

## **Statement of qualifications**

I am a graduate psychologist by profession. In 2004, I was awarded my master degree at the Psychology Department, University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. My master thesis was the “Effects of Psychosocial Programs on the Rehabilitation of Children and Adolescents Suffering from the Consequences of Survived Traumatic War Experiences”. In addition, I have completed a two-year specialization in the field of traumatology at the EMDR Institute in Germany and acquired the title of trauma consultant, as well as a three-year specialization in the field of systemic family psychotherapy at the Belgrade Institute, Serbia and acquired the title of family consultant. In addition to the above referenced specializations, I have to date completed a series of educational and training programs concerning the work with vulnerable groups, including victims of violence, sexual assaults and physical torture, trainings in the field of trauma and post-traumatic stress-disorder, stress, secondary victimization and a number of other educational programs in similar fields, including management. All the above referenced training and educational programs have assisted and still assist me in my everyday work and activities.

I have started working already during the third year of my studies, with children and adolescents in the rural areas of BiH who had survived war traumas. I somehow clearly knew, already at the time, that I would like to express myself as both a human being and psychologist, and to dedicate myself to working with the victims of the war, which had lasted for almost five years in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Considering that I have personally experienced and survived the war in Sarajevo, the support and assistance to this most vulnerable group have been all the time my motivation and the leading idea in my carrier. Having finished my post-graduate studies in psychology in 2000, I got engaged with the international organization Wings of Hope. In addition to working as a psychotherapist, I soon became a coordinator of the counselling center for children and adults suffering from difficulties caused by the survived traumatic experiences. In 2005, I started working as a witness support expert officer/psychologist in the then newly established Witness Support Section at the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina. I have to underline that this Section is the first section of the kind in the whole region. In 2006, I became a Head of the Witness Support Section and I have held this position to date.

The everyday work with witnesses and victims within the Witness Support Section has shown the magnitude of vulnerability of this population in general, and the need for enormous work with them today, in order to enable them to function with no obstructions in their everyday lives after the hardships and various forms of torture they survived. Obviously, the work of the Witness Support Section staff has not been related only to the arrival of witnesses before the Court and their testimonies. This work includes a wider context of the complete evaluation of not only the mental state of a witness, but also his/her social, family and any other status. It was necessary to provide the victims and witnesses with any form of support to enable them to exercise their rights, but also to ensure their survival in very difficult times today. Accordingly, we have initiated the cooperation with the non-governmental sector which is able to provide assistance to the victims in certain ways, through its various support projects. Since the Witness Support Section is the first of the kind not only in Bosnia and Herzegovina but in the whole region, we have shared our experiences at the regional level too. Thus, we have become a model for the establishment of similar Sections in the region. As a Head of such a Section, and as a human being and psychologist too, I have over the time directed my knowledge and experiences at developing and improving the witness support in Bosnia and Herzegovina through a variety of international projects. Among other things, I have advocated the idea that witness support sections be established in the courts and prosecutor’s offices at the Entity level in BiH to provide all victims/witnesses with equal access to all levels of the judiciary. The idea was understood and adopted as an important part of the National War Crimes Prosecution Strategy in 2008. Already since 2010, the UNDP opened, in cooperation with us, the first Witness Support Section at the Entity level in Sarajevo and Banja Luka. Today, six years later, in addition to the Witness Support Section at the Court of BiH, 17 additional Witness Support Sections were established

at the Courts and Prosecutor's Offices in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Pursuant to the above-referenced National Strategy, the Section at the Court of BiH, or the Head of this Section, acts as a supervisor of those other Sections.

I have mentioned all the foregoing in order to explain that there is always a possibility, even the slightest one, to assist people in exercising their rights in an easier way. The fact that they suffered different atrocities 20 years ago is unimpeachable and significantly affects their everyday lives. Having directly worked exactly with these victims, I realized how great heroes are those persons who have survived the severest crimes. For example, women repeatedly raped for a number of days during the war, today have families and children and fight for their survival and a better life, by integrating their most difficult experiences in a subtle, unburdening way for both members of their families and the community. The way in which we have contributed, as psychologists, through our everyday work with them, may be perhaps a slight but sufficient motivation to encourage them to keep going on and persist in their fight.

Over the past period, several publications were published in relation to the rights and needs of victims as a direct response to the victims' needs, in the production of which I have also personally taken part. The nomination of candidate to serve on the Board of Directors of the Trust Fund for Victims at the International Criminal Court is, in my view, a possibility to share, with other regions too, my 10-year experience in working with the victims of the severest tortures, and the work with the judiciary, and thereby assist victims from the other regions in developing possibilities for rehabilitation and recovery, and exercising their rights. I believe that our experience in the work with witnesses and victims from Bosnia and Herzegovina is highly significant and covers a wide spectrum, because we have raised many issues in BiH, specifically relating to this group of people, that are resolved, or still being resolved, all with a view to providing support and assistance to the persons who still live, in a way, in a post-war society.

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