



The Fall of Srebrenica and the Failure of UN Peacekeeping Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Summary

The fall of the town of Srebrenica and its environs to Bosnian Serb forces¹ in early July 1995 made a mockery of the international community's professed commitment to safeguard regions it declared to be "safe areas" and placed under United Nations protection in 1993.² United Nations peacekeeping officials were unwilling to heed requests for support from their own forces stationed within the enclave, thus allowing Bosnian Serb forces to easily overrun it and — without interference from U.N. soldiers — to carry out systematic, mass executions of hundreds, possibly thousands, of civilian men and boys and to terrorize, rape, beat, execute, rob and otherwise abuse civilians being deported from the area.

This report, based on an investigation by Human Rights Watch/Helsinki representatives from July 31 to August 23, records the events leading up to, during and immediately after the fall of the Srebrenica "safe area," including gross violations of humanitarian law, as has been typical of Bosnian Serb military conduct to date. Abuses attending the occupation of the "safe area" included the terrorization of women, children and the elderly and the premeditated mass executions of men and boys. The trek through Bosnian Serb-controlled territory that men fleeing the enclave hoped would lead them to safety instead led to ambushes and executions of hundreds and possibly thousands of men in numerous locations. We have based our accounts of these atrocities on the testimony of survivors who have identified locations and sites of mass executions both within the Srebrenica region and in various areas stretching between Bosnian Serb-controlled and Bosnian government-controlled territory.

We report on the mishandling of the crisis by the U.N.'s Bosnia peacekeeping force UNPROFOR/UNPF — from the craven decisions of its field commanders prior to the fall of Srebrenica, to its apparent suppression and destruction of evidence of massive human rights abuses immediately after the fall of the "safe area."³ We also report on the Dutch

¹ Human Rights Watch/Helsinki uses the term "Bosnian Serbs" in this report to describe forces loyal to Ratko Mladic, the commander of military forces for the self-proclaimed "Republika Srpska." Scores of Serbs oppose the policies of Mladic and his troops, but unless otherwise indicated, the use of the term "Bosnian Serb" in this report does not refer to opponents of the so-called Republika Srpska regime.

² On April 16, 1993, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 819, demanding that all parties to the conflict "treat Srebrenica and its surroundings as a safe area which should be free from any armed attack or any other hostile act."

³ Such suppression of evidence is emblematic of UNPROFOR's/UNPF's efforts — since 1991 — to downplay abuses by Serbian forces in Bosnia and Croatia. In addition to the suppression of evidence concerning abuses in Srebrenica following the enclave's fall is the U.N. suppression of reports regarding the existence of "concentration" and detention camps in northwestern Bosnia in 1992. (See Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, *War Crimes in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Volume I*, (New York: Human Rights Watch, August 1992), pp. 168-69, and 228-29, for a description of these events in 1992).

Defense Ministry's "mislaying" of a crucial list of missing Bosnian men and boys and its destruction of a video tape showing Bosnian Serb soldiers engaged in extrajudicial executions as Dutch U.N. troops looked on.

The recent cease-fire in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the euphoria that has accompanied this apparent progress, should not obscure the fact that no peace agreement will be legitimate or stable without justice for human rights abuses. The atrocities described in this report, like the many others that have preceded them in the former Yugoslavia, require of the international community a commitment to reparation for the victims and accountability for the perpetrators.

Recommendations

The U.N. General Assembly, the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, the World Conference on Human Rights, and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia have all decried the atrocities in Bosnia and Herzegovina as genocide. Yet the international community has failed to fulfill its moral and legal duty to prevent genocide⁴ and to insist that those who commit acts of genocide, as well as those responsible for parallel war crimes and crimes against humanity, be brought to justice.

