

Matt Damon: Documentary on Systematic Rape of Bosniak Women & Girls

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Throughout long, difficult, strenuous history of the Bosniak people, they were subjected to racist, state-imposed, and often violent denials of their identity, their uniqueness, their culture, and even their language: the Bosnian language; the very language that produced the first printed dictionary of its vocabulary nearly 200 years before the first printed dictionary of the Serbian language.

The denial, prejudice, supremacism: they are all seeds of evil, for they evolve, they expand, and if left unchecked, when they ripen, they flourish, overgrow, and unleash the violence of unimaginable proportions. They can turn seemingly good men — everyday husbands, fathers, neighbors — into psychopathic rapists, ferocious tormentors, maniacal monsters, and mass killers. It happened in Bosnia.

The human 'willingness' to use rape as an instrument of terror in war, for the sole purpose of inflicting irreparable, long term psychological and physical trauma to defenseless women and children, became evident in the bloodstained Serb-led campaign of ethnic cleansing in eastern Bosnia, between 1992 and 1993. A preliminary European Community report, published in January of 1993, estimated that 20,000 Bosniak women may have been raped by Serb forces in Bosnia. The report also added that there was strong evidence that many women and children were killed during or after sexual abuse. (*AP, The News-Journal, p.8A, "Bosnia Rape Victim Waits to Give Unwanted Birth", 8 January 1993.*) In 2001, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia ruled that rape was indeed used by the Bosnian Serb armed forces as an 'instrument of terror.' (*Trial Judgment in the case of Kunarac et al.*)

While Serb soldiers participated in systematic rape of Bosniak women and girls, often mothers with their daughters, Bosniak men were sent to concentration camps or execution fields. Before they met their fate, Bosniak prisoners were savagely beaten and then forced into signing coerced statements that they had committed "crimes against Serbs." The Serb authorities needed these "confessions" from tortured Bosniak prisoners so that they could falsify both the history and the nature of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina (*see, for example, the trial judgment of the International Criminal Tribunal in the case of [Duško Tadić, par. 163-167.](#)*)

Women, War & Peace is the latest, and arguably the most important documentary film focusing on the systematic rape in war zones like Bosnia, to be published since the end of the Bosnian Genocide. As a survivor of war, words cannot express my gratitude toward everyone who was involved in the making of the "*Women, War & Peace*" DVD, especially toward the Academy-Award-winning actor, screenwriter and philanthropist Matt Damon. I urge everyone to pre-order this DVD as soon as possible. Hat tip to distinguished journalist [Jessica Buchleitner](#) for telling me about this project. Here is a preview:

Women, War & Peace is a bold new PBS mini-series challenging the conventional wisdom that war and peace are men's domain. A co-production of THIRTEEN and Fork Films, *Women, War & Peace* places women at the center of an urgent dialogue about conflict and security and reframes our understanding of modern warfare.

Featuring narrators **Matt Damon**, **Tilda Swinton**, **Geena Davis** and **Alfre Woodard**, the series reveals how the post-Cold War proliferation of small arms has changed the landscape of war, with women becoming primary targets and suffering unprecedented casualties. Simultaneously, they are emerging as necessary partners in brokering lasting peace and as leaders in forging new international laws governing conflict.

Episodes include...

When the Balkans exploded into war in the 1990s, reports that tens of thousands of women were being systematically raped as a tactic of ethnic cleansing captured the international spotlight.

I Came to Testify, narrated by **Matt Damon**, is the moving story of how a group of 16 women who had been imprisoned by Serb-led forces in the Bosnian town of Foča broke history's great silence – and stepped forward to take the witness stand in an international court of law. Now, as Bosnia is once again in the headlines with the capture of Bosnian Serb wartime general Ratko Mladić, the women agree to speak for the first time since then, on condition that we keep their identities hidden for their protection. “Witness 99,” who was held at gunpoint for a month with dozens of other women in a sports hall in the center of town remembers: **“We were treated like animals. But that was the goal: to kill a woman’s dignity.”** Their remarkable courage resulted in a triumphant verdict that led to new international laws about sexual violence in war. Returning to Bosnia 16 years after the end of the conflict, *I Came to Testify* also explores the chasm between this seismic legal shift and the post-war justice experienced by most of Bosnia's women war survivors.

The War We Are Living travels to Cauca, a mountainous region in Colombia's pacific southwest, where two extraordinary Afro-Colombian women are fighting to hold onto their gold-rich lands. They are standing up for a generation of Colombians who have been terrorized and forcibly displaced as a deliberate strategy of war.

War Redefined, the capstone of *Women, War & Peace*, challenges the conventional wisdom that war and peace are men's domain through incisive interviews with leading thinkers, Secretaries of State, and seasoned survivors of war and peace-making. Interviewees include Secretary of State Hillary Clinton; Liberian peace activist Leymah Gbowee; Bosnian war crimes investigator Fadila Memisevic; and globalization expert Moises Naim.

Rape of Bosnia: A Report from a Concentration Camp

Help Us, Say Women of Bosnia

Bosniak women told a Press conference in London recently about the rape, torture and other atrocities they suffered at the hands of their Serbian captors. Zaharah Othman has the story.

In a voice devoid of emotion, Bosniak Jasmina Kocarac narrated her traumatic experience at the hands of Serbian soldiers who 15 days earlier had mercilessly killed her husband and her in-laws before her very eyes.

As with other victims of Serbian atrocities, there was no time for Jasmina to shed any more tears, for indeed her more important task now was to tell the world about the systematic ethnic cleansing by the Serbs to wipe out Bosniaks from the map and history of the world.

Jasmina was raped repeatedly by three Serbian soldiers after being arrested and taken to a concentration camp. She was handpicked from a group of women and taken to another room where she said there were naked women who had apparently been raped and sexually molested. She knew she was about to meet the same fate but was mercifully spared the humiliation when she passed out.

She wasn't lucky the next time round and was fully conscious of the brutal reality that those who raped her were her former neighbours. One of them was the best man at her wedding.

In the same monotone voice Jasmina vowed that she would kill her rapists if she found them.

Jasmina was among a group of Bosniak refugees from Zagreb in Croatia who attended the London Peace Conference recently. Like all the others, she acquired her freedom from the concentration camp in exchange programmes for Serbian prisoners held by Bosniaks.

What happened to Jasmina was by no means an isolated case.

According to Fatima Kafedzic, president of the Mothers' Movement for Peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina, age did not seem to be a deterrent.

Gang-raping girls as young as seven years old in front of their mothers and other prisoners offered some kind of morbid pleasure to their Serbian captors.

At a concentration camp in Manjaca, near Banja Luka, seven-year-old Mirma was gang-raped in front of her mother and fellow prisoners. Her distraught mother prayed for her daughter's death to end her trauma. She died eight hours later.

Others, according to Fatima, were not so lucky. At a hospital in Zagreb, where many Bosniaks are taking refuge, teenage girls are awaiting the birth of unwanted babies. Some have to undergo intense psychological treatment and counselling.

“Members of my movement visited a 13-year-old girl who was raped and tortured. She was in a state of shock and was constantly crying. We told her to try to forget what had happened and try to rebuild her life,” said Fatima, her voice betraying her own conviction of her statement.

A mother of 10 children, Fatima fears for the safety of her daughters who are still in Sarajevo. She was in Austria collecting medical supplies and could not return when trouble broke out. Since then she has lost contact with her husband and six children. From Zagreb, her movement tried to help victims pick up the pieces and start life anew. It also helps rehabilitate children who had lost their parents in the war.

Another tireless figure who spends her time healing the physical and mental wounds of the war victims is Dr Alma Muslic. She said she has seen terrible cases of torture, especially of pregnant women who were brutally knifed in the stomach. And there were, of course, little children who were victims of sniper attacks or who were left orphaned without both parents.

One child who was lucky to have both parents around was Jasmin, 9, but he has to live with the constant nightmarish reminder of his days at the concentration camp in Manjaca.

Jasmin was with his mother Aziza and sister Waleeda, 12, on a bus to his aunt’s house in Dobrinja when they were stopped by Serbian soldiers.

Bosniak passengers were marched off for questioning. Jasmin was repeatedly questioned about who was supplying arms to Bosniaks.

When Aziza was taken away for questioning they threatened to rape her children if she did not co-operate.

It was while she was away that Jasmin witnessed men, who were just skin and bones, being tortured.

At the Press conference in London recently, Jasmin broke down while narrating his story and Waleeda constantly hid her face in her hands in an effort to wipe out the memory.

Earlier, before the start of the conference, a brief separation from his mother proved too much for young Jasmin, whose nagging fear was not seeing his mother ever again.

For Aziza and her children, the peace conference which brought them to London for a brief respite from the troubles in their homeland offered little hope for real peace in Bosnia.

However, they received their first good news in months during their stay in London when they heard that her husband was safe in Sarajevo.

However, for Fatima Hodzic, her husband and the rest of the menfolk in her family perished in a mass killing by Serbian soldiers.

Now, her son, five-year-old Mohamed is the only male survivor in her close-knit family of 35.

Putting her sadness aside, Fatima and the rest of the Bosniak refugees in London recently appealed for women's organisations, especially from the Muslim world, to help them in any way they can.

"This is one occasion to call all women to give us support as we want to return to our country as soon as possible. We do not want anybody to receive us as refugees. We want to return to our country, to work and rebuild it.

"We would like to appeal for financial help to bring back our children who are refugees in Western countries so that we can bring them up as Bosniaks. We do not want them to lose their identity."

Serbian Orthodox Church Endorses War Criminals

The [Humanitarian Law Center](#) in Belgrade reports that the Serbian Orthodox Church has hosted a book launch at the parish house of the Cathedral of St. Sava in Belgrade to promote a prison memoir, "Ispovest haškog sužnja" ("Testimony of a Hague prisoner"). The book's author is the convicted war criminal Milan Lukić — a ruthless mass murderer and serial rapist. The Belgrade publisher responsible for promoting the launch is the Serbian Radical Party led by ultra-nationalist politician Vojislav Šešelj. Šešelj himself is [currently on trial](#) at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague for crimes against humanity. The manuscript of Lukić's book was smuggled out of the UN Detention Unit illegally.

This is not the first time Serbian Orthodox Church has aligned itself with war criminals. The recently-captured fugitives, former Bosnian Serb [General Ratko Mladić](#) and Croatian Serb leader [Goran Hadžić](#), bragged that the Serbian Orthodox Church helped them evade justice. General Mladić is now on trial as the orchestrator of the [Bosnian Genocide](#); Hadzic is on trial for [crimes against humanity](#) committed in Croatia. The Serbian Orthodox Church sees itself as the moral compass of the Serbian people. Its incomprehensible and repellent actions suggest that the Church is morally adrift.

In 2009 the International Criminal Tribunal at the Hague found Milan Lukić guilty of burning alive more than 120 Bosniak women, children and elderly men in the eastern Bosnian town of Višegrad. He was sentenced to life imprisonment for his terrible crimes.

On 14 June 1992, a group of victims, most of them from the same village, were locked into one room of a house on Pionirska Street, Višegrad, which was then set on fire. Milan Lukić was found to have placed an explosive device in the room which set the house ablaze. He then shot at people as they tried to escape the burning house. At least 59 women, young children and elderly people were burned alive, among them a 2-day-old baby.

Lukić was also found guilty of burning alive at least 60 women, children and elderly men two weeks later, on 27 June 1992, in a house in the Višegrad settlement of Bikavac. He and other members of his paramilitary group, 'White Eagles', forced the civilians inside the house, blocked all the exits and threw in several explosive devices and petrol, setting the house on fire.

"The perpetration by Milan Lukić and [his cousin] Sredoje Lukić of crimes in this case is characterised by a callous and vicious disregard for human life," presiding Judge [Patrick Robinson](#) noted.

He observed that, "In the all too long, sad and wretched history of man's inhumanity to man, the Pionirska street and Bikavac fires must rank high. At the close of the twentieth century, a century marked by war and bloodshed on a colossal scale, these horrific events stand out for the viciousness of the incendiary attack, for the obvious premeditation and calculation that defined it, for the sheer callousness and brutality of herding, trapping and locking the victims in the two houses, thereby rendering them helpless in the ensuing inferno, and for the degree of pain and suffering inflicted on the victims as they were burnt alive."

Milan Lukić also participated in systematic sexual assaults on Bosniak women and under-age girls in "rape camps" in and around Višegrad. Most notably the Vilina Vlas spa hotel on the outskirts of Višegrad was used as a rape camp while it was, on Lukić's own admission, his military unit's command post. Approximately [200 women and under-age girls](#) were detained in Vilina Vlas. The Association of Women Victims of War — led by rape survivor Bakira Hasečić — believes that fewer than ten women prisoners survived their detention.

Rape and sexual slavery charges were added to the indictment against Lukić less than a month before the trial. The day before proceedings were due to begin, the Trial Chamber ruled that the accused did not have enough time to mount an adequate defence.

I have taken the liberty of translating this short but important press release issued by the [Humanitarian Law Center](#) from Serbian into English:

"Humanitarian Law Center urges the institutions and citizens of the Republic of Serbia to condemn publicly the use of the Parish House of the Cathedral of Saint Sava in Belgrade for the launch of a book by the convicted war criminal Milan Lukić during which priests of the Serbian Orthodox Church took part in the eulogisation of a war criminal responsible for some of the most terrible crimes against humanity.

Humanitarian Law Center demands that the Patriarch reveal the names of the priests who took part in this public event and explain to the public why a religious building whose construction was paid for by the state and many individual citizens has been used to celebrate a convicted war criminal who burned women and children alive.

On 29 July 2011, in the parish house of the Cathedral of Saint Sava in Belgrade, an event to promote the book 'Confession of a Hague Prisoner' by the war criminal Milan Lukić was

attended by several priests of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the company of numerous Lukić supporters. The book is published by the Serbian Radical Party.

The Trial Chamber of the International Criminal Tribunal at the Hague sentenced Milan Lukić to life imprisonment for shooting five Bosniaks beside the Drina River on 7th June 1992, killing seven workers of Varda factory, burning alive at least 120 Bosniak women, children and the elderly in Višegrad's Pionirska Street and Bikavac district, the 'cold and brazen' murder of Hajra Koric and the brutal torture of Bosniak detainees in Uzamnica detention camp near Višegrad. In all these crimes, Milan Lukić, played a 'dominant role' and exhibited a 'callous and vicious disregard for human life', personally killing 'at least 132 people' according to the judges at the International Criminal Court."

An album of photos from this 'book' promotion can be found on Milan Lukić's [Facebook page](#), which is being maintained by the priests of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

Srebrenica: Academic Dishonesty of Prof. Ian Buruma

In a recent Opinion piece published in The Globe and Mail on May 30, 2011, Prof. Ian Buruma challenged the momentous finding of international law that the 1995 Srebrenica massacre was a crime of genocide.(1) We should expect the comments of a professor of human rights and journalism (at Bard College, in Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y.) to embody integrity and conscientious research, particularly when discussing a subject of such gravity – "the worst [crime] on European soil since the Second World War", according to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.(2) Instead Prof. Buruma deals with complex issues superficially, partially and misleadingly.

It may or may not be relevant that Prof. Ian Buruma is of Dutch origin, but reading his attempt to redefine our understanding of what happened at Srebrenica it's impossible not to remember the involvement of his countrymen, the Dutch troops who allowed conquering Serb forces to separate families, terrorize and forcibly remove the women and children of the enclave and systematically execute 8000 men and boys. They even ordered refugees to leave the protection of the United Nations base and handed them over for execution. In his sweeping assertions about military intervention contributing to making violence worse, Prof. Buruma omits any reference to the consequences of the military inaction at Srebrenica.

