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**What is the former Yugoslavia?**

The Tribunal was given authority to prosecute persons responsible for specific crimes committed since January 1991 in the territory of what is referred to as the former Yugoslavia.

What is meant by the term former Yugoslavia is the territory that was up to 25 June 1991 known as The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). Specifically, the six republics that made up the federation - Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia (including the regions of Kosovo and Vojvodina) and Slovenia.

On 25 June 1991, the declarations of independence of Slovenia and Croatia effectively ended SFRY’s existence. By April 1992, the further declarations of independence by two other republics, Macedonia, as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina, left only Serbia and Montenegro within the Federation.

These two remaining republics declared the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) on 27 April 1992. In 2003, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was reconstituted and re-named as a State Union of Serbia and Montenegro. This union effectively ended following Montenegro's formal declaration of independence on 3 June 2006 and Serbia's on 5 June 2006.



Source: International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia

# The Conflicts

At the beginning of the 1990s, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was one of the largest, most developed and diverse countries in the Balkans. It was a non-aligned federation comprised of six republics: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia. In addition to the six republics, the two separate regions of Kosovo and Vojvodina held the status of autonomous provinces within the Republic of Serbia. Yugoslavia was a mix of ethnic groups and religions, with Orthodox Christianity, Catholicism and Islam being the main religions.

Coinciding with the collapse of communism and resurgent nationalism in Eastern Europe during the late 1980s and early 1990s, Yugoslavia experienced a period of intense political and economic crisis. Central government weakened while militant nationalism grew apace. There was a proliferation of political parties who, on one side, advocated the outright independence of republics and, on the other, urged greater powers for certain republics within the federation.

Political leaders used nationalist rhetoric to erode a common Yugoslav identity and fuel fear and mistrust among different ethnic groups. By 1991, the break-up of the country loomed with Slovenia and Croatia blaming Serbia of unjustly dominating Yugoslavia’s government, military and finances. Serbia in turn accused the two republics of separatism.

### Slovenia - 1991

The first of the six republics to formally leave Yugoslavia was Slovenia, declaring independence on 25 June 1991. This triggered an intervention of the Yugoslav People’s Army (JNA) which turned into a brief military conflict, generally referred to as the Ten-Day War. It ended in a victory of the Slovenian forces, with the JNA withdrawing its soldiers and equipment.

### Croatia - 1991-1995

Croatia declared independence on the same day as Slovenia. But while Slovenia’s withdrawal from the Yugoslav Federation was comparatively bloodless, Croatia’s was not to be. The sizeable ethnic Serb minority in Croatia openly rejected the authority of the newly proclaimed Croatian state citing the right to remain within Yugoslavia. With the help of the JNA and Serbia, Croatian Serbs rebelled, declaring nearly a third of Croatia’s territory under their control to be an independent Serb state. Croats and other non-Serbs were expelled from its territory in a violent campaign of ethnic cleansing. Heavy fighting in the second half of 1991 witnessed the shelling of the ancient city of Dubrovnik, and the siege and destruction of Vukovar by Serb forces.

Despite the UN-monitored ceasefire which came into force in early 1992, Croatian authorities were determined to assert authority over their territory, and used its resources to develop and equip its armed forces. In the summer of 1995, the Croatian military undertook two major offensives to regain all but a pocket of its territory known as Eastern Slavonia. In a major exodus, tens of thousands of Serbs fled the Croatian advance to Serb-held areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina and further to Serbia. The war in Croatia effectively ended in the fall of 1995. Croatia eventually re-asserted its authority over the entire territory, with Eastern Slavonia reverting to its rule in January 1998 following a peaceful transition under UN-administration.

### Bosnia and Herzegovina - 1992-1995

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the conflict was to be the deadliest of all in the disintegrating Yugoslav Federation. This central Yugoslav republic had a shared government reflecting the mixed ethnic composition with the population made up of about 43 per cent Bosnian Muslims, 33 per cent Bosnian Serbs, 17 per cent Bosnian Croats and some seven percent of other nationalities. The republic’s strategic position made it subject to both Serbia and Croatia attempting to assert dominance over large chunks of its territory. In fact, the leaders of Croatia and Serbia had in 1991 already met in a secret meeting where they agreed to divide up Bosnia and Herzegovina, leaving a small enclave for Muslims.

In March 1992, in a referendum boycotted by Bosnian Serbs, more than 60 percent of Bosnian citizens voted for independence. Almost immediately, in April 1992, Bosnian Serbs rebelled with the support of the Yugoslav People’s Army and Serbia, declaring the territories under their control to be a Serb republic in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Through overwhelming military superiority and a systematic campaign of persecution of non-Serbs, they quickly asserted control over more than 60% of the country. Bosnian Croats soon followed, rejecting the authority of the Bosnian Government and declaring their own republic with the backing of Croatia. The conflict turned into a bloody three-sided fight for territories, with civilians of all ethnicities becoming victims of horrendous crimes.

It is estimated that more than 100,000 people were killed and two million people, more than half the population, were forced to flee their homes as a result of the war that raged from April 1992 through to November 1995 when a peace deal was initialled in Dayton. Thousands of Bosnian women were systematically raped. Notorious detention centres for civilians were set up by all conflicting sides: in Prijedor, Omarska, Konjic, Dretelj and other locations. The single worst atrocity of the war occurred in the summer of 1995 when the Bosnian town of Srebrenica, a UN-declared safe area, came under attack by forces lead by the Bosnian Serb commander Ratko Mladić. During a few days in early July, more than 8,000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys were executed by Serb forces in an act of genocide. The rest of the town’s women and children were driven out.

### Kosovo - 1998-1999

The next area of conflict was centered on Kosovo, where the ethnic Albanian community there sought independence from Serbia. In 1998 violence flared as the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) came out in open rebellion against Serbian rule, and police and army reinforcements were sent in to crush the insurgents.

In their campaign, the Serb forces heavily targeted civilians, shelling villages and forcing Kosovo Albanians to flee. As the attempt at an internationally-brokered deal to end the crisis failed in early 1999 at the Rambouillet peace talks, NATO carried out a 78-day-long campaign of air strikes against targets in Kosovo and Serbia. In response, Serb forces further intensified the persecution of the Kosovo Albanian civilians. Ultimately, Serbian President Slobodan Milošević agreed to withdraw his troops and police from the province. Some 750,000 Albanian refugees came home and about 100,000 Serbs - roughly half the province's Serb population – fled in fear of reprisals. In June 1999, Serbia agreed to international administration of Kosovo with the final status of the province still unresolved.

### The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia - 2001

The southernmost republic of the Yugoslav Federation, Macedonia, declared independence in the fall of 1991 and enjoyed a peaceful separation. It was later admitted to the UN under the temporary name of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM).

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, populated by a majority of ethnic Macedonians and a large Albanian minority, remained at peace through the Yugoslav wars of the early 1990s. However, at the beginning of January 2001 the ethnic Albanian National Liberation Army (NLA) militant group clashed with the republic’s security forces with the aim of obtaining autonomy or independence for the Albanian-populated areas in the country. Sporadic armed conflict lasted for several months in 2001, ending with a peace deal which envisaged a political agreement on power-sharing, the disarmament of the Albanian militia and the deployment of a NATO monitoring force.

**Mapping the Serbian concentration camps**



The location of the dozens of Bosnia Serb concentration camps coincided with the shape of the country they wanted to form. For this, they needed to clear the territories of all traces of Muslim or Croat enemies in "their" land.

As a general rule their strategy, as set out in the RAM Plan and other documents, was to construct a "Greater Serbia" made up of land bordering Serbia on the east, bordering the Serbian-occupied Krajina (originally Croatia) on the west, and with a land bridge joining the two across the north. The most ferocious Serb fighting and repression was centered in this northern - and to the Serbs - most vulnerable area. (A notable example: Brcko, where Bosnia Serbs murdered 3,000 military age Muslim men in 1992.)



Source for number of camps in each locale: UN commission of Experts, Final Report and Annexes, December 1994.

Source: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/karadzic/atrocities/map.html>

**MASSACRE IN BOSNIA; Srebrenica: The Days of Slaughter**

Published: October 29, 1995

<http://www.nytimes.com/1995/10/29/world/massacre-in-bosnia-srebrenica-the-days-of-slaughter.html?pagewanted=all>

The following article is by Stephen Engelberg and Tim Weiner with further reporting from Raymond Bonner in Bosnia and Jane Perlez in Serbia.

On the afternoon of July 10, soldiers of the Bosnian Serb army began storming Srebrenica, a city of refuge created by the United Nations, where more than 40,000 people sought shelter from war. A United Nations officer in the town hunched over his computer and tapped out a desperate plea to his leaders in Geneva:

Urgent urgent urgent. B.S.A. is entering the town of Srebrenica. Will someone stop this immediately and save these people. Thousands of them are gathering around the hospital. Please help."

