assertion that at the time when the killing of M.I. occurred, the crime rate in Kosovo "was at its highest" (see § 52 above), the Panel notes that for this argument to be valid, it should have been supported by statistical data. As no such data was provided by the SRSG, the Panel dismisses this argument.
92. The Panel therefore considers that, having regard to all the circumstances of the particular case, not all reasonable steps were taken by UNMIK to identify the perpetrators and to bring them to justice. In this sense the Panel considers that the investigation into the killing of M.I. was not adequate and did not comply with the requirements of promptness, expedition and effectiveness (see § 69 above), as required by Article 2.

93. As concerns the requirement of public scrutiny, the Panel recalls that Article 2 also requires that in all cases the victim's next-of-kin must be involved in the investigation to the extent necessary to safeguard his or her legitimate interests (see ECtHR [GC], *Tahsin Acar v. Turkey*, no. 26307/95, judgment of 8 April 2004, § 226, ECHR 2004-III; ECtHR, *Taniş v. Turkey*, no. 65899/01, judgment of 2 August 2005, § 204, ECHR 2005-VIII).
94. The Panel notes that the complainant only communicated with KFOR when she reported the killing of her mother. However, no formal statement was ever taken from the complainant and no information was given to her concerning the status of the investigation. The Panel therefore considers that the investigation was not accessible to the complainants' family as required by Article 2.
95. The Panel also notes the fact that the mortal remains of M.I. were eventually located, identified and handed over to the family for burial. However, unlike the Panel's position with regard to some other complaints that it has already considered (see HRAP, *J.D.*, no 44/09, opinion of 14 March 2013, § 74; HRAP, *D.P.*, opinion of 6 June 2013, §§ 85 - 86), in this case it is the authorities who were responsible for the misplacing of the mortal remains. Therefore, the Panel does not deem their finding and return of the mortal remains to the family as a significant achievement in the investigation, satisfying the requirement under Article 2 of the ECHR (see § 71 above).
96. In light of the deficiencies and shortcomings described above, the Panel concludes that UNMIK failed to carry out an adequate and effective investigation into the killing of the complainant's mother. There has been accordingly a violation of Article 2 of the ECHR under its procedural limb.

B. Alleged violation of Article 3 of the ECHR

97. The complainant alleged that the lack of information and uncertainty surrounding the killing of M.I. and subsequent prolonged failure of UNMIK to return her mortal remains, caused mental suffering to herself and her family. The complainant is deemed to invoke Article 3 of the ECHR prohibiting inhuman and degrading treatment.
98. In its decision of 18 March 2011, the Panel declared the complaint under Article 3 admissible. Nevertheless, the Panel has to reassess the admissibility of this part of the complaint, in light of subsequent developments in the Panel's case law concerning the admissibility of complaints under Article 3 of the ECHR.
99. First, the Panel refers to the case law of the European Court of Human Rights with respect to the question whether a member of the family of a person who has been killed can be considered the victim of a treatment contrary to Article 3 of the ECHR, which prohibits inhuman treatment. While the European Court accepts that a family member of a disappeared person can claim to be the victim of such an ill-treatment, notably in the light of the inability during a prolonged period of time to find out what happened to their relative, it does not usually extend the application of Article 3 of the ECHR to the relatives of a person who has been killed in the case of an instantaneous death (see, *e.g.*, European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), *Bitiyeva and X v. Russia*, nos. 57953/00 and 37392/03, judgment of 21 June 2007, § 152; ECtHR, *Udayeva and Yusupova v. Russia*, no. 36542/05, judgment of 21 December 2010, § 82; ECtHR, *Sabanchiyeva and Others v. Russia*, no. 38250/05, judgement of 6 June

2013, §§ 110 and 113, compare HRAP, *M.M. and V.M.*, no 35/09, opinion of 21 August 2013, §§ 79-83).