At the same time Buruma not only omits inconvenient facts, he misrepresents what actually happened and the wider context in which the massacre occurred. What happened at Srebrenica was not simply an instance of ethnic cleansing in the context of a "civil war", as Buruma portrays it, it was the culmination of a systematic programme to eliminate the Bosniak population of Eastern Bosnia. It took place in the context of a Serb strategy of territorial expansion of which ethnic homogenization was a key component. The events that took place in July 1995 that the international courts determined constituted a crime of genocide were preceded by three years of what the United Nations described as "slow-motion process of

genocide”.(3) As an academic responsible for teaching students basic principles of human rights and journalism, Buruma’s disregard for established facts concerning his subject is unforgivable.

Buruma’s analysis of Srebrenica is framed by his mischaracterization of the Bosnian war as a “civil war”. Superficially plausible as that description might sound to an uninformed undergraduate student, Prof. Buruma should know better. The Bosnian war was not a civil war; to represent it as such is partisan misinformation. As the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) has confirmed, it was an international armed conflict.(4) It involved several sides: the government of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the substantial military involvement of the governments of Serbia and Croatia in alliance with the self-proclaimed entities of Republika Srpska, Croatian Republic of Herzeg-Bosnia and Autonomous Region of Western Bosnia, as well as the military intervention of NATO.(5) But essentially the war was an attempt by an aspirant regional power, Serbia, aided by local allies, to integrate Serb-populated areas of not just one but two other sovereign nations, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, with its own territory.

Having described the Bosnian war as a civil war Prof. Buruma warns that “the sides cannot easily be divided into victims and aggressors, good and evil”. Overlooking the existence of a “joint criminal enterprise” that set out to create a Greater Serbia means disregarding the facts again. The overwhelming majority of war crimes documented during the Bosnian war were committed by the Serb side in pursuit of that goal.(6)

Certainly, as Buruma notes, there were victims on the Serb side too (many of them were killed by the Bosnian Serb army in its efforts to destroy multi-ethnic Bosnian cities like Sarajevo), but the great majority were sacrificial casualties of the military campaign aimed at eliminating non-Serbs from the Bosnian territory as part of the “Greater Serbia” project. Millions of Germans died during World War II in the service of Hitler’s pursuit of a racially purified Third Reich. Prof. Buruma’s flawed line of reasoning takes us in a similar direction to equating the National Socialists with their victims.(7)

There were far many more victims of Prof. Buruma’s notional “civil war” among the non-Serb and in particular the Bosniak population – not just over 8,000 Bosniak men and boys systematically murdered at Srebrenica. The campaign of genocide in pursuit of territorial control through ethnic purification extended far beyond Srebrenica. Prof. Buruma fails to notice or omits to mention that the Bosnian Serb leaders Radovan Karadzic and General Ratko Mladic are currently on trial on charges of genocide in eight other municipalities across Bosnia in addition to Srebrenica – Bratunac, Foča, Ključ, Kotor Varoš, Prijedor, Sanski Most, Vlasenica and Zvornik.(8)

In seeking to test the provisions of the 1948 United Nations Convention on Genocide the ICTY defined the target group for the genocide at Srebrenica as being the Bosnian Muslims of eastern Bosnia – the majority population of the wider Podrinje region of which Srebrenica was a residual “uncleansed” remnant. Judges at the ICTY and the International Court of Justice (ICJ) carefully explained why they considered that what took place at Srebrenica fulfilled the

definition of genocide provided by the Genocide Convention, the relevant legal framework. Prof. Buruma not only disregards the wording of the Convention itself, he uses a crude and discredited comparison between the Bosnian Serbs' failure to kill every surviving inhabitant and the Nazis' alleged aim to annihilate "all Jews" in order to challenge the Tribunal's careful argument.

Based on the fact that the Bosnian Serbs did not kill all members of their target group. Buruma asserts that: "Ethnic cleansing, while reprehensible, is not the same as genocide... By invoking Hitler's ghost too often, we trivialize the enormity of what he actually did." (9) His implication, that reference to genocide in this instance is incorrect, inappropriate and exploitative betrays Buruma's lack of any genuine understanding of the Genocide Convention – the Convention was not intended to establish the Holocaust as a benchmark for judging the effectiveness of future genocides, it sought to prevent any repetition of the Holocaust.

The ICTY has, long ago now, considered and dismissed the notion that the concept of genocide requires or implies an attempt to eliminate "all members" of the target group. The aim of the Convention is not simply to punish genocide after the fact, it is to prevent the crime proceeding to completion. That is implicit in the definition of genocide as "deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part". Prof. Buruma suggests that the definition of genocide has been deliberately widened in order to use it as a means of justifying military intervention. Instead he seems himself to have wilfully narrowed it so as to deny it any practical value. The Genocide Convention is the basic legal framework for the use of the term, and it is very clear on the matter.

In applying the provisions of the Convention, judges at the ICTY determined that the specific target group did not have to include all members of the national, ethnical, racial or religious group. We need only ask ourselves whether the Nazi attempt to trade the lives of Hungarian Jews for cash defines the Holocaust as something less than genocide, but the ICTY examined more substantial ways of delimiting a target group for the purposes of the Convention, such as geographical location and control. The ICTY's Appeal Chamber judgement of Radislav Krstić notes that:

"Nazi Germany may have intended only to eliminate Jews within Europe alone; that ambition probably did not extend, even at the height of its power, to an undertaking of that enterprise on a global scale. Similarly, the perpetrators of genocide in Rwanda did not seriously contemplate the elimination of the Tutsi population beyond the country's borders. The intent to destroy formed by a perpetrator of genocide will always be limited by the opportunity presented to him." (10)

The ICTY dismissed the suggestion that sparing the lives of the Bosniak women and children forcibly transferred from Srebrenica was anything other than the most effective method that the Serb leadership were able to devise for minimizing the risk of retribution while proceeding with their plan of genocide under the watching eyes of the international community. In Krstić's appeal, the Court found:

“The decision not to kill the women or children may be explained by the Bosnian Serbs’ sensitivity to public opinion. In contrast to the killing of the captured military men, such an action could not easily be kept secret, or disguised as a military operation, and so carried an increased risk of attracting international censure... The international attention focused on Srebrenica, combined with the presence of the UN troops in the area, prevented those members of the VRS [Serb Army] Main Staff who devised the genocidal plan from putting it into action in the most direct and efficient way. Constrained by the circumstances, they adopted the method which would allow them to implement the genocidal design while minimizing the risk of retribution.”(11)

It is worth comparing Prof. Buruma’s schema denying genocide with the words of Judge Theodor Meron, read out directly from Krstic’s appellate judgement to the Srebrenica Genocide Memorial commemoration in June 2004. Judge Meron, himself a Holocaust survivor, presided over the ICTY’s appellate hearing in the Krstic case, when the Court concluded unanimously that the Srebrenica massacre was Genocide:

“Among the grievous crimes this Tribunal has the duty to punish, the crime of genocide is singled out for special condemnation and opprobrium.... The gravity of genocide is reflected in the stringent requirements which must be satisfied before this conviction is imposed. These requirements – the demanding proof of specific intent and the showing that the group was targeted for destruction in its entirety or in substantial part – guard against a danger that convictions for this crime will be imposed lightly. Where these requirements are satisfied, however, the law must not shy away from referring to the crime committed by its proper name. By seeking to eliminate a part of the Bosnian Muslims, the Bosnian Serb forces committed genocide. They targeted for extinction the forty thousand Bosnian Muslims living in Srebrenica, a group which was emblematic of the Bosnian Muslims in general. They stripped all the male Muslim prisoners, military and civilian, elderly and young, of their personal belongings and identification, and deliberately and methodically killed them solely on the basis of their identity. The Bosnian Serb forces were aware, when they embarked on this genocidal venture, that the harm they caused would continue to plague the Bosnian Muslims. The Appeals Chamber states unequivocally that the law condemns, in appropriate terms, the deep and lasting injury inflicted, and calls the massacre at Srebrenica by its proper name: genocide. Those responsible will bear this stigma, and it will serve as a warning to those who may in future contemplate the commission of such a heinous act.” (12)

Conclusion:

There are circumstances in which questioning whether use of the term genocide is justifiable in relation to a particular situation or another may be part of a legitimate inquiry into the nature of the crime and effective means for its prevention. Too often, though, the way in which the analysis proceeds reveals an ignorance of (or disregard for) established fact that shades into revisionist denial and even the attempt to disguise hate speech. Prof. Ian Buruma’s ill-informed personal views contribute little to any debate on the subject, based as they are on a brazen unfamiliarity with the wording of the Genocide Convention and a deliberate misinterpretation

of its provisions. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that Buruma is concerned primarily to exploit comparisons between the Holocaust and Srebrenica, references to civil war and the alleged indistinguishability of victims and aggressors in order to provide a platform for political views concerning a military intervention which did in fact save lives – too late to prevent an avoidable slaughter but forestalling the elimination of other safe havens and a successful outcome for an even more comprehensive crime. It is unclear whether Prof Buruma's views derive from ignorance or dishonesty but either way they are a sad offering coming from a professor of human rights and journalism.

While freedom of speech is a vital defence of the truth, the denial of historical evidence that genocide denial represents falls outside the realm of what may reasonably or legitimately be argued. On June 28 I sent Ian Buruma an email asking him to reconsider his views and realign himself with the facts. It is my hope he will respond publicly and distance himself from his earlier statements.

References:

(1) Ian Buruma, "Muddying the meaning of genocide," The Globe and Mail, 31 May 2011, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/opinions/opinion/muddying-the-meaning-of-genocide/article2040282/>

(2) United Nations Press Release, "Secretary-General's message to ceremony marking the 10th anniversary of the Srebrenica massacre," <http://www.un.org/apps/sg/sgstats.asp?nid=1570> Retrieved on 10 July 2011.

(3) United Nations, "Report of the Security Council Mission Established Pursuant to Resolution 819 (1993)," S/25700, 30 April 1993.

(4) For example, see "Statement by Tribunal's Prosecutor Carla Del Ponte to the Security Council," 7 June 2006, http://www.icty.org/x/file/Press/PR_attachments/p1085e-annex.htm

(5) Human Rights Watch, "Genocide, War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity," 26 July 2006, download this book in pdf format for free by visiting <http://www.hrw.org/node/11277>

(6) Roger Cohen, "C.I.A. Report on Bosnia Blames Serbs for 90% of the War Crimes," The New York Times, 9 March 1995.

(7) Michael Hubert, "Deutschland im Wandel. Geschichte der deutschen Bevölkerung seit 1815" (Germany in Transition. History of the German Population from 1815). ISBN 3515073922 p. 272 (1998).

(8) For 'Revised Indictment' of Radovan Karadzic follow this link http://www.icty.org/x/cases/karadzic/ind/en/markedup_indictment_091019.pdf ; For Ratko Mladic follow this link <http://www.icty.org/x/cases/mladic/ind/en/110601.pdf>

(9) Buruma, Ibid.

(10) Appeals Chamber Judgement: Prosecutor v. Radislav Krstic, para.13, April 19, 2004, <http://www.icty.org/x/cases/krstic/acjug/en/krs-aj040419e.pdf>

(11) Krstic Appeal, para 31, 32, 33. <http://www.icty.org/x/cases/krstic/acjug/en/krs-aj040419e.pdf>

(12) The national Criminal Tribunal's Press Archive, "Address by ICTY President Theodor Meron at Potocari Memorial," 23 June 2004, <http://www.icty.org/sid/8409>

Mladic: Inaccurate Reporting by Associated Press and Reuters

General Ratko Mladic on Trial for the Bosnian Genocide

Associated Press and Reuters — two major global news agencies — are both feeding the public misleading information about the charges against Ratko Mladic.

Throughout their news reporting, they unceasingly repeat the inaccurate information that Mladic is charged only with genocide at Srebrenica and the siege of Sarajevo.

The fact of the matter is that former commander of the Bosnian Serb army currently before the International Criminal Tribunal is charged with orchestrating genocide not only at Srebrenica, but also in a number of other Bosnian municipalities: Bratunac, Foča, Ključ, Kotor Varoš, Prijedor, Sanski Most, Vlasenica and Zvornik.

Although I have lodged complaints with Associated Press and Reuters regarding this issue, they haven't even acknowledged my complaint, which begs the question: are they doing this on purpose or unwittingly?

Here is a list of charges against Ratko Mladic and a full video of his first court appearance:

Count 1: Genocide.

– Municipalities: Bratunac, Foča, Ključ, Kotor Varoš, Prijedor, Sanski Most, Vlasenica and Zvornik.

Count 2: Genocide.

– Municipality: Srebrenica.

Count 3: Persecutions on Political, Racial and Religious Grounds, a Crime Against Humanity.

– Municipalities: Banja Luka, Bijeljina, Bosanska Krupa, Bosanski Novi, Bratunac, Brčko, Foča, Hadžići, Ilidža, Kalinovik, Ključ, Kotor Varoš, Novi Grad, Novo Sarajevo, Pale, Prijedor, Rogatica, Sanski Most, Sokolac, Trnovo, Vlasenica, Vogošća, Zvornik and Srebrenica.

Count 4: Extermination, a Crime Against Humanity.

Count 5: Murder, a Crime Against Humanity.

Count 6: Murder, a Violation of the Laws or Customs of War.

Count 7: Deportation, a Crime Against Humanity.

Count 8: Inhumane Acts (forcible transfer), a Crime Against Humanity.

Count 9: Acts of Violence the Primary Purpose of which is to Spread Terror among the Civilian Population, a Violation of the Laws or Customs of War.

Count 10: Unlawful Attacks on Civilians, a Violation of the Laws or Customs of War.

Count 11: Taking of Hostages, a Violation of the Laws or Customs of War.

Debating Genocide Deniers, Part II / II

Origin of the Srebrenica massacre

My “Part I” response to Prof. David Gibbs can be found [here](#). Unembarrassed by an obvious lack of familiarity with the subject, this ‘tenured full professor’ of history at the University of Arizona recycles propaganda about the events at Srebrenica that has long been recognized as promoting misunderstanding and antagonism.

In his book, *‘First Do No Harm’*, Prof. Gibbs downplays Bosnian Serb war crimes, denies genocide and blames the Bosniak (Bosnian Muslim) victims for instigating the massacre that followed the fall of the town in July 1995. On p. 160, he declares that: *“The origin of the Srebrenica massacre lay in a series of Muslim attacks began in the spring of 1995.”*

Before making this **unequivocal assertion**, he might have done well by studying the conclusions of the United Nations report on *“The Fall of Srebrenica.”* The report addresses some of the major issues surrounding events that led to the fall of Srebrenica, including allegations that the Bosniak defenders of Srebrenica ‘provoked’ the Serb offensive by attacking out of the safe area:

“Even though this accusation is often repeated by international sources, **there is no credible evidence to support it.** Dutchbat personnel on the ground at the time assessed that the few ‘raids’ the Bosniaks mounted out of Srebrenica were of little or no military significance. These raids were often organised in order to gather food, as the Serbs had refused access for

humanitarian convoys into the enclave. Even Serb sources approached in the context of this report acknowledged that the Bosniak forces in Srebrenica posed no significant military threat to them... The Serbs repeatedly exaggerated the extent of the raids out of Srebrenica as a pretext for the prosecution of a central war aim: to create a geographically contiguous and ethnically pure territory along the Drina, while freeing their troops to fight in other parts of the country. The extent to which this pretext was accepted at face value by international actors and observers reflected the prism of 'moral equivalency' through which the conflict in Bosnia was viewed by too many for too long." (UN, "[The Fall of Srebrenica](#)" p.103-104.)