Nobody did. As the Western alliance stood by, the eastern Bosnian city was overrun. What followed in the towns and fields around Srebrenica is described by Western officials and human rights groups as the worst war crime in Europe since World War II: the summary killing of perhaps 6,000 people.

As recounted by the few Muslims who survived, the killing was chillingly methodical, part mass slaughter, part blood sport.

The Muslim men were herded by the thousands into trucks, delivered to killing sites near the Drina River, lined up four by four and shot. One survivor, 17-year-old Nezad Avdic, recalled in an interview this week that as he lay wounded among the dead Muslims, a Serbian soldier surveyed the stony, moonlit field piled with bodies and merrily declared: "That was a good hunt. There were a lot of rabbits here."

Serbian civilians interviewed this week in the villages around Srebrenica confirmed for the first time the mass killings carried out in their midst.

They pointed out the schools that were used as holding pens for the doomed Muslims -- including the schoolhouse in Karakaj where young Mr. Avdic said he was taken. They reported seeing bodies all along the roads and fields outside Srebrenica. One man said he had been stopped by soldiers who asked for help loading the bodies onto trucks for burial.

A reconstruction of the fall of Srebrenica and the ensuing massacres, based on survivors' accounts, NATO and United Nations documents and interviews in Bosnia, Serbia, Washington and New York, leaves little doubt about what happened. The question of Serbian accountability promises to haunt the Bosnian peace talks that are to begin Wednesday at an Air Force base in Ohio.

The role of the outsiders who were sworn to protect the town but did not -- the United Nations, NATO and the United States -- is not so stark. But the massacre of thousands of men ostensibly under international protection is regarded by many officials as the low point of Western policy in the Balkans, a time of impotence if not acquiescence.

Before the Serbian conquest of Srebrenica, some calls for help were ignored, some rejected. Gen. Bernard Janvier, the United Nations commander for Bosnia, vetoed the air strikes that Dutch peacekeepers in Srebrenica requested to defend the town. United Nations officers said he had little enthusiasm for protecting an enclave widely viewed as an indefensible impediment to ending the war.

After the town was overrun, the Dutch soldiers failed to relay crucial information to the United Nations, including a threat by the Bosnian Serb commander, Gen. Ratko Mladic, to massacre the Muslims.

American officials say they had no warning the town would fall and no way to save its people. After the Serbs swept in, the Americans did little more than urge Slobodan Milosevic, the President of Serbia, to restrain the Bosnian Serbs and allow relief supplies to reach Srebrenica.

An American reconnaissance satellite photographed hundreds of Muslim men held in fields at gunpoint on July 13 -- evidence of a crime in progress. But those riveting photos, and shots taken by a U-2 spy plane two weeks later of freshly turned earth in the same fields, were first shown to President Clinton's top advisers on Aug. 4, long after the victims were dead and buried.

Those advisers said that they had no options short of sending the 82d Airborne, and that seeing the satellite photos of Muslim men in fields the day they were taken would not have changed their minds.

The deaths of thousands gave life to a moribund diplomacy. The testimony of despairing refuges from the enclave caught Mr. Clinton's attention. Pushed by the United States, NATO adopted a more aggressive military stance and staged the most punishing air strikes of the war. A new American peace plan became the basis for a cease-fire and the Ohio talks.

But the mass killings may not have ended with Srebrenica. This month thousands more men and boys captured by the Serbs in and around the town of Banja Luka have disappeared. There is no word yet on their fate.

**The Attack NATO's Warnings Ignored by Serbs**

At 3:15 A.M. on July 6, Srebrenica exploded. The Bosnian Serbs fired rockets into the United Nations compound and shelled a village to the south, sending 4,000 more people fleeing into the enclave.

For weeks the Serbs had been tightening their noose on Srebrenica. They had weakened the Dutch force, allowing troops to leave on regularly scheduled rotations, but blocking their replacements, slicing the size of the battalion from 450 to 300. They confiscated spare parts for the peacekeepers' anti-tank missiles and waylaid fuel shipments.

Col. Ton Karremans, the Dutch peacekeepers' commander, warned senior United Nations officers in May of signs that the Serbs were preparing to conquer the enclave, according to the Dutch Defense Ministry. Nothing was done in response to this message, United Nations officials said.

"We had indications in June that the Serbs might be concentrating on the enclave," an American intelligence official said. "But it was unclear what the scope of the action was."

As the Serbian assault continued on July 7, the Dutch peacekeepers asked their United Nations superiors to call in NATO warplanes against the attacking artillery and armor. The request was rejected by United Nations officers in Sarajevo. They saw the attack as mere "probing." And they did not want to undermine the peacemaking efforts of Carl Bildt, the European negotiator, who had just arrived in the region.

Over the next 48 hours, the attack stepped up. On July 8 the Bosnian President, Alija Izetbegovic, spoke on the Sarajevo radio, saying the people of Srebrenica faced "massacres and genocide" if the town fell. He said he had delivered this warning to the United States, Germany, England, France, the United Nations and NATO.

By July 9, the safe area was under attack, with shells sometimes falling every minute. The Dutch peacekeepers set up a blockade of four armored personnel carriers on the road entering Srebrenica from the south, in a desperate attempt to stop the Serbian advance.

At 10:35 P.M., Gen. Herve Gobillard, the acting United Nations commander, faxed a letter to General Mladic. "This attack against a United Nations 'safe area' is totally unacceptable," it said. "The advance must stop where it is."

The letter explicitly said an assault on the peacekeepers' blockade would be met by an attack with warplanes. It promised "grave consequences" if the Serbs ignored the warning.

The Serbs ignored it. The next morning, July 10, they drove toward the center of Srebrenica. Late that afternoon, a single tank and about 100 Serbian infantrymen approached the Dutch blockade and fell back under a hail of .50-caliber machine-gun fire.

In Zagreb, the Croatian capital, General Janvier, the United Nations commander for Bosnia, convened his top military advisers at 8 P.M. It was a tense meeting, repeatedly interrupted for updates from the Dutch troops. The general asked for advice. The response was nearly unanimous: air strikes. The United Nations' credibility was at stake. Srebrenica was a safe area. It had to be defended.

"We need F-16's swooping down now," said a Dutch officer, according to a participant at the meeting. General Janvier was unpersuaded. He announced that he would sleep on it. He left his aides "aghast," as a United Nations official put it.

General Javier, a United Nations officer said, did not believe that the Serbs would take the town. American military and intelligence officials shared that belief.

The Dutch officers in Srebrenica were even less well-informed. Lacking links to outside intelligence, they had no way of knowing how many Serbs were attacking. Worse, they mistakenly believed that General Janvier had approved overwhelming air strikes for the next morning.

At midnight, Colonel Karremans, the Dutch commander, met at the Srebrenica post office with the Mayor, the local military commander, the town's leading citizens and United Nations officers. According to a participant in this meeting, the colonel said the United Nations had delivered an ultimatum to General Mladic: Pull back by 6 A.M. or face a "massive" NATO air strike. And he told Srebrenica's leaders that "everything that moves, whether on two legs, four legs or on wheels, will be destroyed, erased from the ground," if the Serbs did not withdraw, the participant said.

As Colonel Karremans went to sleep, "he expects that there will be a massive air attack" on 30 Serb targets in the morning, said Bert Kreemers, a spokesman for the Dutch Defense Ministry.

At this crucial juncture -- which in hindsight, American, United Nations and NATO officials said, was the moment of Srebrenica's downfall -- Washington was on the sidelines. Clinton Administration officials said they did not believe that the town was in imminent danger; nor did they know that General Janvier was balking at air strikes.

That night in the Netherlands, the Dutch Defense Minister, Joris Voorhoeve, assured the American Ambassador that the situation was stabilizing. General Mladic, he said, had told General Janvier that the Serbs had no intention of taking Srebrenica.

**The Fall 'Serbs Have Won' In Srebrenica**

"The situation this morning has been unusually, but creepily, calm and quiet," United Nations military observers in Srebrenica reported at 7:55 the next morning, July 11. "The usual hail of shells that have been greeting our mornings is surprisingly absent today. We view this as a positive change in the current circumstances, which undoubtedly have come from the NATO ultimatum, even though it has not been implemented yet."

Five minutes later, the Dutch renewed their request for air attacks on the Serbs, who had not withdrawn. None came. At 11:10, the Serbs resumed their assault on Srebrenica.

With that, General Janvier finally gave the go-ahead -- but limited the targets to tanks or artillery seen firing on United Nations troops. The air strikes finally began at 2:40 P.M., as tanks rolled toward the Dutch blockade. Four planes, two Dutch and two American, took aim at the tanks. They damaged one.

It was far too little, too late. The Bosnian Serbs brushed off the largely symbolic strike. Thousands of Serbian infantrymen joined the attack, flanking the Dutch armored vehicles and streaming into the city.

