



REPUBLIKA E KOSOVËS - REPUBLIKA KOSOVA - REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO  
QEVERIA - VLADA - GOVERNMENT OF KOSOVO  
ZYRA E KRYEMINISTRIT - URED PREMJIËRA - OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER  
INSTITUTI I KRIMEVE TË KRYERA GJATË LUFTËS NË KOSOVË  
INSTITUTE OF CRIMES COMMITTED DURING THE WAR IN KOSOVO  
INSTITUTU ZA ZLOČINE POČINJENE TOKOM RATA U KOSOVU



# **INSTITUTE OF CRIMES COMMITTED DURING THE WAR IN KOSOVO**

## **DOCUMENTATION AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

**Prishtina**

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Remit and Legal Mandate

The Institute of Crimes Committed During the War in Kosovo (ICCW) was established based on Law Nr. 08/L-177 for the ICCW. This law also outlines the internal organization and functioning of the ICCW, establishing it as an agency within the Office of the Prime Minister of Kosovo. According to this law, the ICCW is responsible for documentation and research of crimes committed during the war in Kosovo, ensuring data collection on human losses, physical and psychological damages, economic/material losses, environmental harm, damage to cultural property, and other types of harm caused by war crimes. This includes crimes committed between January 1, 1998, and June 20, 1999, as well as other war-related crimes up to December 31, 2000, in accordance with the regulations and procedures outlined in this law. The ICCW also has a mandate to document and research crimes and other actions that *led* to the war in Kosovo; the purpose being to document and present the full range of historical facts directly connected to war. The territory of Kosovo is defined as the geographic boundaries of the Republic of Kosovo (Figure 1). The ICCW's remit is focused on collecting, verifying, processing, archiving, researching, and publishing data on crimes committed during the war, as well as ensuring public access for victims and interested parties.

To ensure the highest standards of admissibility, the ICCW derives its approach from both Kosovan criminal procedure law and international legal standards, incorporating practices used by international and hybrid criminal courts.



Figure 1. Time and geographic context of the ICCW's scope of activity.

### 1.2 Operational Policies

The ICCW's operational policies are fundamental in building a professional, independent, and transparent environment in which to conduct its activities. These policies include legality, independence, impartiality, transparency, non-discrimination, confidentiality, a victim-centered ethos, gender equality, and protecting children's best interests. Based on these policies, the ICCW will ensure that all its activities follow the highest ethical and professional standards and guarantee respect for human rights of all interested parties in the process of documentation and research of crimes committed during the war in Kosovo.

The entire process of documentation and research at the ICCW is structured and organized through two main departments: **The Department of Documentation** and **The Department of Research**. These departments play an essential role in achieving the institute's mission and are connected and coordinated in such a way as to ensure inclusiveness and systematic access to the documentation and research of crimes committed during the war in Kosovo.

## 2 DEPARTMENT OF DOCUMENTATION

The Department of Documentation is an organizational unit within the ICCW, whose mission is to i) collect, ii) verify, and iii) process and archive data (Figure 2), with the purpose of documenting crimes committed during the war in Kosovo. This chapter describes the specific methodology employed to fulfill these goals, designed to ensure a structured and stable process in documenting crimes by guaranteeing the quality and accuracy of the data collected.

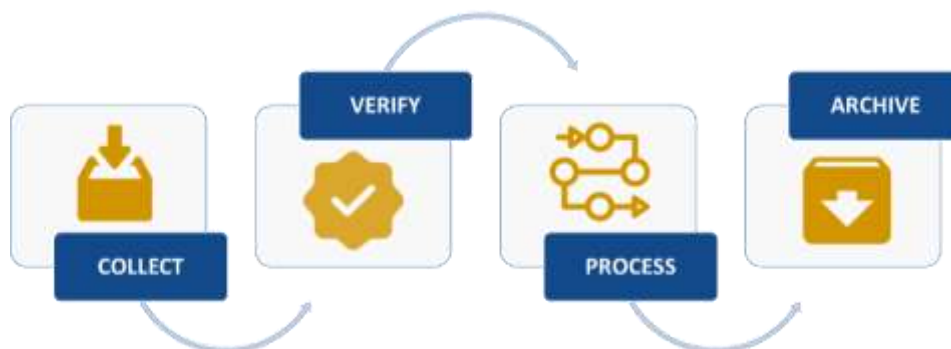


Figure 2. Methodological steps involved the work of the Department of Documentation.

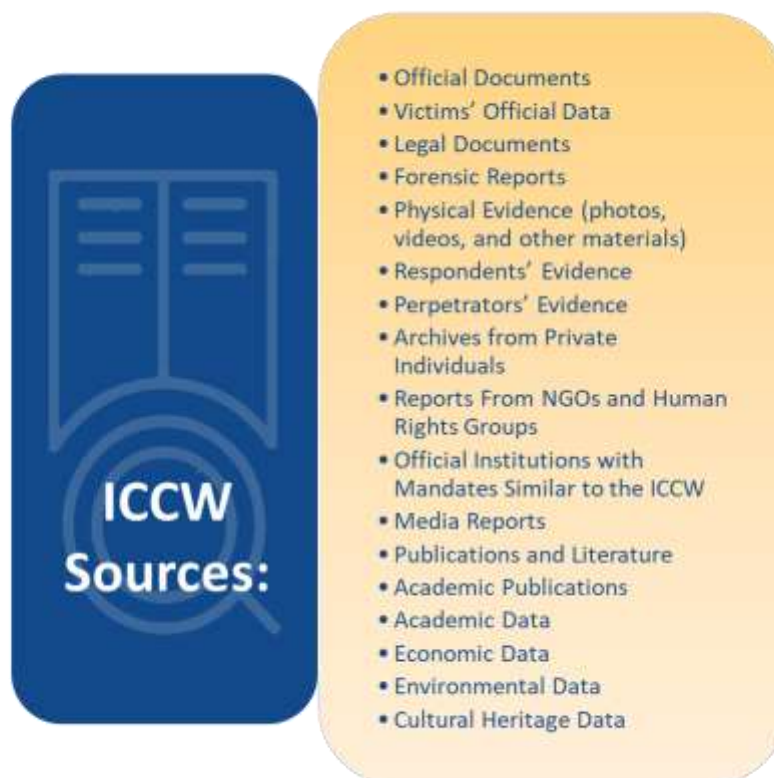
### 2.1 COLLECTION

The strategy for data collection at the ICCW comprises a structured process consisting of several key steps. Initially, potential sources are identified, such as individuals, institutions, and organizations, that may hold important materials. After identification, these parties are contacted and informed about the work of the institute, and they are requested to cooperate. This process continues with an agreement to transfer relevant materials or evidence, which is then carefully documented.

