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**STATEMENT AT ICM PRESS CONFERENCE
11 AUGUST 1995, LLUBLJANA, SLOVENIA**

- Jakobovic (Hajika) Abid, 57 years-old, forester, taken off the bus at Potocari UNPROFOR base 12 July; "disappeared".

- Hediba Alic, 22 years-old, Hajrudin Begzadic, 32 years-old, Esad Mustafic, all taken away also on 12 July from an unused factory building in Potocari -- taken by Serb soldiers dressed in UNPROFOR uniforms; now "disappeared".

All these people, and several thousands of others, "disappeared" nearly one month ago today when the so-called safe area of Srebrenica was overrun by the Bosnian Serb Army (BSA). Two

weeks ago today, the so-called safe area of Zepa was overtaken, and thousands more fled. Again many "disappeared". Today, one month after Srebrenica, thousands of people suspected to have been in the hands of BSA are still missing. These thousands join the tens of thousands of other people who have "disappeared" over the course of the last three years in the former Yugoslavia and remain still today unaccounted for.

Over the course of the last two weeks, I and two colleagues from Amnesty International have had the opportunity to interview at length scores of refugees who have fled the areas of Srebrenica and Zepa after those areas were occupied by the BSA. About 15,000 withdrew on foot through the forest, where they seem to have been subjected to systematic ambushes by Bosnian Serb soldiers. Some in this group appear to have been killed after surrendering to Serb forces

The remaining population of Srebrenica -- at least 20,000 -- were evacuated to Potocari. There, men and boys as young as 12 and men over 65, even over 75, were systematically separated from the women and children and taken away. Thousands are unaccounted for.

We gathered eyewitness and first-hand accounts from those people who were part of this exodus -- in the camp at the Tuzla airport where several thousand refugees were camped next to the runway, and at collective centres where other refugees were being housed.

Solidly documenting what happened is difficult. While there is no shortage of sources willing to provide testimonies, given the large numbers of people involved and the nature of the departure of many, it is difficult to obtain corroborating information, especially from those who fled on foot and who spent days without sleep, food, water, and who were frequently ambushed. Their ability to recall specific dates, times, or even places is understandably limited.

Yet, after speaking with hundreds of refugees, we found the magnitude of this human rights problem staggering. I found not a single family in which the whereabouts of all family members was known. Every individual family we spoke to was missing either a father, a husband, a son or a brother. Many were missing several male members; some were missing all, especially if they were of military age.

What happened to them? Where are they?

The answer is not a pleasant one to contemplate. I am afraid that the worst fears of too many families may be realized. If the men separated from the women at Potocari are among the very few who are very lucky, they may be held at the Batkovic camp where some have been visited and registered by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). But these account for only a very small number -- about 164 as of just a few days ago to be exact.

At first large numbers were thought to be held at the football stadium in Bratunac, but they are apparently no longer there, according to the ICRC.

Now far more likely is one of the following scenarios:

- Many thousands may be held incommunicado with no access to family, a lawyer, anyone -- completely cut off from the rest of the world -- and this is for a month now. Given what we know of the past pattern for detainees held by the BSA, this situation cannot be comforting to their relatives.

- Or they may be dead. They may be one of the seven bodies that an UNPROFOR employee said she saw when she went out to the well and saw three of her neighbours with their throats slit.

- Or they may be among the hundreds, if not thousands, of others who may have been executed following surrender to Serb forces, or ambushed as they fled through the forest.

We are here today to appear for the "disappeared", to add our voices -- voices from more than 70 countries from every corner of this earth -- to add our voices to those of the many grieving families languishing in camps just a few kilometres from here in demanding that each single person taken into the custody of the BSA be accounted for. We know that the Bosnian Serb leadership knows where they are and what happened and they must be held responsible for them. And those responsible must be held accountable. And the over one million members of Amnesty International around the world will do everything they can -- publicizing, demonstrating, campaigning -- to ensure that those responsible are held accountable.

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