Do you remember Prijedor?

Never forget genocide in Prijedor

As long as they deny the genocide we will beat them with the scientific and judicial truth.

This series, author professor Emir Ramic, Director of the Institute for Research of Genocide, Canada is based on scientifically verified knowledge and the essential results of scientific research, of the many eminent researcher institutions of genocide and other crimes against humanity and international law in Europe and the world

According to 1991 census, Prijedor had 112,543 residents of which Muslims (Bosniacs) were 49,351 (43.9%); Serbs 47,581 (42.3%); Croats 6,316 (5.6%); Yugoslavs 6,459 (5.7%), and Others 2,836 (2.5%).

JNA and other Serb armed units took over the authority in the town by force on 30 April 1992, and occupied all the vital buildings in town. The armed Serbs assumed the positions at the checkpoints throughout Prijedor, along with the soldiers and snipers on the roofs of main buildings. They raised the Serb flag on the building of municipality, and place the checkpoints along the access roads and controlled everyone who entered or left the town.

Once they occupied the town, they introduced curfew, and banned the movement in the town between 22:00 and 06:00 hours. At the same time, they gave an ultimatum relative to collection and surrender of weapons.

The first arrest were made on 20 May 1992, when the Bosniac political leaders and intellectuals were arrested and detained in the premises of police station, where many of them were physically ill-treated by the Serb police. At the same time, all the educational facilities stopped working (kindergartens, elementary and secondary schools). The period between early May and the first attack against the village of Hambarine was the period of a total blockade, limited movement for Bosniacs and Croats.

The attack against the Bosniac villages in the area of Prijedor started on 23 May 1992 around 12:00 hours, when they shelled with the artillery the village of **Hambarine**. The Bosniac population vacated Hambarine and escaped to the villages of Čarakovo, Zecovi, Rizvanovići, Rakovčani and Donja Ljubija, and some of them to the forest near Kurevo. Simultaneously with vacating the village, they started plundering and devastating Bosniac property. They shelled the villages of Gornji Volar and Šurkovac during the night.

In the period 23-30 May 1992, the Serb armed units carried out armed attacks against almost all the settlements in which Bosniacs and Croats lived. As of 24 May 1992, the Serb aggressor started with the establishment of camps. They detained the first group of Bosniac civilians from Prijedor to the **camp Omarska**.

Around 14:00 hours on 24 May 1992, they attacked Kozarac. The attack started with shelling, followed by the breakthrough of tanks and infantry. Having entered Kozarac, they started burning the houses and plundering the property. In four days, until 28 May 1992, they destroyed 50% of Kozarac, while the remaining damage was made in the period between June and August 1992. They destroyed 12 mosques in Kozarac. During the armed attack, which continued until 26 May 1992, they killed and injured many Kozarac civilians. The surviving Bosniacs were forced to leave their homes and go towards Prijedor, under the military escort of Serb forces who by force separated men from women and children. The surviving men from Kozarac were taken to the camps Keraterm and Omarska, and women and children were taken to the camp Trnopolje, and various places of incarceration in the town of Prijedor (National theater, secondary school building...). Members of the political leadership, respectable and rich Bosniacs and Croats were arrested and taken to the concentration camps: Krings in Sanski Most, Keraterm, Trnopolje, and Omarska, organized in the territory of the Prijedor municipality. On 30 May 1992, members of the JNA 43 mechanized brigade, fired shells from the tanks in the Partizanska street in Prijedor, and killed and injured a large number of civilians and destroyed a large number of civilian objects.

In early June, Bosniacs were taken to already prepared camps. Serb authorities organized a convoy of 70 buses to transport civilians, previously arrested. There were 80 people in every bus. The convoy with the arrested people was taken to the camp Omarska. Having arrived to the camp Omarska, the first killings started when civilians started getting off the buses. At the same time, Serb authorities started arresting and taking civilians to the camp Trnopolje. Two buses with women and children from the Prijedor settlements of Stari Raškovac and Skela were taken to the camp Trnopolje, while three buses with the arrested men were taken in front of the police building in Prijedor, where they physically ill/treated them, and then took them to the camp Omarska. The killing of Bosniacs was carried in the town itself, especially in Pionirska street. The bodies of the killed Bosniacs were collected in the town tennis playground. The collecting of the bodies was carried out in the period between 30 May and 10 June 1992, and it is believed that they were taken to the area around the mine Tomašica.

During the attack against the villages of Kevljani and Sivci, on 14 June 1992, they killed dozens of Bosniacs and hundreds were detained in the camps.

In the period 20-25 July 1992, the Serb authorities, supported by the criminal JNA attacked the Bosniac villages situated along the left bank of the Sana river: Bišćani, Rizvanovići, Rakovčani, Hambarine, Čarakovo, Zecovi, and the Croat villages of: Briševo, Raljaš, Stara Rijeka, and others. The brutal party was started with the artillery attack, then followed by the infantry attack, resulted in the murder of several thousand of Bosniac and Croat civilians, and an unidentified number of them were taken to camps, where they were mainly executed.

They were continuously arresting and deporting Bosniacs to the camps Omarska, Keraterm, Trnopolje, and other places of incarceration during July. Torture, killings, rapes, demolition, plundering, and devastation of property were everyday practice. As an illustration, they killed at that time Muhamed Sudžuka, in a way that the war criminal Zoran Žigić nailed him to the door to the mosque. Also, the Imam Sulejman Dizdarević was killed in front of the mosque in Čarakovo, along with 18 other Bosniacs, who were then burnt.