In addition to these steps, the strategy also foresees alternative options, such as purchasing or borrowing materials when necessary. To further expand the evidence collection, the ICCW will develop public engagement strategies for gathering materials through awareness-raising activities via traditional and social media and inviting individuals and organizations with relevant materials to share them with the ICCW. Even in cases where materials are purchased or borrowed or when individuals, institutions or organizations provide materials, the same structured steps are followed to ensure that all materials are documented in an organized and controlled manner.

#### 2.1.1 Identification

The identification process begins by determining the crime for which ICCW has the mandate to collect evidence for (see Chapter 1.1) and specifying the resources needed for collecting evidence for the documentation and research of war crimes. Within this process, the main focus will be on identifying primary and secondary sources of archival materials that interest the Department of Documentation (Figure 3).



*Figure 3. Summary of primary and secondary sources of interest to the Department of Documentation.*

Identified sources include:

- **Official Accessible Documents:** Military data, court transcripts, government reports, and other documents related to wartime events. These include operational plans, battle and order reports, judicial reports with detailed evidence and decisions, and government documents related to internal investigations and institutional decisions.
- **Official Data on Victims:** Death certificates, missing persons reports, refugee databases, and reports from examinations of mass graves.
- **Legal Documentation:** Any documentation related to cases of sexual violence, including court files, legal proceedings reports, as well as forensic evidence such as DNA samples and injury marks.
- **Forensics Reports:** Analyses of crime scenes, weapons used, and human remains by forensic experts.
- **Physical Evidence:** Photographs, videos, and other materials related to war crimes.
- **Respondents' evidence:** Available interviews with survivors, victims, and witnesses of war crimes.
- **Perpetrators' evidence:** Available statements or evidence from individuals involved in war crimes or those with knowledge of the events.
- **Private Individuals:** Individuals who have collected relevant files/archives.
- **Reports from Non-Governmental Organizations and Human Rights Groups:** Organizations that have documented war crimes and created archives or libraries with important documents on the war.
- **Official Institutions with Mandates Similar to the ICCW:** Institutions that have collected and preserved significant data related to the war.



- **Reports from International Institutions:** Governments, institutes, international security organizations, and other legal, military, and civilian entities that have gathered materials and prepared reports providing different perspectives on the crimes committed during the war in Kosovo.
- **Media Reports:** Newspaper articles, documentaries, and media content from local, regional, and international media, preserved in physical and digital archives, including news, chronicles, interviews, and footage produced during the war.
- **Publications and Literature:** Books and publications that document the events of the war and the crimes committed in Kosovo.
- **Academic Publications:** Local and international scientific books/peer-reviewed papers that offer in-depth analyses of the historical context of the war in Kosovo.
- **Economic Data:** Surveys, reports, and studies that target economic damage measurement and assess the financial impact on individuals and communities, including business registers, tax documents, and financial statements.
- **Environmental Data:** Reports, studies, surveys, photographs, and videos documenting environmental damage.
- **Cultural Heritage Data:** Photographs and videos documenting structural damage and physical changes to cultural heritage sites such as churches, mosques, historical buildings, archaeological sites, and similar objects.

### 2.1.2 Contact

After identifying the sources, the next step is establishing contacts and collecting documentation and materials that document the crimes committed during the war. This constitutes the second phase of the process and is crucial for ensuring a successful collection of reliable and verified data from different sources. Establishing these contacts requires a careful and sensitive approach, respecting the sensitivities and experiences of survivors and witnesses while guaranteeing their confidentiality and safety. Successful collaboration with sources is essential to ensure that all collected materials are accurate, complete, and useful for documenting and researching war crimes.

### 2.1.3 Agreement

After successful contact with the party, the next step is reaching an agreement to hand over the materials. The agreement includes:

- **General Provisions and Specific Conditions:** The terms and conditions for handover are clearly defined in the agreement. These include the type and quantity of materials to be delivered and any specific conditions the delivering party may impose, such as restrictions on the use, storage, and/or distribution of the materials.
- **Protection of Intellectual Property Rights:** The agreement should clearly address issues related to intellectual property rights concerning the delivered materials. This includes clarifying ownership of the materials after delivery, the right of the ICCW to use them for documentation and research purposes, and any restrictions related to the reproduction or publication of the materials.
- **Legal Enforceability:** The agreement must comply with relevant laws and regulations, including data protection and intellectual property rights. The ICCW must ensure that the agreement is legally valid and enforceable and that all parties are informed of and agree to all the terms and conditions specified.

The negotiation and formalization phase of the agreement is essential to ensure that the process of material handover is transparent, fair, and in compliance with the legal and ethical standards of the





ICCW. It also guarantees that all parties are protected and that the collected materials are used responsibly and effectively.

#### 2.1.4 Handover of Materials

After reaching the agreement, the process of handing over the material is carried out. This process includes:

- **Appointment of the Handover Commission:** The ICCW appoints a special commission to handle materials, which reviews and verifies the general and specific conditions related to the submission of the materials. The commission is responsible for assessing the delivered material's type, quantity, timeframe, condition, and other details.
- **Drafting of the Record and Registry of Submitted Archival Material:** The handover process is standardized through the *Record of Submitted Archival Material*, a document that includes all basic information about the party and the submitted materials. If the party requests restrictions on the use of the material, it is noted in this document. An integral and mandatory part of the *Record* is the *Registry of Submitted Archival Material*. The *Registry* is completed by the person submitting the material, and together with the handover commission, the nature and quantity of the submitted material(s) are identified and registered. The *Record* and *Registry* are documented in two original copies, one for the submitting party and one for the ICCW.
- **Signing and Approval:** After completing these documents, both parties sign them to finalize the handover. These signatures confirm that all terms and obligations are clear and accepted by both parties. After signing, all rights and obligations are transferred to the ICCW, unless otherwise specified.
- **Recording of the Material:** After the handover, the material is recorded within the ICCW in the *Entry Inventory Book*, a fundamental tool for ensuring and maintaining documentation. This book is an official document certifying ownership of the material and is the primary reference for information about the material handed over. It is a guide to the document and not a guide through documents. The *Entry Inventory Book* will be digitized to meet ICCW's internal needs.

