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## Joint Mission to Zagreb and Exploratory Visit to Slovenia Report

M. Cherif Bassiouni 1937-2017

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UNITED NATIONS

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Commission of Experts established pursuant to  
Security Council Resolution 780 (1992)  
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TO: *Ms. Karen Kenny, Centre for Human Rights  
Zagreb*  
FAX No. *0385 41 176 704*

FAX-OUT No: 187

FROM: Julio A. Baez, Legal Adviser/Assistant Secretary of the Commission *Jy*

SUBJECT *Please find attached the document  
requested -*  
*Best regards -*

*Report of NGOs  
Coordinators of  
Advance Team*

K.K.

2/36

Commission of Experts  
established pursuant to Security Council resolution 780 (1992)

✓ In-depth investigation of allegations of sexual assault,  
extrajudicial executions, torture and alleged violations  
of international humanitarian law particularly in detention  
camps in connection with the hostilities in the former Yugoslavia

REPORT ON A JOINT MISSION TO ZAGREB  
AND ON AN EXPLORATORY VISIT TO SLOVENIA  
30 JANUARY TO 11 FEBRUARY, 1994

by:

SABINA NEGOVETIC

ELENOR RICHTER-LYONETTE

Givrins & Berne: 18 February, 1994

### GROUPS OF POTENTIAL WITNESSES AND SURVIVORS

We suggest seven groups of potential witnesses from the non-governmental spectrum for interview by Commission of Experts teams:

- ▶ The anti-war spectrum witnesses and survivors
- ▶ The 'MacKinnon Group' e.g. Kareta, Tresnjevka etc.
- ▶ Home Clubs and self help groups of displaced persons
- ▶ Those under the care of local doctors in the UNHCR refugee camp of Gasinci who have no relatives in direct combat zones and were screened for resettlement to third countries with departure dates in March or April.
- ▶ Those who participate in programmes run by humanitarian and aid agencies
- ▶ The quango group
- ▶ The church group.

In addition, government offices offer assistance in contacts with victims and witnesses. A separate report will probably deal with these sources.

u/36

## Annex 1

## MEDICAL CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ✓

The Medical Center for Human Rights pictures itself as a non-governmental organization. Their links with the Division of Information and Research of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Croatia suggest, however, that the Centre is more of a 'quango' or quasi-non-governmental organization. Dr. Helena Nakic-Alifirivic, for example, welcomed us at the Office of Displaced Persons & Refugees of the Government on 31 January, is a niece of Jelena Brajsa of Caritas, Zagreb, as we heard on 8 February, and she is actively associated with the Medical Centre for Human Rights. Equipped with newest data technology, the Centre is actively involved in the documentation of war atrocities and war crimes against Croats and others.

Interesting enough, the Centre enjoys the good services of Dr. Mladen Loncar, himself an ex-detainee held at Begejci near Zenjani in the Vojvodina and in other places. Mr. Loncar is a medical doctor by profession and took part in the first exchange of prisoners between Serbia and Croatia on 10 December, 1991. Instead of returning to Novisad, where he had lived beforehand, the then 30 year old moved to Zagreb and started working with ex-detainees. Mr. Loncar is calm, committed and professional there is no search for attention in his voice when he says that having being released on 10th December, the International Human Rights Day, made him start to work for justice and healing.

Mladen Loncar works with ♂ survivors of detention camps all over Croatia. His work is not financed by the Medical Center or the government but by donations from the Croat community abroad. He observes phenomenons such as post-traumatic stress, psycho-somatic reactions, trauma, anxiety, tendency to suicide, sudden death without easy explanation and other post-detention reactions.

He distinguishes between the effects of rape in women and men, and continues to explain that the worst possible for a woman would be to have been raped, to have become pregnant, and to have been forced to give birth to a baby impregnated a result of the rape. For men, he distinguishes between homosexual rape and castration (either partial with a chance of survival or complete with the effect that the person is normally dead). The largest group, however, of men are those with unspecific reactions. They often had their sexual organs damaged and suffer from all kinds of side-effects in addition to the effects of their treatment in captivity.

There are two groups of ♂ rapists raping ♂: Those described as hidden homosexuals who come out through the chance to exercise power in detention situations and those who develop a collective 'super-ego'. The later may be men who, as a consequence of the war, have been forced to change religion, to change there entire way of life and they react by committing revenge crimes. Yet, in their psychological disposition, nothing has necessarily been wrong with them beforehand. War propaganda and the feeling of being able to do anything and to get away with it, together with the experience of a militarization of the entire society around them add to tuning them towards crime.

Three groups of rape of ♀ and of ♂ are distinguished by Mladen: so called 'peace rape', so called 'war rape' and what he calls 'THE NEW PHENOMENON' in the absence of any proper assessment of the phenomenon, to date. The new phenomenon is what he describes as characteristic for the wars in the former Yugoslavia. The new phenomenon combines 'mass rape' with women taking a more prominent part than men, an increase - instead of a decline like in all other wars - in the incidence of rape after the first period of the capturing of enemy territory, exceptionally and over-

relief. He shares the approach of Inger Agger of the ECTF in this respect. He also stresses that one most important issue is to see testimony as an empowerment and as having made a choice. Mladen stresses that he does not take the testimonies himself, he only helps in the process.

Asked about options to go to court in Croatia and to bring to trial cases such as the above, he says that there might be a chance, if the person can identify the rapist.

Mladen definitely wishes to cooperate with the COE. He speaks no foreign language but his Serbo-Croate is very precise and via translation good communication is easily established. Once, he will begin to talk to those he cares for, he beliefs to have at least 20 persons who would wish to testify, most probably many more.

The present residences of rape victims under his care are in: Split, Karlovac, Osijek, Slavonia.

Origin and/or past detention in:
Sarajevo
Mostar
Manjaca
Prijedor
Omarska
Vukovar
Brcko
Banja Luka
Jablanica
Vitez
Gorazde

ask Loncar  
re with

ECMM ✓

The EC Monitoring Mission was conceived in CSCE and formalised through European Community arrangements. Its legal mandate dates back to the so called 'Brioni Agreement' of 7 July 1991 and it is not limited in time, as are the UNPROFOR missions, which require regular extensions and new Security Council resolutions.

With the deployment of UNPROFOR, ECMM refocussed and operates now in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Hungary, Bulgaria, Albania and Macedonia. The three main areas of ECMM's monitoring are political, military and humanitarian matters and diplomats, military officers and NCO's are involved in the task. Monitoring is used to mediate in conflict situations and to report to the International Conference on Former Yugoslavia (ICFY) in Geneva, to the EC-Presidency in Brussels and to other selected parties.

ECMM brings together monitors from the twelve EU countries and from five CSCE countries, these being Canada, Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia and Sweden. All in all, some 350 persons belong to the ECMM staff. At present, Greece is in charge of the Mission in line with general EU arrangements.

There are seven regional centres of ECMM. These are in Zagreb, Knin, Zenica, Szeged, Belgrade, Sofia and Tirana. Liaison officers exist in all UNPROFOR HQs, in Ljubljana and in Geneva for contact with the ICFY and other humanitarian agencies.

ECMM stresses its ability in crises management and in confidence building measures sur place, for which some members claim to have a reputation superior to that of UNPROFOR. ECMM is fully unarmed.

