



**Statement of Lead Republican Michael McCaul (R-TX)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs**

“Kosovo’s Wartime Victims: The Quest for Justice”
April 30, 2019

Remarks as Delivered

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Before we start this morning’s hearing I want to address the developing situation in Venezuela. The Chairman and I both got a briefing from Ambassador Bolton. I think things are moving very rapidly, hopefully in the right direction.

I continue to stand with the Venezuelan people and interim President Juan Guaido and urge Maduro to step down to allow a peaceful transition in Venezuela and refrain from violence against his own people.

The Venezuelan people need the support of the international community now more than ever and I hope that my colleagues here from both sides of the aisle can stand together in support of this cause for freedom and democracy.

Now to the subject of this hearing. The war in Kosovo was a terrifying conflict that brought tremendous suffering to the Balkans.

Over the course of a year and a half, ethnic tensions and violence forced families from their homes, took the lives of innocent civilians, and left an untold number of people scarred for life.



Many of us remember the gruesome images shown across our TV screens or printed in the newspapers. Refugees were crammed into trains and sent off to camps.

A spokesman for the United Nations Refugee Agency at the time said he was reminded of the “darkest days at the end of World War II, with refugees streaming in all directions.”

We learned of horrifying war crimes that included torture, rape, and a program of ethnic cleansing carried out by Serbian forces.

By the end, over 13,000 people were dead or missing, and over 1.2 million people had been displaced. It was a full-blown humanitarian crisis.

This would be the last major conflict of the 20th century on a continent that is no stranger to war. And while an operation carried out by NATO helped bring the hostilities to a close in June of 1999, the war never actually ended for many of its victims.

The horrors have stayed with the people who were forced to endure them.

Some survivors have yet to experience justice for the crimes that were committed against them.

Although we have pledged to never forget what happened in Kosovo twenty years ago, there are people who feel as if they've already been forgotten.

Too many war criminals and perpetrators have yet to be punished for their evil actions.

While this is a sad reality, we can still take action and do something about this.



This hearing will allow us to discuss what happened and review ways to seek the justice that needs to be served.

This morning, we will hear directly from our witnesses who can share their stories about what happened to them and their family members. Their truths must continue to be told.

I want to personally thank each of our witnesses for being here today. All of us commend you for your strength, your courage, and your commitments to peace.

Of note, I want to also welcome Ms. Goodman from my home state of Texas.

I am hopeful that your testimonies will shed light on these atrocities that were committed and inspire others who have yet to share their stories.

I would like to finally thank Chairman Engel for holding this important hearing. And I urge my colleagues to find ways in which we can work together to find the justice that has so far eluded the victims of this conflict.

And with that, I yield back.

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