#### 2.1.5 Alternative Methods for Securing Materials – Purchase/Borrowing

When the necessary material needed for documentation and research is not available through standard handover procedures, the ICCW may use an alternative step of purchasing or borrowing the materials from third parties. This step is necessary when the material is rare, unique, or of significant value for the mission and objectives of the ICCW.

Before proceeding with a purchase, a thorough analysis must be conducted to evaluate the significance and unique value of the material in question. This includes examining the material's relevance to the documentation and research carried out by the ICCW and its uniqueness. The justification for the purchase must be clear and documented, based on the value the material will add to the ICCW archives and its ability to assist with clarifying war crimes. After approval for the purchase, further steps involve negotiating with the material's owner to reach an acceptable price. Once an agreement is reached, a contract is signed that clarifies all details, obligations, and conditions of the purchase, including the transfer of ownership rights to the ICCW and any rights and restrictions that may be defined in the contract.

Borrowing can be a valuable alternative when purchasing the material is not possible or necessary, but the material is still important for research within the ICCW. This may occur when the material is associated with a subject who wishes to retain ownership rights but is willing to provide access to the relevant material for a specified period. The justification for borrowing should include the reasoning





for needing access to the material and its added value. Negotiations for borrowing the material should involve a detailed agreement that outlines the terms and conditions of the borrowing, including the duration of the loan, conditions for material preservation during transport and the borrowing period, and any usage restrictions imposed by the owner. The agreement should also detail the procedures for returning the material to its original condition and any measures required to protect it during the loan. If the borrowed material is digital, the agreement may also include restrictions on access or subsequent use based on the terms of the agreement.

The entire process of purchasing or borrowing materials must be conducted legally and transparently. This includes documenting all negotiations, evaluations, agreements, and any eventual payments. These documents should be accessible for internal or external audits to ensure that the processes are carried out based on objective needs in a fair, proportional, and legal manner.

#### **2.1.6 Awareness Strategy for Gathering Material**

Another method that can be applied in data collection is creating a strategy to encourage individuals to voluntarily submit documents and materials they may possess without the Department of Documentation needing to approach them directly. This strategy involves utilizing various digital platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), and others, to reach a broader audience.

Additionally, utilizing and enhancing the official ICCW page on these platforms can help distribute the message and encourage people to share their materials. Also, creating an online platform where users can securely and confidentially upload documents and evidence could be a crucial step in this process. However, this option must be provided with stringent security measures to prevent any attempts at misuse. For example, it should implement filters and verification mechanisms to avoid uploading irrelevant or biased materials, ensuring that the platform maintains the integrity and quality of delivered data.

Alternative methods should be provided for those who do not use social networks or digital platforms. This can include organizing community meetings, distributing flyers and notices, and creating dedicated phone lines where people can make contact and submit their materials. Also, organizing campaigns to raise public awareness about the importance of documenting war crimes is crucial; this involves working with media, non-governmental organizations, and other institutions to broadcast information and encourage public participation in collecting documents.

## **2.2 VERIFICATION**

Data verification is a multifaceted and complex process involving several key phases to ensure the accuracy, reliability, and authenticity of collected materials. Initially, this process involves identifying and categorizing different sources of information to verify their authenticity and reliability. Once the origin is confirmed, the next phase is verifying the authenticity of the materials, whereby documents and evidence undergo a rigorous process to ensure their validity. Then, the data is compared and verified to ensure accuracy and consistency using methods such as additional interviews and source triangulation.

An important aspect of verification is the professional assessment by experts in relevant fields who provide in-depth analysis to ensure the authenticity and quality of the data. It should also be noted that verification is conducted on a case-by-case basis, following some general principles applicable to all cases.

Finally, the verification results are documented in detailed reports, which include descriptions of the methods used and key findings, ensuring that the information is usable and reliable for further research. All phases of verification (Figure 4) will be detailed in the following subsections.

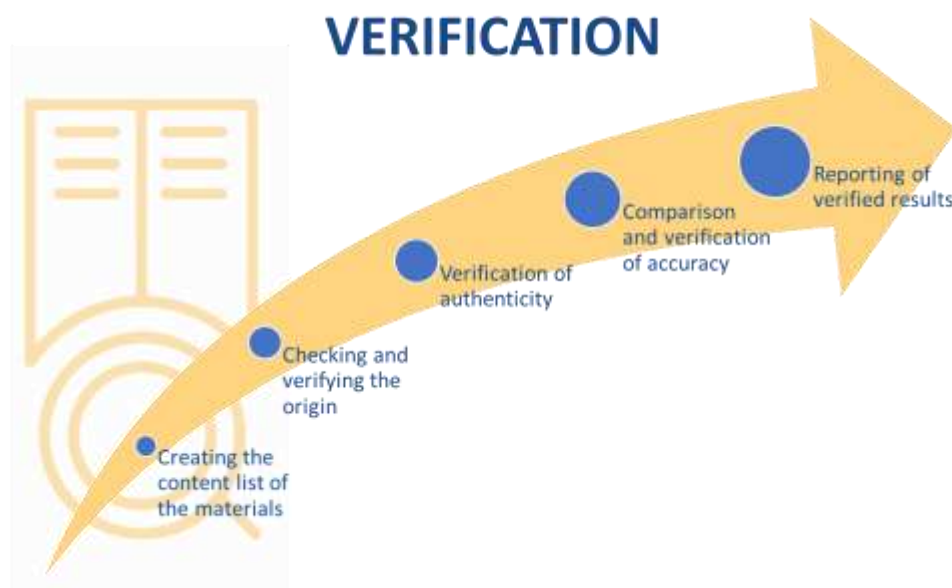


Figure 4. Steps included in the verification process.

