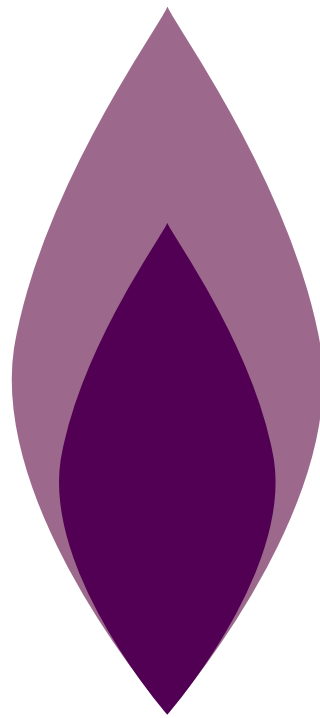
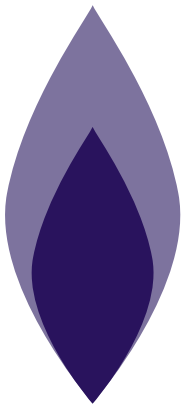


KEEP THE MEMORY ALIVE



UCU Commemorates the 20th Anniversary
of the Bosnian Genocide

Holocaust Memorial Day 27 January 2015



INTRODUCTION

Against the backdrop of the civil war, Bosnian Serb forces descended on the Bosnian Muslim ‘safe haven’ of Srebrenica. Around 8,000 men and boys were murdered – the single largest mass murder in Europe since 1945.

Like genocides before, death has no distinction between ethnicity, gender and age.

This booklet forms part of our work to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day in which we not only remember those who were murdered in the Holocaust but also the many who were killed in subsequent genocides in Armenia, Bosnia, Cambodia, Darfur and Rwanda.

Genocide

The term genocide was recognised by the United Nations General Assembly in 1946 following the adoption of a resolution that affirmed that genocide was a crime under international law. In December 1948, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (CPPCG) legally defined the crime of genocide for the first time.

The Convention (article 2)

In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- a) killing members of the group
- b) causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group
- c) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part
- d) imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group
- e) forcibly transferring children of the group to another group... any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such.

Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, Article II

EIGHT STAGES OF GENOCIDE

Classification

The differences between people are not respected. There's a division of 'us' and 'them'. This can be carried out through the use of stereotypes, or excluding people who are perceived to be different.

Symbolisation

This is a visual manifestation of hatred. Jews in Nazi Europe were forced to wear yellow stars to show that they were 'different'.

Dehumanisation

Those who are perceived as different are treated with no form of human right or personal dignity. During the Rwandan genocide Tutsis were referred to as 'cockroaches'; the Nazis referred to Jews as 'vermin'.

Organisation

Genocides are always planned. Regimes of hatred often train those who are to carry out the destruction of a people such as the training of the Janjaweed militia in Darfur.

Polarisation

Propaganda begins to be spread by hate groups. The Nazis used the newspaper Der Stürmer to spread and incite messages of hate about Jewish people.

Preparation

Victims are identified based on their differences. At the beginning of the Cambodian genocide, the Khmer Rouge separated out those who lived in the cities and did not work in the fields. Jews in Nazi Europe were forced to live in Ghettos.

Extermination

The hate group murders their identified victims in a deliberate and systematic campaign of violence. Millions of lives have been destroyed or changed beyond recognition through genocide.

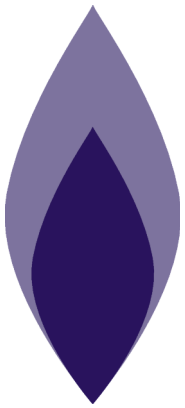
Denial

The perpetrators or later generations deny the existence of any crime.

Gregory H Stanton,
President of Genocide
Watch developed the Eight
Stages of Genocide which
explains how genocide
occurs. At each of the
earlier stages there is the
opportunity offered to
members of the community
or by the international
community to halt the
stages and stop genocide
before it happens.

Holocaust Memorial Day

KEEP THE
MEMORY
ALIVE



HOLOCAUST
MEMORIAL
DAY

January 27, 2015 marks the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau. It is the day every year that we commemorate the memories of the millions who were murdered in the Holocaust and subsequent genocides in Bosnia, Cambodia, Darfur and Rwanda.

Holocaust Memorial Day provides an opportunity to remember but also for all of us to continue to challenge hatred and persecution in the world today.

July 11, 2015 will also mark the 20th anniversary of the genocide in Srebrenica, Bosnia.

Bosnia

The following is being reproduced with the kind permission of the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust.

