



# KOSOVO

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## Helena Ranta: Foreign Ministry tried to influence Kosovo reports

Helsingin Sanomat, Finland

<http://www.hs.fi/english/article/Helena+Ranta+Foreign+Ministry+tried+to+influence+Kosovo+reports/1135240292632>

Forensic dentist Helena Ranta says that officials of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs had tried to influence the content of her reports in 2000, when Ranta was commissioned by the European Union to investigate the events of Racak in Kosovo.

Ranta put forward her allegations on Wednesday at the publication of her biography in Helsinki. The book was written by Kaius Niemi, a managing editor at Helsingin Sanomat.

“Three civil servants of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs expressed wishes by e-mail for more far-reaching conclusions”, Ranta said. “I still have the e-mails.”

More than 40 Albanians were killed in the village of Racak in January 1999. The investigation by Ranta’s working group was very charged from the beginning. It was commonly assumed that Serb forces had perpetrated a massacre, which helped persuade NATO to launch bombings of Yugoslavia in the spring of 1999.

In her investigations, Ranta focussed on forensic medicine; she did not want to take a stand, at that stage, on politically and legally loaded terminology.

In the summer of 2000 she submitted her report to the War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague, and a summary of the report to the EU member states.

Ranta says that the head of the Foreign Ministry’s political section at the time, Pertti Torstila, who now holds the position of Secretary of State, asked her to remove a comment from the report, that was “very mildly critical” of the foreign affairs administration.

Officials at the Foreign Ministry had also hoped that Ranta would have drawn conclusions on how many people fired shots and if any of the shots amounted to a coup de grace.

"I feel that it was more a task for the war crimes tribunal", Ranta says in the book.

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[P]ressure was high, specifically in the investigation over Racak. That pressure also came from the media.

According to Ranta, in the winter of 1999 William Walker, the head of the OSCE



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Kosovo monitoring mission, broke a pencil in two and threw the pieces at her when she was not willing to use sufficiently strong language about the Serbs.

Helena Ranta has worked in the Balkans and Iraq, and has investigated the victims of the sinking of the Estonia and the victims of the 2004 tsunami in Thailand, where nearly two hundred Finnish holidaymakers were among the dead.

Ranta also testified at the trial of former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic in The Hague in 2003.