

materials have been declassified.

- The Authority notified all interested individuals on filling out the information forms to have access to such documents, pursuant to Law 45/2015.
- The materials were also displayed in Tepelena on 23th of August 2018, in the framework of the Authority activities carried out with other partners on the European Day of Remembrance for Totalitarian Systems Victims, marked by the presence of the local community. The exhibition aimed to nurture local dialog on the past, focusing on specific local events, which serve to figures re-dimensioning and encourage reflection.
- On the 23rd of August, the Authority - as the main state institution responsible for supporting scientific research during the historical review of the former state security activity- organized for remembrance purposes Tepelena Museum Day/Memorial on the European Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Totalitarian Regimes, in cooperation with the Municipality of Tepelena, survivors, institutions and active civil society organizations, UNDP Albania, Italian Government, USA Embassy and OSCE Presence.
- In the framework of the Museum day, the following numerous activities were carried out: exhibitions with the Authority archival materials-Communist Persecution in Tepelena area; Scientific symposium on forced labor historical and juridical framework, as a preparatory stage for the proceedings of the conference on forced labor camps; Institutional coordinated efforts to establish the National Museum/Memorial of Forced Labor Camps; Camp premises visiting by the President of the Republic of Albania; Commemoration ceremony to sufferance survivors and distribution of medals for "Special civic merits" as a sign of human dignity triumph; Launching of the project "In the Light" in cooperation with the Authority, IIPP, Harabel and MEMO, incorporating the display of video monologues "Just like mama...", "Room-like bed", and "Chopping Wood" based on real life stories; Display of the installation " Even walls have ears" and a musical concert with the band "Asgjë sikur dielli" and "3 Musketierët", as a sign of human dignity and life triumph.
- In order to benefit from the good international experience in the field of historical and collective memory, the Authority with international partners support conducted a study visit in Israel on 8-11/10/ 2018. During the visit, the Authority working group was introduced to: a) a more consolidated remembrance museum experience; b) experience in scientific research and civic education; c) work carried out by the communication department. Experience exchange between the two institu-

tions was accompanied by the airing of a documentary film "Besa", focusing on human dignity and linking remembrance with values.

- In the first day of the university academic year 2018-2019, the Authority inaugurated the remembrance corner of the scholar Sabiha Kasimati, at the Museum of the Faculty of Natural Sciences already named after her. Numerous activities were carried out in cooperation with the University of Tirana, Faculty of Natural Sciences, Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth, scholars, family members, and international development partners. The remembrance corner "Sabiha Kasimati" was finalized thanks to a cooperation with an inter-disciplinary group composed of historians, biologists, archive officers, journalists and scientific researchers. A good part of such data was exhibited for the very first time. By establishing the information corner at the entrance of the Museum, the Authority fulfilled one of its duties related to civic education through scientific research, serving to the historical truth and confrontation with the past. Following a more-than-one-year work, coordinated with scientific projects, shedding light on the past, and figures re-dimensioning, Sabiha Kasimati was finally given a place of honor in the Museum designed, proposed and founded by her before being brutally punished and executed to be abandoned into decades-long oblivion. This activity was accompanied with the airing of the documentary film on Sabiha Kasimati's life.

Future work

- Building on the work to turn the Tepelena labor camp into a museum and one of the most important memory sites.
- Organizing special exhibitions on several well-known personalities with the Authority archival materials, thus encouraging scholars to conduct the first studies on the persecution exerted by the communist regime.
- Building on the work carried out so far by drafting an activity calendar on Remembrance Days to communicate with the youth and the wider public by means of art, massive communication and exhibition of former state security documents tackling specific topics.
- Building on the work carried so far by publishing studies on specific individuals or events such as the Zhapokika Revolt in the Tepelena district, which will serve to the enrichment of the Tepelena Camp Museum.