In another standard reference source, Human Rights Watch (HRW) finds the origin of the Srebrenica massacre in the Bosnian Serb leadership's hatred of their Bosniak compatriots:

"The 1995 massacre in Srebrenica occurred because Bosnian Serb leaders, intoxicated by hatred and an illusory sense of omnipotence, lashed out savagely against the country's Muslim population. But the international community also bears responsibility for the worst crime in Europe since World War Two. After promising protection to the inhabitants of Srebrenica, the United Nations and NATO allowed the 'safe area' to fall." (HRW, "[The Legacy of Srebrenica](#)", 10 July 2005)

A preeminent scholar and Holocaust survivor, Judge Theodor Meron, had the privilege of sitting as the presiding Judge in the appeal of Radislav Krstić – a landmark ruling that put to rest any doubts about the legal character of the massacre. The Appeals Chamber of the International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) unanimously ruled that the Srebrenica massacre was a crime of genocide:

"By seeking to eliminate a part of the Bosnian Muslims, the Bosnian Serb forces committed genocide. They targeted for extinction the forty thousand [40,000] Bosnian Muslims living in Srebrenica, a group which was emblematic of the Bosnian Muslims in general... the law calls the massacre at Srebrenica by its proper name: genocide." (ICTY Press Release, "[Address by ICTY President Theodor Meron](#)", 23 June 2004).

Gibbs' Sources, Genocide Deniers

Having assigned the fundamental blame for what happened in July 1995 to the victims of genocide, Prof. Gibbs takes issue with the judgment of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) without offering any evidence of his own expertise in the field of international humanitarian law. He dismisses the Krstić judgement as an exaggeration.

Despite the multitude of evidence that Serb forces committed genocide in Srebrenica, Prof. Gibbs finds comfort in a personal opinion of another genocide denier:

"I agree with Katherine Southwick's criticism of the ICTY judgement, which was published in the *Yale Human Rights and Development Law Journal*... Certainly, the murder of eight thousand

people is a grave crime, but to call it 'genocide' needlessly exaggerates the scale of the crime." (*First Do No Harm*, p. 281, note 101)

To advance his ideological agenda, Prof. Gibbs cites discredited statements of former UN Protection Force commander, **General Philippe Morillon – a biased source for any serious consideration** – who, unsurprisingly, also happens to be genocide denier. In support of his view that the inhabitants of Srebrenica were responsible for their fate, Prof. Gibbs presents Gen. Morillon as a 'reliable' source of information about Srebrenica and Naser Orić. Consider **the following version of Serbian propaganda history** that may appeal to misguided readers:

"Orić engaged in attacks during Orthodox holidays and destroyed [Serb] villages, massacring all the inhabitants. This created a degree of hatred that was quite extraordinary in the [Srebrenica] region... I wasn't surprised when the Serbs took me to a village to show me the evacuation of the bodies of the inhabitants that had been thrown into a hole, a village [of Kravica] close to Bratunac." (*First Do No Harm*, p.154, citing statements of Gen. Philippe Morillon)

The Court: Orić committed no massacres

Gen. Morillon uncritically and sweepingly assigns blame for creating "*hatred that was quite extraordinary in the region*" to Naser Orić's attacks on Serb villages "*during Orthodox holidays*". Gen. Morillon is presumably referring to a specific attack by Bosnian army forces led by Naser Orić on the village of Kravica – a Serb military stronghold – during the Orthodox Christmas holiday, 7-8 January 1993. At the same time, **he avoids to mention** that Serb crimes around Srebrenica started in April 1992 (some 8 months before Orić's attack on Kravica). In the first three months of the Bosnian war (April – June 1992) Serb forces destroyed 296 Bosnian Muslim villages around Srebrenica and slaughtered at least 3,166 Bosniaks. Therefore, it is more than obvious who was responsible for this "*degree of hatred that was quite extraordinary in the region.*" It was the Serbs.

The Hague Tribunal **found no convincing evidence** that Bosniak forces were responsible for the destruction and casualties in Kravica and a number of other Serb villages (Šiljkovići, Bjelovac, Sikirić, Fakovići and Divovići) because the Serb forces used artillery in the fighting in those villages. In the case of Bjelovac, Serbs even used warplanes. Not excluding the military justification for the Bosniak attack on Kravica, the Tribunal noted that,

"... the village guards [in Kravica] were backed by the VRS [Bosnian Serb army], and following the fighting in the summer of 1992, they received military support, including weapons and training. A considerable amount of weapons and ammunition was kept in Kravica and Šiljkovići. Moreover, there is evidence that besides the village guards, there was Serb and Bosnian Serb military presence in the area." (ICTY, Orić Trial Judgement, para. 664).

Certainly a number of Serb civilians died in the Kravica attack (11, perhaps 13). But Morillon's reference to the massacring of 'all the inhabitants' of an unspecified number of Serb villages is **inaccurate**, and more so is his failure, like Gibbs', to make appropriate reference to **the**

context in which the attack on Kravica took place — the Serb ethnic cleansing of the Drina Valley at the start of the 1992-1995 war, the siege of Srebrenica and the desperate struggle for survival of the starved inhabitants.

As for the civilian casualties in the Kravica incident, there was no massacre. The death of 11 or 13 Serb civilians caught in the cross-fire between enemy soldiers does not constitute massacre. In legal terms, the massacre is understood as the intentional killing of a larger group of helpless people (including prisoners of war) – in a particularly gruesome manner – for no ‘valid’ military objective, other than to inflict death. The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia at the Hague reviewed Serbian accusations against Naser Orić extensively, but **found no evidence that his troops committed any massacres against Serb civilians** in villages around Srebrenica. In the Orić’s trial judgement, the judges used the term ‘massacre’ only once, referring in fact to Serb propaganda prior to the outbreak of conflict:

“Influenced by Serb propaganda predicting an imminent massacre by Bosnian Muslims, many Bosnian Serbs left the town of Srebrenica in March and April 1992” (ICTY, Orić Trial Judgement, para. 95).

When Serbs retook Kravica in March 1993, Philippe Morillon attended the funeral of Serbian soldiers and civilians in the village. During his stay in Srebrenica, he never bothered to attend funerals of Bosniak soldiers and civilians killed by Serb forces who regularly attacked Bosnian Muslim settlements from Kravica.

Why was Kravica attacked?

Like other Serb villages around Srebrenica, the heavily militarized Serb stronghold of Kravica was used as a ‘launching pad’ for brutal attacks on neighbouring Bosniak villages and the town of Srebrenica itself. In the case of Kravica, the Hague Tribunal established **it was the Serbs who attacked first**:

“The fighting intensified in December 1992 and the beginning of January 1993, when Bosnian Muslims were attacked by Bosnian Serbs primarily from the direction of Kravica and Ježestica.” (ICTY, Orić Trial Judgement, para. 662)

The Bosniak attack on Kravica was a response to the village’s use as a base for constant Serb attacks on Srebrenica and surrounding Bosnian Muslim settlements, including the Serb blockade preventing humanitarian aid from entering the enclave. According to the Hague Tribunal,

“Between April 1992 and March 1993, **Srebrenica town and the villages in the area held by Bosnian Muslims were constantly subjected to Serb military assaults**, including artillery attacks, sniper fire, as well as occasional bombing from aircrafts. Each onslaught followed a similar pattern. Serb soldiers and paramilitaries surrounded a Bosnian Muslim village or hamlet, called upon the population to surrender their weapons, and then began with indiscriminate

shelling and shooting. In most cases, they then entered the village or hamlet, expelled or killed the population, who offered no significant resistance, and destroyed their homes. During this period, Srebrenica was subjected to indiscriminate shelling from all directions on a daily basis. Potočari in particular was a daily target for Serb artillery and infantry because it was a sensitive point in the defence line around Srebrenica. Other Bosnian Muslim settlements were routinely attacked as well. All this resulted in a great number of refugees and casualties.” (ICTY, Orić Trial Judgement, para. 103)

Serbs from Kravica had played **a key role in earlier atrocities** around Srebrenica such as the massacre of Bosniak civilians at Glogova in May 1992. In 1992, approximately 350 Bosniak civilians - unarmed men, women and children – were held as prisoners in a detention camp located in an abandoned Serb Orthodox church in Kravica. Serbs tortured, raped and killed Bosniak prisoners including women and underage girls.

The Serb leadership had the avowed objective of making conditions of life intolerable for the remaining Bosniak population of the Drina Valley. When the soldiers under Orić’s command attacked Kravica they were followed by large numbers of starving Bosniak civilians from the besieged enclave in search of food (the so-called “torbari” or “bag people”). The Hague Tribunal described the circumstances which led these people to accompany military raids:

“Between June 1992 and March 1993, Bosnian Muslims raided a number of villages and hamlets inhabited by Bosnian Serbs, or from which Bosnian Muslims had formerly been expelled. One of the purposes of these actions was to acquire food, weapons, ammunition and military equipment. **Bosnian Serb forces controlling the access roads were not allowing international humanitarian aid most importantly, food and medicine to reach Srebrenica. As a consequence, there was a constant and serious shortage of food causing starvation to peak in the winter of 1992/1993....** Numerous people died or were in an extremely emaciated state due to malnutrition... Threatened by starvation, almost everyone from Srebrenica participated in searches for food in nearby villages and hamlets under Bosnian Serb control. These searches were very dangerous; many stepped on mines or were wounded or killed by Serbs. [...] Hygienic conditions throughout the Srebrenica enclave were appalling. There was a total absence of running water. Most people were left to drink water from a small river which was polluted. Infestation with lice and fleas became widespread among the population. The Srebrenica war hospital ... lacked almost all the essentials. [...] Patients suffered in dreadful conditions, as no disinfectants, bandages, aspirins or antibiotics were available with which to treat them. Limbs were amputated without anaesthesia, with brandy being administered to ease the pain... ” (Orić Trial Judgement, para. 104, 110, 112-114.)

Gibbs’ sloppy research

Critical of the ICTY’s assessment of the scale of the crime of genocide, Prof. Gibbs is less rigorous in examining the sources of the “Orić legend” on which he bases his assessment of the nature and scale of the crimes that he believes were at the origin of the 1995 Srebrenica

massacre. He makes no attempt to distinguish between Serb military and civilian casualties, nor does he try to assess the balance of casualties between the two sides.

Deniers are entitled to their own opinion, but not to their own facts. Approximately **95 percent** of all victims around Srebrenica (1992-95) were Bosniaks, according to the Research and Documentation Center. All attempts to **equalize** the demise (military defeat) of the Serb war criminals around Srebrenica in January of 1993 with the genocidal suffering of the Bosniak people in/and around Srebrenica (from 1992-1995), amount to nothing more than a case of moral equivalence and a gross distortion of historical facts. The brutal siege of Srebrenica was described by the United Nations itself as a “**slow-motion process of genocide.**” (United Nations, “*Report of the Security Council Mission Established Pursuant to Resolution 819 (1993)*,” S/25700, 30 April 1993.)

Serb soldiers who died in the pursuit of criminal enterprise — by participating in the siege of Srebrenica, attacking the enclave, and committing war crimes against the Bosniak civilians in/and around Srebrenica) — cannot be considered ‘victims’ of massacres.

A spokesperson for the Office of the Prosecutor (OTP) at the Hague Tribunal has described how the scale of the alleged suffering endured by the local Serb population around Srebrenica had been **deliberately distorted**:

“... the OTP is always very careful in the use of the word ‘victim’. Military or police casualties from combat should not be considered victims in a criminal investigation context in the same way people are victims from war crimes, such as summary executions. Before speaking about the whole area of Podrinja, including at least the municipalities of Srebrenica, Bratunac, Vlasenica and Skelani, I would comment on the various figures circulating around the Kravica attack of January 1993. The figures circulating of hundreds of [Serb] victims or claiming that all 353 inhabitants were ‘virtually completely destroyed’ **do not reflect the reality**. During the attack by the BH army on Kravica, Jezeštica, Opravdići, Mandići and the surrounding villages (the larger area of Kravica), on the 7th & 8th January 1993, 43 people were killed, according to our information. Our investigation shows that 13 of the 43 were obviously civilians. Our findings are matching with the Bratunac Brigade military reports of battle casualties which are believed in the OTP to be very reliable because they are internal VRS [Bosnian Serb Army] reports. For the whole region, i.e. the municipalities of Srebrenica, Bratunac, Vlasenica and Skelani, the Serb authorities claimed previously that about 1400 [Serb] people were killed due to attacks committed by the BH Army forces for the period of May 1992 to March 1995, when Srebrenica was under the control of Naser Oric. Now the figure has become 3,500 Serbs killed. **This figure may have been inflated. Taking the term ‘victims’ as defined previously, these figures just do not reflect the reality.**” (ICTY, [Weekly Press Briefing](#), 6 July 2005)

The most up-to-date analysis of Serb casualties in the region comes from the Sarajevo-based *Research and Documentation Centre* (IDC), a non-partisan institution with a multiethnic staff, whose data have been evaluated and accepted by an international team of experts. They put the number of Serb military casualties in the attack on Kravica at 35 killed along with 11 civilian

victims. The IDC's extensive review of casualty data around Srebrenica found that Serb casualties in the adjoining Bratunac municipality — where majority of military operations took place — amounted to 119 civilians and 424 soldiers; about one third (or 139) of Serb military losses — listed as casualties of Naser Orić's attacks around Srebrenica — had in fact died elsewhere in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Furthermore, a number of Serb war criminals who died in the process of terrorizing and killing more than 10,000 Sarajevo residents were presented as victims of Orić's attacks around Srebrenica:

"Under the Dayton Peace Accords, the suburbs of Sarajevo held by the VRS were to be re-integrated into the city of Sarajevo. The then leadership of the RS [Republika Srpska] called on the local Serb population to leave Sarajevo and even take the graves of their loved ones with them. In fact, such a large majority followed the instructions that parts of the city of Sarajevo remained deserted for months. **The remnants of their loved ones have been buried in Bratunac after the war, but their deaths are presented as the result of actions taken by the Bosnian Army units from Srebrenica.**" (The Research and Documentation Center, "[Myth of Bratunac](#)," 7 June 2010)

Philippe Morillon's Lack of Impartiality

The French UNPROFOR commander, General Philippe Morillon, is perhaps best known for his pledge to the besieged inhabitants of Srebrenica that the enclave would be protected by the international community. He gave that pledge shortly after a fact-finding visit to the nearby towns of Cerska and Konjević Polje on 5-6 March 1993 following reports of massacres a few days earlier. The enclave of Cerska had been overrun by Serb forces on 2 March 1993. After spending some minutes walking around the village and seeing no dead bodies, Philippe Morillon sent the controversial message back to the UN, "**Je n'ai pas senti l'odeur de la mort**" (I didn't smell the odour of death.)

According to survivor Sahma Muminovic, Serb forces massacred refugees trapped in the town's schoolhouse. They bombarded the schoolhouse with artillery and tank shells before moving in and killing people. The victim's bodies remained trapped under the rubble of a destroyed school.

Invited to attend a funeral of Serb soldiers in Kravica, Morillon was apparently too busy to investigate another report of the massacre. As the Serbs continued their offensive, they slaughtered 200 Bosnian Muslims fleeing Cerska, near Mount Rogašija. A group of 900 Bosniak refugees had split in two groups. A survivor, Besim Topalovic, told how the column he joined, numbering as many as 200 people, were all machine-gunned. Topalovic was fortunate to be the only survivor; the corpses fell on him and protected him from gunfire.

Despite Morillon's denial of the Cerska massacre, the evidence from Bosnian Serb army tells a different story. The daily combat report obtained by the Hague Tribunal and dated 2 March 1993, describes how the columns of Bosniak refugees fleeing from Udrč and Raševo towards Konjević Polje "*were hit with every available means.*" In the cross-examination of General Vinko

Pandurević, the prosecutor Peter McCloskey was able to show how the Bosnian Serb army attempted to cover-up the attack on the column by revising their own combat reports.