After the NATO warplanes bombed the tank, the Serbs threatened to kill 32 Dutch peacekeepers they had taken hostage after seizing the battalion's observations posts. They had used the tactic with brutal efficiency in May and June, when they terrorized NATO into halting air strikes by taking 400 other peacekeepers hostage.

It worked again. The Dutch Defense Minister, Mr. Voorhoeve, asked for a halt to the air strikes. The United Nations and NATO concurred.

"The Serbs have won," Mr. Voorhoeve announced.

By 4 P.M. the Dutch were hurriedly retreating two miles north to their base camp, at a factory in a small town called Potocari. Some 20,000 terrified people joined them.

The Serbs secured the town and disarmed the Dutch. They placed the Potocari camp and the refugees gathered there in the cross hairs of their tanks, artillery and rocket launchers.

At 6:27 P.M., United Nations headquarters in Sarajevo faxed new orders to the beleaguered Dutch battalion. The mission had changed. The Dutch commander, Colonel Karremans, and his sector commander, Col. Charlie Brantz, read that the battalion was ordered to "take all reasonable measures to protect refugees and civilians in your care."

"Not possible," Colonel Brantz scribbled in the margin. They were in General Mladic's hands now.

At nightfall, the swaggering General Mladic -- who was about to be indicted by the International War Crimes Tribunal in the Hague on charges of ordering savage ethnic purges in other conquered towns -- met with Colonel Karremans. He set his terms "in the most threatening way," as the colonel later described it: no more air strikes, or the refugees huddled at Potocari would be shelled and shot.

To illustrate his plans, according to eyewitnesses, the general ordered one of his men to slit the throat of a pig and declared, "This is what we're going to do the Muslims."

The colonel sent a message to his superiors at the United Nations and the Dutch Defense Ministry when the meeting broke up after midnight. His official report made no mention of the Serbian general's ghoulish threat, but he wrote, "I am not able to defend these people."

The Refugees 'Don't Be Afraid,' Mladic Says

As General Mladic made his threats, 15,000 people -- mostly the men, including the local soldiers -- gathered on the outskirts of Srebrenica, not willing to trust their lives to the United Nations or to the Serbs. Safety lay a three-day trek away, through Serb-held territory. The long march began just before midnight.

The remaining refugees, as many as 25,000 jammed into the Dutch camp in Potocari, were seized with panic. Some of the women were abducted by Serbian soldiers and raped, witnesses have said. On the night of the 11th, United Nations soldiers heard screams and gunshots. Later, they found the bodies of at least nine men, shot in the back of the head.

General Mladic arrived at Potocari on the morning of Wednesday, July 12, with a convoy of 40 trucks and buses and a video crew. His soldiers ordered the refugees aboard, separating the men from the women. The peacekeepers stood by.

"No panic, please," the general said, smiling, handing a child a candy bar, in a video clip broadcast around the world. "Don't be afraid. No one will harm you."

Another tape made the same day but never shared with the world's networks showed a more chilling scene. In it, a Serb soldier shouts at the male refugees: "Come on, line up, one by one! Come on! Faster, faster! Go, go, go!"

One witness who recorded the fear of the town that day was Christina Schmidt, a German-born nurse who led the Srebrenica team from the French group Doctors Without Borders. She sent her account by radio to her organization's Belgrade office, which relayed it to the world press.

"Everybody should feel the violence in the faces of the B.S.A. soldiers directing the people like animals to the buses," she wrote in her journal for July 12, referring to the Bosnian Serb Army. "Everybody who could have stopped this mass exodus should be forced to feel the panic and desperation of the people."

"A father with his one-year-old baby is coming to me, crying, accompanied by B.S.A.," she continued. "He doesn't have anybody to take care of the baby and B.S.A. selected him for . . . ? It's a horrible scene -- I have to take the baby from his arm -- writing down his name and feeling that he will never see his child again."

The Killing A Survivor, Saved by Bodies

Hurem Suljic, an invalided 55-year-old carpenter with a withered right leg, thought the Serbs would allow him on the buses taking the women, children and elderly to safety at a United Nations air base at Tuzla, 50 miles away. But when he and his wife, daughter, daughter-in-law and 7-year-old granddaughter approached the buses through a corridor of Dutch peacekeepers, he was snatched by a Serbian soldier. He was taken to a partly finished house jammed with men the Serbs had pulled out of the lines.

About 7 P.M., General Mladic appeared. "Good day, neighbors," he said cordially. The men demanded to know why they were being held. The general said he was going to trade them to the Bosnian Government for Serbian soldiers who had been captured.

The men were taken outside, led past United Nations peacekeepers and loaded onto buses again. They went to Bratunac, on the border with Serbia. There they were put into a dilapidated warehouse, about 50 feet by 25, with a dirt floor. Several more busloads of men arrived, until about 400 men were crammed in.

A Serbian soldier began shining his flashlight into their faces. "He would shine his light around, then pick on one person," and order him outside, Mr. Suljic said. "He seemed to pick the younger and stronger men."

Screaming -- "a specific sound, like the sound when you slaughter an animal" -- came from outside the warehouse, Mr. Suljic said. He said 40 men were taken out and beaten. Ten were thrown back. In the morning, five were dead.

That morning, the 13th, the prisoners heard vehicles approach. A Serbian soldier demanded 10 volunteers from the group. No one spoke up; the men were sure that they would be forced to bury the bodies of those beaten to death, Mr. Suljic said. The Serbs then picked 10 men for the task. They went outside. They did not come back.

Then the beatings and killings started again.

Later in the day, Mr. Suljic heard more vehicles arrive. Again came a demand for 10 volunteers. Again the vehicles left, and the 10 did not return.

Early in the evening, General Mladic appeared again. "We yelled at him, 'Why are you holding us here, why are you killing us?' " Mr. Suljic recalled. The Serbian military leader replied that it had taken him a while to reach an agreement on the exchange of prisoners, but that it had been arranged.

The men were taken outside and loaded onto buses. Mr. Suljic saw General Mladic giving orders to the soldiers. After dark, the buses headed headed toward Zvornik, also on the border with Serbia. Just before Karakaj, the buses turned left and stopped at a school, probably near a town called Krizevici.

The men were taken into the gymnasium. Soon another vehicle came and more men were shoved into the gym. They kept coming -- perhaps 2,500 in all, Mr. Suljic said.

About noon on the 14th, General Mladic came again. He told the men that he had not been able to work out a deal with their Government to trade them for Serbian prisoners. He left, and soldiers began taking the men out of the gymnasium in groups, blindfolding them as they were led out. Mr. Suljic was taken out at nightfall. He was the last of the 25 or 30 men to board his truck.

The truck moved slowly along a dirt road. Mr. Suljic said he had pushed up his blindfold and had seen a field filled with bodies. Around the bend, more bodies. Then the truck stopped. The men were ordered out.

They were put in rows four abreast. From behind, the Serbian soldiers began shooting. Men fell on top of Mr. Suljic, who escaped being hit. As he lay on the grassy field under the bodies, trucks kept coming, each with 25 or 30 more men. The men were taken out, lined up and shot. Mr. Suljic said he had seen it all clearly under the full moon.

General Mladic returned, stood by while a fresh truckload of men was shot, and left, Mr. Suljic said. More groups of men were brought and killed. Finally, Mr. Suljic said he heard some Serbs saying, "Everything is finished; nobody is left."

Then he saw heavy machines working. They were backhoes, digging big graves.

**The Hunt Refugees Killed From Ambush**

The column of refugees that fled Potocari on foot stretched for mile after mile through Serbian-held land. They were hunted like game in the woods, ambushed, shelled and shot. They were captured, and their throats were slit. Uncounted numbers died in the woods and fields.

Mr. Avdic, the 17-year-old, joined the exodus from Srebrenica on July 11. After two nights of walking, he said he had surrendered along with at least 1,000 others in his group. It was near Kravica, on the road to Konjevic Polje.

The men were loaded onto trucks and taken to Bratunac. They spent the night in the truck, and the next day, the trucks went toward Zvornik, a town just across the border from Serbia. After Karakaj, the trucks stopped at a school. As the men entered the school, a Serbian soldier, holding his rifle by the barrel and swinging it like a baseball bat, hit them with the butt. Another Serbian soldier told the captives to move slowly, so the soldier with the rifle could hit everyone.

Mr. Avdic was taken to the second floor and put in the last room at the end of a hallway. It was already so full that he could barely squeeze in. During the day, the Serbs took men out of the rooms, sometimes two at a time, sometimes 5 or 10. If two men were ordered out of a room, soon after there would be two shots; if five, five shots.

"At that moment, I knew they would probably kill us," Mr. Avdic said. His account of what followed has been corroborated in detail by other survivors interviewed by human rights groups.

That night, the soldiers tossed him into a truck with 100 or more other men, drove down a dirt road, and yanked them out, five at a time. Shots. Another five, and more firing. Then it was Mr. Avdic's turn.