TEPELENA FORMER INTERNMENT CAMP MEMORY SITES

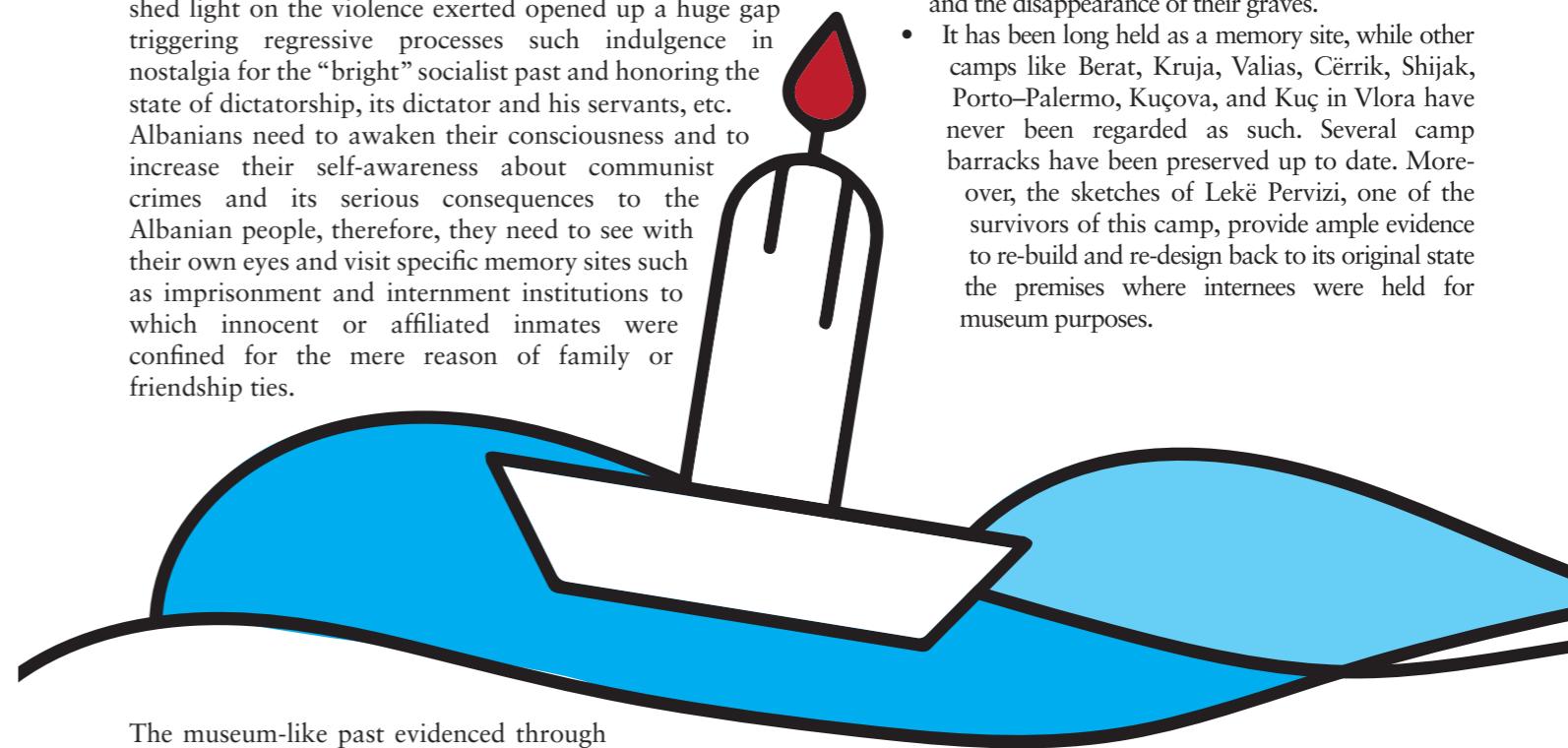
Shqiptarët kanë nevojë urgjente për zgjimin e ndërgjegjes, për vetëdijësimin mbi krimin komunist dhe pasojat serioze të tij

Issue

The intense communist propaganda, information concealment, total secrecy, and the cover-up of the violent reality of the dictatorship of proletariat instilled many illusions in those individuals who were not subject to imprisonment or internment. Maintenance of a stony silence in the years of democratic ruling and failure to shed light on the violence exerted opened up a huge gap triggering regressive processes such indulgence in nostalgia for the "bright" socialist past and honoring the state of dictatorship, its dictator and his servants, etc. Albanians need to awaken their consciousness and to increase their self-awareness about communist crimes and its serious consequences to the Albanian people, therefore, they need to see with their own eyes and visit specific memory sites such as imprisonment and internment institutions to which innocent or affiliated inmates were confined for the mere reason of family or friendship ties.

which were uncommon to the Eastern Bloc and can be set side by side only with soviet gulags.