As this report documents, possibly thousands of civilians were killed by Bosnian Serb forces during and immediately after the offensive on Srebrenica. The whereabouts of thousands of persons remains unknown. Bosnian Serb forces have granted the International Committee of the Red Cross only limited access to a small number of detainees, while the vast majority remain disappeared. A complete investigation to determine the number of civilians executed by Bosnian Serb forces and the fate of those whose whereabouts is unknown is not possible without access to the territory under the control of Bosnian Serb forces, an examination of the sites, and the exhumation of alleged mass graves and examination of corpses which may be found.

To Bosnian Serb Authorities:

- Identify the fate of all persons — both civilians and combatants — killed during and immediately after the July offensive against the United Nations-designated “safe area” of Srebrenica;
- Allow international humanitarian and human rights organizations immediate access to all detainees and ensure the safety of such detainees;
- Identify the site(s) of any possible massacres and allow international forensic experts to exhume and examine the bodies immediately to determine cause of death and to preserve evidence for future prosecution;
- Protect all civilians remaining in Bosnian Serb-controlled territories from abuses such as rape, forced labor, forced eviction and imprisonment, harassments that are designed to intimidate, terrorize or forcibly expel, thereby “ethnically cleansing” the regions;
- Publicly prosecute, not only those who committed acts of genocide, but also those who allowed atrocities to be committed by troops under their direction, as well as those who provided or assisted such troops.

⁴ Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crimes of Genocide, Art. VIII.

To the International Community:

Human Rights Watch/Helsinki calls the international community, and especially the United States government and its peace negotiating team, to

- Insist on immediate international access to all detainees from the Srebrenica “safe area” and demand that their safety and well-being are ensured;
- Insist that the Bosnian Serb authorities provide immediate access to the sites of reported massacres during the Srebrenica offensive;
- Publicly name the senior political and military leaders who presided and continue to preside over the commission of atrocities related to the Srebrenica offensive. Make details of their crimes public and provide this information to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia;
- Provide immediate humanitarian assistance to those displaced by the offensive;
- If relevant, disclose all available information, including intelligence, that implicates Serbia in supplying, assisting or directing Bosnian Serb troops. Also, strengthen the mechanisms for monitoring external support to Bosnian Serb forces;
- Investigate the role of U.N. officials and disclose all available information pertaining to the United Nations’ response to the military offensive against the so-called “safe area” of Srebrenica. Such investigations and disclosures should be aimed at and forthcoming not only from the Dutch government, but also senior military and civilian officials at UNPROFOR/UNPF headquarters in Zagreb. An independent investigation should be conducted into the U.N.’s role before, during and after the fall of the Srebrenica enclave, and disciplinary action should be taken against all those - irrespective of rank - who destroyed or withheld information that provides evidence of human rights abuses.
- Ensure that any peace accord agreed to by any of the parties to the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina guarantees the right to repatriation of survivors of “ethnic cleansing” and the full protection of all returnees and minority groups. Also, the fate of the missing and disappeared must be disclosed.
- Take steps to further protect the remaining United Nations-designated “safe areas” of Gorazde, Sarajevo and Tuzla, and ensure that no siege of these areas or massacre of their inhabitants takes place;

The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia offers an historic opportunity to provide justice to victims of atrocities, possible deterrence against further abuse, and a basis for eventual peace and reconciliation by substituting individualized guilt for the assumptions of collective ethnic guilt that now fuel the conflict. The Serbian government's active support is needed to secure the presence of defendants for trial, but to date, Belgrade has blocked the tribunal's investigations and done nothing to secure custody of Bosnian Serbs indicted by the tribunal.

Human Rights Watch/Helsinki is deeply disturbed that the major powers, despite earlier commitments to the contrary, are now offering rump Yugoslavia (i.e. Serbia and Montenegro) an opportunity to suspend sanctions in return for political concessions that have nothing to do with the tribunal. That offer should be withdrawn, and rump Yugoslavia's active cooperation with the tribunal - particularly in regard to the investigation of the massacres in the Srebrenica area - should be made a prerequisite for any suspension, lifting or easing of the sanctions.