### 2.2.1 Control and Verification of Origin

Controlling and verifying the origin of the material is a fundamental step in the verification process which aims to ensure that the sources of information are authentic, reliable, and suitable for use in documentation and research.

Initially, in controlling and verifying the origin of the material, it is essential to identify and categorize the data source. This process begins with completing the *Content Form* of the ICCW, which describes each file and contains the main data of the file. Completing the *Content Form* determines the status of the file and confirms the control and verification of the origin of the source. Its structure is built from several categories that clearly define the identification of the source, the nature of the content, the type and physical parameters of the material, and the specifics of the file.

- **Code:** includes the serial number of the file, the origin of the source, and the inventory of the data.
- **Content Item:** includes factual data about the material and, depending on the nature of the case, it can be a short or long list. The file may contain structured content, which includes data such as evidence, physical evidence - photographs or videos, legal, medical, and institutional documents - or the file may have unstructured content.
- **Physical Parameters:** includes the type of material – physical or electronic – the number of pages and the material's format.
- **Remarks:** includes the recording and description of potential deficiencies, additional data, and relevant specifics of the file, if any.

It should be noted that the structuring of the *Content Form* may vary depending on the diversity of the data content of the file and the practices of the ICCW.



Another important aspect of verification of the origin of the source is the contextualization of the source. This involves evaluating the circumstances under which the source was created and used. For example, if the source is a handwritten document, it is important to take into consideration the historical and geographical context in which the document was created and to assess its reliability and ensure that it is not a forgery or a document that has lost its value due to changes in the circumstances of its creation.

For secondary sources, such as reports from non-governmental organizations or media outlets, it is essential to assess the source's reputation and history when reporting similar events. An organization with a good reputation and a long history of documenting war crimes can be considered a more reliable source than a lesser-known source or one with a suspicious history.

This structure ensures that every document has an accurate and reliable origin by allowing a consistent verification process.

### **2.2.2 Verification of Authenticity**

Verification of the authenticity of data is a crucial step and is carried out alongside other steps and methods in the verification assessment process. After recognizing and identifying primary sources, such as witness testimonies, official documents, photos, and audio or video materials, verifying the legitimacy and credibility of the person or institution that produced that testimony, document, or material is essential. For example, in the case of medical documents, it is important to verify whether a credible medical institution issued the document, that it has the signature of an authorized physician, and if it contains the institution's seal, which ensures the document's authenticity in terms of its administrative aspects. Only after the professional evaluation is complete can the authenticity of its content be confirmed.

Additionally, as part of the penal procedure, it is essential to ensure that the data are legally valid and usable. This includes a segment that verifies the admissibility of the evidence in legal contexts, assessing whether the data meets the necessary legal standards for use in prosecutorial processes or court cases.

Also, for official documents, it is essential to verify whether the document is officially recorded and whether it contains all necessary elements, such as seals and signatures, to confirm its authenticity. The complete authenticity of the data can only be confirmed after a professional evaluation, depending on the specifics of the case/event and, if necessary, based on:

- Ballistic analysis,
- Forensic analysis,
- Temporal analysis,
- Digital analysis,
- Comparisons of data with other credible official sources,
- Assessment of consistency compared to other data.

Following these steps in verifying authenticity and confirming high-quality results in the professional assessment ensures that the documents are reliable and ready to be presented to the public.

### **2.2.3 Comparison and Verification of Accuracy**

Verification of the accuracy of data is a multifaceted process that involves a range of methods to confirm and correct information before its use in final reports. This process is essential to ensure both



the integrity of the collected materials and that they accurately and fairly represent the documented events and facts.

- **Comparison of Information:** This is a fundamental method for verifying accuracy. It involves comparing the collected data with other sources to identify and correct any discrepancies. Comparison sources may include official documents, reports from non-governmental organizations, media reports, academic publications, etc. Data triangulation is a specific technique in verifying information using more than two credible and independent sources. This method is particularly effective in ensuring that the data is consistent and highly accurate, reducing the possibility of errors or manipulations. However, in cases handled by domestic or international courts, evidence (data) is automatically considered reliable, provided it is adequately managed and referenced. Of course, this is done after comparing the material or testimony provided and the evidence administered by the court.
- **Consistency of Data:** This is a crucial method to ensure that the collected information is coherent and reliable. It involves checking the accuracy of factual data, including the personal identity of witnesses, the time and place of events, and the nature of the events described. Data consistency is especially important when there is more than one testimony for the same case or when data is collected from multiple sources for a specific event. For example, when two witnesses provide testimony about the same case, it is crucial to compare their testimonies to ensure they align on key aspects such as time, place, and circumstances of the event. Also, during the comparative method, it is important to consider cases where two witnesses speak about the same event but specify different times. In such cases, a thorough interview should be conducted, or comparisons with official documents should be explored.
- **Professional Assessment:** This refers to cases where specialized expertise is required. It is essential to engage professionals in relevant fields to verify the accuracy and authenticity of data. This may include legal expertise to assess the validity of legal documents, ballistic analysis to determine the use of weapons in a particular incident, or forensic evaluations to analyze physical evidence such as DNA or injury marks. Additionally, digital forensics may be employed to verify the authenticity of materials stored in digital formats, such as photographs, audio, video, or scanned documents. Professional assessments help ensure that data is verified from a technical and professional perspective, contributing to their reliability and validity in the documentation and investigation of war crimes.
- **Interview for Accuracy Reconfirmation:** This method is applied in cases where collected evidence may be unclear or incomplete due to factors such as the time difference, trauma experienced by witnesses, or other elements affecting their memory. To address these issues, conducting additional interviews with witnesses may be necessary to review and reconfirm the accuracy of the gathered information. During these interviews, careful techniques and structured questions should be used to assist witnesses in recalling event details and to ensure that the information provided is accurate and comprehensive.
- **Final Data Assessment:** This is the last method in the verification process that ensures the collected information's accuracy, reliability, and validity before it is used in final reports. During this process, it is important to highlight the assessment levels, as some data may be unverifiable or difficult to verify. In some cases, on-site visits may be necessary to validate information gathered from interviews and documents, although this method is not standard. These visits can help confirm the accuracy of geographical details and verify the existence and current condition of locations mentioned in the collected data. During field visits, visual checks can be conducted, photographs and videos can be taken for documentation, and measurements can be made to compare with previously collected information. However, it is important to consider the time gap



from the end of the conflict to the current documentation of crimes, which may have affected changes in place names and the accuracy of the collected details.