ECMM provides a compendium with texts on Croatian legislation. This compendium covers texts on the constitutional law on human rights and freedoms, the rights of national and ethnic communities or minorities, the Croatian citizenship law, the law on absolution from criminal pursuit and from the procedure of criminal offenses during armed conflict. The ECMM Humanitarian Section also published a report on inter-ethnic violence in Vitez, Busovaca and Zenica in April 1993 of some interest to the purpose of our investigation.

In the ECMM morning briefing of 4 February Elenor R.-L. introduced the COE mission. A request had been received the day before by the German delegation in ECMM. Julio B. originally intended to himself brief ECMM but later delegated the task. The ten minute brief was well received.

ECMM offered its support to the COE mission and is prepared to assist with logistics planning, if so requested.

VOLUNTARY RELIEF DOCTORS *ONLY RELEVANT TO BH TRI.*

Voluntary Relief Doctors (VRD) is a German based medical NGO with permanent working experience in Bosnia-Hercegovina as of July 1993 and ~~48 medical staff deployed~~. They work in Lukavac and Zenica. In Lukavac they provide general medical backup to local health structures through a local representative. In Zenica they implement a prostheses building and provision project for the disabled.

VRD replied to our two page summary fax of January 1993. They took the initiative and translated the English summary into German and Croate and they approached local authorities in order for them to assist us in our task. The NGO was from the beginning most cooperative, even if all communication requires German as a means of communication. In reply to their initiative, the local authorities of Lukavac, a town of 40,000, some 7 kilometres from the centre of Tuzla, contacted us by sending a letter in German to the NGO for onward despatch to us. This is interesting because it shows the dynamics in place.

Lukavac like several satellite towns around Tuzla is host to a large population of displaced persons and refugees and among these, there are persons from Travnik, Doboj and Brcko. These are mostly Muslims, but also Croats and Serbs. The township, as assessed by the NGO, still possesses 'the old Bosnian spirit' of shared neighbourhood. Hence, no ethnic clashes are reported. Lukavac is in a more privileged position than Tuzla itself, as there are industries of some importance which among others nourish the town of Tuzla. Central heating and electricity still work. Lukavac has medical facilities of apparently high quality and the local health structures are able to support witnesses after testimony in case there would be a need for psychological backup or trauma treatment.

A branch of the governmental Bosnian War Crimes Commission operates in the town and is willing to assist the COE. Among others, they propose some 150 written testimonies. Those who testified are still in town according to the NGO and the local authorities state that all witnesses are willing to testify in front of COE representatives and in front of the International War Crimes Tribunal, if so requested.

The testimonies in question primarily relate to experiences in concentration camps in what the local administration calls 'temporarily occupied territories'. Victims are Bosnian primarily but not only Muslims. The local authorities speak about 250 perpetrators involved in crimes. There are supportive documents such as photographic evidence and medical data which could be made available. The crimes in question were committed at different points in time during the war, and new influxes into Lukavac still report new atrocities according to the NGO.

The NGO suggests to ask the assistance of the local administration in providing safe areas for testimony and they stress that such arrangements must not only be made prior to the arrival of any potential interview team but that the issue merits care and attention. They would be prepared to assist locally, if so requested, as long as this does not endanger their own freedom of movement. They see their mandate as primarily medical.

According to the local authorities the Bosnian War Crimes Commission in Sarajevo should be contacted as well. Lukavac has informed them of our investigation and in reply they were told that the Sarajevo Commission was prepared to share their entire documentation with the COE.



## TRESNJEVKA ✓

*(both directly and through C. McKinnon)*

Tresnjevka states that it had published a 70 page documentation in the past which contained some 54 testimonies of female survivors of rape. This documentation had been shared with UN already. ~~Tresnjevka estimates that up to 100 women may be prepared to testify at present.~~ Some of these were part of the initial 54. Others were survivors of recent rapes and belonged to the group of new arrivals.

~~Tresnjevka is prepared to contact the above for the COE in consultation with Catherine A. MacKinnon.~~ The following details were given about these women:

PLACE OF ORIGIN:	DETAILS KNOWN:
Visegrad	partly witnesses of 'mass grave' incidents or aware of their location
Miljevina	close to Foca
Zvornik	
Bratunac/Srebrenica	
Bijelina	
Doboj	among others from Grabska
Prijedor/Kozarac	
Sanski Most	
Bihac	2 female witnesses from Ripac where a rape camp was operated
Kotor Varos	
Titov Drvar	

Tresnjevka recommends four women as 9 key witnesses as these:

- remember the name of other women who were killed
- recall the layout and details of the camp in which they were detained
- remember precise details of the crimes committed
- can name dates (including hours) and duration of captivity
- recall details of the uniforms of the perpetrators
- know the names of the alleged criminals in question.

Their information can be correlated with data from Dr. med. Visnja Latin, gynaecologist at Petrova Bolnica, Zagreb (medical reports).

LEADS ~~WAS~~ REQUIRE  
ACCOMPLISHMENT BY

ETHNIC CROATE HOME CLUBS AND LOCAL NGOS ✓

Maja/H  
T.O.

A meeting on 31 January 93 brought together members of COE core mission team and more than 100 representatives of local NGOs and ethnic Croat Home Clubs at the Office for Displaced Persons and Refugees at 14, Republic of Austria Square in Zagreb. After an introductory presentation by Karen K. the invited were asked for their comments and their representatives began to share their worries, advice, life stories and warnings rather freely. We were invited by Karen K. in the process to help her explain the task.

A more than once heard comment was: it makes no sense for the Commission of Experts to identify witnesses from within official refugee camps only as the majority of displaced and refugees lives in private accommodation. They cannot talk freely in refugee camps.

The 'horizontal and vertical approach' did not impress them either, particularly, as they did not grasp what that would mean in practice. ~~Not mentioned in the meeting~~ NO.

They were highly suspicious also of the concept of limiting the investigation to detention centres. One speaker with support from others described how the systematic sealing off of villages had meant ordeal for their communities and how comparable in all detail their experience had been to that of ex-detainees from detention camps or centres. It made no sense to him to differentiate between the two or to focus the investigation on detention facilities only. In fact, by doing that one would clearly miss out on understanding their plight as civil population. He insisted that villages should form part of the investigation. In his own home area, the speaker said, ten villages of 2,750 persons in total had become one single camp. Some 120 persons had survived the sealing off.

In another comment one speaker warned that it was not enough to investigate structures of command or to find out how systematic certain patterns of rape or the like had occurred. He thought that there should be rather limits to the information collected. What was needed to his understanding was to name those responsible and to put them on trial. Names were needed and not structures.

Another speaker gave a detailed description of how a woman from his area had been killed with UNPROFOR troops only 100 metres away. He insisted that they could have stopped her legs being cut off.

The Vukovar massacre helped to bring out more frustration about the role of United Nations. Surprisingly enough, there was interest in cooperation with the Commission of Experts, at the same time. As long as our work would make a difference in comparison with past investigations and as long as it would not simply duplicate what had been provided shared with Mazowiecki and with some government commissions and media, things were fine.

Towards the end of the meeting, Dr. Nakic-Alifirivic offered to act as a link between the Commission of Experts and the Home Clubs. She would write to them and pre-sort and pre-select the replies from them in order to present to us the best possible cases. Karen K. welcomed this procedure as fantastic.

Those who wished to contact Nakic in the morning could do so. NC

It was emphasised that everyone who wished to contact us directly could do so and the CoE tel. was emphasised.

In addition, the large meeting was simply introductory - individual groups were to be met by E/S in follow up.