- It represents the typology of the camp to which innocent elderly men, women and children endured agony.
- The camp is typical of the highest degree of communist atrocity, where one third of inmates were children, 1163. It is also typical for massive deaths of children and the disappearance of their graves.
- It has been long held as a memory site, while other camps like Berat, Kruja, Valias, Cërrik, Shijak, Porto-Palermo, Kuçova, and Kuç in Vlora have never been regarded as such. Several camp barracks have been preserved up to date. Moreover, the sketches of Lekë Pervizi, one of the survivors of this camp, provide ample evidence to re-build and re-design back to its original state the premises where internees were held for museum purposes.



The museum-like past evidenced through tangible objects or premises where thousands of individuals lost their lives with no grave, is a call to remembrance and to stand up against dictatorships. Tepelena former internment camp (hereinafter the "Camp") tells apart among the internment-deportation system for several reasons:

- This camp carries thousands of painful human life stories. Due to its extreme living conditions, the USA Government in the United Nations made particular reference to this camp in 1955 to back up its complaint on violation of human rights in Albania and use of forced labor as a punishment.
- It mirrors perfectly the typology of barbed-wired camps,

Role of the Authority

The Authority supports its work and the continuity of projects undertaken on important memory principles, placing the historical memory at the core of community members' identity and legacy such as: presenting different perspectives; avoiding generalizations; treating historical figures as individuals; ensuring a genuine historical basis; using academic knowledge as sources, where every content should be faced and discussed with well known and certified academics for the specific knowledge needed for this work.



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.



Based on the above principles, the Authority has undertaken ambitious and complex projects in the field of scientific research and evidence professional collation, focusing on reviewing and re-evaluating history, rehabilitating victims, personalities and communities' resistance, and encouraging social dialog for the sake of transparency and democracy strengthening.

Through the work started to set up one memory site for Forced Labor Camps in Tepelena, the Authority aims to establish a model for all forced labor camps in Albania, so that the past serves to self-reflection and be not repeated.

Within the legal framework of its activity and based on the values of transparency, integrity, cooperation, learning, and commitment the Authority is working to raise the public awareness through continuous learning as a mean to encourage democratic engagement.

the Authority is prone to cooperate with actors and players, so that Tepelena Camp represents- as an evidence of the forced labor camps during the communist regime-to represent a place of reflection for youth, students, citizens and pays homage to the sacrifice and the human dignity of thousands of maltreated individuals, men, women, and children in the forced labor camps all over the country.

Milestones/ Tepelena Camp Museum Project

- In the framework of its research activity and with an eye to review the former state security activity and provide civic education, the Authority launched through Decision No. 54, dated 10.08.2017 the Remembrance Project “National Memorial to Forced Labor Camps” and established the working group “On searching for archival documentation for Tepelena camp and establishing a memorial to commemorate the 30th of August, as the International Day of Missing People”, pursuant to Law No. 45/2015, Law No.

9154, dated 06.11.2003 “On Archives” on organizing and opening documentary exhibitions, and Law No. 9802, dated 13.09.2007 “On ratifying the International UN Convention “On Protection of All People from Enforced Disappearance””.