100. The Panel has held that a complainant may invoke a violation of Article 3 of the ECHR even if there is no explicit reference to specific acts of the authorities involved in the investigation, since also the passivity of the authorities and the absence of information given to the complainant may be indicative of inhuman treatment of the complainant by the authorities (see HRAP, *Mladenović*, no. 99/09, decision of 11 August 2011, § 22).
101. The Panel further notes that in cases when the European Court did consider a disappeared person's family member a victim of treatment by the authorities contrary to Article 3, its applicability is principle limited to the distinct period during which the member of the family sustained the uncertainty, anguish and distress appertaining to the specific phenomenon of disappearances (see, e.g., ECtHR, *Luluyev and Others v. Russia*, no. 69480/01, judgment of 9 November 2006, §§ 114-115, *ECHR*, 2006-XIII; see also ECtHR, *Gongadze v. Ukraine*, no. 34056/02, judgment of 8 November 2005, § 185, *ECHR*, 2005-XI). The Panel has already considered that such period ends at a moment when the mortal remains of a disappeared person are handed over to the family (see e.g. HRAP, *D.P.*, no. 04/09, opinion of 6 June 2013, §§ 93-94).
102. In the present case, the relevant period lasted until 14 December 2007, when the mortal remains of M.I. were handed over to the complainant's sister (see § 30 above). The fact that the complainant had apparently not been informed by her family about it cannot be regarded as UNMIK's failure.
103. The Panel recalls the requirement set forth by Section 3.1 of UNMIK Regulation No. 2006/12, which states that the Panel "may only deal with a matter ... within a period of six months from the date on which the final decision was taken". As a rule, the six-month period runs from the date of the final decision in the process of exhaustion of domestic remedies. Where it is clear from the outset however that no effective remedy is available to the complainant, the period runs from the date of the acts or measures complained of, or from the date of knowledge of that act or its effect on or prejudice to the complainant (ECtHR [GC], *Varnava and Others v. Turkey*, cited in 47 above, at § 157). Where the complaint relates to a continuing situation, the six-month time limit starts to run from the date on which the situation has come to an end.
104. In this respect, the question arises whether the complaint has been filed in time. The Panel, again, notes that the mortal remains of M.I. were returned to the complainant's family on 14 December 2007. It is at that moment that the period during which an issue could arise under Article 3 of the ECHR, came to an end. For the purpose of Section 3.1 of UNMIK Regulation No. 2006/12, the six-month time limit started to run from that date.
105. The complaint of Ms Ž.I. was filed with the Panel on 1 April 2009, which is clearly after the expiration of the above-referred six-month period.
106. The Panel has no doubts as to the profound suffering caused to the complainant and her family by the prolonged failure of the authorities to return the mortal remains of her mother. Nevertheless, the Panel must conclude that this part of the complaint falls outside the time-limit set by Section 3.1 of UNMIK Regulation No. 2006/12 and thus will not be examined

on its merits (see HRAP, *Radovanović*, no. 177/09, decision of 16 September 2011, §§ 19-23; HRAP, *Djukanović*, nos 67/09 & 140/09, opinion of 25 April 2013, §§ 103-107).

V. CONCLUDING COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

107. In light of the Panel's findings in this case, the Panel is of the opinion that some form of reparation is necessary.
108. The Panel notes that enforced disappearances and arbitrary executions constitute serious violations of human rights which, shall be investigated and prosecuted under any circumstances. The Panel also notes that UNMIK as the territorial administration of Kosovo from 1999 to 2008 had the primary responsibility to effectively investigate and prosecute those responsible for killings, abductions or disappearances in life threatening circumstances. Its failure to do so constitutes a further serious violation of the rights of the victims and their next-of-kin, in particular the right to have the truth of the matter determined.
109. The Panel notes the SRSG's own concerns that the inadequate resources, especially at the outset of UNMIK's mission, made compliance with UNMIK's human rights obligations difficult to achieve.
110. It would normally be for UNMIK to take the appropriate measures in order to put an end to the violation noted and to redress as far as possible the effects thereof. However, as the Panel noted above (see § 24), UNMIK's responsibility with regard to the administration of justice in Kosovo ended on 9 December 2008, with EULEX assuming full operational control in the area of rule of law. UNMIK therefore is no longer in a position to take measures that will have a direct impact on the investigations that are still pending before EULEX or local authorities. Likewise, following the declaration of independence by the Kosovo Provisional Institutions of Self-Government on 17 February 2008 and subsequently, the entry into force of the Kosovo Constitution on 15 June 2008, UNMIK ceased to perform executive functions in Kosovo, this fact limiting its ability to provide full and effective reparation of the violation committed, as required by established principles of international human rights law.
111. The Panel considers that this factual situation does not relieve UNMIK from its obligation to redress as far as possible the effects of the violations for which it is responsible.