“There’s been an editing job by the corps, hasn’t there?” – the prosecutor Peter McCloskey asked. “Yes, that’s what we read here,” – responded the accused.

The revised version of the original report dated 2 March 1993 referred only to “soldiers.” The revised report also replaced “*The columns were hit with every available means*” with “*Fire was opened on the column.*” (Popovic et al., Trial Transcript, [25 February](#) and [26 February 2009](#)).

Nevertheless the survivor’s report which reached Zagreb via an amateur radio link, had clearly described how the escapees were attacked and slaughtered with grenade launchers and machine guns. Gen. Morillon does not seem to have followed up this report.

Shortly after his failure to investigate the 1993 Cerska massacre and other Serb massacres of Bosniak civilians around Srebrenica, Gen. Morillon went on to say something in mid March 1993 that raised eyebrows of his own *aide-de-camp*. On March 15, during a meeting with the Serb generals Manojlo Milovanović and Zdravko Tolimir, Morillon referred to Srebrenica — home to some 80,000 emaciated Bosnian Muslim refugees — as a nest of terrorists. He told the Serbs:

“I know you wish to clean out this nest of terrorists. I will do it for you and save you many, many casualties.” (ICTY, Orić trial transcript, 5 December 2005)

Also, during the trial of Slobodan Milošević, Gen. Morillon touched on the subject of pro-Serbian bias, hinting his own lack of objectivity:

“Once again, in this context one has to explain why sometimes French forces were considered as too indulgent to Serbs. I’m a French general. I do not forget the statue which is in Belgrade, ‘Let us love France as France loved us’...” (ICTY, Milošević trial transcript, 12 February 2004)

Speaking of those who excited nationalism, he stood in defense of the Serbs, showing his lack of impartiality and openly defending the Serbian side from any type of criticism:

“This is the reason why I have continued to say that everywhere that Serbs should not be demonised but one should judge those who brought them there to that solution, to that impasse in this drama.” (ICTY, Milošević trial transcript, 12 February 2004)

On 3 September 2010 — appearing on Bosnian television after being heckled by survivors at the Srebrenica memorial complex in Potocari — Gen. Morillon repeatedly refused to acknowledge the 1995 Srebrenica genocide (interview available on [FaceTV.ba](#)).

So much about the shattered credibility of Prof. David N. Gibbs and his sources. No further commentary is necessary.

Mass murder and ethnic cleansing of Bosniaks in the Srebrenica region during the first three months of the Bosnian War (April-June 1992)

More than three years before the 1995 Srebrenica genocide, Bosnian Serb nationalists – with the logistical, moral and financial support of Serbia and the Yugoslav People’s Army (JNA) – destroyed 296 predominantly Bosniak (Bosnian Muslim)[1] villages in the region around Srebrenica, forcibly uprooting some 70,000 Bosniaks from their homes and systematically massacring at least 3,166 Bosniaks (documented deaths) including many women, children and the elderly. It was these massacres that should have alerted the international community to the prospect of genocide when the United Nations-protected enclave eventually fell to Bosnian Serb forces commanded by General Ratko Mladić three years later, in July 1995.

The following study provides a short background account of the outbreak of war in Bosnia-Herzegovina in April 1992, an overview of significant massacres committed against the Bosniak population in the Srebrenica region during the first three months of the war, including a breakdown of the numbers of Bosniak victims and a complete list of villages wholly or partially destroyed by Serb forces in and around Srebrenica between April and June 1992.

For the purposes of this study, the Srebrenica region is defined as the area comprising the municipality of Srebrenica and the adjoining pre-war municipalities of Bratunac, Vlasenica, Rogatica and Višegrad. This strategically important central section of the River Drina valley is situated in the Podrinje, which forms Bosnia’s eastern border with Serbia. According to the 1991 population census in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bosniaks comprised the ethnic majority in all five municipalities (75.19% in Srebrenica; 64.05% in Bratunac; 55.17% in Vlasenica; 60.10% in Rogatica and 63.54% in Višegrad).

Although armed conflict in this part of eastern Bosnia commenced on 6 April 1992 with the attack of the Yugoslav People’s Army (JNA) on the town of Višegrad, it was not until 17 April that the Bosnian Serb authorities announced their effective intention to commit genocide in a public threat to “destroy” the Bosniak population of the municipalities of Srebrenica and Bratunac, some 49,000 people.

Preparing for War (Early 1991)

Prior to Bosnia and Herzegovina’s declaration of sovereignty in October 1991, the Bosnian Serb leadership was already making preparations “for eventual secession from or division of BH from behind the scenes” by actively undermining “the existing political and administrative system in the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (SRBiH).”[2] For example, in April 1991 the Bosnian Serb leadership embarked on a programme of regionalisation by creating the Serb “Autonomous Region of Krajina” (ARK) and establishing parallel institutions of government throughout the area that was intended to form part of an ethnically homogeneous Serb state, the “Greater Serbia” project.[3] The decision to incorporate Srebrenica into a future

restructured Serbian state was made by the government of Slobodan Milošević, then President of Serbia.

In early May of 1991, Milošević's cabinet summoned two local Bosnian Serb leaders to attend a high-level meeting with Mihalj Kertes in Belgrade. The meeting was attended by Goran Zekić from Srebrenica and Miroslav Deronjić from Bratunac, the leaders of the Serbian Democratic Party (SDS) in their respective municipalities. Kertes, long-time director of the Yugoslav Federal Customs Bureau, was Milošević's man of trust who provided logistic and financial support for various undercover operations of the Serbian regime. At this meeting, Kertes advised Zekić and Deronjić that *"the decision of the political and state leadership of the SFRY [Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia] was that an area of 50 kilometres from the Drina would be Serb."*[4]

There was one problem with this decision: the area Milošević had assigned to the Bosnian Serbs included large swathes of predominantly Bosniak-inhabited territory in the municipalities of Zvornik, Bratunac, Vlasenica, Srebrenica, Višegrad, Rogatica, Goražde and Foča. Bosniaks loyal to the Bosnian government in Sarajevo stood in the way of the plan to establish an ethnically-pure Serb region that would eventually form part of a *"Greater Serbia"*.

Milošević's strategy could not be implemented without the use of force and the Belgrade leadership agreed to start covert shipments of arms to local Serbs in and around Srebrenica immediately under the supervision of Zekić and Deronjić. The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) found that weapons were *"shipped into the area from Serbia across the Drina River or flown in by helicopter. Paramilitary training was covertly provided in public buildings in Bosnian Serb villages throughout the area. In comparison... there were not even firearms to be found in the Bosnian Muslim villages, apart from some privately owned pistols and hunting rifles; a few light weapons were kept at the Srebrenica police station."*[5]

Killings Fuel Tension (3 September 1991)

On 3 September 1991 four Bosniaks were ambushed by a group of Serb nationalists as their car was passing through the village of Kravica in Bratunac municipality. Dževad Jusić and Nedžad Hodžić – were shot and killed, while the other two – Mevludin Sinanović and Zaim Salković – survived with injuries.[6]

The Kravica ambush aroused particular panic, evoking vivid memories of horrendous massacres during World War II. In the fall of 1941, Nazi-collaborating Bosnian Serb Chetniks under the command of Jezdimir Dangić killed 81 Bosniak civilians in the village of Zaklopača. They barricaded civilians in the local mekteb (Muslim religious school) and burned them to death.[7] A similar crime took place in December 1941. This time Chetniks from the Serb village of Kravica – armed with guns, knives, hammers, sticks, and axes – massacred 86 Bosniak civilians in Sopotnik (near Drinjača).[8] Then in February 1943, Draza Mihailović's Chetnik forces rounded up and killed 9200 Bosniaks from both sides of the River Drina.[9]

Karadžić's Threats of Genocide (October 1991)

In the months before Bosnia and Herzegovina declared independence from the former

Yugoslavia [10], Milošević's ally, the Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić expressed his own genocidal intentions in intercepted telephone conversations and public speeches. Historian Dr. Robert J. Donia described Karadžić's language as *"threatening' and issued from the point of view of someone 'who can dictate to the Muslims what their options are.'"*[11]

In the recording of an intercepted conversation between Karadžić and Gojko Đogo on 12 October 1991, Karadžić repeated five times that in the event of war the Bosniaks would "disappear". In his words, *"They don't understand that there will be bloodshed and that the Muslim people could disappear. Misguided Muslims, who do not know where he [Izetbegović] is taking them, that they could disappear... they will disappear, this people will disappear from the face of the earth."*[12]

A day later, speaking to Momčilo Mandić over the telephone, Karadžić said: *"Within a few days there will be no Sarajevo, and there will be over 500,000 dead; within a month the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina will be destroyed!"* Then again, on 15 October 1991, speaking to Miodrag Davidović and his own brother Luka, Karadžić said: *"In the first instance, none of their [Bosniak] leaders will remain alive, they will be killed within 3 or 4 hours. They will have no chance of surviving."*[13]

Karadžić spoke publicly about the "annihilation" of the "Muslim people" when he addressed the Parliament of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the night of 14–15 October 1991. Making clear what was likely to happen if Bosnia and Herzegovina seceded from the rump of Yugoslavia, Karadžić indicated the possibility that the Bosnian Muslims could disappear as a group:

"You want to take Bosnia and Herzegovina down the same highway to hell and suffering that Slovenia and Croatia are travelling. Do not think that you will not lead Bosnia and Herzegovina into hell, and do not think that you will not perhaps lead the Muslim people into annihilation because the Muslims cannot defend themselves if there is war. How will you prevent everyone from being killed in Bosnia and Herzegovina?"

Deployment of the Yugoslav Army (JNA) (January 1992)

In response to the growing crisis in the former Yugoslavia, representatives of a European Union Peace Mission headed by Jacques Gabrielle, visited Srebrenica on 3 January 1992 to meet with local political leaders. Asked what he thought was potentially the most destabilizing factor in inter-ethnic relations in the Srebrenica municipality, the chairman of the municipal assembly Besim Ibišević replied point blank, "The JNA." Ibišević explained that,

"The arrival of the JNA will spark the outbreak of war. The Serbs desire JNA's arrival, because it is their Army. After seeing what the Yugoslav Army has done in Croatia, Bosniaks are rightfully fearful of it and see it as a hostile military force. JNA has plans to enter into the territory of our municipality, and if they do so, then the war is inevitable."[14]

Ibišević's concerns were justified. The JNA was the third largest army in Europe and one of the largest in the world. By early 1991, the JNA had transformed itself into a *de facto* Serbian army with approximately 90 percent of high-ranking officers of Serb and Montenegrin ethnic origin.[15]

When on 2 January 1992 a ceasefire agreement brought the fighting in Croatia to a provisional halt, the JNA began redeploying many of its units into Bosnia. By April 1992, artillery posts had been set up at all the strategic points and elevations around Srebrenica. Other preparations for the onslaught against the local Bosniak population were also in place.

The Propaganda War

Prior to the outbreak of the armed conflict, the Bosnian Serb authorities started waging a propaganda war. Prominent members of Karadžić's Serbian Democratic Party (SDS) regularly appeared in the media making discriminatory speeches insulting and degrading non-Serbs and inciting the Bosnian Serbs to commit crimes against other ethnic groups.[16]

Then, at the beginning of April 1992, the Bosnian TV relay station on Mount Kvarac was blown up. Local residents could no longer receive TV broadcasts from Sarajevo, only Serbian programmes from Belgrade.[17] The source of Srebrenica's water supply in the village of Slapovici was also sabotaged, leaving the town with no access to running water and creating an atmosphere of panic.[18]

The deliberate destruction of the local TV relay was no accident. It was part of the programme of "regionalisation" referred to earlier, which envisaged the creation of autonomous regions in which Serb *"authorities started taking over television and radio installations, and broadcasting 'Serb' programs that intimidated persons of other nationalities. Muslim leaders were barred from the radio while SDS [Karadžić's Serb Democratic Party] leaders had unlimited access."*[19]

The propaganda campaign had a *"disastrous impact on the people of all ethnicities, creating mutual fear and hatred and particularly inciting the Bosnian Serb population against the other ethnicities"* and creating *"a climate where people were prepared to tolerate the commission of crimes and to commit crimes."* Once armed conflict had broken out in Bosnia, the SDS-controlled media openly incited Bosnian Serbs to kill other non-Serbs.[20]

The Outbreak of War and the First Victims

The first impact of the outbreak of war was felt in Višegrad, at the beginning of April 1992, as the Yugoslav Army embarked on a campaign of intimidation that was to lead to the ethnic cleansing of the town and some of the most terrible atrocities committed anywhere during the entire Bosnian war, described later in this chronological sequence of events.

In the municipality of Srebrenica, the first victims of war crimes were two Bosniak civilians from Potočari, Meho Hrvačić and Bahrudin Osmanović. On 15 April 1992, their vehicle was stopped by a group of armed Serbian Chetniks on the road from Skelani to Srebrenica. They were executed and their bodies left at the roadside. Earlier that day, a truck full of armed Chetniks

came from the direction of Skelani, entered the Bosniak village of Kragljivoda and destroyed a local Post office.[21]

The Ultimatum of Genocide (17 April 1992)

On 22 March 1992, Serbs formed the so called “Serb municipality of Skelani”, without any consultation with the majority Bosniak population of the municipality of Srebrenica or of the Skelani area. Skelani, located in the municipality of Srebrenica, was one of the largest Bosniak villages in eastern Bosnia.[22] In the first half of April 1992, “volunteers” from Serbia crossed the Drina River and took control of this village in a preparatory operation aimed at ‘disarming’ the civilian population and establishing a Serb foothold in the predominantly Bosniak municipalities of Bratunac and Srebrenica.

Then, on 17 April 1992, a meeting was held in the Hotel Fontana in Bratunac between the Bosniak and Serb representatives of the Srebrenica and Bratunac municipalities. It was at this meeting that the Serb authorities issued the public ultimatum which effectively threatened the Bosniak population of Srebrenica and Bratunac, some 49,000 people, with genocide.[23] In the words of Miroslav Deronjić, Bosniaks had two options: *“To leave Srebrenica quietly or to be killed. There is no third option.”* He warned that *“Bratunac, Skelani, Milići, Rogatica and Višegrad are already in Serb hands.”*[24] Bosniaks were *“to surrender weapons and legal authority to Bosnian Serbs. Otherwise they were to **suffer from destruction** at the hands of thousands of Serb soldiers who were amassed across the Drina River in Serbia.”*[25]

War in the Municipalities of Srebrenica and Bratunac (17 April onwards)

That same day, the Serb nationalists of Radovan Karadžić’s Serbian Democratic Party (SDS) assumed political power in Bratunac. This event marked a transition from uncertainty and political instability to a period of war and suffering, accompanied by large-scale expulsions of the Bosniak population driven by a campaign of unrelenting violence.

The attack upon the Bosniak population of the Srebrenica region took many forms, starting with the Serb takeover of towns and villages and followed by the systematic and large-scale criminal campaign of murders, rapes and mistreatment of civilians. Despite routine guarantees of safety offered if they surrendered weapons, unarmed Bosniak villagers were frequently rounded up and executed, while many women and girls were subjected to sadistic sexual torture and gang-raped.[26]

Localised resistance in some cases led to the establishment of enclaves under Bosniak control to which refugees fled from elsewhere in the Podrinje, the most notable of them being Srebrenica, Kamenica, Cerska, Konjević Polje, Velika Glogova, Potočari, Sućeska, Osmaće and Žepa.

The First Fall of Srebrenica and Massacre (18 April – 8 May 1992)

Following the takeover of Bratunac, the Serb forces began the attack on Srebrenica on 18 April 1992, firing around 5000 mortar shells on the town and the surrounding Bosniak villages. There

was no resistance. The same day, Serbs entered the town, looting Bosniak property, setting houses on fire and killing Bosniak residents who were unable to flee into nearby woods.