This strategy was expressly agreed with E/S before and after that meeting.

10/36

*Leads require  
accompanied by  
Maja / K.H.*

## BOSNIAN HOME CLUBS

On 3 February, a meeting was scheduled with some 20 Bosnian Home Clubs and the Red Cross of Bosnia & Herzegovina. It took place at the premises of the Doboj Home Club in Zagreb.

Bosnian Home Clubs are NGOs which date back to the beginning of the war in Bosnia. At first, they were physical meeting points for refugees, they traced missing persons, exchanged information on home areas and they provided logistics support for those civilians which arrived in Croatia. They also help form a platform for discussion and mutual support, in general.

The function of Bosnian home clubs therefore is multifaceted.

The Doboj Home e.g. is involved in the following activities:

- care for new arrivals in Zagreb and help to those who need to leave Bosnia due to ethnic cleansing
- tracing of family members in third countries
- collection of evidence in respect to missing, tortured or ex-detainees e.g.
- channelling of information to the media (one of the first interviews with an ex-detainee appeared in the Washington Post in July 1992. Contacts had been arranged by the Home Club)
- Work in refugee camps (Little Doboj)
- Collection and delivery of humanitarian aid to Bosnia
- support to injured either in Croatia or in third countries, including medical aid and rehabilitation
- care for some 600 children who are orphans
- collect testimonies in order to document atrocities or the destruction of cultural property.

Karen K. explained the function and aims of the COE mission to Zagreb and asked those invited for comments. Again, home club members expressed their reservations towards UN and it could be observed that they remained reserved, critical and full of distrust throughout the meeting. They questioned why testimony was collected yet another time.

Towards the end of the gathering, home club members expressed their willingness to cooperate in the COE process, nonetheless. Dr. Alicehajic mentioned some 180 testimonies which the Commission of Experts could dispose of immediately. These would be available from the Red Cross of Bosnia & Herzegovina. In addition, they agreed to consider providing further information if each home club present could be visited by the COE team. This procedure was agreed.

Next meetings were scheduled for 12 February (Domovinska Zajednica Modric, Home Club of Spreca, Red Cross of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Dr. Muhidin Alicehajic) 13 February (Tuzla region, Breko) and 19 February (Bosanski Petrovac, Sanski Most, Gracanica, Zvornik) so as to await the departure of those dealing with NGO contacts.

*No. At the suggestion  
of the HK's as the  
weekend immediately following  
the meeting was too soon  
for them.*

MERHAMET ✓

Merhamet is an old humanitarian organization which operated before 1945. It was later prohibited and reestablished operations both within the former Yugoslavia and in support of the former Yugoslavia in countries such as Germany.

Merhamet shares a copy of the COE information sheet with us which is intended to serve as an announcement in refugee camps and which is created to spread information on the Commission and its investigation:

The procedures and aims of COE interviews are described as follows:

- to collect information with a view of putting on trials war criminals
- interviews will be conducted during the month of March
- interviews will be conducted by foreign and highly qualified lawyers
- interpreters are being chosen with care so as to guarantee correct translation and secrecy of the interview
- all persons involved in the interviews will be female
- safe places will be available for the interviews and these will be chosen according to the wishes of the witnesses
- if the witnesses wish to bring support persons for the interview, such persons may be friends, members of the family or any other person selected by the one being interviewed.

It seems important to revise the information sheet so as to incorporate information about the option of sworn testimony!

Merhamet wishes to provide witnesses but the person in question is still travelling. ✱

## UNHCR ✓

In line with prior arrangements, meetings with UNHCR were handled by another member of the team. Only informal contacts were therefore established, and these upon recommendation by the Jesuit Refugee Services in Zagreb. The Jesuits had worked with Ms. Morelli, an Italian national and UNHCR field officer in Karlovac before her departure to Gasinci and continued to cooperate.

Gasinci is a UNHCR refugee camps which took over from Karlovac as a processing centre for those individuals screened for departure to third countries under resettlements programmes. Ms. Morelli had moved with the caseload. According to the Jesuits, she did an outstanding job in Karlovac and continued to do so in her new post.

Contacted by satellite telephone - which is also the only promising way of contact - Ms. Morelli expressed her support to the ongoing COE process. She said that records were being kept of all resettlement cases and that UNHCR was therefore able locally to trace the whereabouts of all those resettled in the past. If not their address, then the receiving government counterpart agency was recorded.

She agreed that those whose departure was scheduled for the near future would be a very important group for COE to contact. If there were no family members left in combat zones, various among those in waiting would probably wish to participate in the investigation by either describing incidents as witnesses or victims of sexual assault.

Ms. Morelli would welcome to be re-contacted. She recommends fax communication as the safest way for communicating details of our investigation. Utmost discretion and knowledge of the terrain is required to handle the investigation in her opinion, and Ms. Morelli reiterates that the security risk which some people may state in Gasinci is generally well founded. Yet, she thinks that it was worthwhile to visit Gasinci and to stay in touch with the Jesuits.

WOMEN AID

*to be followed  
up - possibly at  
meeting again with  
Spero.*

WomenAid and Women International Research Institute Research Institute are British NGOs. WomenAid is a registered charity as of 1987 and they give as their main aims:

- to offer women relief from distress and poverty
- to assist in the education of women including training for remunerate or productive work, and
- to provide emergency relief for women, their families and communities.

In early 1993, WomenAid launched an Appeal on behalf of 'Rape Camp' young women and girls, with special emphasis on Bosnia and Dame Anne Warburton supported them by lending her name to fund raising events.

WomenAid wanted to prove then that an all women NGO was capable of solid logistics planning and that they could deliver humanitarian aid without losses into combat zones. Their initial focus was therefore on food, clothes and medicine. The delivery of quantities of high protein biscuits large enough to supply both Croatia and Bosnia entirely made their name with UNHCR, ODA and other British NGOs.

In January 1993, WomenAid began to work with the Zagreb based feminist NGO 'Tresnjevka' (see Annex 4) and when Tresnjevka split, they started their own WomenAid office in Zagreb.

Under a system of so called 'international relief grants', refugee women receive cash in hand, directly. They may obtain a flat grant of up to DM 120,-, and more if they require a passport. Medical grants are equally available. The 'invisible cupboard' is used where women wish to select clothes according to their personal taste without being watched in a soup kitchen manner. The back of the agency offices is available for this purpose. The agency describes such approaches as "another and more feminine approach to development". The agency documents its programme and women recipients themselves are invited to fill in documentation forms where they can tick items like 'rape' to document their personal history. In medical terms WomenAid is the first NGO in Croatia to focus on metamedicine and on NLP, in particular. Their initial NLP proposal was turned down by the European Community Task Force in Zagreb but the agency is optimistic to continue having registered in the USA where financial support for NLP is easier to mobilize.

At present, WomenAid supports Zena B&H, Tresnjevka, the Centre for War-Raped Women, and WomenAid, Zagreb. It has begun to build a network and Elenor met with the network coordinator Pida Ripley on 9 February, 1993 to discuss potential ways of cooperation.

WomenAid gives the impression of highly efficient management on the international level of the organization. They would be most pleased to cooperate with the Commission of Experts, in particular once their trauma care programmes are further developed.

A sample of their programmes and their statements on the International War Crimes Tribunal are enclosed.