#### **2.2.4 Reporting Verified Results**

After completing the verification process, a final report containing verified data for each file should be prepared. This report includes a detailed description of the methods used during the verification process, categories of documents, assessments of temporal and geographical accuracy, results from comparisons with other official documents, and a final evaluation of the accuracy of the information. The final report concludes a process that is documented transparently and structurally, reaffirming the collected data as reliable and verified.

Another important element in concluding the entire data verification process is the establishment of a professional commission within the ICCW, which evaluates the materials that do not meet the above-mentioned criteria and thus should be eliminated before processing and archiving.

### **2.3 PROCESSING AND ARCHIVING**

Data processing and archiving involves a series of interrelated steps that ensure the proper handling and preservation of collected materials. Initially, data is processed to organize and structure it to facilitate its future use. Then, a detailed description of these materials creates records that aid in their accurate identification and classification. Archiving ensures long-term preservation under suitable conditions, while digitization allows converting materials into digital formats to ensure easier access and protection from physical damage. Finally, data access refers to the ability of the public and interested parties to access both physical and digital materials, thus ensuring complete transparency and supporting research into war crimes in Kosovo.

#### **2.3.1 Processing**

Processing collected materials is a crucial step in ensuring the organization and systematization of data. The protocol for data processing and archiving includes the creation of databases, the definition of categories, and the organization of materials following designated standards. This protocol is essential to ensure processes are documented, consistent, and aligned with best archival practices.

In this phase, creating a well-structured database is crucial to support the categorization and classification of materials. This database should be designed to meet the specific research needs, considering historical, military, economic, legal, environmental, cultural, psychological, forensic, and sociological aspects. A well-organized database helps maintain data in an organized and easily accessible format.

To ensure that material processing is as efficient as possible, the ICCW will establish an internal commission responsible for determining the form of categorization and classification of materials. General categorization involves defining clear and standardized categories for each main topic and subtopic, dividing the material into logical groups that reflect the nature of the documented crimes.

Processing begins with creating registers for all materials deposited at the ICCW. Then, the material is processed fond by fond (collection by collection) and case by case, assigning specific sequential numbers to each case (Figure 5). These numbers are also recorded in internal lists of boxes where the processed cases are stored.



## ARCHIVE ORGANIZATION



Figure 5. Organization of the materials in the ICCW physical archive system.

Upon receiving materials, the ICCW determines which archival fonds they should be placed in and assigns a signature or code, which includes the number and title of the fonds or collections for precise identification in the general fonds lists. Fonds are then divided into organizational units, which are also assigned signatures, facilitating the retrieval of materials for research by external parties or the ICCW officials.

Materials will be categorized according to the type and content of the fond. One of the most important categorizations, which will be followed for the applicable fonds and collections, is the categorization of materials into organizational units based on the name of the fond provider, types of crimes and the consequences caused during the war. Regarding crime categorization, the ICCW classifies and organizes war crimes for documentation and research purposes with an emphasis on the various impacts these crimes have had (Figure 6).



Figure 6. Classification of war crimes for documentation and research purposes.

This approach enables an accurate assessment of the nature of these crimes and their broader impacts. The categories include:

- **Crimes with Severe Human Consequences:** Acts that directly harm individuals, such as Crimes against Humanity, including murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation, torture, and rape and sexual violence (in this category, rape and sexual violence are considered a weapon of war or a systematic policy contributing to broader goals such as ethnic cleansing or genocide). These crimes result in grave human suffering, violations of human rights, and systemic harm to the civilian population.
- **Crimes with Physical and Psychological/Emotional Consequences:** These include physical injuries, wounds, and other bodily harm, alongside psychological trauma such as post-traumatic stress



disorder (PTSD), depression, and other mental health issues arising from wartime experiences. Rape and sexual violence are also included here, and it refers to their immediate and long-term effects on individual victims, such as physical injuries, chronic health issues, psychological disorders, and societal stigma.

- **Crimes with Economic and Material Consequences:** Destruction or damage to property, loss of livelihood, forced displacement, and other economic impacts that undermine the well-being and survival of affected populations.
- **Crimes with Environmental Consequences:** Damage to ecosystems, environmental pollution, and the depletion of natural resources caused by war, affecting both immediate and long-term ecological balance.
- **Crimes with Cultural and Heritage Consequences:** These crimes result in the destruction, damage, or theft of culturally significant objects, monuments, and sites, constituting acts of culturicide. The consequences include the erosion of cultural identity, loss of heritage, and the disruption of historical and religious continuity.
- **Other Crimes with Broad Social and Individual Consequences:** Violations that do not fit neatly into the above categories but still constitute serious offenses under international norms, such as human trafficking and other violent acts that severely impact individuals and communities.

Regarding the categorization of damages, the ICCW classifies and categorizes the damages caused during the war for documentation and research purposes (Figure 7).



*Figure 7. Categorization of damages for documentation and research purposes.*

- **Material Damages:** Direct damages that can be easily measured (e.g., destruction of houses, damage to vehicles, harm to livestock, damage to agricultural tools, theft of valuable items such as ornaments, etc.) - in brief, damages that can be translated into economic loss.
- **Functional Integrity Damages (Emotional and Psychological):** Indirect damages that are not easily measurable but have long-term consequences. For this, measuring individuals' perceptions of the damage is easier.

In addition to this categorization, the damages are also examined in relation to the party affected. The ICCW will assess damages based on the following categories:

- Individuals,
- Social environment,
- Physical environment,



- Private entities (such as businesses, non-governmental organizations, and other private institutions).

The ICCW will apply the damage measurement framework that has been developed by Professors Victoria Greenfield and Letizia Paoli and has been tested for measuring damage in various processes across different European countries. Taking into consideration that a damage measurement framework needs to be adapted to the environment in which it is applied and the context of the period when the conflict occurred, the ICCW will implement only a part of the framework developed by Professors Greenfield and Paoli-by not focusing on aspects related to reputation and privacy damages.