Background

Yugoslavia was created in 1929 after the unification of Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

BOSNIA 1992–1995



The former Yugoslavia

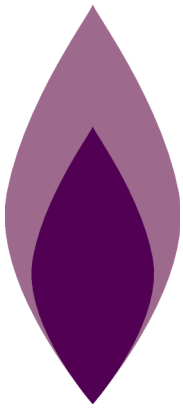
The history of the area means it has always been contested between different ethnic groups. Orthodox Christian Serbs and Roman Catholic Croats lived interspersed throughout Croatia and Bosnia. The Ottoman Empire ruled for many centuries, leaving a legacy of a Muslim population in Bosnia; neither Croat nor Serb.

World War II left a poisonous legacy in Yugoslavia. Extreme nationalist Croats (the Ustaše) were allowed to set up a puppet state by the Nazis. They launched a ferocious campaign of murder, atrocities and 'ethnic cleansing' against Serbs, Jews and Gypsies.

After the war, Communist dictator Josip Broz Tito claimed legitimacy from his role in the defeat of the Nazis and the Ustaše, and suppressed both Croat and Serb nationalism. He set up a complicated federal constitutional structure which carefully balanced the different nationalities in Yugoslavia.

By the 1970s Yugoslavia appeared to the outside world to be peaceful and economically successful. However, the memory of World War II atrocities, and centuries-old ethnic and religious tensions, were still present, despite their public suppression by Tito.

BOSNIA 1992–1995



After Tito's death in 1980, and the decline of communism across Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia's political settlement was undermined by the resurgence of Serb and Croat nationalism.

Slobodan Milošević, Communist President of Serbia, broke the Titoist taboo and began to use Serbian nationalist sentiment to his own advantage. He engineered the end of autonomous government in the ethnically-mixed Serbian regions of Kosovo and Vojvodina, and ensured a sympathetic leadership was installed in neighbouring Montenegro. Tito's careful constitutional checks and balances were in tatters, as Serbian leader Milošević now controlled nearly half the country.

The situation inflamed nationalism in Croatia and Slovenia, both suspicious of Serbian nationalism. In 1991 both Slovenia and Croatia declared independence. This left multi-ethnic Bosnia and Herzegovina in an impossible position. Bosniaks and Croats did not want to stay part of a Serb-dominated rump Yugoslavia. Most Bosnian Serbs wanted to join the emerging 'Greater Serbia', being created by Milošević. Yet they lived interspersed in the same country.

Bosnia and Herzegovina held a referendum on independence in February 1992, which was boycotted by the Bosnian Serbs. After independence was declared, Serb and federal Yugoslav armies entered Bosnia to secure Serb areas. The war which followed was a brutal interethnic conflict focused on territorial control.

Bosnia: the war

The Bosnian war resulted in the death of around 100,000 people, and the displacement of over two million men, women and children. A campaign of war crimes, 'ethnic cleansing' and genocide was perpetrated by Bosnian Serb troops under the orders of Slobodan Milošević. The Croatian military also carried out war crimes and ethnic cleansing, on a lesser scale.

Siege of Sarajevo

Sarajevo, the capital city of Bosnia was the scene of the longest siege in modern warfare. From April 1992 to February 1996, the city was encircled by the Serb-controlled army. Civilians endured shelling of their city for nearly four years. The Bosnian Serbs burnt down and destroyed cultural monuments, public meeting spaces and the national library in the city.

Prijedor

From 1991, in the north-western Bosnian municipality of Prijedor, non-Serbs were forced to wear white armbands. The Serbian newspaper Kozarski Vjesnik began to publish allegations against the non-Serb residents that they belonged to far-right fascist organisations, or had involvement with Islamic terrorism. Radio Prijedor began to broadcast anti-Croat and anti-Bosniak propaganda and television stations began to broadcast interviews with radical Serbian leaders and pro-Serbian nationalistic songs which were previously banned.

After the takeover of power from the municipal Assembly by Serb forces, non-Serbs were forced out of their jobs and approximately 47,000 homes were destroyed.

Non-Serbs were sent to concentration camps which had been set up by the ruling Serbs in mid-1992. Women were taken to Trnopolje camp where systematic rape took place on a regular basis and camp officers would beat all prisoners indiscriminately with whatever weapon came to hand. It is estimated that around 7,000 people passed through the camp. Around 3,500 people, mainly men, were held in inhumane conditions in the Omarska Camp. The prisoners were given one meal per day and violence from the camp officers was widespread. Living conditions were atrocious, with suffocation caused by overcrowding being a constant threat to the prisoners.

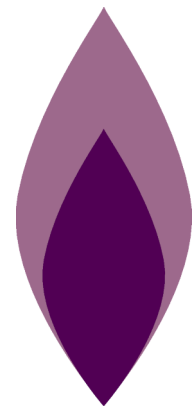
The camp was closed in August 1992 after a visit from foreign journalists. The surviving 1,500 prisoners were divided into groups and deported to different destinations.

