

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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Bosnia and Herzegovina: Families of the victims of genocide committed in Srebrenica 17 years ago are still waiting for truth, justice and reparation

Amnesty International is concerned that victims of crimes committed during the 1992-1995 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and their relatives are still being denied access to truth, justice and reparation.

Families of more than 8,000 killed in the Srebrenica genocide are still waiting for justice and reparation as the majority of those responsible enjoy impunity. Many alleged perpetrators continue to live in the same communities as their victims and their families. As no effective investigations take place, the families of the missing are unable to obtain information about the fate and whereabouts of their loved ones.

On 10 July 1995, during the 1992-95 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Bosnian Serb forces advanced on the Srebrenica enclave, which was a designated UN "safe area", and where thousands of Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims) had taken refuge. After Srebrenica fell to Bosnian Serb forces, despite the presence of the UN, more than 8,000 Bosniak men and boys were separated from the rest of the population and deliberately and arbitrarily killed. As of today, a total of 6,704 DNA identifications of those persons have been made. The July 1995 events in Srebrenica have been described as the biggest atrocity in Europe since the end of the Second World War and have been recognized by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (Tribunal) and by the International Court of Justice as an act of genocide

While some authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to engage in attacks on the justice system, the fate of an estimated 8,000 to 10,000 of forcibly disappeared in Srebrenica and other places in Bosnia and Herzegovina remains unknown. The Law on Missing Persons, providing for the creation of the Missing Persons Institute, the Fund for Providing Assistance to the Families of Missing Persons and the Central Records of Missing Persons, fails to be fully implemented leaving the families of the missing with no access to reparation, including compensation.

Earlier this year, a coalition party from Republika Srpska filed a motion to abolish the State Court and Prosecutor's Office of BiH. Although the principles of the draft proposals of the Laws which would abolish the Court of BiH and the Prosecutor's Office of BiH were rejected in the BiH Parliament, politicians continue to make public declarations undermining the work of the state judicial institutions.

Denial of Srebrenica genocide, a crime that, as was found in the international court rulings, generates further the suffering of those who have suffered enough during and after the war. Amnesty International calls on all the authorities in the former Yugoslavia, including Serbia's

new president, Tomislav Nikolic, who said that the Srebrenica massacre of 1995 was not a genocide, to respect the commemoration efforts in Srebrenica. Acknowledgment and memorials represent key components of transitional justice efforts of any society, and is the only way victims of war time human rights abuses can deal with the past and rebuild their shattered lives.

As the families are preparing to bury another 520 bodies in the memorial Potocari near Srebrenica this year, Amnesty International calls on the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to undertake urgent steps to ensure the right to truth, justice and reparation for the victims and their families.

More information

Court rules Netherlands responsible for three Srebrenica deaths

Ratko Mladić arrest 'a major step towards justice

Bosnia & Herzegovina: 'Whose justice?' : The women of Bosnia and Herzegovina are still waiting

Karadžić trial must bring justice to victims from Bosnia war

Document - Bosnia and Herzegovina: Ten years on and no justice for the victims of Srebrenica

Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina: The apparent lack of accountability of international peace-keeping forces in Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina

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