14/39

THE 'KATHERINE MACKINNON GROUP'

*through  
Cherif Bassiouni*

We established contact with Ms. Katherine MacKinnon on 9 February, when feminist NGOs such as 'Tresnjevka' 'Kareta' 'Biser' and the 'Women of Bosnia & Hercegovina' had pointed out that Ms. MacKinnon was their joint legal adviser and that she enjoyed not only their highest respect and trust but that they wished her to participate in the process.

Particularly Kareta made it clear that they would envisage a cooperation with COE but only if Ms. MacKinnon was fully briefed and agreed this step. They stressed that, in their opinion, Ms. MacKinnon should be incorporated in the process of evidence taking. Her presence in Zagreb at one point during the stay of the COE mission of 26 February - 27 March had been demanded by Kareta. They had discussed the issue with Ms. MacKinnon and they had communicated details of their understanding of the COE itinerary, approach and process.

It deemed useful to speak personally to Ms. MacKinnon in Berlin, both to show respect for the special relationship between her and Zagreb feminist and women NGOs and to explore as to whether direct contacts between Ms. MacKinnon and Prof. Cherif Bassiouni could be envisaged.

Ms. MacKinnon reacted very positive to Elenor's approach, and, when being briefed about the general scope and focus of the mission, she made it very clear that she thought that Prof. Bassiouni had succeeded to secure the participation of a highly qualified, reputable and suitable legal team. She expressed her high respect for Professor Bassiouni's work and pointed out that the best interest of those under his care had always ruled his legal professional practice; even before he had been appointed in his present capacity. She trusted that he would make this endeavour a success.

It was concluded that the best possible procedure would be if Ms. MacKinnon could contact Prof. Bassiouni directly so as to allow for the discussion of potential patterns of cooperation.

KARITAS NADBISKUPIJE ZAGREB

*contacted  
in areas  
outside Zagreb*

On 8 February 1994, we met with Ms. Jelena Brajsa, the chief executive of Caritas in the archdiocese of Zagreb. Ms. Brajsa is an institution in an institution and while paying due respect to her often difficult work, she may well be called the 'iron lady' of Zagreb.

Ms. Brajsa opened the first branch of Caritas in Croatia on 8 July 1969 when she - as she recalls vividly - found the first abandoned baby. Without ever compromising on the task has she pursued the issue of caring for the destitute ever since. Before the end of communist rule she remembers that Caritas had only existed in Zagreb itself. Recently, Caritas was spreading all over Croatia, however. Around Sibenik, in Split and in Rijeka either support centres or mobile teams had begun to begin to work.

Since 1969, Jelena Brajsa has processed some 900 women in Caritas houses and some 1680 babies were hosted. Her organization had facilitate the adoption of certain of these children and some 30 abandoned children presently lived in the care of Caritas Zagreb.

In order to deal with numbers as large as the above, some 21 persons assisted Caritas in so called 'Mobile Teams'. The coverage of these mobile teams was remarkable and she could state with pride that there was no hospital in Zagreb where her teams did not visit. No baby could be born in any Zagreb hospital without Caritas visiting the mother. Besides their field trips to hospitals, Caritas also visited the homes of the needy and they worked with those without residence in the streets. Refugee women and displaced were among those serving. The street workers and mobile teams of Caritas met at six p.m. each Tuesday. There were a lot of people who theoretically cared for the poor, but they really did the job.

At present, there were some 96 women and 118 children under her care. Pregnancy or motherhood with a new-born baby were pre-requisites for the acceptance into one of Caritas' houses and homes. Stay was not limited in time and women were given a job to do by cooking, washing and cleaning for themselves. Needlework, knitting and the like were also offered.

Not only Christians were accepted into the eight Caritas family homes in Zagreb but also Muslim women. In delicate cases e.g. when men were either suddenly relocated or were visiting from the front lines, families could be reunited, temporarily. Separating married men and women was surely inhuman.

Caritas is not the only organization which supports raped women with housing and through the provision of items of basic need. Ms. Brajsa pointed out that there was also one larger house of the Samaritans where these women resided. Their stay was limited to 30 days, however, a concept which was not acceptable to Caritas in times of war.

There were eleven dioceses in Croatia. The archdiocese Zagreb derived its importance from the fact that 40% of Croatia's population resided within the borders of the Zagreb diocese. One million persons lived within the city borders and some 800,000 in the surrounding areas. Town services were popular because the anonymity of women was greater in urban conglomerations than in half rural areas.

Among 'these destitute women' under her care, Ms. Brajsa recalls the case of one Muslim survivor of rape. This woman might be prepared to talk to the Commission of Experts together with several of those women under Caritas care in Zagreb or elsewhere in Croatia.



IFRC AND ICRC

— IFRC follow up thro Geneva  
— ICRC direct contact ✓

In cooperation with UNHCR and IOM, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross have agreed on shared responsibilities.

IFRC e.g. works in four republics of the former Yugoslavia. They are not involved in the screening of refugees for resettlement to third countries. They, however, have a strong presence in refugee camps and in the monitoring of safety and security.

ICRC works in Bosnia and UN protected areas on Human Rights issues of all kinds. ICRC, like IFRC, is not involved in the screening of refugee for resettlement.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) acts in the traditional way, e.g. as the 'travel agent' for the physical transfer of refugees from their first country of asylum to the resettlement country.

UNHCR therefore is agency with prime responsibility for the organized movement of refugees and to some degree displaced person.

We met with Kirsten Danielsen, the country programme coordinator of IFRC, on 7 February. Ms. Danielsen briefed us that there were some 150 staff under their responsibility in Zagreb, out of which 134 were social workers. In Croatia they had eight foreign staff and six programme coordinators. Inside refugee camps, counselling could be provided but not therapy. All medical care was the financial responsibility of the refugees themselves. No financial assistance by the government was available to them. It was possible to build up a club or a group of some kind for knitting or the like under IFRC care but no groups with the declared aim of therapy for rape victims.

Utmost care was necessary not to endanger those temporarily residing in refugee camps, IFRC stressed. It was a must to have safe places for testimony. These had to be outside refugee camps. Stigmatization and real danger could prevail if such precautions were not taken. Careful and professional planning on the side of COE was needed.

We should not forget that only 20% of the refugee community lived in camps while 80% lived in private accommodation in Croatia. Camps were places of tight social control.

— visit to collective centres for terms  
— through Catherine McKinnon  
BISER

BISER, the 'Pearl', was founded in January 1993. They are an international, decentralized network of women from Bosnia and Hercegovina. They work in Germany, Switzerland, in Zagreb in Croatia, in Sarajevo in Bosnia and they are about to start working in the United States of America among exiled refugee communities. In Zagreb, Falza Mustovic represents the organization. Biser has good contacts all over Croatia and through its work with UNHCR and others is a well informed NGO. In and around Zagreb, Biser supports some 3,000 refugees and displaced women in the following refugee settlements and refugee camps:

• X	Špansko	350 → 400	— MUJAČIĆ BIBA
•	Zimjak	ŽITNJAK ~ 220	
•	Kruga	240 → 285	HOROZOVIĆ AJNUŠA
	'HŽ' Slobodstina		DERVENTA AJSA PEKEZ
•	'Radnik' Slobodstina	230 → 250	→ KOZARAC (RADNIK)
	'Pionir' Velika Gorica	100-110	(12) coll cs.
• X	Zaprudje	± 510	NADA SAHOVIĆ
	'GP Bosna' Jarun	11 families	
	'Grade' Jarun	70-80	
	Šamobor		
•	Lučko	2 locations - 160 ±	3 barracks — EDINA SEFER
	Oranice	60	MLINOVI - 180

Sanda Kreitmayer attended the COE 'Meeting with Mental Health Professionals' on 2 February 1994 in the Hotel Esplanade on behalf of Biser. (This meeting probably is well documented in a separate report by another team member and therefore does not require further write up.)