He emerged and saw, under the full moon, a field covered with dead bodies. The men were told to lie down. With his hands tied, Mr. Avdic found it difficult to do so. As he was falling the shooting started. He felt a terrible pain in his right arm and right side of his stomach. He had been shot.

As he lay on the killing ground, he heard the Serbs check the bodies.

"I saw a boot near my head," he said. "He stepped over me. The guy next to me was badly wounded; he was screaming. He shot him, several times. I don't know how the stones did not hit my face. I just closed my eyes. I wanted him to kill me. I thought it would be better for me to call him. But I changed my mind."

**The Warehouse 'Everybody Is Dead In Here'**

Hakija Huseinovic, a 52-year-farmer and father of four -- a 14-year-old daughter was killed when Serbs shelled their village in 1992 -- also joined the thousands of men who fled when Srebrenica fell.

His section of the long column was ambushed the next day by the Serbs at a hill called Bulje. Scores of men were killed and wounded -- "nobody counted," Mr. Huseinovic said. Then they were ambushed near Konjevic Polje, when he believes that at least 1,000 men were killed or wounded. The Serbs called for them to surrender, and about 2,000 did, Mr. Huseinovic among them. They were marched to a big valley at Lolici, where the Serbs robbed them.

On the 13th, General Mladic came. "You know it's not pleasant to make war with Serbia," Mr. Huseinovic quoted the general as saying.

Then a Serbian commander marched the men, in a column about a third of a mile long, toward Bratunac. At Kravica, near Mr. Huseinovic's village, they were jammed into an agricultural warehouse. Then the Serbs began shooting through the windows, with automatic rifles, and firing shoulder-held grenade launchers.

They were "playing with us," he said. They would shoot for a while and then stop. When they would hear moaning, they would come back and shoot some more. One man, delirious, kept calling a friend's name. A Serbian soldier shouted an obscenity about the man's "Turkish mother" and shot him. Another man was crying for water. A Serb shouted an obscenity about Muslims, and shot him.

"Some of us yelled, 'Why don't you just kill us all?' " Mr. Huseinovic said. He saw about 20 bodies in the room; he covered himself with two of them. He heard a Serbian soldier say, "Everybody is dead in here."

The next morning, the 14th, the Serbs called into the warehouse and said that anybody who was not wounded should come out and would become part of the Bosnian Serb army. Some men did go out. They were put on trucks. The Serbs then said the wounded should come out, and they would be taken to a hospital. Some men did.

"I heard shooting," Mr. Huseinovic said. "I heard screaming. Then it was silent. They killed them all."

No one is sure precisely how many people died in the fields and woods surrounding Srebrenica. American intelligence analysts estimate the number at between 5,000 and 8,000.

**The Reaction Serbian Villages Know of Killings**

The fact that thousands were killed is plain fact in the Serbian villages surrounding Srebrenica on the west bank on the Drina River.

People interviewed in those villages this week said it was well known that Muslims were held captive in schools along the 13-mile stretch from Zvornik to Sepak were before they were killed.

Bratislav Grubacic, editor in chief of the VIP Daily News Report in Belgrade, said he was in Bratunac and Potocari in mid-July. "It is common knowledge in eastern Bosnia about what happened," he said Friday. His reporters said there were as many as 10 mass graves in the area, each containing several hundred bodies. He said the public reaction to the killings was "shock, fear and shame."

Those feelings are not universal. A priest near Sepak confirmed that the schools had been used to imprison the Muslims and that the prisoners had been shot. He expressed no remorse at the killings, but regretted the style in which they were conducted.

"I would kill a Turk, but I wouldn't torture them," the priest said.

**The Americans Washington Slow To Understand**

The understanding that something unspeakable was happening dawned slowly in Washington.

Officials at the highest levels of the Clinton Administration said they had not foreseen the fall of Srebrenica. At the State Department, the Pentagon and the Central Intelligence Agency, the consensus was the Bosnian Serbs did not want to conquer the town. Nor were there signs that the Serbs would commit mass slaughter. In hindsight, the officials say, their best information came from human rights groups, the United Nations and the press, not from spies, satellites or eavesdropping.

American officials worried mainly about the Srebrenica refugees' lack of food and provisions. On July 12, the senior American diplomat in Belgrade asked President Milosevic to use his influence with the Bosnian Serbs to avert a "humanitarian disaster." That day, he also pressed Mr. Milosevic to help international observers gain access to the men who had been rounded up.

After the fall of Srebrenica, senior officials said they turned their attention toward creating a new policy -- using air power to protect the remaining safe havens, particularly Gorazde.

On July 13, as the press reported refugees' accounts of mass killings, an American spy satellite passing over Bosnia recorded pictures of two fields in which hundreds of prisoners were guarded by gunmen. One of these was the stony field of the "rabbit hunt," where the 17-year-old Mr. Avdic was shot.

But no one saw that picture for three weeks.

Techno-thriller readers think spy satellites make the C.I.A. all-seeing and all-knowing. In fact, American intelligence collects far more data than it can analyze. One former National Security Agency director said gleaning hard facts from the avalanche of information was like trying to take a drink of water from a fire hose.

An intelligence official familiar with the Bosnia photos said that "if you saw an overhead photograph of all New York City, and there was a bank robbery going on somewhere, and nobody reported it," detectives would have a hard time finding the scene of the crime. Throughout July, he said, the C.I.A. lacked "information regarding specific places and atrocities."

The Western allies gathered in London on July 21 and adopted a much tougher stance toward the Bosnian Serbs. After balking at punishing air strikes for three years, the Europeans finally agreed: Further Serbian attacks on the safe havens would be met with exactly the sort of withering response that Colonel Karremans, the Dutch commander in Srebrenica, had asked for, but never received.

On July 27, two weeks after the first published accounts of mass killings from survivors of the fall of Srebrenica, a U-2 spy plane passed over the sites of the slaughter and recorded images of newly turned earth. That film was shipped to Washington on a regular military flight on July 30.

That day, John Shattuck, the Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights, was in Tuzla, interviewing furious and stunned refugees -- among others, Mr. Avdic, the teen-ager, and Mr. Suljic, the invalid carpenter. His reporting helped give the C.I.A. a push.

By Aug. 2, "enough information had come to us that allowed us to hone in" on the killing grounds, an intelligence official said. An analyst with the C.I.A.'s Balkans Task Force stayed up all night, looking through thousands of images, until he matched the men in the fields with the corresponding shot of freshly dug graves.

The pictures landed at the White House on Aug. 4. They were riveting. Here was evidence, Mr. Shattuck said later, of "direct acts of genocide." Madeleine K. Albright, the chief American delegate at the United Nations, successfully argued that they be made public.

That same day, Croatia's Army -- aided by the advice of retired American generals -- opened an offensive that tilted the balance of power in the Balkans. The Croats re-conquered the Krajina region of Croatian, dealing the Serbian forces their first major defeat.

On Aug. 8, as the Serbs streamed out of Croatia, Ms. Albright stood before a closed session of the Security Council and told the story of Srebrenica. She said the photos and the accounts by witnesses were "compelling evidence that the Bosnian Serbs had systematically executed people who were defenseless" -- thousands of them -- "with the direct involvement of high-level Bosnia Serb officials."

"The perpetrators of these atrocities have -- literally -- not covered their tracks," she said. "The physical evidence of what they have done -- the bodies discarded in their fields -- will bear silent witness."

In September, General Mladic confronted the West by refusing to pull his heavy weapons back from Sarajevo. This time, NATO warplanes pummeled his forces. Those attacks, and the Croatian offensive in the Krajina, persuaded the Bosnian Serbs to agree to peace talks, which open this week in Ohio.

All is calm now in Srebrenica. The grass is still green, though covered with frost in the morning. The leaves are turning red and brown. The village is now home to thousands of Serbs driven from the Krajina.

# Ante Tomić

When war erupted in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992, Ante Tomić was 34 years old. Of Croatian ethnicity, Mr. Tomić worked in the Omarska mines and lived in his hometown in the Prijedor municipality in northwestern Bosnia and Herzegovina. Before the war, roughly half the population of his town, called Ljubija, was ethnically Croatian.

“ Mr. Tomić said that in the Omarska camp they were treated in "a beastly manner. No rules applied whatsoever. There was no human dignity at all. They killed us. They did whatever they pleased." ”

On the evening of 30 April 1992, Mr. Tomić was in Ljubija in a cafe when around 10:00 that night police officers came in. They said that the cafe should close and everyone should leave because there was a curfew. This is how Mr. Tomić came to learn that the Serbian Democratic Party (SDS) had taken power in Prijedor.

Mr. Tomić told the court that he did not observe the curfew. He described how every night a group of about 20 to 30 citizens from Ljubija gathered spontaneously at the cafe and went on walks lasting 30 to 45 minutes, or until the police dispersed them.

On the evening of 24 May 1992, Mr. Tomić was again in the cafe when a man from Donja Ljubija (Lower Ljubija) came and said that the military was getting ready to attack. Mr. Tomić said that he put on his military uniform and with several others, including Serbs, Croats and Muslims, started out for Donja Ljubija. Halfway there, members of the Territorial Defence barred their way.