The Serb occupation of the town of Srebrenica lasted until 8 May, the day when Serbs burned to death 23 Bosniak civilians in the downtown Srebrenica. The victims died in excruciating pain. From April 17 to May 8, a total of 74 Bosniak civilians were killed in the occupied Srebrenica.[27] The youngest victim was the 12-month-old boy Nezir Suljić whose charred body was still lying in his cradle. His father Huso, his mother Muška, and his brother Nisvet were burned to death in the same room. Nezir's nine-year-old sister Sanela survived by jumping through a window and hiding in nearby woods.[28]

First Instances of Resistance (20 April 1992)

On 20 April 1992, Serb paramilitary units attempted to enter Potočari, a Bosniak village on the road from Srebrenica to Bratunac. They were met by opposition from a group of Bosniak villagers armed with hunting guns and led by Naser Orić. The villagers set up an ambush, killing four attackers belonging to the notorious paramilitary group "Arkan's Tigers." This was the first instance of successful Bosniak resistance to Serb aggression in the municipality of Srebrenica. Orić was subsequently to achieve prominence as the most effective commander of the defence forces during the period of the siege.

On the same day, the mountain village of Likari, located about 10km from Srebrenica, became the first Bosniak settlement in the municipality to be completely destroyed by the Serbs. Likari was defended by a group of poorly armed Bosniak villagers with "*only about 25 old hunting rifles and no means of obtaining more.*"[29] The capture of Likari enabled Serb forces and the Yugoslav People's Army to strategically reposition their heavy artillery and inflict heavy material damage on property including homes and agricultural buildings in Potočari and neighbouring Bosniak villages.

The Hranča Massacre (2-3 May 1992)

On 2 May 1992, Hranča became the first Bosniak village in the municipality of Bratunac to be attacked. A group of Serb paramilitaries commanded by Najdan Mladenović, raided Bosniak homes demanding weapons. They killed one Bosniak civilian, Fićo Ramić, before leaving the village. The next day, Serb gunmen with Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) support, surrounded and then torched the village, killing another 14 Bosniak civilians, including a seven year old girl Selma Hodžić.[30] British journalist Tim Judah visited Hranča two days later and found local Bosniaks praying over the dead. The little body of the girl was "*lying on a sofa in a small house there.*"[31] The Hranča massacre was the clearest possible signal of what was about to happen next to the remaining Bosniak population of the Srebrenica region.

The Blječeva Attack (6 May 1992)

The next target was the predominantly Bosniak village of Blječeva in the municipality of Bratunac which was attacked by Serb mortars on 6 May 1992. The mortars struck several homes in the village, killing a 16-year old Bosniak girl, Vesna Muratović, and two elderly Serb residents of the village, Kosana Zekić and Gojko Jovanović. Several other residents were

wounded. The Bosniak population of the village fled towards the village of Pale. Serb forces quickly moved into Blječeva, pillaging and burning homes. They shot and killed one Bosniak civilian, Ibro Jašarević, and took prisoner anyone unable to flee, including Nurif Memišević, a paralyzed Bosniak man unable to move unaided. He was forced to sign a 'confession' to the effect that he was being well treated by his Bosnian Serb captors, and that it was Bosniaks who had attacked the village and been responsible for the killings. Memišević was never seen again.[32]

Liberation of Srebrenica (8 May 1992)

Bosnian Serb forces retreated from Srebrenica following the death in an ambush on 8 May 1992 of the local Serb leader Goran Žekić, a key organiser of the ethnic cleansing of the Bosniak population of Srebrenica and Bratunac. After his death, local Bosniaks succeeded in reoccupying the devastated town and began organizing its defence. However, the town remained under siege, cut off from the territory under Government control. The brutal siege of Srebrenica was subsequently described by the United Nations itself as "a slow-motion process of genocide"[33]

Although the presence of the Yugoslav People's Army on the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina formally ended on 19 May 1992, the International Criminal Tribunal (ICTY) found that "*a large number of JNA troops, weaponry and equipment remained in BiH and were merely re-designated 'Army of the Serbian Republic of BiH' (VRS). Consequently, the VRS had at its disposal a significant cache of resources, outweighing by far those available to the Bosnian Muslims.*"[34]

Serbian forces regularly fired on Srebrenica from positions on Mount Tara across the Drina in Serbia where the Special State Security Forces of the Serbian Ministry of Internal Affairs (MUP) operated a training centre. Some places were shelled blindly, but a sizeable portion of the free territory was within clear sight and range of Serb artillery and snipers. In the first three months of war, Serb forces fired an average of 2000 mortar shells per day on the enclave of Srebrenica. The International Criminal Tribunal (ICTY) concluded that:

"Between April 1992 and March 1993, Srebrenica town and the villages in the area held by Bosnian Muslims were constantly subjected to Serb military assaults, including artillery attacks, sniper fire, as well as occasional bombing from aircrafts. Each onslaught followed a similar pattern. Serb soldiers and paramilitaries surrounded a Bosnian Muslim village or hamlet, called upon the population to surrender their weapons, and then began with indiscriminate shelling and shooting. In most cases, they then entered the village or hamlet, expelled or killed the population, who offered no significant resistance, and destroyed their homes. During this period, Srebrenica was subjected to indiscriminate shelling from all directions on a daily basis. Potočari in particular was a daily target for Serb artillery and infantry because it was a sensitive point in the defence line around Srebrenica. Other Bosnian Muslim settlements were routinely attacked as well. All this resulted in a great number of refugees and casualties."[35]

Glogova Massacre (9 May 1992)

On 9 May 1992, Serb forces assisted by the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) entered the village of Glogova and killed at least 64 unarmed Bosniak civilians. Several women were taken into the nearby forest where they were gang-raped by the masked Serb soldiers.[36] The remaining population of the village was forcibly expelled. Prior to the massacre, village residents had been disarmed and guaranteed safety. The decision to attack Glogova was taken two days beforehand, at a meeting between the Bratunac Crisis Staff and the Yugoslav People's Army commander known as 'Captain Reljić,' Raša Milošević, commander of the Kravica Detachment, "and another person who was a member of the State Security of Serbia." [37]

According to Ibrahim Dervišagić, a survivor of the massacre, many of the Serbs who participated in the Glogova massacre came from the nearby Serb village of Kravica.[38] Another survivor, Azem Rizvanović, watched from a nearby forest as two women from Serbia – Vesna Krdžalić from Beli Manastir and Dragica Mastikosa from Novi Sad – used knives to kill Bosniak civilians. Both women were killed during the 29 May 1992 attack on the Bosniak village of Sandici.[39]

The Role of Kravica in Crimes Against Bosniaks

Kravica is a predominantly Serb populated village in Bratunac municipality. Throughout the Bosnian war, Kravica was heavily militarized. The Bosnian Serb Army's Kravica Detachment took part in almost daily attacks on Bosniak hamlets, villages and settlements in the area, including terrible massacres of civilians in villages such as Glogova. From the very beginning of the war, the Kravica Serbs looted livestock and other goods belonging to Bosniaks killed or driven from their hamlets and villages. They also took part in more systematic abuse of Bosniak prisoners.

As well as taking part in the torture of Bosniak civilians in the detention camp set up in the Vuk Karadžić school in Bratunac, Serbs from Kravica also established a detention camp for captured Bosniak civilians in an abandoned local Serb Orthodox church, where they tortured, raped and killed prisoners including women and underage girls. Some 350 civilians were detained in the camp.[40] The physical abuse perpetrated on them included beatings with objects, including steel pipes and rifle butts and bare fists, kicking victims with boots and extracting teeth with rusty pliers. Detainees were beaten unconscious and some beaten to death.

One of the most sadistic individuals to take part in the torture was Momir Nikolić. He used a sharp knife to gouge out prisoners' eyes. In one particularly gruesome incident other prisoners were forced to watch as Nikolić blinded the defenceless Bosniak prisoner Šaban Salkić. Female detainees, including young women and underage girls, were forced to lie beside the cross on the altar while their abusers took sadistic pleasure in torturing and raping Muslims in a Serb Orthodox church. One of the most violent of the rapists was Golub Erić.[41] According to his grandson Slaviša, Golub Erić and his brother Nego had also committed crimes against Bosniaks in World War II. Both participated in the massacre of Bosniak civilians at Sopotnik mentioned above and were sentenced to death but for some unknown reason they escaped execution by the Yugoslav authorities.[42]

The Vuk Karadžić School Massacre (10 May 1992)

On 10 May 1992, the Yugoslav People's Army, various paramilitary groups from Serbia and local Bosnian Serb forces jointly conducted one of the most violent assaults on the Bosniak population of Bratunac and the surrounding villages. Some 4,000 to 5,000 Bosniak civilians were expelled from their homes and detained in the local football stadium "Bratstvo" (Brotherhood). Serb forces stripped Bosniak civilians of their possessions and forcibly separated men from the women, killing some of them on the spot. The youngest known victim was a six month old girl, Narcisa Salihović, and the oldest a 110 year old woman, Zahida Suljagić.[43] A United Nations investigation found that some victims interned in the "Bratstvo" stadium were "forced to serve as blood donors, and some did not survive because so much blood had been withdrawn. Reportedly, the bodies of hundreds of individuals have been burned or thrown into the Drina River." [44]

Several hundred of women and underage girls were taken from the Bratstvo stadium to the local Hotel Fontana where they were repeatedly raped. Other women and older men were herded onto buses, warned never to come back to their homes again, and forcibly expelled in the direction of the government controlled town of Kladanj.

About 700 unarmed Bosniak men were taken to a detention camp located in the gymnasium of the Vuk Karadžić primary school. When the men arrived in the camp, they were met by the sight of mutilated detainees. The men were offered very salty food with no water. They were brutally tortured over the next few days and some 350 of them were murdered in the most sadistic ways.

Physical abuse at the camp included beatings with objects including wooden sticks, wooden poles, steel pipes, metal bars, baseball bats, rifle butts, bare fists, kicking with boots, extraction of teeth with rusty pliers and suffocation. Some prisoners were decapitated and their heads held up for all to see, then kicked around the floor. Other prisoners were forced to move bodies before eventually being killed themselves and their bodies thrown on the pile. According to the United Nations Human Rights Committee, "*Witnesses claim that the bodies of those killed were butchered, with nose, ears, genitals cut off, or crosses being cut into them. Those witnesses also claim that while that was being done, they were forced to sing Chetnik songs.*" [45]

The local Muslim priest Mustafa Mujkanovic, was humiliated, tortured and beaten for hours. His throat was cut open in front of other prisoners after he defiantly refused to cross himself, drink alcohol or raise three fingers in the Serb manner (he lifted only two, symbolically asserting the struggle of the Bosniak people for freedom).

The Suha Massacre (10 May 1992)

On 10 May 1992, Serbs attacked and destroyed the Bosniak village of Suha in the nearby municipality of Bratunac. They sexually tortured young women and girls and then killed 38 unarmed Bosniak residents. They dumped their bodies in a local mass grave. Among the 38 exhumed remains were those of nine children ranging in age from 3 months to 11 years, several women and mostly elderly men. One of the victims was the 9-month pregnant Zekira

Hrustanbasic (aka: Zekira Begić). When pathologists at the University Clinical Center in Tuzla conducted their examination of the victims' remains, they found the body of her unborn child had been pierced by a bullet.[46]

The principal suspects of the Suha massacre are Milenko ("Mungos") Prodanovic, a former paramilitary leader, and his associate Vujadin Stevic, also known as Dragan. Despite repeated calls for his arrest Prodanovic had still not been charged with any crime and was a member of the Bratunac municipal assembly in 2010.[47] Stevic's whereabouts are unknown.

Strategic Objective: "Eliminate the Drina" (12 May 1992)

Meanwhile, on 12 May 1992, at a session of the Bosnian Serb Assembly, Radovan Karadžić announced the six "strategic objectives" of the Serbian people in Bosnia and Herzegovina. One of them was to ethnically cleanse the predominantly Bosniak-inhabited Drina valley, that is "[to] establish a corridor in the Drina river valley, that is, eliminate the Drina as a border separating Serbian states." The International Criminal Tribunal (ICTY) at the Hague found that,

"The Bosnian Serb leadership, including Radovan Karadžić, Momčilo Krajišnik, Biljana Plavšić, and Nikola Koljević, understood and intended that the creation of Serbian ethnic territories included the division of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the separation and the permanent removal of ethnic populations from municipalities designated as Serbian, either by agreement or by force."[48]

Furthermore, the Hague Tribunal specifically established that **"the operative part – that is the actual implementation of the use of force – was directed from Belgrade [Serbia]."**[49]

Two months later, at the 17th Session of the Bosnian Serb Assembly, held on 24-26 July 1992, Karadžić was more specific as to what he really wanted to do with the Muslims of Bosnia:

"Neither Serbs nor Croats together can control through the birth-rate the penetration of Islam into Europe, since in 5-6 years Muslims would make 51% of the population of inner Bosnia... There is truth in what Mr Kuprešanin has said, although nobody in Europe will say it openly, that this conflict was roused in order to eliminate the Muslims."[50]

The Zaklopača Massacre (16 May 1992)

Large scale attacks on the Bosniak population of the adjoining municipality of Vlasenica had begun on 1 May and continued through June 1992. A number of Bosniak villages in the municipality were burned down including Here, Vrsinje, Zilići, Gerovi, Pomol, Nurići, Bešići, Žutica, Štedrići and Đile. Many civilians were reported killed, others were captured and interned in the Sušica concentration camp.

One of the worst massacres occurred in a small Bosniak village called Zaklopača. On 16 May 1992, armed Serbs entered Zaklopača demanding that the civilian residents hand over their weapons. Apart from a few legally-owned hunting rifles, the residents had no weapons, either to attack anyone or to defend themselves with. When the Serbs learned that the residents of

the village were effectively unarmed, they blocked all the exits to the village and massacred at least 63 Bosniak men, women and children. A survivor, Nihada Hodžić, described the aftermath of the killings:

“We dared to step out again, to witness that inferno, the death and destruction of this inevitable storm which plundered our town and raped it of its virtues and good life. We saw dead bodies everywhere. The smell of death permeated the entire town. Dead children, women, men. Bodies everywhere. We were in shock...We saw my eldest uncle (Bećir Hodžić) again – in a kneeling position with a cigarette still burning in between his index and middle fingers, his head bowed to the ground, and a puddle of blood next to him – he was dead too. We saw small children with their mothers lying side by side on the ground, motionless, very still – in an eternal sleep. We were told that my father was among the dead too.”[51]

The Nova Kasaba Massacre (18 May 1992)

Vitkovići is a village in Bratunac municipality where Serbs and Bosniaks had co-existed in a mixed community. On 18 May 1992, the Bosniak villagers were forcibly expelled from Vitkovići and taken to the nearby town of Bratunac. Three days later, they were forced onto buses and told they would be taken to the Sušica detention camp in nearby Vlasenica. Near the village of Nova Kasaba, the buses were stopped and 32 civilians were taken off and shot. Only three survived the massacre and were able to tell their story. The survivors were later able to help in the recovery and reburial of the decapitated bodies of the victims.[52]

The Borkovac Shootings (20 May 1992)

On 20 May 1992, Serb forces attacked the village of Borkovac, in Bratunac municipality, and captured 14 Bosniak civilians. They tortured their prisoners before shooting them. Among the captives was Amer Ramić and his sister Hamedina. According to Naser Orić’s book, *“Srebrenica Testifies and Accuses,”* Amer was forced to watch Serb soldiers rape his sister, before they killed her. The survivors identified Novak Stjepanović (“Krke”) as the leader of the Serb paramilitary group responsible.[53]

On 12 November 2009, Stjepanović was indicted by the State Court of Bosnia-Herzegovina on charges of crimes against humanity. The indictment alleges that the accused Stjepanović *“participated in torturing of [14] detained civilians”* and *“in the killing of seven civilians from this group.”*[54] According to Orić’s book, Serbs killed eight Bosniaks that day: Hamid Alić, Halima Alić, Munib Sulejmanović, Fadil Sulejmanović, Hajro Hasanović, Hamed Velić, Meho Avdić and Hamedina Ramić.