At this occasion, we came to discuss options for safe testimony and, in the same context, the dilemma of those caught in encircled towns and villages in Bosnia. Among these there would certainly be a number of women who would wish to testify in order to make their experiences known if safe passages were available.

It was most helpful to hear that a legal option exists to bring out nationals of Bosnia into e.g. Croatia. UNPROFOR air transport could be used for this purpose if the UNPROFOR application form for 'experts' would be used. This form is designed for people who get invitations from abroad e.g. to participate in international meetings. The form carries the specification "G5"-form.

Only further contacts would permit to estimate how many women Biser would recommend for interview. Biser is part of the 'MacKinnon group' (see annex 10) and should be approached in line with e.g. Karetta and Tresnjeva.

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*- Excellent direct contact*

## THE ANTI WAR CAMPAIGN IN CROATIA

The Antiwar Campaign in Croatia (AWCC) came into existence in July 1991. Founding members were persons from a wide spectrum of movements such as the environment, human rights, women and peace movements and there were also spiritual roots in some. In parallel, similar organizations founded themselves in other republics such as the Peace Centre in Sarajevo, the Centre for Antiwar Action Beograd, the Civil Peace Council Titograd in Montenegro. After April 1992 common actions was no longer possible easily with communication lines cut. Yet, pre-war contacts allow monitoring of the overall situation, even under these restricted conditions.

After some 2 1/2 years, the AWCC comprises some 15 local specialized organizations, many with specific antiwar action programmes and partly with own development programmes. On 10 February, a chance presented itself to speak to Vesna Terselic, the very experienced country coordinator of AWCC.

AWCC and the 'Centre for Peace, Nonviolence and Human Rights' in Zagreb publishes the magazine 'arkzin', the magazine of the Croatian antiwar campaign. 10,000 copies are printed every month and seven thousand of these are actually sold. This wide dissemination speaks for a demand being met. The publication is freely distributed and censorship has not been applied by the authorities, so far. Civil liberties are a central topic treated.

As an umbrella organization, AWCC exercises very little centralized power. The idea is to act locally and there are larger peace groups in Osijek, Rijeka, Split, Karlovac and Porec. In Rijeka, Suncroket should be a good counterpart for COE purposes. They started in refugee centres as of July 1992. Now they look after some 22 refugee centres. 'Nexus' as a humanitarian aid offspring of Suncroket executes programmes. In Osijek the Centre for Peace, Non-Violence & Human Rights should be contacted. The latter is a formal part of the Antiwar Campaign. There were also contacts for Split worthwhile pursuing if an option existed to actually travel there. Definitely, Split could not be missed out if the COE intended to do work in a comprehensive way.

Among the various offsprings of AWCC, there are some of importance to the mission of the Commission of Expert. Contacts should be maintained with:

### The CENTRE FOR WOMEN WAR VICTIMS in Zagreb:

The Centre for Women War Victims became independent in March 1993. Sara Woodhouse and Martina Belic are important counterparts for the work of the COE; so is Neva Toelle.

### The ZAGREB WOMEN LOBBY

has no formal representative. It is a forum for information exchange and it is hosted in turn by various women's organizations in town. Vera Kesic of Women Rights - Human Rights could be a COE counterpart.

### The INFOTHEKA in Zagreb:

Drusda Knesevic ought to be a good counterpart.

AWCC is a 12 year old organization. It is a local group of people who are working on a project to help the people of the world. It is a group of people who are working on a project to help the people of the world. It is a group of people who are working on a project to help the people of the world.

AWCC and the Center for Women War Victims and Human Rights are working on a project to help the people of the world. It is a group of people who are working on a project to help the people of the world. It is a group of people who are working on a project to help the people of the world.

AWCC is a group of people who are working on a project to help the people of the world. It is a group of people who are working on a project to help the people of the world. It is a group of people who are working on a project to help the people of the world.

Among the various projects of the Center for Women War Victims and Human Rights are the following:

**Center for Women War Victims and Human Rights in Zagreb:**  
The Center for Women War Victims and Human Rights in Zagreb is a group of people who are working on a project to help the people of the world. It is a group of people who are working on a project to help the people of the world.

**Center for Women War Victims and Human Rights in Zagreb:**  
It has no formal representative. It is a group of people who are working on a project to help the people of the world. It is a group of people who are working on a project to help the people of the world.

**Center for Women War Victims and Human Rights in Zagreb:**  
The Center for Women War Victims and Human Rights in Zagreb is a group of people who are working on a project to help the people of the world. It is a group of people who are working on a project to help the people of the world.

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*Excellent direct contact made*

## INDIVIDUALS

15/1 Ms. Zeljka Mrkic

Ms. Zeljka Mrkic (earlier member of Tresnjevka and WomenAid) has indicated her preparedness to assist the Commission of Experts. She names some eight women survivors of rape in Zagreb with whom she could establish contact. These have survived some two or three different camps, as she stresses. She has contacts also with the Munich based group of Omarska ex-detainees and with initiatives for the support of raped women from the former Yugoslavia in Berlin, Germany.

FIKRETA H. 40 YEARS

GRAPSKA NEAR DOBOJ, SCHOOL CENTRE DOBOJ

~~31 years~~ 3 MAY

After the Chetniks had entered the town, they separated the women, children and old people from men on the pretext that they were to be mobilized. Instead they were imprisoned. Hundreds of us were locked in the high school building in Doboj which was used as a prison camp. It was all done by our neighbours. As soon as we were imprisoned the so called "Martich soldiers" arrived with shotguns and selected young women and girls. They pushed them to the middle of the room and told the group of Chetniks that they could do whatever they wanted with these women and girls. There was utmost silence. And then, those wild, dirty and stinking Chetniks grabbed the helpless women and girls. They started to tear their clothes off, to pull their hair and cut their breasts with knives. The women wearing Turkish trousers were cut also across their bellies. Anyone that cried was killed on the spot.

Those women and girls were raped and terrorized in front of several hundred prisoners. It was horrible to watch young girls being raped in front of their fathers. There was no escape and the hell around us was becoming worse and worse. In the evening, after getting drunk, the Chetniks would come into the room with torch lights, walking all over us and searching for young girls, not older than 12 or 13 years. The girls would scream and cry holding onto their mothers, in whose hands part of their torn clothes would remain. Each time they came to take the young girls away, they would shoot at us.

At night, the dead bodies of girls would be brought in and left in the middle of the room for us to watch and mourn over until dawn. The next morning, their bodies would be thrown into the river Bosna.

Each day the same ritual was repeated, raping and killing in front of hundreds of people.

A young woman with a baby of just a few months was pushed to the middle of the room. It was around the end of June. She was forced to undress and she put the baby beside herself. Four Chetniks raped her but she just kept quiet and watched her baby cry. When they left her alone, she asked if she could feed the baby on her breast. At that, one of the Chetniks approached, grabbed the baby and cut its head off with the knife. The bloody head was then tossed to the mother. The unfortunate woman screamed in her pain. She was taken out and never returned. That scene I'm sure, will never be, nor should it be, forgotten by anyone of the hundreds of prisoners.