Human Rights Watch/Helsinki calls on the major powers to:

- Assist actively, including by providing sufficient budgetary support, in the efforts of the International War Crimes Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia to identify, prosecute, and punish war criminals and to prevent war crimes.
- Maintain full economic sanctions against rump Yugoslavia until that government cooperates fully with the investigation and extradition of suspected and indicted war criminals.

Background

In April and May 1992, the Bosnian Serb army - with the active assistance of the Yugoslav Army⁵ and paramilitary groups from Serbia proper - began a drive to “ethnically cleanse” all non-Serbian inhabitants from much of Bosnia. As part of its “ethnic cleansing” campaign, Bosnian Serb forces used tactics such as siege warfare, systematic persecution involving widespread torture, murder, rape, beatings, harassment, *de jure* discrimination, intimidation, forced displacement of people, confiscation and destruction of property, and the destruction of cultural objects such as mosques and Catholic churches. With the fall of Srebrenica and Cepa,⁶ Bosnian Serb forces have virtually completed the “ethnic cleansing” of eastern Bosnia. The abuses perpetrated during the “ethnic cleansing” of eastern Bosnia constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity as that term was defined at the Nuremberg trials and within the meaning of customary international law.⁷ Moreover, the fact that the abuses associated with “ethnic cleansing” were “committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group,” and that such acts were perpetrated systematically, that no one was held accountable for such crimes, and that they appear to have been premeditated in some cases, would indicate that the “cleansing” of eastern Bosnia and of the Srebrenica “safe area” in particular was part of a larger attempt by Bosnian Serb forces to commit genocide against the Bosnian Muslims⁸ and other non-Serbs.

Before the war, approximately 37,000 people — 72.5 percent Muslims and 25.5 percent Serbs — lived in the Srebrenica municipality.⁹ The town of Srebrenica was a relatively small

⁵ The Yugoslav Army (Jugoslavenska Narodna Armija - JNA) nominally withdrew its forces from Bosnia on May 19, 1992. However, the Belgrade authorities claimed that 80 percent of JNA troops in Bosnia were Bosnian Serbs who were free to remain in Bosnia to fight on behalf of Serbian forces in the republic after the JNA withdrawal. The result was that a force of at least 30,000 men and large quantities of war materiel remained in the hands of Bosnian Serb forces following the withdrawal of the Yugoslav Army. Serbia proper has also reportedly re-supplied Bosnian Serb troops since the JNA's withdrawal and paid the salaries of some Bosnian Serb military officers.

⁶ Although Human Rights Watch/Helsinki representatives investigated events surrounding the fall of both Srebrenica and _epa in July and August of 1995, this report will focus primarily on the period during and immediately after the Srebrenica offensive.

⁷ For an explanation of the definition of crimes against humanity as it relates to the current conflict, see Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, Appendix A: Memorandum of Law: Elements of the International Crime of “Crimes Against Humanity” Applied in the former Yugoslavia, *War Crimes in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Volume II*, (New York: Human Rights Watch, April 1993), pp. 394-97.

⁸ For the purposes of this report, “Muslim(s)” will be used to identify those now referred to as Bosnjak or Bosnjaci (plural) — pronounced in English as Bosniak(s) — in Bosnia. “Bosnjak” is a term which is accepted by the government of Bosnia and Herzegovina to define the population generally known as “Muslim(s),” and which has become their official nationality title. Their current status as “Muslims” is viewed by some as an inaccurate label because it identifies a people's nationality solely on the basis of religious belief. Furthermore, the term “Muslim(s)” used as a nationality title is disapproved of by many countries in which Islam is the dominant religion, as well as by many “Muslims” of Bosnia and Herzegovina themselves.

⁹ At the time of the offensive, 38,000 to 39,000 people were living in the enclave. These figures are lower than the UNHCR's estimated population of approximately 42,000, because the UNHCR's numbers are based on the amount of food being delivered; the UNHCR overestimated the number of people in the enclave, because a portion of all food delivered had to be

and poor provincial town that had a population of approximately 8,000 residents. When Bosnian Serb forces began their brutal campaign of “ethnic cleansing” in eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina in April and May 1992, most areas quickly fell under Bosnian Serb control. Most of the non-Serb men either fled, were put into detention centers, or were indiscriminately killed. Most of the women, children and elderly who did not escape were forcibly expelled, and the few who remained lived under repressive conditions. Srebrenica initially came under the control of the Bosnian Serb forces in April 1992, but territorial defense units¹⁰ loyal to the Bosnian government retook the city a few weeks later.