By the middle of June, one could not leave Ljubija: the phones lines were cut, they had no communications with Prijedor, buses were not running—they could not go anywhere. “We were completely isolated,” said Mr. Tomić.

In the night of 13 to 14 June 1992, two Serb soldiers, both of whom were his neighbours, came to his apartment and arrested him. They took Mr. Tomić to a van where there were about a dozen people who had also been detained the same night. They were all Muslims or Croats, and all men between 16 and 60 years old. One of them had been beaten up and was barefoot; another was in his pyjamas. They were all taken to the Keraterm camp, a former ceramics factory located on the outskirts of Prijedor. As Mr. Tomić would later learn, 115 men from his town would be detained at the Keraterm camp.

The camp consisted of one large building with two floors, of which the four rooms on the ground floor, referred to as Rooms 1, 2, 3 and 4, were used to hold prisoners. Mr. Tomić spent almost three weeks together with some 400 people in Room 2, a space which was about 15 to 20 metres wide, 18 to 20 metres long and had a cold concrete floor.

Several hours after his arrival, all of a sudden there was some commotion. Everybody, including those who were new to the camp, ran into the rooms, and Mr. Tomić heard people say, “there’s Duća.” ICTY accused Dušan (Duško) Knežević, nicknamed Duća, was a Serb soldier who often visited the camp, and each time he came, Mr. Tomić said people would be beaten and killed. Knežević and another soldier came to Room 2 looking for a man who had allegedly raped some Serb women. When Knežević and the other soldier found him, they beat him.

When they were finished, they started beating another inmate, Emsud Bahonjić, whom they called “Sniper” or “Singaporac.” Bahonjić was lying in a corner of Room 2. “We could only smell the stench coming from him,” said Mr. Tomić. “He hadn’t moved for days. He was badly beaten up but still alive.” Knežević ordered Bahonjić to stand up. But, Mr. Tomić said, he could not move. Knežević kicked him several times and a day or two later he died.

This was not to be the only time that Mr. Tomić saw or heard prisoners being beaten in the few weeks that he was at the Keraterm camp. Mr. Tomić told the court that an Albanian boy of 17 called Jusufi, and two Albanian pastry shop owners were called out and beaten. He told the court that Jovan Radocaj, a Serb inmate was taken out and beaten right outside the building. Mr. Tomić said that Radocaj had allegedly voted for the Muslim-dominated Party of Democratic Action (SDA), and had SDA posters in his house. As Radocaj left the room, Mr. Tomić heard him say, “It’s all over.” He was killed that night.

In the several weeks that Mr. Tomić was at the Keraterm camp, he saw new prisoners arriving on a daily basis. Most often, a man named Milan Čurguz, known as Krivi, would bring them. However, he also helped the prisoners while they were inside. Once when he brought Mr. Tomić food, he told him that helping the prisoners will cost him his life. “It was highly unpopular to help the inmates,” said Mr. Tomić. Milan Čurguz was indeed killed, and Mr. Tomić believes that the main reason was indeed that he had helped the prisoners.

“ The worst night that Mr. Tomić had in the Omarska camp, a guard called Kvočka, began beating him. Then another few men joined him, then another few, and finally there were eight of them beating him. ”

Later, on 6 August 1992, the day Mr. Tomić arrived in the Trnopolje camp, Milan Čurguz’ brother Pero, who worked for the Red Cross, told Mr. Tomić that he was positive that it was Serbs, members of the unit with which Milan was on mission, who had killed him. However, Mr. Tomić said that half an hour later Banja Luka television arrived and Pero Čurguz said on camera that balijas [a derogatory term for Muslims] had killed his brother, and not only that they killed him, but that they also cut his head off. “So that was a different story from the one that he told us,” said Mr. Tomić.

Mr. Tomić said that other policemen from Ljubija also brought prisoners to the camp, and mentioned Drago Tokmadžić [a Croat] and Esad Islamović. One day, Mr. Tomić said, the two of them came to the camp together again. “We thought they had brought new inmates,” said Mr. Tomić, “but on that day [it] was them who were brought as detainees.” One night they were taken out of Room 4 and Mr. Tomić could hear that they were beaten. Among the voices he recognised were Duško Knežević’s, and ICTY convict Zoran Žigić, another visitor to the camp whom Mr. Tomić knew by sight [and whom the Tribunal later convicted of crimes he committed in both the Keraterm and Omarska camps]. Mr. Tomić said that Drago Tokmadžić succumbed to his injuries that night, while Esad Islamović, survived and was later taken to hospital.

During the time that he was at Keraterm, on one occasion guards asked for five to six inmates to volunteer for some work outside the camp. For an entire day, the inmates carried and sorted goods in a warehouse. They told Mr. Tomić that the goods—which included television sets, household appliances, furniture, and tractors—were stolen from villages that had been torched. When asked in court why someone would volunteer for such work duty, Mr. Tomić said, “Perhaps the most important reason for anyone to do any sort of work was their expectation that they would get something extra to eat.”

In the almost three weeks that Mr. Tomić was held at the Keraterm camp, he was never questioned or interrogated, nor was he ever given a reason why he was detained.

On 4 July 1992, Mr. Tomić and the other 115 prisoners from his town were transferred to the Omarska camp. Mr. Tomić said that in the Omarska camp they were treated in “a beastly manner. No rules applied whatsoever. There was no human dignity at all. They killed us. They did whatever they pleased.” In the three weeks that he was held in the Keraterm camp, Mr. Tomić said that about ten people were killed, while at Omarska at least ten or fifteen inmates were killed every day, if not more.

The guards and visitors, all of whom were in uniform, beat prisoners at Omarska any time of the day or night, and Mr. Tomić said that many of them beat him. “[D]aily beatings were so regular,” said Mr. Tomić, “that they didn’t even represent anything special anymore. I was once beaten up so badly, I spen[t] the next four days in a coma. I was thrown out onto a heap of corpses, and I was found there by one of my comrades who brought me back to the world of the living.”

The worst night that Mr. Tomić had in the Omarska camp, a guard called Kvočka, began beating him. Then another few men joined him, then another few, and finally there were eight of them beating him. Mr. Tomić said that Kvočka was the brother of one of the camp’s commanders, Miroslav Kvočka [whom the Tribunal convicted of crimes he committed at Omarska].

Mr. Tomić said that one day in the middle of July, the Omarska detainees were being prepared to sing songs because a delegation was to come from Banja Luka, and they were to welcome them. When the delegation came by helicopter, they sang Serb nationalist songs with their hands raised in the three-finger Serb salute. Up to about ten members of the delegation, among them the President of the Banja Luka municipality, toured the camp, including the rooms where the prisoners were detained.

Mr. Tomić stayed in the Omarska camp until 6 August when he was transferred to the Trnopolje camp.

During cross-examination, defence counsel asked Mr. Tomić whether the emergence of national parties disrupted relationships among people that had been harmonious until then. Mr. Tomic replied, “In my case, no. I have remained friends with my friends.”

Ante Tomić testified on 5 and 6 April 2001 in the case against [Duško Sikirica](http://www.icty.org/en/cases/party/775/4), commander of security at the Keraterm camp, and [Damir Došen](http://www.icty.org/en/cases/party/775/4) and [Dragan Kolundžija](http://www.icty.org/en/cases/party/775/4), both of whom were shift commanders. After the Prosecution had completed its case against them, all three pleaded guilty to persecutions on political, racial or religious grounds, and other charges were dropped. The Trial Chamber sentenced them to fifteen, five and three years' imprisonment, respectively.

Source: <http://www.icty.org/en/sid/198>

# Samir Poljak

Samir Poljak was born in the village of Jakupovići, in the Prijedor municipality of northwestern Bosnia and Herzegovina. Before the conflict broke out, Muslims, Serbs, and Croats lived there peacefully side by side.

“ There was a dead man lying there. It didn't even prompt any kind of feelings in me. It was as if it was just a piece of wood, a log, a rock. ”

In the spring of 1992, Serbian authorities forcibly took control of Prijedor municipality. Mr. Poljak was 19, he was attending the Prijedor technical secondary school and living at home with his parents, his brother, his brother’s wife, and their six month old son. “When Serb authorities took over the municipality, I stopped going to school as of that day because my parents thought that it was better for me not to continue going to school for my own safety.”

The situation in the area quickly deteriorated, with the increasing militarisation of Serb forces and rising propaganda against non-Serbs. In response, several villages - including Mr. Poljak’s - organized Territorial Defence units that erected barricades to protect the villages from the threat of Serbian attacks.

On 24 May 1992, Mr. Poljak remembers “That day, the situation was really tense.” Around 1p.m., he was eating his lunch and listening to the radio, when he heard a news announcement: “They said that unless the barricades were removed from the Banja Luka/Prijedor main road, Kozarac and the surrounding area would be attacked.” This really scared him, because in Jakupovići there was also a barricade.