- The project consists of bringing back to its identity one of Tepelena camp barracks as a deportation camp; establishing boards with testimonies, photographs, and archival evidence on deportation-internment camps; as well as designing, positioning and planting several saplings (cypresses) to commemorate children with no grave to rest, who lost their lives due to the harsh living conditions in Tepelena Camp. Erecting such a memorial is only the first step of transforming the entire complex into a Museum of Forced Labor Camps and Communist Dictatorship.
- The remembrance project has been incorporated in the 2017-2021 governing program in the chapter dedicated to culture and education through remembrance. The programs highlight the following: “Remembrance Paths” are a unique itinerary to Albania, which will continue to shed light on the historical and educational aspects of former communist sites such as Spaç or Tepelena, building on the well-known museum-like Remembrance projects”.
- In support of the Authority commitment, the Municipality of Tepelena defined the National Memorial of Forced Labor Camps project as a priority object to the Local and Regional Arts and Culture Infrastructure Development for 2018. The project managed to obtain the local power support by Tepelena Municipal Council Decision No. 40, dated 30.11.2017 “On approving the priority investment objects for 2018”.
- The Authority has signed several cooperation agreements with partners, who are aiding official documents and data collection, citizens’ awareness-raising, and social education through review and re-evaluation of history. Collection of official documents evidencing the existence of Tepelena Camp was performed by cooperating with the Civil Registry General Directorate, Institute for the Integration of Political Persecutes, and the Institute

for Studies on Communist Crimes and Consequences in Albania.

- The project was supported by partners like UNDP, OSCE Presence, other public institutions at local and central level, academic and scientific research institutions. The project “Remembrance to heal and prevent” besides the conceptualization, history and practices of forced labor during the communist regime through a historical and juridical approach, also worked for the design of memory sites such as the Camp in Tepelena.
- Building on the research work, the Authority has entered into cooperation agreements with the Institute of History at the University of Tirana on in-depth knowledge on the past and its professional expertise.
- The Ministry of Culture supported the Authority project for a Memorial in the Tepelena deportation-internment camp: Designing, positioning and planting several saplings (cypresses) to commemorate children with no grave to rest, who lost their lives due to the harsh living conditions in Tepelena Camp.
- The Ministry of Defense joined the work carried out by the Authority by opening the premises of Tepelena Camp to the public and providing tools, materials, and human resources to aid such premises arrangement, with the aim to organize an activity in the framework of the International Day of Missing People.
- The Authority managed to obtain relevant data through the Institute for the Integration of Political Persecutes, such as the name list and categories of people convicted of forced labor in Tepelena Camp: 3380 people in total, of whom 973 elderly men, 1254 women and 1163 children.
- The remembrance project “National Memorial of Forced Labor Camps” was launched in Tepelena on the 30th of August 2017 from architects at the presence of the Authority and Municipality of Tepelena representatives, international partners, survivors and their successors, Tepelena citizens, historians and students, as well as representatives from public and non-public institutions, national and international organizations, and the media.

- The planting of the first cypresses on the 30th of August to commemorate missing minors marked the first step to the commencement of Memorial works. The project involves bringing back one of the barracks to its original state as a deportation camp; planting saplings to commemorate children with no grave to rest, who lost their lives due to the harsh living conditions in Tepelena Camp; and placing boards (photographs and archival evidence) on deportation-internment camps.
- The Authority, at its own premises, nearby the Republic Guard, exhibited archival materials, anti-communist resistance documents, dozens of anti-communist persecution files from the state security in Tepelena area-many of which were displayed for the first time- and the relevant measures on the 20th of August. The materials are thousands of pages long and are made available to interested individuals, scholars and scientific researchers, former persecutes and their family members, civil society and media, thus enabling them to get to know thoroughly and in details the full itineraries.
- There were identified the main characters of the Zhapokika Uprising in August 1948 and judicial investigative files, including that Father Gjergj Sulit, Baba Shefqet Mahmutit, Zenel Shehu and others.
- The alphabetic indexes used by State Security for Tepelena area persecutees; inmates statistics in 1945, as well as other form files like the one of Selahudin Toto; informative files of executed people by firing squad, persecutes and their detailed statistics; reports on anti-party elements documenting interneers surveillance; state security name list of fugitives and victims at border; informative reports on several diversionist gangs and Bënça Camp security files were also exhibited.
- The processing records for the entire area of Tepelena, the voluminous investigative judicial files of the panel that tried the poet Trifon Xhagjika, Neim Pasha and thousands more were also made public. The Authority has engaged into in-depth research on the victims and persecutes of this area during 1945-1968 by reviewing documents, alphabetical indexes, and statistics. All the above-mentioned