Thousands of mostly Muslim refugees from other areas of eastern Bosnia flocked to places like Cepa, Gorazde and Srebrenica, where territorial defense units had succeeded in fending off the Bosnian Serb attacks. As a result of this sudden demographic shift, Srebrenica's population swelled to an estimated 55,000 to 60,000, which remained under siege for more than three years.¹¹

Srebrenica's defense was formed from the region's territorial defense units and was commanded by Naser Oric, formerly a police officer in the Yugoslav Interior Ministry and bodyguard of Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic. Despite being severely outgunned, Oric's troops initially resisted Bosnian Serb assaults until early 1993, when Bosnian Serb forces launched a major offensive in eastern Bosnia. This attack reduced the Srebrenica municipality from approximately fourteen square kilometers to eight square kilometers. The Srebrenica pocket became increasingly vulnerable as Bosnian Serb forces tried to overrun the city. Bosnian Serb shelling increased, while access for U.N. humanitarian aid convoys decreased. Residents were reported to be on the verge of starvation, and the humanitarian crisis in the area became dire.

Reports of Srebrenica's disastrous situation in late February and early March 1993 prompted the United States to spearhead an air-drop operation as a means to ensure that food reached the besieged enclave. As a result, the malnutrition crisis was somewhat alleviated, but the Bosnian Serb attacks continued. On March 11, 1993, the French commander of U.N.

handed over to the Bosnian Serb authorities surrounding the enclave.

¹⁰Each of Yugoslavia's six constituent republics maintained a territorial defense (TO) structure, which included a civilian security force and local reserve militia. Most men of military age were required to serve one year in the army. Those who did could be called up to serve as reserve police officers for the republic police force or as members of the local territorial defense unit. These territorial defense units, because they more closely mirrored the ethnic make-up of the local population, were transformed into the army of the Bosnian Government after the Bosnian Serb rebellion began in April 1992. The territorial defense units have since been reorganized and renamed as the Bosnian Army.

¹¹Human Rights Watch/Helsinki considers siege warfare as it has been carried out in Srebrenica to be legally impermissible. For a full discussion of the application of international law to the concept of siege warfare see Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, “Appendix G: Relevant International Law as it Applies to Siege Warfare and Its Aim in the Current Conflict,” *War Crimes in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Volume. II, p. 420-422.

forces in Bosnia, Gen. Phillipe Morillion, forced his way into the pocket. His visit was the first by an international observer for several months and was an attempt to publicly protest against the Bosnian Serbs' siege and continued attacks against the enclave. However, when Morillion had made his point and prepared to leave, the citizens of Srebrenica prevented his exit. Women and children lay on the ground in front of his convoy and refused to let it pass, forcing Morillion to stay in Srebrenica until the United Nations concretely addressed their immediate needs. Morillion left about a week later when the first convoy with humanitarian aid in months finally arrived in the town. Some of the enclave's 60,000 residents were also evacuated during the period, reducing the population of the enclave to approximately 40,000 people.

