

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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## **Bosnia and Herzegovina: Avdo Palić's remains identified – a beginning toward justice**

On 5 August 2009, eight years after exhumation and 14 years after his disappearance, the International Commission for Missing Persons announced that it had identified the remains of Avdo Palić, a war-time commander of the Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Armija Bosne i Hercegovine), forcibly taken away from the UN Protection Forces (UNPROFOR) compound in Žepa in eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) by soldiers from the Bosnian Serb Army (Vojska Republike Srpske) on 27 July 1995. Following the initial identification, additional DNA analysis conducted on 19 August 2009, requested by Avdo Palić's wife, has confirmed that the remains exhumed from the Vragolovi mass grave in Rogatica municipality in November 2001, do indeed belong to Colonel Palić.

Amnesty International welcomes the identification of the location of the mortal remains of Avdo Palić, but regrets the length of time it took to make this step. The organization also reminds that, though this constitutes an important beginning toward justice, the most important task remains yet undone. Amnesty International is concerned that the BiH authorities have failed to take meaningful steps to bring those responsible for the enforced disappearance of Avdo Palić to justice.

The news that the mortal remains of Avdo Palić have finally been located is a bitter reminder that thousands of people still reported missing as a result of the 1992-95 armed conflict in BiH are yet to be identified.

Almost 14 years after the end of the war in BiH, Amnesty International is seriously concerned about the continuing impunity for enforced disappearances and other violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed during the war. The organization is also concerned about the continuing lack of justice and redress for the victims of these violations and their relatives.

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