The Joševa/Jagodnja Killings (22 May 1992)

On 14 May, the villages of Joševa and Jagodnja in the municipality of Bratunac were attacked from the direction of Skelani and two Bosniak civilians were killed. The attack was repeated on 22 May when another 10 civilians were killed. Without any sophisticated combat weapons, the villagers succeeded against the odds in preventing Serb forces from entering Joševa and Jagodnja by setting up ambushes at all the entrances to their villages. Nevertheless, most of the houses and other buildings in Jagodnja, Joševa and the nearby Bosniak villages and hamlets,

were damaged or set ablaze by heavy artillery fire. The nearby village of Zapolje was partially destroyed by shelling from the direction of Serb-held Fakovići. Other Bosniak hamlets and villages in the area suffered co-ordinated attacks on a daily basis.[55]

The Sase Camp (May 1992 onwards)

While large scale raids were being conducted on Bosniak villages around Bratunac, the Bosnian Serb forces in the municipality of Srebrenica converted the Sase mine and its administrative building into a detention camp where Bosniak civilians from nearby hamlets and villages were imprisoned. Beatings, torture, rapes, and murders were a daily occurrence at the camp.

Court transcripts of the International Criminal Tribunal indicate that *“many Muslim civilians, including more than a dozen children, were killed”* in this camp.[56] Naser Orić, who commanded the defense of Srebrenica, wrote in his book that Serbs killed most of the detainees and then buried them *“in the sludge deposit of the mine in Sase.”* He also noted that *“a large number of the detained girls and women were raped.”*[57]

The head office of the mine was situated in Gradina, an outlying hamlet of Sase. Serb forces took control of Gradina on 21 May 1992, after attacking this undefended hamlet and killing seven Bosniak civilians. Many Bosniak civilians who fled for safety into nearby woods were subsequently captured by Serb paramilitary gangs and brought to the Sase camp. Hundreds of women and underage girls were taken to abandoned Muslim houses outside the camp where they were sexually enslaved and systematically raped by Serb paramilitaries led by Novak Stjepanović (“Krke”).[58] One of the victims was Edina Karić, who was only 15 at the time. She described her ordeal to the International Criminal Tribunal:

“...We were raped and abused and beaten throughout the night, and I myself had a gun pointed at my head all the time... I was screaming too much.” She testified that local Serbs were not ‘peace-loving’ village guards as they liked to portray themselves in their evidence describing the situation around Srebrenica, but *“...an army with lots of weapons... They were killing, looting, raping, setting houses alight, and they perpetrated a great many crimes.”*[59]

In one incident 51 prisoners were called outside, loaded onto lorries, and sent to be killed. Edina Karić testified that *“there was a lot of screaming in the hall at that stage, and the children started crying and it was terrible. Words are failing me in trying to describe it but it was terrible. People were being pushed onto lorries, and one woman was unable to get on, and she was hit and then thrown on to the lorry.”*[60]

The Sušica Camp (May 1992 onwards)

On 21 April 1992, the Yugoslav People’s Army (JNA) and local Serb forces took control of the town of Vlasenica and rapidly began implementing a policy of ethnic cleansing. The local authorities began arresting prominent Bosniak residents and burning their homes. Over the next several months, as many as 8,000 unarmed Bosniak civilians from Vlasenica, Bratunac and Srebrenica – men and women, young and old, sometimes entire families – were detained in the

barbed wire-surrounded Sušica concentration camp, commanded by Dragan (“Jenki”) Nikolić.[61]

The detainees were kept in the camp without proper shelter, food, or medicine with the deliberate intent that they die. According to The New York Times, *“Unlike Nazi camps during World War II, Sušica was a camp in which torture and death were meted out by soldiers on people who had been their immediate neighbors.”*[62] The International Criminal Tribunal concluded that abuses of civilians in the camp *“were not isolated acts, but an expression of systematic sadism... [amounting to] the highest level of torture. The camp was severely overcrowded and living conditions were deplorable.”*[63]

The detainees were treated rather as slaves than as inmates.[64] Prisoners endured beatings with iron bars, metal knuckles, metal pipes, rubber tubing filled with lead, truncheons, axe handles, rifle butts, wooden bats and pieces of timber, along with other forms of physical and mental abuse. Women of all ages were raped or sexually assaulted.[65]

According to the “Association of Families of War Victims in Vlasenica 1992-95” between late May and October of 1992, some 1600 Bosniak civilians were killed in the camp.[66] A former guard at the camp, Pero Popović, testified that he *“personally witnessed, close to 3,000 Bosnian Muslims from around Vlasenica lost their lives at Sušica.”*[67] In January 1993, Mr. Popović deserted from the Bosnian Serb army due to *“his remorse over the eviction and killing of his former neighbors.”* In 1994, he gave three interviews to The New York Times in which he corroborated earlier accounts of systematic killings of Bosniak civilians in the Sušica concentration camp:

“Executions of small groups took place within the camp, just outside the hangar used as a barracks, Mr. Popović said. But large-scale executions — which generally happened in reprisal for the killing in the war of a local Serb — were carried out at a nearby ravine called Han Ploča on the road south toward Han Pijesak. Men were loaded into the back of a truck, taken up to the edge of the ravine, about five miles away, and then shot as they got out of the vehicle, he said. Groups of young soldiers were brought in to perform the executions. The bodies fell into the ravine and bulldozers were later used to cover them over. ‘...In mid-June I witnessed the execution at the ravine of 26 people. One man got away by running down into the woods as he got out the truck. In all, at least 1,000 people were executed up there. At first the executions took place during the day, but later they were all at night.”[68]

The Bosanska Jagodina Massacre (26 May 1992)

On 26 May 1992 about 200 Muslim refugees from Višegrad hoping to reach Macedonia were turned back at the Mokra Gora border crossing when Serbian soldiers refused to let the refugee convoy pass through Serbia.[69] As the buses tried to return to Višegrad, armed men halted the convoy in the village of Bosanska Jagodina. A bus company employee saw 17 Bosniak children taken from the buses and executed on the spot. One of the fathers begged to be killed instead of his son, but Serb forces rejected his pleas: *“No, you, we will not kill,’ one of the gunman reportedly replied. ‘We will kill your son and you will suffer for it.”*[70]

The killers were members of notorious “volunteer” groups from Serbia that operated as part of a local Serb “territorial defense” formation, systematically abducting and murdering Bosniak civilians in the region. The fate of a number of the refugees who were sent back to Višegrad, a town controlled by Serbian paramilitaries, remains unknown.

Air Bombing from Serbia (June 1992 onwards)

For most of 1992, there were still many small patches of Bosniak-held territory scattered across eastern Bosnia, including the villages of Kamenica, Cerska, Konjević Polje, Velika Glogova, Potočari, Sućeska, Osmače and Žepa. All of them were subjected to daily artillery bombardments, but the attacks intensified in June with the introduction of air bombings.

According to Hasan Nuhanović, a survivor of the siege of Srebrenica and the town’s subsequent fall, four fighter jets from Serbia started bombing the village of Žepa on 5 June 1992 and,

“After that date, the use of the air force of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia as a repressive means against civilians in the Žepa, Srebrenica, Konjević Polje and Cerska region became an almost daily occurrence. The air bombardment caused panic among inhabitants, far greater than the panic caused by the daily tank, artillery and rocket-launcher attacks.”[71]

Fighter jets flew from Ponikve Airport, near Užice in Serbia, and also from the Batajnica Air Base near Belgrade. Others were based at the airport in Banja Luka in Serb-controlled Bosnia. A relatively slow-flying civilian aircraft used a runway on a farm near Bratunac, some 4 miles away from Srebrenica.

As another survivor of the Srebrenica siege, former judge Mensud Omerović, testified in the trial of Naser Orić, *“We were bombed on a daily basis. The centre of Srebrenica was attacked by planes every day and there was constant shelling, particularly from multiple rocket launchers and they would simply drop around 30 to 40 shells in the area of the town at once. It was terrible.”*[72]

Rape as a Weapon of War

The non-governmental organisation “Women Victims of War” has documented some 25,000 cases of rapes in the Bosnian war, many of them from the region of Podrinje.[73] This figure should be considered a conservative estimate, bearing in mind the social stigma associated with rape and the unwillingness of women to come forward and be readily identified as rape victims. Within the Srebrenica region, it was at Višegrad that rape was most obviously, systematically and horrifically used as an instrument of ethnic aggression. The significance of rape in the campaign to eliminate the Bosniak population of Višegrad was recognised only very belatedly in Milan Lukić’s trial before the Hague Tribunal. An attempt to include rape and sexual slavery in the indictment failed on the grounds of inadequate time to prepare a defence.[74]

It is beyond the scope of this paper to examine in depth the use of rape as a weapon of war in the broad context of the Bosnian war or even in the limited area of Srebrenica and adjoining municipalities of the Central Podrinje. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the rapes

perpetrated by Bosnian Serb forces in the Drina valley were more than acts of individual violence committed in the context of conflict and a breakdown of the rule of law. Rape was used systematically as an instrument of terror and demoralisation in order to achieve the political and military goal of securing the permanent removal of the Bosniak population from the area.

Višegrad Massacres (April – June 1992)

Višegrad, an adjoining municipality to Srebrenica, was the scene of systematic rapes, torture and murders of thousands of helpless Bosniak civilians regardless of their age or sex. The scale and ruthless brutality of the murderous campaign of terror waged against Višegrad's majority Bosniak population included some of the most appalling examples of inhuman treatment and cruelty inflicted on the Bosniak population anywhere in the Srebrenica region. The following sequence of events discusses some of the worst crimes that occurred in Višegrad between April and June 1992.

Vilina Vlas Rape Camp (April 1992 onwards)

Of 21 Serb-run rape and torture camps established in the municipality of Višegrad in April and May of 1992, the rape camp at the 'Vilina Vlas' hotel was one of the largest and most brutal. Serb soldiers and members of Milan Lukić's "White Eagles" paramilitary group detained hundreds of Bosniak women and girls and systematically tortured, enslaved, and sexually abused them in the most sadistic ways (for example, raping mothers and their underage daughters together), with the aim of inflicting irreparable psychological damage on the victims and ensuring they would never return to the area. Young and beautiful women were selected and repeatedly raped with the intention that "*they would bear Serb children.*" Of approximately 200 women and girls imprisoned at the camp, only a handful survived. Many disappeared when the camp was closed after coming to international attention.[75]

Mehmed Pasha Sokolović Bridge Massacres (April 1992 onwards)

The Drina River was used to dispose of many of the bodies of the Bosniak civilians killed by Serb forces in the early months of the Bosnian war. The famous bridge on the Drina built by Mehmed Pasa Sokolović (Sokollu Mehmed Paşa) became emblematic of the suffering of Višegrad's Bosniak residents. Truckloads of civilians were taken by Serb paramilitaries to the bridge or the riverbank where they were stabbed or shot, and then thrown into the river.

In one instance, when a group of 22 people were murdered on 18 June 1992, Milan Lukić's men tore out the kidneys of several individuals; in other cases individuals were tied to cars and dragged through the streets and children were thrown from the bridge and shot before they hit the water.[76] Hundreds of bodies, including mutilated remains, floated down the Drina and eventually settled in Lake Perucac, the reservoir formed where the river's flow is dammed by the Bajina Basta hydroelectric power station.

At the time of writing, in September 2010, Lake Perucac was the site of a forensic operation to retrieve these bodies. According to a report published by Balkan Insight, "*The corpses of about*

250 civilians, believed to be victims of the 1992 Višegrad killings in Bosnia, have been found in Perucac lake on the border between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia.”[77]

The Pionirska Street Live Pyre (14 June 1992)

On the fourth day of the Muslim religious holiday of Eid al-Adha on 14 June 1992, Milan Lukić’s White Eagles celebrated the Serbian Orthodox holiday of the Holy Trinity by burning to death at least 60 Bosniak women, children and elderly men in a house on Pionirska Street in Višegrad.[78] They barricaded their victims in one room of the house, then set the house on fire. The youngest victim was a newborn baby, who according to a witness, *“one or two days did not have. Tonight is born, burned down tomorrow evening.”* The witness continued, *“I am wounded through the left leg and left arm when I jumped out the window, threw out the son of 13 and a half, 14 years. Thus yet another woman. The four of us survived.”*[79] Prior to being burned to death, the victims were robbed, forced to strip naked, and then younger women and girls were forcibly taken out and raped before being brought back to die in horrible pain.[80]

The Paklenik Massacre (15 June 1992)

On the morning of 14 June 1992, an unarmed Bosniak civilian named Ferid Spahić was one of 150 other Bosniak men, women, and children from Višegrad, who boarded two buses in the village of Bosanska Jagodina, thinking they were headed for safety. The buses were stopped in Rogatica where the men and boys (ages 15-60) were separated from the women and children. The men were held against their will overnight, beaten, and ordered to board another bus the next morning. They were transported to Paklenik village, led to the edge of the Propast ravine (the name signifies “disaster”), systematically executed and their bodies thrown into a pit. Ferid Spahić was the only survivor.[81]

The Bikavac Live Pyre (27 June 1992)

On the Serbian Orthodox holiday of Saint Vitus’s Day (Vidovdan), 27 June 1992, Milan Lukić’s White Eagles carried out a repeat of their earlier crime at Pionirska Street. They forced a group of Bosniak women, children and elderly men inside a house in Bikavac, near Višegrad. They barricaded all the exits and then set the house on fire. At least 59 helpless victims were burned to death.[82] According to the testimonies of two protected witnesses, the terrible sobs of burning victims inside the house lasted about half an hour and sounded like *“like the screams of cats”*. [83] Only one woman, Zehra Turjačanin, managed to escape. Her injuries were described by journalist Maggie O’Kane: *“Her ears are melted away. All that is left are two waxy, twisted beige blobs like burned out candles. Her forehead is covered in a huge scab that is still healing and her nose is a maze of burst blood vessels.”*[84]

Prior to the Pionirska Street crime, Turjačanin had witnessed Chetniks douse a group of Bosniak civilians with gasoline and set them on fire in broad daylight.[85]

Numbers of Bosniak Victims:

According to the figures assembled and published by the Research and Documentation Center (IDC) in Sarajevo (Istraživačko dokumentacioni centar) between April and June 1992 Serb forces killed at least 3,166 Bosniaks in the Srebrenica region. This number should be regarded as a

minimum figure rather than a final total. Some 15 years after the war 10,419 people still remain unaccounted for in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the vast majority of them Bosniaks.