The categorization process is carried out using both manual and digital coding systems. For manual categorization, methods such as sticky notes, colored markers, or charts are used to mark and categorize information on physical documents. Documents are placed into separate boxes, and labeling and indexing are integral to the systematization and archiving process.

Reviewing and adjusting categories is crucial to ensure that the coding system remains aligned with archiving objectives. Codes should be periodically reviewed to ensure they still align with archiving goals and to identify any codes that may be unclear or redundant.

Internal lists are created to maintain a detailed inventory of all collected and processed materials. These lists ensure that every document and piece of evidence is accurately recorded and categorized, facilitating easier access to data during subsequent research and analysis.

### **2.3.2 Description**

An essential step in creating and maintaining a high-quality and easily accessible archive is describing the archival material. The ICCW will refer to the international ISAD(G) for this purpose. This standard specifies that the description should proceed from the most general to the most specific. Accordingly, for the ICCW archive, the initial description will be general, covering the fonds, followed by descriptions of the collection, the organizational unit, and specific items. After filing, each item will have a brief description in its folder, providing a concise summary of the information.

Descriptions at each level, from the fonds to the most specific item, should be concise and have a summary that includes all relevant key information. This requires archivists to be well-informed about each archival item they process.

Another important procedure that archivists and those who process the materials must follow is the ongoing review of described material. This involves examining whether the description remains accurate and complete and updating or revising it as necessary. If a revision is considered necessary, it is crucial to retain previous descriptions to document any changes made over time.

### **2.3.3 Physical Archiving and Digital Archiving**

After completing the above-mentioned processes, the material becomes ready for placement in the ICCW archive depot. A designated and marked area in the depot and on the shelves is used to store the material in a way that ensures easy access as needed. The conditions of the archive depot where the archived material will be stored must adhere to international standards for archiving, with ISO-15489 being the most relevant. This standard specifies the conditions and provisions for the maintenance of archives (see Chapter 3). After physical archiving, the processed and organized material moves on to the digitization process. Digitization involves converting physical materials into digital formats and organizing them into a structured and manageable digital archive (Figure 8).

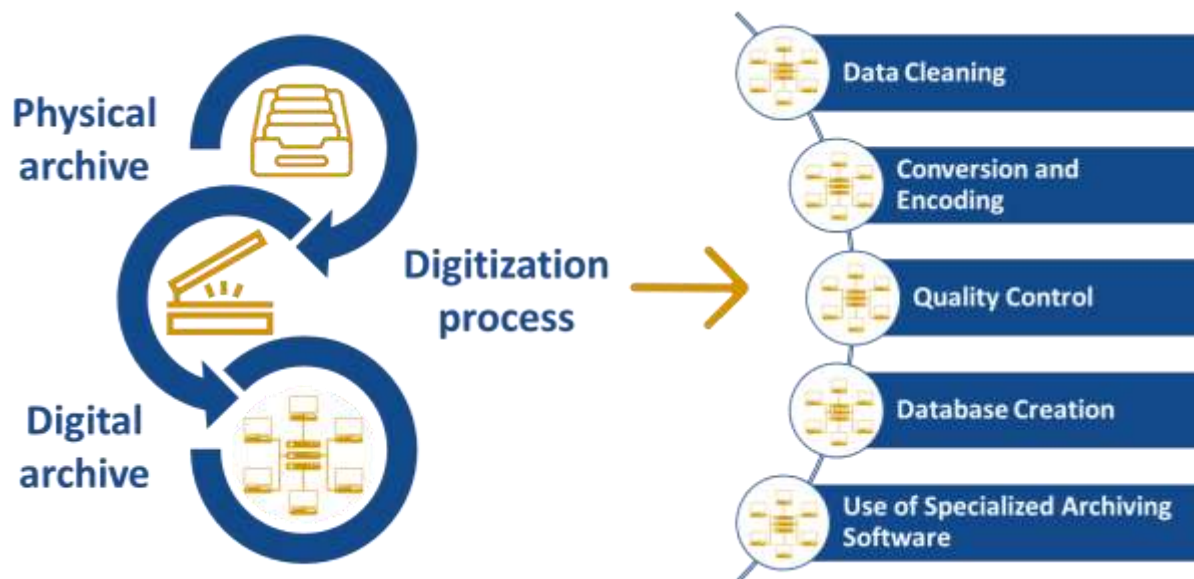


Figure 8. The process of digitization.

The digitization process should follow several key steps:

- **Data Cleaning:** Before entering the digital archive, collected data must undergo a cleansing process. This involves standardizing data formats and eliminating errors, inconsistencies, or missing data.
- **Conversion and Encoding:** Physical documents and materials being archived are converted into digital formats suitable for long-term deposit. This process may include scanning documents, photographs, or other materials and saving them in PDF, TIFF, JPEG, DOCX, or MP4 formats.
- **Quality Control:** Each digital material created undergoes thorough quality control to capture all details accurately. This process includes verifying the resolution, clarity, and completeness of scanned or recorded materials.
- **Database Creation:** Each digital document and material is appended with detailed data, including information about the content, source, date, and historical context. This data aligns with the information recorded during physical processing and categorization.
- **Use of Specialized Archiving Software:** Materials are entered into a digital archiving system for efficient data management after digitization. This system enables the creation of codes and categories for stored materials, using specialized software for managing qualitative and quantitative archival materials. The process also includes open, axial, and selective coding of materials, which assists in their organization and analysis.

The materials are stored on a dedicated server system that is protected from physical and technical damage. These servers are physically located within the premises of the Information Society Agency (ASHI). Backup copies of the data are created at multiple locations to ensure security in the event of disasters or technical incidents. Digital materials are sometimes encrypted, and access is restricted and strictly monitored. This ensures that only authorized personnel have access to the stored data. For more information on the digital data depot and archiving system, see the ICCW document: *Active Digital Preservation and Archiving (version 1.3)*.