As he was alone at home, he immediately went to his aunt’s house which was less than a kilometre away from the barricade, his mother was also there and his father soon joined them. Then some of Mr. Poljak’s cousins arrived and told them that they had to leave the village because it was under attack and a tank had broken through the barricade. Mr. Poljak told the Tribunal: “They said we had to leave the basement and run towards Kozarac because they hoped that there, it would be safer. This was all happening very quickly. No one really managed to collect any of their belongings. We just took off for Kozarac.” They cut across fields and through forests, avoiding the roads.

“We got some rest in the forest and then gradually and very slowly, we kept on retreating because we no longer knew -- the area was not safe. It had mixed population. There were Serb houses there and Muslim houses, too.”

Finally in the evening Mr. Poljak and his parents arrived in Brđani, where his sister-in-law’s father lived. They stayed there for two days. The village was constantly being shelled, so they stayed in the basement the entire time. “The basement was full of people seeking shelter. I didn't know most of those people.” On the second day, someone arrived and told them that the town of Kozarac had fallen and an order had been issued to go in a convoy and surrender to the Serb authorities there. After hearing this, most of the people who had been sheltering with Mr. Poljak, including his parents, his sister-in-law and his infant nephew, began to walk to Kozarac. Mr. Poljak himself did not go with them because he was scared. Along with his sister-in-law’s brother, Mr. Poljak decided to try to go to Croatia instead. The two young men spent the night in the woods, with many other refugees, listening to the sounds of shooting and shelling.



Mutnik Mosque in Kozarac, one of the religious sites damaged or destroyed by the Serbs in Prijedor Municipality in 1992.
(Prosecution Exhibit S15-5 from the Stakić case)

In the morning, they came across and joined a group of approximately a hundred people that was heading towards Croatia. The group was mixed; it included some armed men, but also women, children and elderly people. Mr. Poljak himself did not have a weapon and had never been a member of any armed group, nor performed any military service or received any military training. The group seemed to have been rather random. “And I'm not sure who the leader of this group was, who led the way, who was the guide… We started out slowly. I didn't know where I was going. We were in the woods and the area was unfamiliar to me. So we just walked on, and we followed those other people there.”

Later that morning, they paused to rest at a World War II memorial fountain on Kozara mountain. While they were resting there, they suddenly hear a shot close by. But someone quickly reassured them, saying: “Don’t be afraid. It was just an accidental shot.”

Before long, however, shooting broke out all around them. Mr. Poljak remembered: “We were just resting there and everything was silent, and suddenly, we heard sounds of shooting in several places at once. And we started running. I turned around, and everyone started running up the hill. They didn’t take the path. They just started running straight into the woods, scared by the shooting. So I started running, too.” When they reached a sort of plateau, they stopped running and the shooting stopped too. Suddenly, someone spoke through a loudspeaker and told them: “Do not resist. You are surrounded. Surrender immediately. We guarantee your personal safety.”

People began surrendering. Mr. Poljak and his relative did not know what to do. Then, they saw Ekro and Eno Alić, some of the wealthiest men from Kozarac, surrendering. Mr. Poljak thought: “Well, since the two of them are surrendering, I think we better surrender, too.”

When they came out of the woods and onto a dirt road, soldiers ordered them to lie down on their stomachs and put their hands behind their heads. The soldiers wore a variety of camouflage uniforms, some of which Mr. Poljak identified as old JNA (Yugoslav People’s Army) uniforms. A soldier kicked Mr. Poljak’s feet and instructed him and two other men who had surrendered to assist in gathering discarded weapons. The soldier guarding them asked them: “Why did this have to happen? Why did you do this? You didn’t stand a chance to defend yourselves. Don’t you know what forces attacked you?” The soldier then named some special units from Belgrade and from the Serb-controlled town of Knin in Croatia.

While they were gathering the weapons in the woods, Mr. Poljak heard a shot from the road. After collecting the weapons, they went back down to the road and were again forced to lie down on their stomachs. Soldiers demanded that all the people hand over their jewellery, money, and gold. Eventually, the soldiers formed them into a column and marched them down the road. They passed a man who was lying on the side of the road, who had been shot in the eye and was obviously dead. Mr. Poljak later heard that this man had been executed because he was a member of the Croatian National Guard (ZNG) who had come to Bosnia to fight the Serbs.

Finally, they reached the Kozara/Mrakovica road, where the soldiers put the men into trucks and drove them to the Benkovac barracks. There, the soldiers made them stand in rows, with their hands on their heads, outside in the hot sun. “There were many soldiers all over the place. They were shooting, singing, roasting a lamb on a spit.”

After some time, the soldiers took five or six people out of the group, one of whom Mr. Poljak recognized as Ekro Alić. “He was taken out and brought to a nearby building outside this building. So they probably started beating him up because we could hear his screams. We could hear him shout: ‘Don’t do this to me. Better kill me.’” Then, Mr. Poljak heard a shot, followed by silence. He never saw Ekro Alić or any of the other men taken from the group again.

“ Mr. Poljak never again saw any of his other relatives who were at the Omarska camp. He testified: "They are not around. They never returned. I can’t really believe that they would still be alive after ten years. ”

After several hours, the soldiers moved the remaining men to a small bathroom area. Mr. Poljak remained in that room for three days. It was so full that no one could lie down. “Some people leaned against the wall or next to each other.” From time to time, the soldiers threw in some bread and jam and water. Several times, the soldiers took some of the men out of the room to beat them. One of them was Hamid, a local Muslim cleric, who had also surrendered on the Kozara mountain. Mr. Poljak remembers: “Once he returned, he wasn’t even put back into the room. He remained […] – sitting on a small chair in the corridor. He didn’t have any clothes on from the waist up. He didn’t say anything. He didn’t speak. He just sat quietly on the chair.” Mr. Poljak could see that Hamid’s upper body was mottled black, blue and purple from bruises.

After three days, the boys were separated and taken away. Mr. Poljak and the rest of the men were also to be transferred elsewhere. “We didn't know where we were going or anything.”

As they ran to the buses that were waiting to transfer them, the detainees were forced to shout “Serbia, Serbia” and hold three fingers in the air in the manner of a traditional Serb salute. Soldiers stood along the path to the buses and beat the prisoners with their rifles as they ran to the buses. “They were hitting us with whatever they had, with the rifles. I remember that a couple of lads fell down, that they were beating them. I received several blows myself, but nothing really very bad.” Mr. Poljak and the other men were made to sit on the bus with their heads down so they could not see where they were going.

After some time, the bus stopped and the detainees were again forced to run through lines of soldiers who hit them. Mr. Poljak saw soldiers beating one man off to the side. He ran quickly to the garage-like building where they were now to be detained. No one knew where they were, but they later learned that this was Omarska, a former mine turned into a detention camp.

With about 150 other men, Mr. Poljak was detained in this garage for 10 days. When he summed up what he had endured there, he said: “It was just terrible. It was impossible. It's impossible to describe. It was hell.”

The garage was so packed that they had to remain standing at all times, and for the first few days there was not even room to turn around, until some people were taken away. Mr. Poljak remembers that there was no air to breathe: “It was dreadful. When they shut us up inside, it was very hot. There wasn’t enough air. I remember that within half an hour or one hour, I was soaking with sweat. Everything I was wearing, my shirt, my trousers, it was all soaked in sweat. It was unbearable. I remember that I pressed my hand against the wall, and I saw that the paint on the wall began to melt. The ceiling was full of drops of sweat. Sweat was dripping from the ceiling.”

The soldiers forced the prisoners to sing a song in exchange for a single jerry can of water, which the detainees then fought over, since it was not enough for all. “It was awful. It was a fight to survive, as simple as that. No one really cared about the person next to them. We fought like animals over the water they had brought us.” For two days the detainees received no food. Then someone opened the door and threw in some bread. Again, people started to fight each other to get it.

In the first evening, Mr. Poljak testified, “two young men suffocated… They were just lying there on the floor. They were dead. No one flicked an eye. No one paid any attention. That was the state we were in. And everyone just looked after himself. No one had any sympathy for the dead body lying there. Until a day ago, we had still talked to each other, and now this person was dead. But it made no difference. It was really awful.”

As the horrific conditions worsened some of the people in the garage broke down, “I remember one man… started to hallucinate: "Get out of that forest, what are you doing there? The Chetniks are coming. They will kill us." There was another elderly man who was looking into my eyes as if he were looking through me. He started to talk to me, "Come on, young man, saddle the horses. We are going."”

After a day or two, detainees were allowed outside to urinate. On the grass just lying there, there was a body of one of the young men who had suffocated. Again, the brutalities that Mr. Poljak experienced made him numb. “I wasn't even paying attention to that. There was a dead man lying there. It didn't even prompt any kind of feelings in me. It was as if it was just a piece of wood, a log, a rock.” Mr. Poljak admits that in this “abnormal situation” the only sensation he felt was enormous joy being outside his suffocating prison. “I felt wonderful. The smell of the air was somehow pleasant, and the sunshine. It was nice. It's beyond words. It was a wonderful feeling. That was something, it's stuck in my memory, the morning and the grass, the smell of fresh air.”