Although three international experts – Partick Ball, Ewa Tabeau and Philip Verwimp – assessed the IDC database favorably, they expressed concern over the under-reporting of civilian victims. Many families wanted their members to be buried as soldiers, even though they died as civilians. The most common reason for this was access to social benefits for families of killed soldiers. The experts concluded that these practices were likely to lead to over-reporting of soldiers and under-reporting of civilians in the sources.[86]

I was advised by Elma Zahirović of IDC, administrator of the Bosnian War Crimes Atlas project, that *“a number of killed and missing persons for whom we were unable to determine the exact date of death, were not included in the following list of victims.”*

April, May, and June 1992:

Srebrenica – 403 Bosniaks (294 civilians / 109 defenders)

Bratunac – 612 Bosniaks (399 civilians / 213 defenders)

Vlasenica – 636 Bosniaks (527 civilians / 109 defenders)

Rogatica – 434 Bosniaks (242 civilians / 192 defenders)

Višegrad – 1081 Bosniaks (830 civilians / 251 defenders)

Srebrenica

April 1992 – 36 Bosniaks (23 civilians / 13 defenders);

May 1992 – 279 Bosniaks (235 civilians / 44 defenders)

June 1992 – 88 Bosniaks (36 civilians / 52 defenders)

Bratunac

April 1992 – 24 Bosniaks (21 civilians / 3 defenders)

May 1992 – 508 Bosniaks (344 civilians / 164 defenders)

June 1992 – 80 Bosniaks (34 civilians / 46 defenders)

Vlasenica

April 1992 – 40 Bosniaks (38 civilians / 2 defenders)

May 1992 – 254 Bosniaks (200 civilians / 54 defenders)

June 1992 – 342 Bosniaks (289 civilians / 53 defenders)

Rogatica

April 1992 – 12 Bosniaks (9 civilians / 3 defenders)

May 1992 – 52 Bosniaks (37 civilians / 15 defenders)

June 1992 – 370 Bosniaks (196 civilians / 174 defenders)

Višegrad

April 1992 – 38 Bosniaks (22 civilians / 16 defenders)

May 1992 – 280 Bosniaks (178 civilians / 102 defenders)

June 1992 – 763 Bosniaks (630 civilians / 133 defenders)

List of 296 Wholly or Partially Destroyed Bosniak Villages (April – June 1992)

In the rural, predominantly agricultural area around Srebrenica, Bosniak villages consisted of groupings of smaller hamlets and settlements with close communal ties between them. It is important to bear in mind that one wholly or partially destroyed village in fact translates into several devastated hamlets and settlements. During the first three months of the Bosnian war (April-June 1992), Serb forces destroyed 296 predominantly Bosniak villages in the Srebrenica region. The figures given in brackets indicate the relative percentage of the Bosniak population in each village according to the 1991 Population Census in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Bosniak people were also expelled from 81 mixed and/or predominantly Serb villages in the area.

Srebrenica municipality:

Of the 296 Bosniak-majority villages that were wholly or partially destroyed by Serb forces in the Srebrenica region during the first three months of war, 93 were located in the municipality of Srebrenica:

Alimani (100%), Barakovići (100%), Begići (100%), Beširovići (98.54%), Borbašići (100%), Brezovice (87.61%), Bukovik (100%), Čičci (100%), Čivići (100%), Dimnić (100%), Donja Rijeka (100%), Donja Žgunja (100%), Donje Peći (100%), Donji Potočari (85.52%), Đurđevac (100%), Gladovići (99.62%), Glumci [Visošnjik] (100%), Gornja Rijeka (100%), Gornje Peći (100%), Gornji Potočari (100%), Gradina (100%), Grujčići (100%), Hađići (100%), Ivčići (100%), Jovičići (100%), Kadrići (100%), Kalići (100%), Kamenjača (100%), Karćino Brdo (100%), Karići (100%), Katanići near Tokoljak (100%), Klotjevac (97.07%), Knezovi near Sulica (100%), Kovačići (100%), Kragljivoda (100%), Krnjići near Daljogošta (100%), Lasovac (100%), Liješće (71.94%), Likari (96.26%), Luka (98.66%), Ljeskovik (99.62%), Markovići (100%), Mala Daljogošta (90.65%), Mali Dobrak (100%), Mehmedino Polje (100%), Mehmedovići (100%), Miholjevine (97.29%), Močevići (100%), Nogačevići (64.73%), Ornica (100%), Osat (100%), Osatica (96.12%), Osmače (99.26%), Oštika (100%), Pećišta (92.65%), Petinići (100%), Podgaj (96.63), Podkorijen (100%), Podševar (100%), Poljak (100%), Polje (100%), Porobići (100%), Poznanovići (99.33%), Predola (100%), Pribidoli (87.89%), Prohići (99.75%), Rabađići (100%), Radovčići (88.33%), Rađenovići (100%), Raušići (100%), Rešagići (100%), Ritašići (100%), Rulovci (100%), Sase (82.15%), Sejdinovići (100%), Sjedaće (100%), Skejići (100%), Skelani (84.59%), Skenderovići (100%), Studenac near Osat (100%), Sućeska (100%), Sulice (99.71%), Suljagići (100%), Šljivica (100%), Tihći (100%), Tokoljaci (98.41%), Trubari (100%), Tursanovići (100%), Urisići (99.69%), Vačići (100%), Vodice (100%), Velika Daljogošta (99.38%) and Veliki Dobrak (100%).

Bosniaks were also forcibly expelled from 14 mixed and/or predominantly Serb villages, including Brežani, Bujakovići, Čičevci, Gaj, Gostilj, Kalimanići, Krnjići, Međe, Obadi, Orahovica, Radoševići, Toplica, Viogor, and Žabokvica where Bosniak homes were destroyed and property plundered.

Bratunac municipality:

Of the 296 Bosniak-majority villages that were wholly or partially destroyed by Serb forces in the Srebrenica region during the first months of war, 22 were located in the municipality of Bratunac:

Abdulići (99.38%), Biljača (96.03%), Blječeva (87.35%), Borkovac (100%), Glogova (99.37%), Hranča (77.31%), Hrnčići (99.67%), Jagodnja (99.30%), Joševa (100%), Konjevići (97.69%), Krasanovići (67.29%), Lonjin (96.17%), Mihaljevići (95.90%), Pirići (100%), Pobuđe (99.49%), Podčauš (82.33%), Suha (85.93%), Tegare (63.30%), Urkovići (99.63%), Voljavica (99.70%), Zalužje (99.51%), and Zapolje (95.76%).

Bosniaks were also forcibly expelled from 12 mixed and/or predominantly Serb villages, including Bjelovac, Fakovići, Loznica, Magašići, Mratinci, Pobrđe, Rakovac, Repovac, Sikirić, Slapašnica, Vitkovići and Zagoni where Bosniak homes were destroyed and property plundered.

Vlasenica municipality:

Of the 296 Bosniak-majority villages that were wholly or partially destroyed by Serb forces in the Srebrenica region during the first three months of war, 35 were located in the municipality of Vlasenica:

Bešići (99.48%), Bukovica Gornja (100%), Cerska (98.58%), Donje Vrsinje (80.12%), Drum (81.35%), Durakovići (100%), Durići (100%), Džemat (98%), Đile (99.65%), Gerovi (99.23%), Gobelje (95.15%), Gornje Vrsinje (92.46%), Gradina (99.86%), Here (100%), Kuljančići (99.16%), Mačesi (98.98%), Mršići (100%), Neđeljišta (83.73%), Nova Kasaba (78.11%), Nurići (100%), Pijuke (100%), Pomol (99.78%), Pustoše (88.94%), Raševo (71.33%), Rašića Gaj (69.26%), Rovaši (100%), Sebiočina (100%), Skugrići (93.26%), Šadići Donji (88.51%), Štedra (100%), Štedrići (100%), Turalići (85.93%), Zaklopača (65.90%), Zilići (100%) and Žutica (100%).

Bosniaks were also forcibly expelled from 11 mixed and/or predominantly Serb villages, including Bukovica Donja, Buljevići, Milići, Mišari, Mišići, Peševina, Rupovo Brdo, Tugovo, Višnjica, Vrli Kraj and Vrtoče where Bosniak homes were destroyed and property plundered.

Rogatica municipality:

Of the 296 Bosniak-majority villages that were wholly or partially destroyed by Serb forces in the Srebrenica region during the first three months of war, 56 were located in the municipality of Rogatica:

Borovac (98.63%), Borovsko (85.18%), Brčigovo (98.48%), Brda (100%), Burati (80%), Čadovina (100%), Čavčići (99.62%), Čubrići (91.04%), Dobrače (96.92%), Dub (100%), Đedovići (83.72%), Gazije (100%), Godomilje (69.90%), Golubovići (71.42%), Jasenice (68.96%), Karačići (100%), Kopljevići (100%), Kovanj (78.23%), Kozarde (100%), Kozići (86.66%), Kramer Selo (94.32%), Kujundžijevići (68.88%), Kukavice (93.82%), Laze (88.76%), Lepenica (74.28%), Lubardići (98.48%), Ljubomišlje (98.97%), Mahala (84.78%), Medna Luka (93.54%), Mrgudići (96.66%), Nahota (100%), Okruglo (72.51%), Orahovo (100%), Otričevo (100%), Pašić Kula (75.78%),

Pokrivenik (100%), Pripečak (97.60%), Prosječeno (100%), Purtići (99.43%), Radič (98.46%), Rakitnica (100%), Ribioc (100%), Slap (100%), Sočice (94.91%), Stop (100%), Strmac (80.13%), Surovići (100%), Šatorovići (100%), Šetići (80.29%), Šljedovići (100%), Šljivno (100%), Vragolovi (89.94%), Vrtar (100%), Vrelo (98.95%), Žepa (97.40%), and Živaljevići (73.40%).

Bosniaks were also forcibly expelled from 26 mixed and predominantly Serb villages, including Babljak, Begzadići, Borač, Borika, Dobrašina, Dobromerovići, Dobroušćići, Dumanjići, Jarovići, Mesići, Osovo, Pavičina Kula, Planje, Plješevica, Pribošijevići, Rađevići, Seljani, Sjemeć, Stara Gora, Starčići, Stjenice, Šena Krena, Vražalice, Vrlazje, Zagajevi and Zakomo where Bosniak homes were destroyed and property plundered.

Višegrad municipality:

Of the 296 Bosniak-majority villages that were wholly or partially destroyed by Serb forces in the Srebrenica region during the first three months of war, 90 were located in the municipality of Višegrad:

Ajdinovići (100%), Babin Potok (95.18%), Ban Polje (92.40%), Barimo (100%), Batkušići (100%), Bistrivode (99.18%), Blaž (100%), Bogdašići (100%), Borovac (100%), Brezje (75%), Brodar (100%), Crijep (100%), Crni Vrh (100%), Čengići (100%), Donja Brštanica (100%), Donja Crnča (99.55%), Donje Dubovo (100%), Donje Štitarevo (100%), Donji Dobrun (70.84%), Donji Dubovik (100%), Drina (100%), Drinsko (100%), Drokani (100%), Dubočica (91.17%), Dušće (89.65%), Džankići (100%), Đipi (100%), Gazibare (100%), Gornja Brštanica (97.95%), Gornja Crnča (97.04%), Gornje Štitarevo (100%), Gornji Dobrun (99.41%), Gornji Dubovik (100%), Hamzići (99.18%), Holijaci (96.84%), Hranjevac (100%), Jarci (100%), Jelačići (100%), Jelići (100%), Kabernik (87.27%), Kamenica (98.42%), Kapetanovići (95.74%), Klašnik (100%), Kosovo Polje (71.85%), Kuka (100%), Kupusovići (93.75%), Kurtalići (97.22%), Kustur Polje (100%), Lasci (100%), Madžarevići (100%), Mala Gostilja (93.06%), Mangalin Han (95%), Međeđa (98.96%), Menzilovići (98.30%), Meremišlje (100%), Miloševići (100%), Mušići (90.76%), Nezuci (99.61%), Obravnje (80%), Okolišta (70.07%), Okrugla (99.34%), Omerovići (98.26%), Orahovci (99.19%), Palež (100%), Polje (100%), Povjestača (93.97%), Presjeka (91.11%), Raonići (100%), Repuševići (89.23%), Resnik (100%), Rodić Brdo (87.87%), Rohci (100%), Rutenovići (100%), Sendići (100%), Smriječje (97.77%), Šip (83.78%), Šumice (100%), Tupeši (100%), Turjak (100%), Tusta Međ (100%), Tvrtkovići (100%), Uništa (78.57%), Velika Gostilja (79.60%), Vlahovići (93.95%), Zagorac (100%), Zakrsnica (100%), Zanožje (100%), Zlatnik (100%), Žagre (100%), and Žlijeb (79.32%).

Bosniaks were also forcibly expelled from 18 mixed and predominantly Serb villages, including Bodežnik, Čaćice, Donja Jagodina, Faljenovići, Glogova, Klisura, Koritnik, Mirlovići, Pijavice, Pozderčići, Pretiša, Rujišta, Sase, Šeganje, Velji Lug, Višegradska Banja, Vodenice and Vučine where Bosniak homes were destroyed and property plundered.

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FOOTNOTES:

1 In this study, the designation 'Bosnian Muslim', with its problematic religious connotations that have tended to obscure the essentially secular, political and ethnic nature of the conflict, has been avoided in favour of the term more generally used by the community to refer to itself, Bosniak.

2 ICTY, Expert Report of Patrick J. Treanor, "*The Bosnian Serb Leadership 1990-1992*", page 4. Research report prepared for the case of Momčilo Krajišnik & Biljana Plavšić (IT-00-39 & 40), 30 July 2002. Retrieved from the Court Database of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), Exhibit P64.

3 ICTY, *Prosecutor v. Radoslav Brđanin*, Trial Judgement, Case No. IT-99-36-T, para. 163-164.

4 ICTY, *Prosecutor v. Miroslav Deronjić*, Sentencing Judgement, Case No. IT-02-61-S, para. 54.

5 ICTY, *Prosecutor v. Naser Orić*, Trial Judgement, Case No. IT-03-68-T, para. 93-94.

6 Besim Ibišević. Amsterdam, 1999. "*Srebrenica (1987-1992)*", 133-134.

7 Daniel Toljaga, "*Interview with Nihada Hodžić, Survivor of the Zaklopača Massacre*," published by the Canada-based Institute for the Research of Genocide, 12 February 2010.

8 The Netherlands Institute for War Documentation (NIOD), Appendix IV, *History and Reminders in East Bosnia*; Chapter 3, *World War Two, 1941-1945, Chetnik terror against Muslim villages*.

9 In a report to Serbian Nazi collaborator Draža Mihailović, dated 13 February 1943, commander Pavle Đurišić stated that Chetniks killed 1,200 Bosniak soldiers and 8,000 Bosniak women, children and elderly in a single military operation.

10 Bosnia and Herzegovina declared its independence on 3 March 1992 and was recognized by the European Community on 6 April 1992. On 22 May 1992, the United Nations admitted Bosnia and Herzegovina as a member State.

11 Rachel Irwin, "*Karadžić's 'Threatening' Language*", The Institute for War and Peace Reporting, 14 June 2010.

12 Florence Hartmann, *"The aim of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina was to destroy the Bosnian Muslims"*, The Bosnian Institute (United Kingdom), 16 August 2007.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibišević, *"Srebrenica (1987-1992)"*, 147.

15 ICTY, *Prosecutor v. Radoslav Brđanin*, Trial Judgement, Case No. IT-99-36-T, par. 91.

16 ICTY, *Prosecutor v. Radoslav Brđanin*, Trial Judgement, Case No. IT-99-36-T, par. 81-83.

17 Ibišević, *"Srebrenica (1987-1992)"*, 190.

18 Ibišević, *"Srebrenica (1987-1992)"*, 190.

19 ICTY, *Prosecutor v. Momčilo Krajišnik*, Trial Judgement, Case No. IT-00-39, par. 48-62.

20 ICTY, *Prosecutor v. Radoslav Brđanin*, Trial Judgement, Case No. IT-99-36-T, par. 81-83.

21 Ibišević, *"Srebrenica (1987-1992)"*, 208-209.

22 According to the 1991 Bosnia and Herzegovina Population Census, Skelani had 1,123 inhabitants: 950 Bosniaks, 160 Bosnian Serbs, 7 Yugoslavs, and 6 Others.

23 According to the 1991 Bosnia and Herzegovina Population Census, a total of 49,107 Bosniaks lived in the municipalities of Srebrenica (27,572) and Bratunac (21,535).