On 26 July 1992, a new crime was committed in the camp Keraterm. Without any reason, they killed in the sleeping room number 3 between 150 and 180 detained civilians.

Around the late July 1992, round 50 camp inmates were taken out of the camp Omarska, and their bodies were later on found in the natural pit Lisac in Bosnian krajina. On 31 July 1992, three buses full of camp inmates were taken out of the same camp, whose bodies were found in a natural pit Hrastova glavica in the territory of Sanski Most. On 6 August 1992, attempting to conceal the situation in this camp, around 1,500 camp inmates were transported from camp Omarska to the camp Manjača near Banja Luka, and around 1,200 of them to the camp Trnopolje.

The first deportations and forcible expulsion of population began in early June, when around 1,000 Bosniacs were expelled from Trnopolje. They were forcibly loaded on 9 cargo wagons (around 130 people in a wagon) and escorted by military police officers they were taken to the place Stanari (Doboj municipality). After the stealing of their money, jewelry and other valuables, they crossed the line of separation and arrived to the territory under the control of regular forces of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. On 11 July 1992, the train composed of 26 wagons, loaded with the expelled Bosniacs and Croats, were transported from the camp Trnopolje to the same location. Deportations continued on 24 July 1992, when the residents of the villages Bišćani, Rizvanovići, and Rakovčani were taken out of the camp Trnopolje, and in a convoy of buses and trucks expelled to Travnik. During the travel, the passengers were robbed by the members of the armed escort. Killing of the prisoners was continued in the territory of Ljubija. Also, the prisoners from the Local community Miska Glava were killed in the area of iron mine Ljubija (location known as Redak). Having arrived to the location Redak, members of the armed forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) ordered that all the mortal remains be taken out of the buses, and then they were taking prisoners, in groups of three, out of buses and killed them. One Bosniac who was taken out for execution managed to escape and thus became the only survivor of this massive crime.

Genocide and other forms of crimes against humanity and international law committed in the territory of Prijedor municipality continued throughout the period 1992‑1995, where the Serb forces killed around 4,000 civilians, mainly Bosniacs. The most massive crimes were committed by the summer 1993. Massive crimes were committed in Prijedor. Crimes were committed massively, intentionally, killings were organized, people were expelled, primarily Bosniacs, and then Croats. Killing of Bosniacs was carried out everywhere and in every location, the dead bodies lied on these sites for several days, and then, the prisoners were forced to collect them on trucks, after which the Serb forces took them to different locations. Particularly illustrative example of killing of Bosniacs was carried out at the site of Korićanske stijene (Skender Vakuf municipality), where on 21 August 1992, more than 200 camp inmates and other expelled residents were killed. Members of the military police intervention platoon killed and threw bodies to the abyss 200 meters deep.

Serb forces carried out an organized and systematic destruction of parts of Prijedor town. In other words, they destroyed settlements mainly populated with Bosniacs such as: Čaršija, Stari grad, and Zagrad. Kozarac and its villages, as well as villages of the entire area known as Brdo (Hambarine, Bišćani, Rizvanovići...) were surfaced. The criminal built stables, parking lots, and similar objects in the places where valuable monuments of Bosniac culture used to be, as they tried to conceal the traces of the long living of Bosniacs in Prijedor. They made garbage depots in the suburbs and the streets. They carried out intentional and systematic destruction of Bosniac and Croat culture and tradition. All the mosques and catholic churches were mined and destroyed.

A massive crime of intentional and organized torture in the concentration camps of death was committed in Prijedor. More than 10,000 civilians, mainly Bosniacs were killed in the three most famous camps of death: Omarska, Trnopolje, and Keraterm. The concentration camps, established by the Serbs became famous places of torture in the soil of Europe after the WWII. The worst kinds of torture and killings were carried out in them. Bosniac women were raped to death, and then killed. “Serb criminals were taking with knives their unborn babies out of their wombs, and then chopped the babies to pieces“.

A special example of destruction of mental integrity of the entire families is the taking of their family members to unknown locations and their disappearance. This destruction of the mental integrity of the families continues until the present day. Thousands of Prijedor residents and others still do not know anything about their relatives. Six sons of a mother from the family Garibović were killed. Thirteen children in the age between several days and 18 years were killed in one day in the family Bašić from Zecovi (they are still unaccounted for).

A crime of rape was also committed in Prijedor, and several thousand women were raped. The rapes were systematic, in camps, in the houses, police stations, and other places. Girls, twelve year old, and the elderly women, over sixty years, were raped. Rapes were carried out individually and in groups. „They singled out one woman and six girls. They raped them at the distance of five meters from us. One girl was taken away, I do not know her name, she was beautiful, she was maybe 16. she did not come back while we were in the camp. The other ones were taken to Prijedor. The woman stayed with us. Next day, around noon, they returned the girls“. In the course of the act of rape, they were inflicting wounds by knives, blows by rifle butts, hands on the victims. That was some kind of a reward for them. Even the cases of rapes of men were recorded too.

In addition to mass (128 with 1,511 mortal remains) and individual (278 with 278 mortal remains) graves, exhumed in the territory of the Prijedor municipality, the bodies of Prijedor residents were also found in mass and individual graves in sixteen other towns. There are 312 exhumed bodies, of which 276 were identified.

**Sources of scientific knowledge:**  
  
1.Institute for Research of Crimes against Humanity and International Law, University of Sarajevo  
2.Institute for Research of Genocide, Canada  
3.The International Criminal Tribunal for areas of the former Yugoslavia  
4. The International Court of Justice