#### 2.3.4 Data Access

The primary purpose of collecting, verifying, processing, and archiving materials related to war crimes committed during the war in Kosovo is to facilitate access for internal and external researchers and other interested parties. The physical archive of the ICCW is designed for the long-term preservation of materials and to provide easy access to interested parties. Access to archived materials is handled with special care, considering the preservation of confidentiality and privacy in cases where this is deemed necessary and in specific instances where the depositor sets conditions. This process complies with relevant laws and regulations, which define the limitations and conditions for using sensitive materials. Ensuring access to the ICCW archival materials requires special measures, particularly for materials with a high level of sensitivity that demand strict confidentiality protection. Therefore, it is essential to clearly define data classification levels based on their sensitivity and importance. The level of classification and their protection are determined based on the applicable laws: Law No. 08/L-175 on the Protection of Classified Information, Law No. 08/L-111 on Archives, and Law No. 08/L-205 on Copyright and Related Rights. Additionally, these classification levels must specify who has the right to access and under what conditions, ensuring that only authorized individuals can access such data. Care must be taken in controlling access to physical materials, ensuring that all materials requested by parties are documented for check-in/check-out from the archive, including recording the official who approved the check-in/check-out of the material.

Nevertheless, for maximum security of the archived material and taking into consideration the importance and sensitivity of the materials, it is essential that all materials be digitized and accessible via computers, either within the ICCW facilities or through the internet, via the official website, through a dedicated digital platform for data depot and easy access. This platform should be designed to facilitate research of stored documents by various users, such as researchers, journalists, and the general public. Creating a public digital archive is crucial for preserving and disseminating historical data, ensuring sustainable and secure access for future generations. At the same time, the digital platform ensures that all published information is handled with care, respecting privacy and confidentiality where necessary. To safeguard the privacy of sensitive materials and their intended use the ICCW establishes filters through which interested parties must pass.

Through its programs, the digital system should offer multiple research options, allowing for easy retrieval of detailed information from the entire digitized material. It should enable materials to be transcribed into several languages so that keywords can be used for the easy retrieval of information by various international researchers. For more details, see section 4.1 below.

### 3 ARCHIVE SECURITY

The physical infrastructure for data depositing should include a secure database system capable of preserving all collected archival materials. The depositing and protection of documents should be carried out in secure environments, considering three factors: physical, chemical, and biological (Figure 9).



*Figure 9. The main factors in preserving and protecting the archived documents include physical, chemical, and biological.*

### **3.1 Protection of the Archive Depot from Physical Factors**

Protection from physical factors involves ensuring a specialized environment for archived material to prevent any risk of physical damage. This is achieved by placing the material in special boxes and folders and storing them in metal shelving units designed for archival materials according to their type. The depot floor must be capable of supporting 1200 kg/m<sup>2</sup> for non-compact shelves and 1700 kg/m<sup>2</sup> for compact shelves. The maximum length of shelves should not exceed 10 meters, and they should be positioned at least 0.70 to 0.80 meters away from the walls. The space between shelves for circulation should be no less than 1 meter.

Lighting should primarily come from internal sources, avoiding direct sunlight through windows, which should be small and cover no more than 10% of the facade's surface.

Each type of material requires optimal conditions for long-term physical depot:

- Paper archival materials require relative humidity between 55% and 65% and a temperature between 13°C and 18°C.
- Photographic materials require relative humidity between 30% and 40% and a temperature lower than 18°C.
- Magnetic film materials should be stored in an environment with relative humidity between 30% and 40% and a temperature between 12°C and 18°C.
- Optical disc materials require a depot in an environment with a relative humidity of 40% and a temperature not exceeding 20°C.

International archival standards and regulations should be consulted for any other materials to ensure that the conditions for long-term optimal depositing are met.

Another crucial physical aspect is preventing unauthorized access to the archives, which could cause damage or loss of archival material. It is essential to ensure that the archive space is under 24-hour surveillance by cameras and that strict protocols are followed to record the check-in/check-out of individuals and the material taken and returned. A designated person should be appointed as the custodian of the archive deposit and should be the only one authorized to enter or to accompany others who are granted permission to enter the archive. This person should also coordinate with the rest of the ICCW staff to locate and bring documents into the study/verification room as they enter these processes.





To ensure higher security and guaranteed preservation of the material, a protocol should be established for individuals authorized to enter the archives and for materials taken out from them. Everything should be accurately recorded to ensure traceability of the movement of documents and archival materials.

### **3.2 Protection of the Archive Depot from Chemical Factors**

Chemical factors include risks posed by chemical processes that lead to damage of archival material, such as the deterioration of paper, damage to film materials from fire or water, drying of paper due to dry air inside the depot, and similar issues. To protect the archive from these risks, the archival space must be well-ventilated and equipped with fire protection systems that do not use water, as water can also damage the material.

To avoid potential damage from water or fire, it is important to ensure that the archive is not located near generators or other electrical equipment that could cause accidents leading to the spread of fire. Additionally, it should be ensured that no water or sewage pipes are running through the archive's floors or along its walls to prevent potential damage from leaks or bursts in these pipes.

### **3.3 Protection of the Archive Depot from Biological Factors**

Another factor that can damage materials is biological; preventive measures should be taken to ensure that the archive space is protected from insects and rodents so that archival materials remain safeguarded over the long term. The archive space should be continuously monitored to ensure no risks from pests or insects. If any biological infiltration is observed, immediate action should be taken for pest control or insect eradication to prevent damage to the materials.

### **3.4 Plan for Securing Archival Material in the Event of Disasters**

To ensure the long-term protection of materials even in natural disasters or various accidents, a protocol should be established outlining the steps authorized personnel must take to rescue the materials. The steps should include:

- a) Notification to security authorities and rapid response teams,
- b) Physical protection of the archive depot,
- c) Evacuation of archival materials to prevent further damage,
- d) Restoration of materials in case of damage from accidents or natural disasters.

In addition to these general steps, in the event of a disaster or accident, the conditions and circumstances of the depot should be considered in order to create a response protocol that is adapted to the situation.

## **4 DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH**

The mission of the Department of Research is to plan and develop professional and academic research aimed at creating and publishing scientific data about crimes committed during the war in Kosovo, the needs of victims, and the damage caused by these crimes.

