

**Priority question for written answer P-004740/2021  
to the Commission**

Rule 138

**Angel Dzhambazki (ECR)**

**Subject:** Violation of the Additional Protocol to the 1949 Geneva Convention in the Republic of North Macedonia, in particular the desecration of a Bulgarian military cemetery

Last week I brought to the attention of the Commission the scandalous case of the desecration of a Bulgarian military cemetery near the town of Kavadarci in North Macedonia. The bones of hundreds of Bulgarian soldiers were brutally extirpated owing to the construction of the new Prilep-Skopje motorway.

The Foreign Ministry of the Republic of North Macedonia permits itself to claim there has been no violation, because the cemetery does not exist. However, if one checks the military archives and listens to eyewitnesses, it becomes clear this is manipulating the facts.

I would point out that the wording of Article 34(2) of the Additional Protocol to the 1949 Geneva Convention, which refers to 'graves and, as the case may be, other locations of the remains of persons who have died as a result of hostilities' suggests a broad interpretation of the terms used.

The fact that 'other locations of the remains' of such persons are mentioned in addition to graves is intended to cover all possible scenarios, be they legitimised or not, regarding the existence of such locations, such as the case of collective graves and even mass graves, which should be treated with due respect and in the spirit of the Convention.

I would therefore like to ask the Commission:

1. What stance it will adopt on the destruction of Bulgarian military cemeteries in the Republic of North Macedonia;
2. Whether it will monitor compliance with international humanitarian law in that country?