Refugees

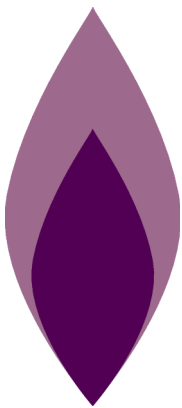
Over two million people were displaced by the genocide in Bosnia in 1995.

As Serbian forces began their campaign of ethnic cleansing, non-Serbs were forced out of their communities and their homes were destroyed.

BOSNIA
1992–1995



BOSNIA 1992–1995



They had to carry what little possessions they could manage. A UN report judged that *'murder, torture, arbitrary arrest and detention, extra-judicial executions, rape and sexual assaults, confinement of civilian population in ghetto areas, forcible removal, displacement and deportation of civilian population, deliberate military attacks or threats of attacks on civilians and civilian areas, and wanton destruction of property'* were methods used to carry out 'ethnic cleansing' during the Bosnian War.

In 1995, towards the end of the war, the Croatian army carried out its own campaign of ethnic cleansing against Serbs in the Krajina border region of Croatia. It is estimated that 300,000 Croatian Serbs were displaced throughout the crisis and, to date, only around a third of those refugees have returned to their former homes.

Genocide at Srebrenica

In July 1995, a genocidal massacre took place in the Bosnian town of Srebrenica. Around 8,000 Bosnian Muslims were murdered by the Army of Republika Srpska (the Bosnian Serb Republic) led by General Ratko Mladić. The victims were mostly men, ranging from teenagers to the elderly, however, there were instances of the murder of young children and women.

The massacre at Srebrenica was one of the most horrific events of the war in the former Balkan States. It remains the single largest mass murder in Europe since World War II.

The Bosnian Serbs wanted to create a territorially contiguous political entity of Republika Srpska, and Srebrenica was a key link which needed to be ethnically cleansed to create this. In 1992, Serbian military and paramilitary forces began the process of ethnically cleansing the territory of Bosniaks, killing and displacing many thousands of people.

On 16 April 1993, the United Nations Security Council declared that Srebrenica was a 'safe area' and called for the area to be free from armed attacks. Despite this, the violence continued culminating in the massacre of 11–16 July 1995, in which the Serbian army entered the town and began their campaign of genocide which included mass executions, deportation of Bosniaks from their homes, and the use of rape as a weapon of war.

In the weeks leading up to 6 July 1995, tens of thousands of non-Serbs had taken refuge in Srebrenica from Serbian attacks in the north-east of Bosnia. The refugees were under the protection of Dutch Infantry forces, and fresh food and water were in short supply. When shelling close to refugee centres in Srebrenica began, the Dutch commander called UN headquarters requesting 'close air support'. As shelling intensified, more refugees from camps in the south fled to the town. Approximately 4,000 refugees were in the centre by 10 July and chaos spread. The Dutch commander called for NATO assistance to stop the shelling, however,

assistance was delayed by the completion of the incorrect paperwork and NATO planes needing to refuel. By the afternoon of 11 July, Serb Commander Ratko Mladić arrived in the city.

On 12 July 1995 buses arrived in Srebrenica to remove the women and children and take them outside of the Serb-controlled zones. Approximately 23,000 women and children were deported over the course of 30 hours. During the deportations, Serb forces began selecting all men aged over 12 for 'interrogation of suspected war crimes'. These boys and men were then held in lorries and warehouses.

The first killing of unarmed Muslim men began on 13 July in warehouses. At least 8,000 of them were murdered. They were marched to the places of their deaths. Up to 3,000 were shot in the fields. Others were trapped in warehouses, football fields, school playgrounds and farms and shot, in their thousands, with machine guns and grenades. Thousands of bodies were buried in mass graves. Some of the bodies have been recovered and reburied, but identification has proved extremely difficult.

On the evening of 12 July 1995, approximately 15,000 men who were being held in trucks and warehouses in Srebrenica managed to escape, but were shelled as they attempted to flee for safety across the mountains. They formed a column and began to walk the 55km toward Tuzla. Serb forces created numerous ambushes and attacks on the column of Bosnian Muslims throughout their journey. Four days later, the column of men



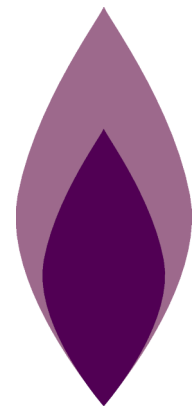
Srebrenica: Potočari Memorial

arrived in Tuzla, exhausted. Many were injured. No more than 4,000 of the original column survived the journey, and it is thought that 2,000 refugees remained in hiding in various parts of the journey after the main column reached Tuzla.