This methodology outlines the general framework for the research and analyses to be conducted by the Department of Research (Figure 10). However, it is important to emphasize that each research project undertaken by the ICCW will be treated individually, and a specific methodology will be developed for each. This approach ensures that the research methodology appropriately addresses the unique nature of each study and its relevant context. Thus, the general methodology described





here serves as a baseline guide, while specific details and processes will be developed for each individual research project.

To conduct scientific research and publish the research results, the ICCW will also collaborate with scientific and academic institutions both in Kosovo and abroad.



Figure 10. Phases involved in the work process of the Department of Research.

#### 4.1 Managing and Using Archived Materials for Research

The ICCW Department of Research is tasked with developing procedures and standards for providing access to and using the ICCW materials for research purposes. In this regard, standard and specific protocols will be created to define how researchers can use archival materials, ensuring that access and use comply with current legislation. These procedures will also include detailed guidelines for ensuring the preservation and protection of materials used for research purposes, minimizing the risk of loss or damage to the data.

The security and integrity of the ICCW data and materials are essential for any research activity. Therefore, an important part of the methodology involves drafting specific procedures to protect data and materials from damage during use. These procedures will include measures to prevent misuse, unauthorized access, and any other forms of risk that could compromise the integrity of the data.

To facilitate access to information and support researchers in their work, the Department of Research will provide informational and guidance services through both manual and electronic catalogs. These services will include data catalogs, references, and other information sources to give researchers easier and quicker access to archived materials. Additionally, support will be offered for information and communication technology, including training and instructions for users who need assistance with digital platforms.

The Department of Research will also organize awareness and informational campaigns to promote the recognition and use of the ICCW materials for research purposes. These campaigns will involve



collaborations with media, organizations, and other institutions to increase public awareness of research opportunities and the value of preserving and using these materials. These activities will always follow current legislation and aim to support the research community in effectively and responsibly using the institute's data.

## 4.2 Academic Research

The research process begins with identifying specific cases for investigation. Case selection involves carefully analyzing variables such as location and type of crime. This process ensures appropriate and diverse representation of cases for analysis and research. An important step is identifying the locations where crimes were committed, including analyzing regions and determining the areas where the research will focus, whether urban or rural.

Identifying witnesses, survivors, and victims is crucial for gathering direct testimonies or valuable information about the crimes committed. The process includes establishing contacts with local communities and individuals willing to share their experiences. Case selection is based on non-random sampling techniques and the 'snowball effect,' which helps expand the database and include various perspectives.

Researchers collect written evidence, photographs, and audio and video recordings and conduct interviews to verify and analyze data. This process ensures that all collected evidence and materials are accurate and complete. To enhance data collection, triangulation techniques are employed, supplemented by interviews and the collection of additional materials such as documents, photographs, and audio-visual recordings, all of which serve as valuable evidence.

Initially, a demographic data form is completed, followed by interviews that include biographical questions and semi-structured questionnaires. Interviews begin with biographical questions to provide context and continue with standardized questions to ensure consistent and comparable data collection. The process is supported by a standard protocol that ensures adherence to ethical standards, including *Ethical and Methodological Guidelines* compiled to the research needs.

## 4.3 Digitalization of Research Materials

The collected data is analyzed using quantitative and qualitative methods. Descriptive statistics and quantitative analyses help summarize the key features of the data, including temporal and geospatial analyses. For qualitative data, thematic analysis techniques are used to identify recurring patterns in the research. Geospatial analyses employ GIS technology to create maps that show the distribution of crimes committed during the war in Kosovo. These analyses assist in identifying patterns and connections between crime locations and other geographic and temporal factors.

Data visualization techniques are employed using graphical and cartographic tools to enhance the understanding and presentation of results. These include creating crime maps, event timelines, and connections between individuals and various events. Data visualization facilitates the identification of hidden patterns and aids in communicating research findings clearly and understandably to a broad audience. Additionally, these techniques serve as a basis for creating materials for the Digital Museum, including interactive exhibits and educational materials that document and preserve the events and experiences of crimes committed during the war in Kosovo. These digital materials help preserve historical memory and provide sustainable access for future generations.

Research results will be presented at conferences and published in various formats, such as books, brochures, scientific articles, and special publications. Digital materials, including videos and documentaries, will be published online and on social media platforms to reach a wider audience. New



technologies, such as artificial intelligence, will assist in drafting initial narratives and online searches for specific materials within the ICCW archive. This integrated approach helps document war crimes and ensure justice for their victims.

#### 4.4 Specialized Analysis

The ICCW plans, organizes, and conducts in-depth analyses that meet the specific requirements of institutions such as the Office of the Prime Minister, the Government, the Assembly, and the President. The process begins with planning specialized analyses, identifying the needs of public institutions, and establishing the methodological framework for each required analysis. These analyses include assessing the psycho-social, emotional, and institutional damage to victims of crimes committed during the war, as well as measuring economic and social damages. Each analysis is carried out with the utmost care to ensure that the results are accurate, reliable, and valuable for formulating policies and strategic decisions of the institutions of the Republic of Kosovo.

Collaboration and coordination with other institutions are essential for this process. Activities must be synchronized with other institutional efforts, creating a broad network of cooperation that facilitates the exchange of information and expertise.

Specialized analyses rely on data and documents held by the ICCW. In this context, the professional expertise of the staff is crucial for conducting a thorough assessment and providing qualified support to justice institutions and others dealing with issues related to war crimes and their consequences.

## 5 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the methodology outlined in this document represents an integrated and comprehensive approach to collect, verify, process, archive, research, and publish data, ensuring that every step of the process adheres to the highest professional and ethical standards. The entire methodology is built on a solid foundation of scientific literature, previous experiences, and best international practices while considering the specific context of war crimes committed during the conflict in Kosovo.

The methodology is designed to provide a clear and structured guide, harmonizing processes and minimizing complexity in its implementation. In this way, the methodology not only meets the current needs of the ICCW but is also constructed to adapt and evolve in response to future challenges and requirements, ensuring a comprehensive, continuous, and sustainable approach. The ICCW's working methodology creates a stable and long-term framework for documenting and researching war crimes committed during the conflict in Kosovo, ensuring that these crimes are not forgotten, and that historical truth is documented based on best practices and scientific methods.