The worst bandits in Doboj are: B.D., M.V., M.D., the brothers J. and the brothers S. They encouraged the

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"Martich soldiers", "White Eagles" and other cut throats to perform all the killings.

I was also maltreated and raped because they knew that my husband was one of the SD- party leaders. The worst treatment I was subjected to was by my neighbour, a man whom my husband regarded as a brother.

At the end of June, a Serbian neighbour was brought into the Doboj school building. With a pointed gun, he was forced to rape a 14 year old girl. He just stood there, stammering and shaking. Then, he turned to the Chetnik who must have been the leader and told him: "Don't sin upon your soul. I have known her since she was born. I used to drink with her father in the pub." He was beaten there in front of us until he died. It was to serve as an example to other Serbs that there was no mercy and that their orders were to be obeyed.

In August, some of the prisoners were exchanged. I found myself among them, together with my sons. Many women and girls were pregnant. They were taken to the Doboj hospital to be fed several times a day because it was expected for them to deliver children that would become the Chetnik offspring.

A lot of women from Grapska in a grave physical and mental condition are living in refugee centres around Croatia and the world. I know of about ten that became pregnant. I don't know what has happened to them now.

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ZEMKA H. 83 YEARS

PRIJEDOR, NOVEMBER 1992

They also raped me, an old woman of 83 and they did it like mad dogs, young boys that could be my grandsons. I was taken to the Serbian prison from Prijedor, together with my daughter and my 17 year old grand daughter. I would give anything and do anything, if only I could have been spared watching how they raped my Nusrata and Sanela, there in front of me and all the other women that were rounded up. They behaved like wild, evil beasts.

In May, the town of Prijedor was taken quickly and occupied. Soon after, the women were separated from the men. My village was levelled to the ground. My other two daughters had escaped with their families earlier and flown to Croatia. Nusrata and I, we are widows. We were gathered in a wire surrounded camp and told that we would be working in the fields, in the kitchen or passing animals in the stables nearby. We hardly had a chance to place our things on the floor when unshaved men in dirty uniforms burst in like a pack of wild wolves. Surrounding them was that awful stench of brandy and cigarettes. They never washed or stopped drinking. My Nusrata was grabbed immediately and raped there in front of us. Each cry from her lips was felt by me like there was a piece of my heart being torn away, each scream like a knife stabbing into my body. I stepped towards her but I was pushed back with a terrible blow to my stomach. As I was falling down, I was struck in my back by another blow from a gun butt. It was so painful that I lost consciousness. Nusrata became quiet and was never heard until the tenth Chetnik had had his turn.

However, this was not enough for them, they started towards the other women. My Sanela was grabbed and her clothes torn off. She begged them to let her go and screamed for her mother's help. It was no use. Her voice was soon overcome by growling of those wild beasts.

The exercise of their lowest instincts lasted for hours. After that they left us alone for days. In the meantime we tried to help each other, because some women were terribly hurt. My Nusrata was a broken person. She kept staring silently at a point in front of her. And my Sanela! She was racked and wounded all over, bleeding for days. Her life was drained out of her in front of my eyes.

Day and night, the cries were heard echoing through the prison camp. I can still hear it in the silence of my hospital room.

2 pages *M. K. M. K.*  
to UNPROFOR  
u No *24*  
23 or 24 *8*



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The first three days, we were not given any food or water, however believe me, in my state of shock and pain, I did not feel any hunger or thirst. They destroyed everything in us.

On the fourth day, five Chetniks burst in through the door. They were a new group coming straight from the front carrying weapons and knives. Some of them even had guns. They were all dusty and unshaven. One of them, called "the boss" had a beard down to his waist. He attacked my Sanela immediately, pulling her by the hair and throwing her to the floor. He didn't rape her, instead, he went over her breasts and throat with a knife saying: "It is good, this fresh meat. I'll be seeing you soon." Nusreta just sat there silent. From time to time, she would wave her hand.

The next day, our tortured Sanela was brought into the camp by three Chetniks. They just threw her on the ground. When I started towards her, one of them grabbed me by my kerchief and shouted to another soldier: "here is the grandma for you, Rade, she isn't so bad!"

The man called Rade pushed me to the floor. However, the pain that I felt was more because of my Nusreta and Sanela. The next day we found them hanging in the barracks. They killed themselves, my poor doves. They were dead before anyway as their souls had been destroyed. The soldiers didn't touch me any more after that. About 100 of us who survived were turned out of the camp and sent over to the nearest village. I was saved by the exchange. But, as God is my witness I didn't want to be saved. I didn't want to live. I died along with my doves.

S.A.G.

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BRATUNAC 9 May 1992. Seselj's and his troops entered the town of Bratunac and accommodated themselves in a hotel called Fontana in the centre of town.

12 May 1992 The village of Glagolac was attacked at 11.00 am. This is 3 km from Bratunac. They surrounded the village, burned houses, women were thrown out of their houses and civilians taken to Gornja Grahovica. My husband and children fled from Bratunac to Glagolac where they had a house. The house was surrounded by police and Chetniks. There were approximately 20 police and Chetniks. They wanted to get H.G. (her husband) who was previously in the police force. He had left the police force prior to the onset of war. S.A.G. noticed from the balcony that the Chetniks were coming and called her mother and father to flee but they did not want to. I jumped with the two children from the balcony into the garden, then across the lake to the forest. I heard the screams of my mother and father. My law, how they were being tortured and were suffering. I stayed by the lake all day without any food. The village was burned and everyone had disappeared. All the men were killed outside the mosque. Some people were taken to a primary school called Vuk Karadic. Women and children were taken away and some were killed. My husband H.G. fled through the forest to Grahovica. Midnight had fallen and I was still in the forest. The children had fallen asleep. I slowly made my way home. My house was destroyed and burnt. The house was the only one standing. My mother and father had been burned in their house. I stayed in my house for about 10 minutes. I noticed that the Chetniks were coming back. I had returned for food because the children were hungry. I again fled to the forest where my children were waiting and ate Sukovani list (type of leaves from a tree). I stayed in the forest for seven days. I felt as if I did not have a head and was mindless. There was no food and no people. In the morning at about 7 am, I surrendered. I came to the mosque which was destroyed. Dead bodies were on the floor, children and women were in front of the mosque. I cried. Some of the dead were Mensura 22 years of age, Ljiljana 30 years of age, Jusufa 37 years of age, Saso 32 years of age, Hamid 40 years of age, Salih 60 years of age, Saso 23 years of age. I could not recognise other bodies because they were unrecognisable.

I saw some neighbours near the mosque who began swearing. Some of them were Marko, Radivoj, Risto, Rado, Jovan, Miro, Rakov. They were all Serbs. They began to swear at me. They forced me to take off my clothes. They threw one of my daughters who was 2 months of age onto the street. My other daughter was tied to a tree with wire. They put me into one corner of the mosque and began hitting me and raping me. They hit me with their hands and objects and chains.

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This lasted three hours. They told us to get dressed. There were about seven of them. They took me and the children in a truck and took us to a hotel where there were seven women who were between the ages of 10 and 19 years. The hotel was called Nermina which is in BRATUNAC. They forced us to take off our clothes and to sit on Arkan and Gasevijs soldiers in the nude. We served alcohol and food during the day and in the night, they raped us. We were there for three days. We were raped each night by 8 soldiers at a time. Then others would come. There were about 200 to 300 of Arkan and Gasevijs soldiers. They then took us and other women who were located in houses and took us in a truck and took us to a concentration camp at Zvornik, KARAKAJ. All together there were about 20 of us. While we were in the hotel, the children were taken to a women's house where they did not seem to be maltreated.