After 10 days, Mr. Poljak was finally transferred to a room in a different building at the camp. There, he found his father and some other relatives and they were held there for over a month. Mr. Poljak was interrogated three times and, at one point, told that he was being charged with participating in armed rebellion – although he had never participated in the conflict.

The soldiers also questioned and beat Mr. Poljak’s father many times. One day, they called him out of the room around five in the afternoon. Mr. Poljak remembers: “He came back at about midnight. Most of the people in the room were sleeping. He sat down. He didn’t say anything much. He was very scared. You could tell that he was scared by the look of him. He was sweating, but he didn’t want to talk about it.”

About an hour later, someone came to the door and called out Mr. Poljak’s father’s name again. Mr Poljak told the Tribunal: “I remember clearly that he stood up. He went to the door. He turned, looked at me, he smiled, and went out.” Mr. Poljak never saw his father again. At Omarska, none of the people taken away at night ever returned.

In August, most of the prisoners were transferred to different camps. Mr. Poljak was left behind at Omarska, along with roughly 150 other detainees. He remembers: “Those of us who stayed, we were really scared. We thought they had left us there to kill us.”

The next day, however, each prisoner was assigned a bed—it was the first time in three months that Mr. Poljak was able to lie down. Other conditions also improved: there was no mistreatment, food was better, deteinees could shave and cut their hair. They were assigned to cleaning toilets, removing all traces of killing. “I know that a couple of guys went to remove several dead bodies, not far from the camp, which had lain there for a long time and I remember it well…When they tried to move them, they simply -- these bodies, I mean they simply disintegrated. The arm came off, a leg came off.”

Detainees were confused by these unexpected improvements to their conditions. However, soon it all became clear as foreign journalists and Red Cross representatives visited the camp during the next few weeks.

Finally, Mr. Poljak was transferred to the Manjača camp. He remained there until late December, 1992, at which point he was transferred to Batković in northeastern Bosnia, near Bjeljina. He remained there until 9 October 1993, when he was freed after a prisoner exchange. “I have no idea how I survived and how it is that I'm still normal, if I am normal.”

In 1994, Mr. Poljak left Bosnia. After the war, the Prijedor area became part of Serb-dominated entity in Bosnia and Herzegovina, “Republika Srpska”. Mr. Poljak has never returned. His brother visited the village and took pictures of their house. “There are just fragments of walls left standing. It's a ruin.”

Mr. Poljak never again saw any of his other relatives who were at the Omarska camp. He testified: “They are not around. They never returned. I can’t really believe that they would still be alive after ten years. They are just not there, and their bodies were never found or identified.”

Samir Poljak testified on 23 and 24 July 2002 against [Milomir Stakić](http://www.icty.org/en/cases/party/782/4) who, at the time of these events, was the president of the Prijedor Municipal Assembly. On 31 July 2003, Milomir Stakić was convicted of crimes against humanity and violations of the laws or customs of war, and was sentenced to life imprisonment, which on appeal was converted to 40 years imprisonment. Among other crimes, he was found responsible for setting up the detention camp at Omarska and for the mistreatment and torture of Bosnian Muslim civilian detainees there.

Samir Poljak also testified on 20 November 2002 in the case against [Radoslav Brđanin](http://www.icty.org/en/cases/party/673/4). Radoslav Brđanin was a leading political figure in the region known as the Autonomous Region of Krajina (ARK) and was sentenced on appeal to 30 years imprisonment for participating in a strategic plan that, amongst other things, led to the establishment of detention facilities across the region, including Omarska camp.

Source: <http://www.icty.org/en/sid/10126>

**Statement of Guilt: Dragan Obrenović**

Dragan Obrenović, was a senior officer and commander within the Bosnian Serb Army in July 1995. He was convicted for persecutions carried out through the murder of hundreds of Bosnian Muslim civilians, committed in and around Srebrenica. Under the plea agreement, he agreed to testify in other proceedings before the Tribunal, including those trials related to Srebrenica. Obrenović was sentenced to 17 years’ imprisonment.

30 October 2003 (extract from transcript of hearing)

“ [Interpretation] On the territory of the country in which I was born, shooting from firearms was usual when celebrating the birth of a male child. These shots tell you everything, what a new male member of the family means and what is expected of him - strength, protection; he should be a warrior, a soldier, the head of the family, as they say in our parts. Unfortunately, when other kinds of shooting started in the former Yugoslavia, shooting in war, it was normal for every man, every male child, to put on a uniform, take up a weapon, and go to protect his homeland, his nation, and ultimately his family. This was expected of him. This was his role, a sacred role.

There was no choice. You could be either a soldier or a traitor. At the beginning of the war, it seemed as if the war and all it brought with it was impossible, that this wasn't really happening to us, and that everything would be resolved within a few days, and that finally our generation would have a chance. We didn't even notice how we were drawn into the vortex of inter-ethnic hatred and how neighbours were no longer able to live beside each other, how death moved into the vicinity, and we didn't even notice that we had got used to it. Death became our reality.

Unfortunately, it became everyday reality. Who before that could have believed that the horrors of war would have become everyday reality? Who could have believed that they could become a part of our lives? Surrounded with horrors, we got used to them and went on living like that. Among those horrors, things happened that were done by people who knew each other, people who, until yesterday, had lived almost as family members together. In Bosnia, a neighbour means more than a relative. In Bosnia, having coffee with your neighbour is a ritual, and this is what we trampled on and forgot. We lost ourselves in hatred and brutality. And in this vortex of terrible misfortune and horror, the horror of Srebrenica happened.

I am here before Your Honours because I wish to express my remorse. I have thought for a long time, and I'm always followed by the same thought - guilt. I find it very hard to say this truth. I am to blame for everything I did at that time. I am trying to erase all this and to be what I was not at that time. I am also to blame for what I did not do, for not trying to protect those prisoners. Regardless of the temporary nature of my then-post. I ask myself again and again, what could I have done that I didn't do? Thousands of innocent victims perished. Graves remain behind, refugees, general destruction and misfortune and misery. I bear part of the responsibility for this.

There is misfortune on all sides that stays behind as a warning that this should never happen again. My testimony and admission of guilt will also remove blame from my nation because it is individual guilt, the guilt of a man named Dragan Obrenović. I stand by this. I am responsible for this. The guilt for which I feel remorse and for which I apologise to the victims and to their shadows. I will be happy if this contributed to reconciliation in Bosnia, if neighbours can again shake hands, if our children can again play games together, and if they have the right to a chance.

I will be happy if my testimony helps the families of victims, if I can spare them having to testify again and thus relive the horrors and the pain during their testimony. It is my wish that my testimony should help prevent this ever happening again, not just in Bosnia, but anywhere in the world. It is too late for me now, but for the children living in Bosnia now, it's not too late and I hope that this will be a good warning to them.

In our wartime sufferings, no one has come out as the winner; everybody is suffering now. On all sides, there is still pain. What has won the victory is misfortune and unhappiness, as a consequence of blind hatred. The spirit of this unhappiness still hovers over our Bosnian hills, which have suffered so much, and it will take years to wipe out the traces of this horrible war and to have smoke rise again from people's chimneys, from the hearths, and maybe decades will have to pass before the wounds in people's souls are healed. If my confession, my testimony, and my remorse, if my attempt to face myself contributes to the quicker healing of these wounds, I will have done my duty of a soldier, a fighter, a human being, and a father.

In the end, I wish to thank the Prosecution for their efforts to establish the truth and for their efforts to have justice done. I would like to thank you, Your Honours, for listening to me so attentively throughout my testimony. I tried to answer every question put to me as correctly and truthfully as I could. Thank you. ”

Video of statement: <http://www.icty.org/en/sid/219>

**Statement of Guilt: Biljana Plavšić**

17 December 2002 (extract from transcript of hearing)

“ [Interpretation] Mr. President, Your Honours, Madam Prosecutor, Counsel: I'm thankful to have this opportunity to speak today. Nearly two years ago, I came before this Tribunal, having been charged with participating in crimes against other human beings, and even against humanity itself. I came for two reasons: To confront these charges and to spare my people, for it was clear that they would pay the price of any refusal to come. I have now had time to examine these charges and, together with my lawyers, conduct our own investigation and evaluation. I have now come to the belief and accept the fact that many thousands of innocent people were the victims of an organised, systematic effort to remove Muslims and Croats from the territory claimed by Serbs.