On 15 January 2009 The European Parliament passed the following resolution:

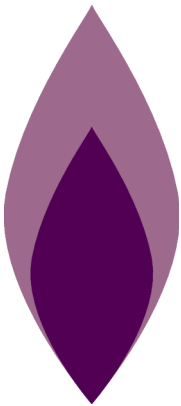
The European Parliament calls on the Council and the Commission to commemorate appropriately the anniversary of Srebrenica-Potočari act of genocide by supporting Parliament's recognition of 11 July as the day of commemoration of the Srebrenica genocide all over the EU, and to call on all countries of the western Balkans to do the same.

BOSNIA 1992–1995



Keep the memory alive: Safet Vukalić

BOSNIA
1992–1995



Safet is a Bosnian Muslim and survivor of the ethnic cleansing in Prijedor, Bosnia. His father and brother were imprisoned by the Bosnian Serb army in concentration camps.

I think it was May. I think it was May '92. Initially the soldiers came round that day with guns and there was tanks on the main roads and they said 'All the men come outside and go on the main road.' They said 'You'll be questioned.'

My dad and my brother went. My mum was screaming and crying. I was going to go out as well because I was 16 at the time, and my mum said, 'No, you stay home.' When you hear gunshots, you think what happened? You know they're out there, but you know, you think, have they been killed? And then later on you hear it was one of your neighbours that was killed. A guy who was just a few years older than me. And so his family, they had to go and collect the bodies... it's just really starting to sort of... be hard to talk about, because I'm still seeing those things as well.

We just didn't know what was going to happen with my brother and my dad. And we also stayed a few nights round people's houses. We just, you know, groups of us, you know, a number of families, together in one house rather than alone, because you know they can come round, kill you, you know. And it just felt a bit safer. Just being with a group of people, thinking, well, you know, they're surely not going to come and kill all of us. Even though that's what they were doing.

We eventually found out where they were taken and it was the concentration camp in Keraterm, which I think was a factory before. After that first camp, we heard that my dad was taken to a second camp, which was Omarska. And we heard of all the killings that went on in that camp, and you think, well, they've taken him there to kill him. Simple as that. To me there was no other explanation. He was going to be killed, and I thought I wasn't going to – I wasn't – I wasn't going to have my dad....Yeah.

Then we heard a while later that my dad was – that my dad was taken to a third camp, which was called Manjača. You hope that they are on the Red Cross register, they won't, hopefully they won't kill him now. So it was a bit better.

My brother was taken to a different concentration camp, which was Trnopolje, and I'd say it was a bit more relaxed in a way that there wasn't as many killings in that camp. And I mean, the stories we heard from that camp weren't even coming close to the stories we heard about the Omarska camp, which was the second one that my dad went to. Then he was asked to sign off everything he owned in order to be released. They were allowed

to leave, as long as they agreed to leave for a third country. As in, they were released to Croatia but they had to leave – they weren't allowed basically to stay in Croatia or come back to Bosnia, they had to go to a third country. And my dad was one of those people that was picked to go to come and live in UK.

I think it was soon after he was released, and I remember I was sleeping in one room... There was two big bangs that went up one after the other. It was, I'd say, within seconds perhaps. One of the neighbours, he was a Serb and he was in the Serbian army and he was home at the time, so he came and said, 'Don't worry, I'll go and see what has happened'. He came back and he said, you know, 'The mosque has been destroyed.'

It's a bad thing to say, but it was a relief, you know. Buildings can be rebuilt; lives can't. But it was helpful that, you know, there was just someone who wanted to help. Now, for all I know, he could have done things in other cities, he could have been a war criminal to other people. To me he wasn't, to me, he was a friend. They were not all the same. Even though they were in the same army, they weren't all the same. If they were, my dad always said, we'd all be dead. They had the weapons to do it.

We left Bosnia on 2 December 1993, and it was, I mean, the snow was about a metre high, you know, three feet high and we went, we were taken to the airport, got on a plane, don't really remember how the flight went, and then we were coming above the UK, and as soon as we started going down, I thought wow, everything is green. Where is the snow? And that was the first it sort of hit me what the weather in UK is about.

Yes, it happened. And people think 'oh, it's fine now.' Well, to me, the only thing that's happened, there's no concentration camps, and the war has stopped. Still division exists; the country is divided, my town is in a part that's occupied by Serbs. I see it as occupied because they rule. I remember first time when I went to visit, my home was still occupied. There was, you know, a family from another side of – another part of Bosnia. And that was again a weird feeling, you know. You can't go to your home that your dad's built from the ground up.

I was a victim of all this. I was an innocent person and people are victims of crime innocently, you know. Walking down the street, get beaten up, and it is helpful when you've got someone to understand where you're coming from and to say, I understand you. I am here to try and help you. I'm here to listen to you. It means a lot. Sometimes you might not be able to change anything, but at least if I know that at least you understand, and you are in a way on my side, even though you're not able to change anything physically, you are on my side, and I know, OK, there is hope. Not everyone's the same.

BOSNIA 1992–1995