We arrived at the camp, Karakaj, on the 20 July 1992. In the Karakaj camp, there were about 100 people. There were about 40 women between the ages of 10 and 20. They took us into the camp which was previously a poultry farm. It was a big long barrack where we slept on the floor on straw. Every second evening, the women were taken and raped. There were three rooms where the women were kept. They hit me and took the four year old girl and at about 3:30 am, they came for me. They took me to a room where there were about 8 or 9 drunk chetniks. They began hitting and swearing at me. It lasted until about 7:30 am. They told me to take my child, but I could not see my child. They found her behind a curtain which was used to separate the room. I looked at my child who was nude. She was bleeding and was frothing around her mouth. Blood was dripping from between her legs. I fainted. They began hitting me again. They left me and I lied there for a while until I came to. I took my child in my hands and took her to a room. She was unconscious. She had bruises on her face and back. I washed her little with water. She remained unconscious. In the room I found another girl who was two months of age at the time her leg was broken. I asked what had happened to her. A lady told me that a Serb had come into the room and broke her arm and leg.

I stayed in the camp for two months with little food. We received one egg and a slice of bread daily. During my two months stay, people were killed. They were from Karakaj, Zvornik, Klis, Vlasenica and Masloveska. I do not know how many were killed because people were taken away every day and new people brought in. Each night about 10 to 20 were taken away and they did not say if they were younger males. They were killed in the confounds of the camp and I am not aware of what they did with the others.

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There was one grave next to one of the barracks. I do not know how many dead bodies were inside. Grass had begun to sprout out on top of the grave. Chetniks would first torture people i.e. cut off their fingers, beat them. There was not anything they did not do to them and then line them up and shoot them. Marica who was a doctor from Ivornik, would treat the women. She was also responsible for the treatment of pregnant women who did not get treated any better than they.

I knew of about 40 women who became pregnant from the rape. Each day, 8 to 9 new women would be brought in. Women who were there would disappear.

Some of the names of the people who worked in the concentration camp were: Stjepan Radić who was 30 or 35 years of age, Goran Ostojic who was about 20 years of age, Vera Ostojic who was about 15 or 17 years of age and Dr. Marica from Ivornik. They were all a team. I stayed in the camp for about 2 months. They took us to Batkovic near Bijeljina, another concentration camp.

We arrived in Batkovic at the beginning of September. This camp was about 20 kilometers from Bijeljina. There were four large barracks at Batkovic. There were a large number of people, approximately 250 individuals or more. The camp was surrounded by barbed wire. There were about four check points (straze). There were no washing facilities. One toilet. They gave us 5 minutes for 50 people to go to the toilet. The men and women were separated in the camp. Two barracks for the men and two for the women. The men who were at the check points usually came off the front line and did not directly have contact with the detainees. I was in barrack number 3. There were about 22 people in this barrack. I was there for about three and a half months. They hit me, raped me and the food was bad. We received two slices of bread and some type of cooked food such as maccaroni each day. The army came freely into the camp and they hit, raped and swore at us for the whole three and a half months. The soldiers would come at 4 in the morning or 12 at night. They would rape us anywhere. For example, in the barracks, in the toilet or outside. About 4 or 5 soldiers would rape each woman at a time. Two women, mother and daughter died in the camp. They came in the morning and took them out of the barrack and shot them. They said they would do the same to us if we did not do as they said.

One of the men, Marko who was a watchman would bring the children food whenever there was extra.

International Red Cross came to the camp. From the time we were there, they came twice. I was not on the list for exchange of prisoners. The International Red Cross knew that we were being raped. We told them and they spoke to the pregnant women who were pregnant as a result of the rape. The camp

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came only when there was an exchange of prisoners. I was 26th on the list. My sister in Tuzla got a missing persons notification on me and my children. We got out of Batkovic around December 1992. The exchange was near a hotel near Ivornik. I spent 9 days in Cerake school. A courier came and told us to go to Tuzla. About 700 set out for Tuzla via Kalesija. About 400 did not make it due to the weather conditions, grenades and general health conditions. Three hundred did. BiH army met us in Kalesija where they gave us food and buses were organised to take us to a sports centre in Tuzla. My sister came to look for me and found me. I said it was me and she said ... you are not my sister. She did not recognise me because of the bruises and sores on my face. My face had furthermore changed because of what I had been through. My sister took me to her apartment. I had a shower. My daughter began to bleed from her vagina and we went to the hospital for treatment which lasted for about 9 days. I was totally lost emotionally and physically where I could not even remember my date of birth.

Please note that the above testimony is presented in the same sequence as it was given.

This testimony was taken in Zagreb on 20 January 1997 by Women's Group Treshnjavka, Villa Milica Petrovcek 24 Zagreb Croatia.

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JASNA A. 28 YEARS

VISEGRAD MEDICAL ATTENDANT

They arrived wearing masked uniforms and black caps pulled down over their faces.

They looked so horrid that I cannot describe them exactly. Their sole appearance made our breathing stop. As I am a medical attendant, I noticed a dirty adhesive plaster on the hand of one of them. They must have been either wounded or taking drugs, because what they did in Visegrad was a horrifying madness. Normal human beings wouldn't be able to do such things.

We were taken over the meadows and while walking, one of them spoke to us. He told us not to be frightened because nothing would happen to us as he personally would guarantee our safety. We certainly were not aware what was awaiting us and no one could possibly imagine the terror that they had prepared for us.

The two of us were brought to the house. Several hours later, another 15 men were brought in (after a raid made that day). I recognized some of the men. Then, M. LUKIC, a bandit that made the entire Visegrad people shudder with fear, came to the house. He ordered us to place all our belongings on the floor in front of us. So we took out our money, jewelry and other personal things. He examined everything and enquired about every name and the address written in our notebooks, or on the visit cards. Each man was called "ustasha" and asked how many Serbs he had killed with sniper bullets. He kept insulting us all the time, calling us the worst names and swearing about our mothers. Then they took all our valuable things and put them into their pockets.

When he finished with the men, he turned to me and my kinswoman ordering us to undress. We were so shocked that we couldn't move. Everything inside us resisted. Then three Chetniks approached us and tore our clothes off.

What can I tell you. They raped us and entertained themselves like wild animals with their prey in front of all other imprisoned men. I can't recall how long it lasted and how many of them exchanged us. I remember tears in the eyes of our men who were standing there with their clenched fists, numb spectators to that horror. They couldn't help us. They were just powerless observers condemned to watch the terror, but with no possibility to change the course of our fate.

When it was all over and their violence satisfied, Lukic separated five younger men from the group while the seven of us were taken outside. We were almost naked and we tried to wrap and cover ourselves with the remains of our clothes that were still left on us. Lukic was searching for a key to lock us in. At the same time, he asked us to guess what gun his shotgun was. He said "if we don't know, it does not matter as he would soon teach us all about it, and who the worst extremists are."

Since they didn't find the key, or maybe they didn't want to find it, they took us back to the vehicle. There they were joined by M.V., a waiter from Visegrad, who worked with a certain Meho from our group for 5 years. Meho D. was his boss. His uniform was covered with Chetnik medals. He didn't talk, he just sneered at us cynically.