With respect to the complainant and the case the Panel considers appropriate that UNMIK:

- In line with the case law of the European Court of Human Rights on situations of limited State jurisdiction (see ECtHR [GC], *Ilaşcu and Others v. Moldova and Russia*, no. 48787/99, judgment of 8 July 2004, *ECHR*, 2004-VII, § 333; ECtHR, *Al-Saadoon and Mufdhi v. United Kingdom*, no. 61498/08, judgment of 2 March 2010, § 171; ECtHR [GC], *Catan and Others v. Moldova and Russia*, nos. 43370/04, 8252/05 and 18454/06, judgment of 19 October 2012, § 109), must endeavour, with all the diplomatic means available to it *vis-à-vis* EULEX and the Kosovo authorities, to obtain assurances that the investigations concerning the case at issue will be continued in compliance with the requirements of an

effective investigation as envisaged by Article 2, that the circumstances surrounding the killing of M.I. will be established and that perpetrators will be brought to justice. The complainant and/or other next-of-kin shall be informed of such proceedings and relevant documents shall be disclosed to them, as necessary;

- Publicly acknowledges, within a reasonable time, responsibility with respect to UNMIK's failure to adequately investigate the killing of M.I., and makes a public apology to the complainant and her family in this regard;

- Takes appropriate steps towards payment of adequate compensation to the complainant for the moral damage suffered due to UNMIK's failure to conduct an effective investigation as stated above.

The Panel also considers appropriate that UNMIK:

- In line with the UN General Assembly Resolution on "Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law" (A/Res/60/147, 21 March 2006), takes appropriate steps, through other UN affiliated entities operating in Kosovo, local bodies and non-governmental organisations, for the realisation of a full and comprehensive reparation programme, including restitution compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition, for the victims from all communities of serious violations of human rights which occurred during and in the aftermath of the Kosovo conflict;

- Takes appropriate steps before competent bodies of the United Nations, including the UN Secretary-General, towards the allocation of adequate human and financial resources to ensure that international human rights standards are upheld at all times by the United Nations, including when performing administrative and executive functions over a territory, and to make provision for effective and independent monitoring;

FOR THESE REASONS,

The Panel, unanimously,

1. FINDS THAT THERE HAS BEEN A VIOLATION OF THE PROCEDURAL OBLIGATION UNDER ARTICLE 2 OF THE EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS;

2. FINDS THAT THE COMPLAINT UNDER ARTICLE 3 IS INADMISSIBLE;

3. RECOMMENDS THAT UNMIK:

a. URGES EULEX AND OTHER COMPETENT AUTHORITIES IN KOSOVO TO TAKE ALL POSSIBLE STEPS IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT THE CRIMINAL

INVESTIGATION INTO THE DISAPPEARANCE AND KILLING OF THE COMPLAINANT'S MOTHER IS CONTINUED IN COMPLIANCE WITH ARTICLE 2 OF THE ECHR AND THAT THE PERPETRATORS ARE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE;

- b. PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGES RESPONSIBILITY FOR ITS FAILURE TO CONDUCT AN EFFECTIVE INVESTIGATION INTO THE DISAPPEARANCE AND KILLING OF THE COMPLAINANT'S MOTHER AND MAKES A PUBLIC APOLOGY TO THE COMPLAINANT;**
- c. TAKES APPROPRIATE STEPS TOWARDS PAYMENT OF ADEQUATE COMPENSATION OF THE COMPLAINANT FOR MORAL DAMAGE;**
- d. TAKES APPROPRIATE STEPS TOWARDS THE REALISATION OF A FULL AND COMPREHENSIVE REPARATION PROGRAMME;**
- e. TAKES APPROPRIATE STEPS AT THE UNITED NATIONS AS A GUARANTEE OF NON-REPETITION;**
- f. TAKES IMMEDIATE AND EFFECTIVE MEASURES TO IMPLEMENT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PANEL AND TO INFORM THE COMPLAINANT AND THE PANEL ABOUT FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN THIS CASE.**

Andrey ANTONOV
Executive Officer

Marek NOWICKI
Presiding Member

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CCIU - Central Criminal Investigation Unit
CCPR – International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
DOJ - Department of Justice
DPPO - District Public Prosecutor’s Office
ECHR - European Convention on Human Rights
ECtHR - European Court of Human Rights
EU – European Union
EULEX - European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo
FRY - Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
HRAP - Human Rights Advisory Panel
HRC - United Nation Human Rights Committee
IACtHR – Inter-American Court of Human Rights
ICMP - International Commission of Missing Persons
ICRC - International Committee of the Red Cross
IP - International Prosecutor
KFOR - International Security Force (commonly known as Kosovo Force)
KLA - Kosovo Liberation Army
MoU - Memorandum of Understanding
MPU - Missing Persons Unit
NATO - North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OMPF - Office on Missing Persons and Forensics
OSCE - Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
RIU - Regional Investigation Unit
SRSG - Special Representative of the Secretary-General
UN - United Nations
UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNMIK - United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
VRIC - Victim Recovery and Identification Commission
WCIU - War Crimes Investigation Unit