Meanwhile, Bosnian Serb forces announced that they would only end their attacks on Srebrenica if the residents relinquished their weapons to the U.N., thereby making Srebrenica a "demilitarized zone." U.N. troops were allowed into the enclave only after most weapons there were placed under U.N. control. Despite Bosnian Serb protests, Srebrenica's defenders retained their light weapons. Bosnian Serbs would later justify their final offensive on the enclave by claiming that these weapons were being used against them.¹² On April 16, 1993, the U.N. Security Council adopted Resolution 819 declaring Srebrenica a "safe area," and a cease-fire was signed on April 17.¹³ Access for humanitarian convoys was no longer denied, and the first 133 Canadian U.N. Protection Force (UNPROFOR) soldiers moved into the town. Srebrenica became a catalyst for the creation of five other United Nations-declared "safe areas" three weeks later.¹⁴

The role of the U.N. in the "safe areas" has been mired in confusion since the areas' inception. The Security Council resolutions establishing the six "safe areas" provided for the placement of U.N. troops within the areas but left unclear whether force could be used to protect the enclaves and their population from attack or whether U.N. troops could use force only for their own self-defense. A subsequent resolution¹⁵ stated that UNPROFOR was mandated to "deter attacks against the safe areas." A May 1994 report by the U.N.

¹² The U.N. did not demand that a sufficient number of U.N. soldiers be present in Srebrenica to actually defend it against a possible attack by Bosnian Serb forces, but nevertheless demanded that the U.N. troops present in Srebrenica enforce a weapons embargo against the Srebrenica territorial defense forces. Thus, the implicit message of the U.N. to the Srebrenica people was: we cannot defend the safe area, but you are not allowed to do so.

¹³For a copy of the agreement, see U.N. document titled, "Agreement for the Demilitarization of Srebrenica," signed by Bosnian Army Gen. Sefer Halilovic, Bosnian Serb Gen. Ratko Mladic and witnessed, on behalf of the U.N., by Lt. Gen. Lars-Eric Wahlgren.

¹⁴See U.N. Security Council Resolution 824, May 6, 1993, which made Sarajevo, Tuzla, Cepa, Gorazde and Bihac "safe areas" as well.

¹⁵ U.N. Security Council Resolution 836, June 4, 1993.

Secretary-General¹⁶ made clear that U.N. troops were authorized to use force to protect the “safe areas” but that, due to a lack of troops, the U.N. could not guarantee the defense of the “safe areas.” The U.N. estimated that it would need 34,000 troops, “to ensure full respect for the ‘safe areas,’” but it assumed that only an initial force of 7,600 would be available.¹⁷ According to U.N. officials in the field,¹⁸ only 3,500 were eventually deployed and only a few hundred of those were deployed in Srebrenica. This made it nearly impossible to fend off any attacks, if only U.N. troops were used. U.N. commanders have generally interpreted their mandate narrowly, claiming that U.N. troops could use force only to protect themselves, not the civilian population, within the “safe areas.” The aforementioned report by the secretary-general states: “UNPROFOR understands its mission [within the safe areas] as follows:

To protect the civilian populations of the designated safe areas against armed attacks and other hostile acts, through the presence of its troops and, if necessary, through the application of air power, in accordance with agreed procedure.”¹⁹

Although the safe areas may have been created with good intentions, in actuality, they became U.N.-administered ethnic ghettos. The humanitarian air drops to Srebrenica ended after Bosnian Serb forces allowed the U.N. to resume land convoys through Serbian-controlled territory from Belgrade to the enclaves. Unlike the air drops, the deliverance of humanitarian aid by land convoys allowed the Bosnian Serbs to examine, monitor and control the quantity, contents, and frequency of the deliveries. Bosnian Serb forces also demanded a portion of the aid in exchange for allowing its passage into the enclave. Sporadic violence continued around the Srebrenica “safe area” to varying degrees for the next two and a half years. Thousands of people huddled together, with inadequate food, water and shelter, living in isolation from the rest of the world. Only a few hundred lightly armed peacekeepers and increasingly disingenuous threats of NATO air strikes guaranteed their safety.

¹⁶ U.N. Security Council, “Report of the Secretary-General Pursuant to Resolution 844 (1993),” S/1994/555, May 9, 1994.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Human Rights Watch/Helsinki interview with U.N. officials, Bosnia and Herzegovina, August 2, 1995.

¹⁹ U.N. Security Council, “Report of the Secretary-General Pursuant to Resolution 844 (1993),” S/1994/555, May 9, 1994, p. 5.

