



In the Yugoslav wars tens of thousands of Europeans vanished. In almost every case, the missing had been murdered. But without word, witness or body, the bereaved could not accept their loss. The torment of unknowing was drawn out as long as ten, even eighteen years – for many it continues today. Children waited for parents to return from the grave. Mothers made up their dead son’s beds. The living also lost their lives.

For the first time in war DNA has been used to match blood and bone, reuniting families divided by death, enabling survivors to find closure. Today more than 15,000 people remain unaccounted for across the Western Balkans. These fifteen, heartbreaking stories represent a tiny proportion of an immense tragedy. This exhibition acknowledges the suffering of all those families and reminds us that in war there is no greater loss than the disappearance of those we love.

Governments of the Western Balkans have an obligation to intensify the search and provide answers to all families.

Missing Lives

photographs by Nick Danziger
words by Rory MacLean



ICRC