They started to drive us back and I thought that we were being taken into the prison or to the spa village called "Vilina Vlas". But, when we reached the crossroad, they turned to the right. It was at this time I realised that we were being taken to the place of execution where many of the people from Visegrad were driven, never to return. The vehicle stopped some 500m from the crossroad and we were ordered to get out and to walk towards the Drina River.

When we reached the river bank, M. Lukic asked who among us knew how to swim. We were silent. He ordered us then to enter the water up to our knees with our backs turned towards the river.

What can one think at such a moment? My entire life ran in front of my eyes. I was constantly thinking of my four year old son.

One of the Chetniks asked if they were going to shoot us with the machine gun or individually. At that moment, I was stirred by my instinct of survival. The thought came to me to fall into the river if I was not hit by the first platoon and pretend to be dead.

At that point, the first in the row, Meho D., cried out (if this animal like shriek could be called a cry). I know he was hit and I plunged into the river before they aimed at me. I saw everybody falling down. Meho's son, Nefres, was badly wounded, screamed and fell. I turned not to watch it, but then, my Yehra was also hit. The Drina River around her was soon coloured with blood and I knew she was dead. I closed my eyes not to watch the end, not to see my own execution.

Then, they approached the river bank and continued to fire. Hasan K. was hit and not heard any more. The next one to be

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silenced forever was Ekrem D. When Hasan M. was shot, he fell over me with his body. Everything was quiet after that. I heard the voice of M.L. ordering one of his bandits to return and shoot the man that managed to survive.

Two shots were heard, one bullet hitting the body and the other falling into the water beside me. Everything was still and quiet after that.

After a length of time, I looked around and saw a young man on my right hand side. He raised his head in that hell of terror and death. I asked him if he was hit. When he said no, we wondered what we would do next.

We were alive and I suggested that we should wait to be sure that they had gone. When I heard them starting the car and left I climbed the river bank to check if there was still anybody there.

We walked together down the Drina River bank for about 1.5 km until we came to the place called Mucici. There we waited for darkness to fall. Our destiny joined us together in survival - that young man didn't know how to swim and I did. He was from the village on the opposite side of the river. I thought that ever thing was also burned down there, I didn't realise that our people still lived there. We decided to cross the Drina River. I found an old tree stump which we pushed into the water. He was holding onto it on one side and I on the other. So we crossed the river at 22.30 hours.



BOSNIAN HOME CLUBS PRESENT  
 AT THE MEETING OF 3 JANUARY 84

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POPI S PRISUTNIH:

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- JURE KRISNIC 613-467 Z.F. Z. ROKVANA - REKA - POLJE
- HODZIC' VESNO 322-991 ZAVICAJNI KLUB TESLJE - MACAUSKA
- TASIC' VALIDG 611-638 ZAVICAJNI KLUB "SPRICA" DOBOR-ISTOK
- ABEMIR BUKUC' 521-491 DULJIN
- HODZIC' ISHAK 611-638 STRECA
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- Dr. Imrich N. Čehović C. Križ - RB14
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- Omerovic' Hasan zavicajni klub "Lopučičke pagije"
- VADIK ERLEM -11- SAN-SKI POST
- Ante Pranikic, zavicajni klub BRČKO, PRESS "RG"
- Al'clavic' Biser LK OBOJ
- Cemir B

## DIGNITY FOR ALL

For the refugees crowding into Croatia, mere survival isn't enough

The trauma stays for the fugitives of former Yugoslavia. The pain of violation and torture does not diminish, nor does the nightmare of escape from Bosnian horror zones where their families were slaughtered in front of them, their women and children raped.

A despondent young woman from Sarajevo, sheltering in a Slavonian refugee camp, said it succinctly. "I have lost everything. All I have left is a brain to think with. God gave it to me to make me suffer."

It takes more than food and shelter to ease the human suffering in former Yugoslavia where the young woman is just one of almost 3,500,000 refugees and displaced persons created by the conflict, the largest uprooting of people in Europe since the Second World War. No less important is the need for dignity. The healing of minds and spirits is essential.

The demand for psychosocial support and social activities led the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to introduce an unprecedented social welfare programme to the region. Now up and running in Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia/Montenegro and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, it is, in the words of Norwegian Kirsten Danielsen, providing someone who cares, someone to talk to, someone to encourage and motivate.

Danielsen is the programme coordinator in Croatia, a country overwhelmed by refugees and in which the Federation is out to reach some 150,000 living in camps and collective shelters. "Most refugees and displaced people here live in host families," she says, "but it is those 150,000 without family and connections who are the poorest and most vulnerable."

## Most vulnerable

Traumatized children, the elderly -- often alone and with no one to care for them -- men and women who have been tortured, raped or abused are the most vulnerable groups in Danielsen's eyes, those unable to cope with daily life. "But grief and fear are the hallmarks of all refugees here, along with fading hope for the future."

More than 150 locally recruited social workers -- some of them refugees and displaced people themselves -- are now reaching out to them as a programme which started in March spreads throughout the country. Six experienced expatriate Federation delegates are running the programme in six regions that cover the Dalmatian coast, Istria, Slavonia and central Croatia. Never before has a social welfare project been implemented on such a scale.

The Federation is using social activity to reach and relieve the massive trauma it is uncovering. "A refugee or a displaced person," Danielsen explains, "is somebody who is running for his or her life, leaving everything behind, coming to a place where no one needs you and you are a burden."

"You do not know if you will ever be able to return home, you do not even know how long you must wait to know. You

cannot influence your situation, you are no longer in charge of your own life. You become passive, depressed, you just sit in the refugee camp, stone-faced, afraid, distrustful of everyone.

"Social activity can be used to change this, to replace the passivity. Activity is itself therapy. We may provide facilities for children to play, material and tools to start handicraft groups, or organize group sports activities. We may issue bus tickets or run bus services to get people out of camps, arrange for them to make phone calls or read a newspaper to moderate the ghetto feeling and keep in touch with the outside world."

The emphasis, says Danielsen, is on help to nurture self-help. "Our staff provide opportunities for people to do things for themselves, take responsibility for themselves and their environment once again."

#### Raped and abused

Social activities do more than provide psychosocial support. They are also a means to contact those in deep trouble, the raped, tortured and abused who need intensive medical or psychiatric care, but cannot bring themselves to ask for qualified help.

Says Danielsen, "Our staff build trust through social activity, gain the confidence of the people and hear their stories. They are trained to identify the seriously traumatized and the mentally ill and serve as the link to the local psychiatrists, clinical psychologists and other specialists recruited for the programme."

The social workers themselves provide a sympathetic ear, a counsellor to talk to one-on-one, and someone who opens the door to peer counselling within the framework of group activity.

"This war has damaged human relations in such a way that the normal solidarity within a group is often absent," Danielsen explains. "The challenge for us is to rebuild trust within groups so that people open up, share their grief and support one another."

#### Croatian Red Cross

The social workers now active in more than 280 camps and collective centres will be employed by the Croatian Red Cross, which works hand-in-hand with the Federation. Eventually it will place 240 social workers in the field, one per 625 refugees and displaced given today's figures.

It will be a long haul, Danielsen confesses, a programme demanding long-term commitment from the Federation's donors. But as one refugee social worker put it, "It isn't enough to survive. Our people need structure and stability. There has to be a tomorrow."

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