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BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA: ONE YEAR AFTER THE SREBRENICA TRAGEDY, AMNESTY DEMANDS TRUTH AND JUSTICE FOR SREBRENICA VICTIMS AND OTHER "MISSING" AND "DISAPPEARED"

Thousands of relatives of around 6,000 people "missing" -- and in many cases feared dead -- after the capture of the Srebrenica enclave by Bosnian Serb forces a year ago are still waiting to find out what has happened to their loved ones, Amnesty International said today as it released a new report.

"Every one of the scores of Muslims we have met who left Srebrenica in 1995 has a relative or friend now among the 'missing'," Amnesty International said.

"As more time passes, their fears grow that they will never know the truth and that the tragedy of last summer will be forgotten."

This week's hearings at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia represent a step towards justice, but the international community and the parties to the Dayton peace agreement still have to show that they are genuinely committed to getting justice and revealing the truth.

In the report -- *To bury my brothers' bones* -- the human rights organization documents new testimony from dozens of relatives of the "missing" of Srebrenica gathered during a research trip in April.

"Their testimony, and other evidence, leads to the inescapable conclusion that thousands of the people captured by Bosnian Serb forces after the fall of the enclave were deliberately and unlawfully killed," Amnesty International said.

The truth about whose bodies lie in mass graves is buried with them and will only be revealed when proper exhumations are complete. Amnesty International is calling on governments and intergovernmental organizations to provide resources for the United Nations to exhume mass graves, conduct proper autopsies and set up an *ante-mortem* database to ensure that the maximum number of victims can be identified. More than 27,000 people are unaccounted for in the former Yugoslavia.

One male survivor, Halil Mehi\_\*, told Amnesty International: "I would want to go back to Srebrenica only if it were possible to find somewhere the bones of my [two] brothers, to bury them".

“There can be no lasting peace without truth and justice,” Amnesty International said. “International organizations, in particular the multi-national peace implementation force (IFOR) and the parties to the Dayton peace agreement, must take every possible step towards these, including ensuring the arrest of indicted war crimes suspects.”

The organization said that other important goals of the Dayton peace agreement have still not been fulfilled. Displaced persons from Srebrenica and of all nationalities from all over Bosnia-Herzegovina do not feel safe to return to their homes as human rights violations, including arbitrary detention and violence against civilians, continue and war crimes suspects remain at large.

The president of an organization representing female relatives of the Srebrenica “missing”, Fatima Husejnovi\_\*, told Amnesty International: “Until we know the fate of the last of our disappeared from all of the Podrinja, from the exodus of Srebrenica, until we all go back to our own homes, something the Dayton Agreement enabled and promised, until that is carried out, in our hearts it is still war”.

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Note to editors:

The two quotes marked with an asterisk are included in the video and audio news releases also launched today. Please contact **Paula Seager** on 0171-4135977 for further information on the video and audio material.