24 Ibišević, *"Srebrenica (1987-1992)"*, 213.

25 ICTY, *Prosecutor v. Miroslav Deronjić*, Sentencing Judgement, Case No. IT-02-61-S, Par. 70-71.

26 BEHAR, Bosnian language Magazine for Cultural and Social Issues, Special Edition *"Raped"* [*"Silovane"*], issue # 90-91, Year XVIII, 2009.

27 The Netherlands Institute for War Documentation (NIOD), Appendix IV, *History and Reminders in East Bosnia*, Chapter 6, *War In Eastern Bosnia: Ethnic cleansing by Serbs and first acts of Muslim resistance*.

28 Dnevni Avaz [Sarajevo-based Bosnian language daily], *"Obilježavanje stradanja prvih srebreničkih žrtava"*, 7 May 2009.

29 Helen Warrell, *“Bosnian Muslim Hazim Malagic remembers Serb aggression as he testifies in defence of the Srebrenica commander”*, The Institute for War & Peace Reporting (IWPR), 20 November 2005.

30 Naser Orić. 1995. *“Srebrenica Testifies and Accuses: Genocide Against Bosniaks in Eastern Bosnia (Central Podrinje) April 1992 – September 1994.”* [“*Srebrenica Svjedoči i Optužuje: Genocid nad Bošnjacima Istočne Bosne (Srednje Podrinje) April 1992 - Septembar 1994,*”] Chapter: *“Massacres in the Months of April and May of 1992”* [“*Pokolj u Mjesecima April i Maj 1992 Godine*”], 49.

31 Tim Judah, *“The Waiting Game in the Balkans”*, The New York Review of Books, 11 August 2005.

32 Information provided by witness Smajo Imamovic.

33 United Nations, *“Report of the Security Council Mission Established Pursuant to Resolution 819 (1993),”* S/25700, 30 April 1993.

34 ICTY, *Prosecutor v. Naser Orić*, Trial Judgement, Case No. IT-03-68-T, Par. 86.

35 ICTY, *Prosecutor v. Naser Orić*, Trial Judgement, Case No. IT-03-68-T, Par. 103.

36 BEHAR, Op. cit. 55.

37 ICTY, *Prosecutor v Miroslav Deronjić*, Sentencing Judgement, par. 85, 30 March 2004.

38 Association “Women of Srebrenica”, *“The United Nations on the Srebrenica’s Pillar of Shame: 104 testimonies about the role of the UN in genocide against the population of the UN ‘Srebrenica Safe Haven’”*, Chapter: *“Slaughtering of Civilians in the Village of Glogova on 9 May 1992”*, 16-17.

39 ICTY, *Court Transcript, Prosecutor v. Naser Orić*, Tuesday 22 November 2005.

40 Sejo Omeragic. *Sarajevo, 1994. “Satanic Sons” (“Satanski Sinovi”).*

41 Emir Suljagić, *“Exclusive: Names of Yet Not-Indicted Criminals” [Ekskluzivno: imena još neoptuženih zločinaca (I)]*, published by BH Dani (Sarajevo-based Bosnian language daily) on 15 Juni 2001.

42 Naser Orić Trial, *Court Transcripts, Testimony of Slavisa Erić on 26 October 2004.*

43 Reuters, *“Bosnian Muslims Bury Oldest Victim of War Killings”*, 12 May 2009.

44 *Final Report of the United Nations Commission of Experts established pursuant to security council resolution 780 (1992), Annex VIII – Prison Camps, Under the Direction of M. Cherif Bassiouni.*

45 *United Nations Human Rights Committee, Document submitted by Bosnia and Herzegovina on 27 April 1993, para. 13.*
<http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/0/333378630589b6d680256674005bc280?Opendocument> ,

46 *Preporod Journal, Issue # 103, ISSN 1334-5052, Special Edition: September 2008, Photo Archive “Masovna Grobnica Suha”, 9-12.*

47 *“Zekira Begić was killed in the 9th month of pregnancy” [“Zekira Begić ubijena je u devetom mjesecu trudnoće”], published online by the Radio-Television of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina (RTVFBiH) on 9 Maj 2010.*

48 *ICTY, Prosecutor v. Miroslav Deronjić, Sentencing Judgement, Case No. IT-02-61-S, Par. 57, 68.*

49 *Ibid.*

50 *ICTY, Prosecutor v. Momčilo Perišić, Case IT-04-81-PT, Submission of Expert Reports of Dr. Robert J. Donia, (ii) Thematic Excerpts from the Assembly of Republika Srpska, 1991-96, attached at ANNEX B, 23 September 2008.*

51 *Daniel Toljaga, Op. cit. “Interview with Nihada Hodžić.”*

52 *Orić, “Srebrenica Testifies and Accuses”, p. 55-56.*

53 *Ibid.*

54 *The Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, “Indictment confirmed in the Novak Stjepanović case”, Press Release, 12 November 2009.*

55 *Orić, “Srebrenica Testifies and Accuses”, p. 54, 57.*

56 *ICTY, Prosector v. Naser Orić, Court Transcript, page 3911, 20 January 2005.*

57 *Orić, “Srebrenica Testifies and Accuses”, p. 59.*

58 *Association “Women of Srebrenica”. Tuzla, 1998. “Deadly Srebrenica Summer ‘95” [“Samrtno Srebreničko Ljeto '95”] p. 133-135.*

59 *ICTY, Court Transcript, Prosecutor v. Naser Orić, Testimony of Edina Karić, 14-15 September 2005.*

60 ICTY, *Court Transcript, Prosecutor v. Naser Orić, Testimony of Edina Karić, 14-15 September 2005.*

61 ICTY, *"Dragan Nikolić, 'Sušica Camp,' (IT-94-2)," Case Information Sheet.*

62 Roger Cohen, *"Bosnian Camp Survivors Describe Random Death", The New York Times, 2 August 1993.*

63 ICTY, *Court Transcript, Prosecutor v. Dragan Nikolić, Testimony of Habiba Hadzic, 3 November 2003.*

64 ICTY, *"Judgement in the Case The Prosecutor v. Dragan Nikolić", Press Release, 18 December 2003.*

65 Hasan Nuhanović. *Sarajevo, 2007. "Under the UN Flag: The International Community and the Srebrenica Genocide," p. 29-31.*

66 *Oslobođenje (Sarajevo-based Bosnian language magazine), "Anniversary of Suffering in the Sušica camp" ["Godišnjica stradanja u logoru Sušica"], 27 September 2009.*

67 Roger Cohen, *"Ex-Guard for Serbs Tells Of Grisly 'Cleansing' Camp", The New York Times, 1 August 1994.*

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69 *First Report on the War Crimes in the Former Yugoslavia, "Submission of Information to the United Nations Security Council in Accordance With Paragraph 5 of Resolution 771 (1992), September 22, 1992."*

70 Carol J. Williams, *"Horror in Bosnia: Children Slain as Parents Watch", Los Angeles Times, 3 June 1992.*

71 Hasan Nuhanović, *Op. cit. "Under the UN Flag", p. 41.*

72 *Naser Orić Trial, Court Transcripts, Testimony of Mensud Omerovic, 26 May 2005.*

73 *Dnevni Avaz, "U BiH 25.000 silovanih žena i 52 muškarca," Issue No. 4652, p. 11, 5 September 2008.*

74 ICTY, *"Decision on prosecution motion seeking leave to amend the second amended indictment," 8 July 2008.*

75 *Final report of the United Nations Commission of Experts established pursuant to security council resolution 780 (1992), Annex IX: "Rape and sexual assault," Chapter "Višegrad," Under the Direction of: M. Cherif Bassiouni, Chairman and Rapporteur on the Gathering and Analysis of the Facts, Commission of Experts Established Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 780 (1992).*

76 *United Nations Human Rights Committee. Op. cit. para. 34.*

77 *Balkan Insight, "Corpses of 250 People Exhumed from Perucac Lake", Bojana Barlovac, 9 September 2010.*

78 *ICTY, "Milan Lukić and Sredoje Lukić, 'Višegrad,' (IT-98-32/1)," Case Information Sheet.*

79 *Slobodna Evropa, "Milan Gets Life Sentence, Sredoje 30 Years" ["Milanu doživotni zatvor, Sredoju 30 godina"] by Dženana Halimović, 20 Juli 2009.*

80 *ICTY, Prosecutor v. Milan Lukić & Sredoje Lukić, Trial Judgement, Case No. IT-98-32/1-T, par. 1008-1009.*

81 *ICTY, Prosecutor v. Milan Lukić & Sredoje Lukić, Trial Judgement, Case No. IT-98-32/1-T, par. 842-865.*

82 *ICTY, "Milan Lukić and Sredoje Lukić, 'Višegrad,' (IT-98-32/1)," Case Information Sheet.*

83 *ICTY, Prosecutor v. Milan Lukić & Sredoje Lukić, Trial Judgement, Case No. IT-98-32/1-T, par. 648-649.*

84 *Maggie O'Kane "Then they set the house on fire and everyone inside was screaming – I was the only one who got out", The Guardian, August 20, 1992.*

85 *ICTY, Prosecutor v. Milan Lukić & Sredoje Lukić, Trial Judgement, Case No. IT-98-32/1-T, par. 852.*

86 *Patrick Ball, Ewa Tabeau and Philip Verwimp. The Bosnian Book of Dead: Assessment of the Database (Full Report), 17 June 2007.*

Interview with Takis Michas, Greek Journalist Sued for Writing About the Presence of Greek Paramilitaries in Bosnia

On 27 July 2009 Mr. Stavros Vitalis, representing the Panhellenic Macedonian Front, filed a libel suit against the acclaimed journalist Mr. Takis Michas, best known for his authorship of the book *"Unholy Alliance: Greece and Milosevic's Serbia."* He is suing the journalist for describing in the daily "Eleftherotypia" – Greek mercenaries as "*paramilitaries who took part in the slaughter in Srebrenica.*"

Mr. Vitalis is one of the leading Greek volunteers who have admitted taking part in the Srebrenica genocide. But, that's not how he sees it.

In a statement distributed to the media, he claimed that the Greek volunteers who fought in Bosnia under the command of General Mladic were there in order to help the Serbs *"who were being slaughtered by international gangs that were also stealing their houses, their country and their dignity."*

DANIEL TOLJAGA: Mr. Michas, thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview. To begin with, what is the Panhellenic Macedonian Front that has filed this suit against you through its representative Mr. Vitalis?

TAKIS MICHAS: It is a Greek nationalist political organization which also includes socialists and conservative former politicians. Up until now its central campaign theme has been its advocacy of the view that Macedonia along with everything related to it (history, symbols, etc.) is exclusively Greek.

DANIEL TOLJAGA: What exactly does Mr. Vitalis hope to achieve with this lawsuit?

TAKIS MICHAS: Bearing in mind that Karadzic's trial will also be taking place next year, what they will be hoping is to create an alternative debate in which the substance of what happened at Srebrenica will be called into question. In other words, while the world is trying the war crimes perpetrated at Srebrenica, in Greece they will be putting the critics of the war crimes at Srebrenica on trial!

DANIEL TOLJAGA: Do you have any comments about the lawsuit and the press statements Mr. Vitalis has made?

TAKIS MICHAS: Yes. First of all Mr. Vitalis explicitly admits that Greeks (i.e. himself) took part in the planning and execution of the Serb "re-occupation" (as he calls it) of Srebrenica. As he says in his press statement "I was present with a group of senior Serb officers in all the operations for the re-occupation of Srebrenica by the Serbs".

Secondly, Mr Vitalis admits that the recruitment of Greek volunteers for the war against the legitimate government of Bosnia took place with the implicit approval of the leading Greek politicians Andreas Papandreou and (to a lesser extent) Constantine Mitsotakis. As he puts it:

"The whole of Greece knows that the Greek volunteers had the broad support of Greek society as a whole as well as the support of politicians, mainly belonging to PASOK, because of the warm friendship between Andreas Papandreou and Radovan Karadzic. They also enjoyed the support of New Democracy, through the friendly diplomatic initiatives of Constantine Mitsotakis."

This reinforces the point I have repeatedly made, namely that Greek support for the Serb war effort was not only moral, economic, diplomatic and political but also military.

DANIEL TOLJAGA: Was Mr. Vitalis present during and after the fall of Srebrenica when Greek paramilitaries hoisted the Greek flag over the town?

TAKIS MICHAS: Well in his own statement he said that together with high ranking Serb officers he took part in all the operations that dealt with the “reoccupation” (as he calls it) of Srebrenica. Now as to whether he was physically present in the hoisting of the flag this is something that only Mr. Mladic knows (and perhaps Mr. Karadzic)!

DANIEL TOLJAGA: It is interesting that he publicly admitted being present himself “in all the military operations” related to the “re-occupation” of Srebrenica. Do you have any idea why Mr. Vitalis has not been investigated for possible war crimes?

TAKIS MICHAS: Because, as I have shown in my book, in Greece Serb actions during the war in Bosnia are not regarded as “crimes” but as “heroic deeds”. This applies to Srebrenica as well. No Greek government has made any statement at any time during the last 15 years explicitly condemning the killings at Srebrenica – this is a unique state of affairs for a European country.

DANIEL TOLJAGA: In the words of U.N. Judge Theodor Meron, who served as the President of the ICTY, Serbs – and I quote – “targeted for extinction the forty thousand Bosnian Muslims living in Srebrenica.” In your opinion, is Mr. Vitalis fully aware that the military operations he took part in resulted in the summary killings of more than 8,000 and the ethnic cleansing of approximately 30,000 people in July 1995? Is he aware that he took part in genocide?

TAKIS MICHAS: According to his own admissions, yes. However, just like Holocaust deniers, these people refuse to accept that mass killings took place in Srebrenica.

DANIEL TOLJAGA: Your book revealed for the first time the presence of Greek paramilitaries in Bosnia. Why has Mr. Vitalis waited so many years since the publication of your book to file a suit?

TAKIS MICHAS: This is an interesting question. Perhaps it has something to do with the fact that as I have hinted in other articles I am now in possession of confidential diplomatic documents that show the Greek authorities for the first time admitting the presence of Greek paramilitaries in Bosnia. Possibly they think that by putting pressure on me now they will prevent me publishing these documents. But this of course is only one explanation. There may be others.

DANIEL TOLJAGA: Mr. Vitalis has claimed that the operations of the Greek volunteers “were widely endorsed by Greek society because of the warm friendship that existed between Andreas Papandreou and Radovan Karadzic.” To what extent did this friendship suggest that the government may have been involved?

TAKIS MICHAS: Obviously it involves government in the sense of knowing, tolerating and endorsing the open recruitment of Greek citizens with the aim of fighting against the legally recognized government of Bosnia. It certainly implicates the government of PASOK under Andreas Papandreou.

DANIEL TOLJAGA: I remember, and you also referred to this in your book, that leading Greek judges had publicly refused to cooperate with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). Considering that your right to a fair trial may be seriously impaired by the extreme ultranationalist atmosphere in Greece and the fact that Mr. Vitalis has announced that he plans to call leading Greek nationalist politicians as witnesses, I would like to know whether you intend to seek support from prominent international organizations that specialize in the protection of journalistic freedom?

TAKIS MICHAS: I will certainly be trying to spread the word. Judging from the lawsuit they have filed against me, I guess that from now on they will also be making the glorification of the Serb war effort in Bosnia one of their campaign themes.

DANIEL TOLJAGA: Are you worried about the forthcoming trial?

TAKIS MICHAS: In any other European country this lawsuit would have been thrown out of court. But as I have said repeatedly Greece is not a normal European country. Given the spirit of extreme nationalism that permeates the country and the fact that Karadzic and Mladic are venerated as saints by the majority of the public and the political class, I have every reason to feel worried.

DANIEL TOLJAGA: Thank you for taking part in this interview. We will be keeping a close eye on the progress of your case.