At the time, I easily convinced myself that this was a matter of survival and self-defence. In fact, it was more. Our leadership, of which I was a necessary part, led an effort which victimised countless innocent people. Explanations of self-defence and survival offer no justification. By the end, it was said, even among our own people, that in this war we had lost our nobility of character. The obvious questions become, if this truth is now self-evident, why did I not see it earlier? And how could our leaders and those who followed have committed such acts? The answer to both questions is, I believe, fear, a blinding fear that led to an obsession, especially for those of us for whom the Second World War was a living memory, that Serbs would never again allow themselves to become victims. In this, we in the leadership violated the most basic duty of every human being, the duty to restrain oneself and to respect the human dignity of others. We were committed to do whatever was necessary to prevail.

Although I was repeatedly informed of allegations of cruel and inhuman conduct against non-Serbs, I refused to accept them or even to investigate. In fact, I immersed myself in addressing the suffering of the war's innocent Serb victims. This daily work confirmed in my mind that we were in a struggle for our very survival and that in this struggle, the international community was our enemy, and so I simply denied these charges, making no effort to investigate. I remained secure in my belief that Serbs were not capable of such acts. In this obsession of ours to never again become victims, we had allowed ourselves to become victimisers.

You have heard, both yesterday and today, the litany of suffering that this produced. I have accepted responsibility for my part in this. This responsibility is mine and mine alone. It does not extend to other leaders who have a right to defend themselves. It certainly should not extend to our Serbian people, who have already paid a terrible price for our leadership. The knowledge that I am responsible for such human suffering and for soiling the character of my people will always be with me.

There is a justice which demands a life for each innocent life, a death for each wrongful death. It is, of course, not possible for me to meet the demands of such justice. I can only do what is in my power and hope that it will be of some benefit, that having come to the truth, to speak it, and to accept responsibility. This will, I hope, help the Muslim, Croat, and even Serb innocent victims not to be overtaken with bitterness, which often becomes hatred and is in the end self-destructive.

As for my own people, I have referred today to their character. I think it, therefore, important to explain what I'm speaking of. There now stands in the centre of Belgrade a great domed church, still under construction, the construction begun in 1935. Our people have persevered in building this church as a monument to a man who more than any other formed the character of the Serbian people. That man was the great St. Sava. The path he followed was marked by self-restraint and respect for all others. A great diplomat who gained the respect of his people and the world around him, a man whose character has become deeply ingrained in the Serbian people.

It is the path and example of St. Sava that the great Serbian leaders have followed, even in our own times, demonstrating a noble endurance and dignity, even in the most difficult circumstances. One need only point to Bishop Artemije Radosavljević, who to this very day is a voice crying out for justice in what has become for Serbs the wilderness of Kosovo. Tragically, our leaders, including myself, abandoned this path in the last war. I think it is clear that I have separated myself from those leaders, but too late. Yet, this leadership, without shame, continues to seek the loyalty and support of our people. It is done by provoking fear and speaking half-truths in order to convince our people that the world is against us. But by now the fruits of this leadership are clear. They are graves, refugees, isolation, and bitterness against the whole world, which spurns us because of these very leaders.

I have been urged that this is not the time nor the place to speak this truth. We must wait, they say, until others also accept responsibility for their deeds. But I believe that there is no place and that there is no time where it is not appropriate to speak the truth. I believe that we must put our own house in order. Others will have to examine themselves and their own conduct. We must live in the world and not in a cave. The world is always imperfect and often unjust, but as long as we persevere and preserve our identity and our character, we have nothing to fear.

As for me, it is the members of this Trial Chamber that have been given the responsibility to judge. You must strive in your judgment to find whatever justice this world can offer, not only for me but also for the innocent victims of this war. I will, however, make one appeal, and that is to the Tribunal itself, the Judges, Prosecutors, investigators; that you do all within your power to bring justice to all sides. In doing this, you may be able to accomplish the mission for which this Tribunal has been created. ”

Video of statement: <http://www.icty.org/en/sid/221> **Radovan Karadzic jailed for Bosnia war Srebrenica genocide**

24 March 2016

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-35893804>

Former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic has been convicted of genocide and war crimes in the 1992-95 Bosnian war, and sentenced to 40 years in jail.

UN judges in The Hague found him guilty of 10 of 11 charges, including genocide over the 1995 Srebrenica massacre.

Karadzic, 70, is the most senior political figure to face judgement over the violent collapse of Yugoslavia.

His case is being seen as one of the most important war crimes trials since World War Two.

He had denied the charges, saying that any atrocities committed were the actions of rogue individuals, not the forces under his command.

The trial, in which he represented himself, lasted eight years.

The current president of the Bosnian Serb Republic, Milorad Dodik, condemned the verdict.

"The West has apportioned blame to the Serbian people and that guilty cliche was imposed on all the decision-makers, including in this case today... Karadzic," he said at a ceremony to commemorate the anniversary of the start of Nato air strikes against Yugoslavia in 1999.

"It really hurts that somebody has decided to deliver this verdict in The Hague exactly today, on the day when Nato decided to bomb Serbia... to cause so much catastrophic damage and so many casualties," Mr Dodik added.

**At the scene: Paul Adams, BBC News, The Hague**

Radovan Karadzic had said no reasonable court would convict him. But listening to Judge Kwon, it was hard to see how any reasonable court could not convict him.

Mr Karadzic listened intently, the corners of his mouth pulled down in a look of permanent disgust and, just perhaps, disbelief. By the end of an hour and 40 minutes, it was obvious what was coming.

There's a strong sense of satisfaction here that one of the chief architects of Bosnia's bloody dismemberment has finally been found guilty. The court's work is almost done.

But all eyes now will be on the fate of Karadzic's main general, Ratko Mladic. His name came up a great deal during Judge Kwon's summation, particularly in regard to the massacre of Srebrenica.

It will be astonishing if Gen Mladic doesn't face a similar verdict and sentence.

Meanwhile, some relatives of victims expressed disappointment at the outcome.

"This came too late," said Bida Smajlovic, whose husband was killed at Srebrenica.

"We were handed down a verdict in 1995. There is no sentence that could compensate for the horrors we went through or for the tears of only one mother, let alone thousands," she was quoted as saying by Reuters news agency.

Karadzic's lawyer said he would appeal, a process that could take several more years.

"Dr Karadzic is disappointed and astonished. He feels that he was convicted on inference instead of evidence and will appeal [against] the judgement," Peter Robinson told journalists.

Karadzic faced two counts of genocide.

He was found not guilty of the first, relating to killing in several Bosnian municipalities.

But he was found guilty of the second count relating to Srebrenica, where Bosnian Serb forces massacred more than 7,000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys.

"Karadzic was in agreement with the plan of the killings," Judge O-Gon Kwon said.

The massacre happened in July 1995 when Srebrenica, an enclave besieged by Bosnian Serb forces for three years, was overrun. The bodies of the victims were dumped in mass graves.

Karadzic was also found guilty of crimes against humanity relating to the siege and shelling of the city of Sarajevo over several years which left nearly 12,000 people dead.

The judge said he had significantly contributed to a plan which emanated from the leadership and whose primary purpose was to spread terror in the city.

**Charges**

**Genocide**

* Count 1 - genocide (in municipalities of Bratunac, Foca, Klyuc, Prijedor, Sanski Most, Vlasenica and Zvornik) - **not guilty**
* Count 2 - genocide (in Srebrenica) -**guilty**

**Crimes against humanity**

* Count 3 - persecutions - **guilty**
* Count 4 - extermination - **guilty**
* Count 5 - murder - **guilty**
* Count 7 - deportation - **guilty**
* Count 8 - inhumane acts (forcible transfer) - **guilty**

**Violations of the laws or customs of war**

* Count 6 - murder - **guilty**
* Count 9 - terror (in Sarajevo) - **guilty**
* Count 10 - unlawful attacks on civilians (in Sarajevo) -**guilty**
* Count 11 - taking hostage of UN observers and peacekeepers - **guilty**

Mr Karadzic was also found guilty of orchestrating a campaign known as "ethnic cleansing" of non-Serbs from the territory of the breakaway Bosnian Serb republic, in which hundreds and thousands were driven from their homes.

He would only be expected to serve two-thirds of his sentence. His time spent in detention - slightly more than seven years - will count towards the total.

Top UN human rights official Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein welcomed the verdict as "hugely significant".

He said the trial "should give pause to leaders across Europe and elsewhere who seek to exploit nationalist sentiments and scapegoat minorities for broader social ills".

At least 100,000 people in total died during fighting in the the Bosnian war. The conflict lasted nearly four years before a US-brokered peace deal brought it to an end in 1995.

Gen Ratko Mladic, who commanded Bosnian Serb forces, is also awaiting his verdict at The Hague.

Karadzic Timeline

1945: Born in Montenegro

1960: Moves to Sarajevo

1968: Publishes collection of poetry

1971: Graduates in medicine

1983: Becomes team psychologist for Red Star Belgrade football club

1990: Becomes president of Serbian Democratic Party

1990s Political leader of Bosnian Serbs

2008: Arrested in Serbia

2009: Trial begins at The Hague

2016: Guilty verdict, sentenced to 40 years