The Fall of Srebrenica

Bosnian Serb forces justified their increasing attacks on the U.N.-declared “safe area” of Srebrenica by pointing to “terrorist activities” being carried out by Bosnian Army troops from within the enclave. In a July 1995 letter sent to Gen. Rupert Smith, the commander of U.N. troops in Bosnia, Bosnian Serb military commander Ratko Mladic justified the offensive on the Srebrenica “safe area” by claiming that Bosnian Army commando raids out of the enclave had killed more than one hundred Serbian civilians since the U.N. demilitarized the pocket in May 1993. “This action is aimed to neutralize the terrorists. Our activities are not aimed against civilians or the U.N.,” Mladic wrote.²⁰

According to H.H., a fifty-five-year-old man:

Starting in April of this year, all the way to late June, there was talk of an army buildup near Perucac. Scouts and people who traveled between Srebrenica and Cepa reported seeing younger soldiers dressed in black uniforms in the area; they reported seeing military maneuvers being carried out, tanks on higher ground and tank columns moving towards Cepa. Then the Chetniks²¹ started to bomb incrementally starting in April; people who trekked between Srebrenica and Cepa for food started to be killed in large numbers. Of about one hundred who would leave, only thirty or forty would return. In two months about 2,000 people lost their lives between Srebrenica and Cepa.²²

There was a lot of commotion in Srebrenica in the beginning of May when some of our men carried out a strike in Visnjica and killed those Serbs. People in Srebrenica were furious because — as the word was — it wasn’t an ordered operation, but something carried out by individuals acting on their

²⁰Samantha Power, “Bosnian Serbs Seize ‘Safe Area’; Fall of Srebrenica Enclave Challenges U.N., Prompts Warnings of Pullout,” *The Washington Post*, July 12, 1995.

²¹ During the Second World War, Serbian forces loyal to the Serbian king fought against the Croatian fascists known as the Ustasas, Tito’s communist partisans, and at times with and against the Nazis. The main objective of the Chetniks was the restoration of the Serbian monarchy and the creation of Greater Serbia. Feared for their brutality, the Chetniks committed atrocities against non-Serbs and Serbs opposed to their policies in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia. Croats and Muslims both in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina commonly refer to Serbian military and paramilitary forces engaged in the current wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina as “Chetniks.” The Yugoslav army and some Serbian paramilitary groups vehemently reject the label “Chetnik,” claiming they are merely defenders of their people and their land and that they are not extremists. Others, such as paramilitary units loyal to the ultra-right wing former leader of the Serbian Radical Party, Vojislav Seselj, commonly refer to themselves as chetniks.

²² Human Rights Watch/Helsinki was not able to confirm the numbers of people killed during such treks between Srebrenica and Cepa.

own. Everyone feared that this mindless action was equivalent to signing a suicide note for the city. From that day on, there was no more peace in Srebrenica. Bombs fell into the city every day and even during one night in June, the Chetniks carried out a commando strike inside the city. People were afraid.²³

U.N. officials acknowledge that Bosnian soldiers did launch attacks from the Srebrenica pockets, but stated that such attacks were few and small in scale, usually intended to obtain food and ammunition from the Bosnian Serbs.²⁴

Prelude: Starvation and Manipulation of Aid

Long before July 1995, there were numerous indications that Bosnian Serb forces were planning a summer offensive against the “safe area.” Access for U.N. convoys was increasingly restricted by Bosnian Serb forces, so that by late February and early March 1995, only one convoy per month was being allowed into the “safe area” to feed the approximately 39,000 people.²⁵ Furthermore, Bosnian Serb forces forbade the U.N. convoys from delivering any salt to Srebrenica and Cepa, in what some UNPROFOR officials²⁶ told Human Rights Watch/Helsinki representatives, was an attempt to prevent residents from preserving food.

The UNPROFOR officials also stated that by May, civilians in the enclave began to suffer from malnutrition, and by the first days of June, seven people had died of hunger. Such conduct by Bosnian Serb forces violated an agreement, reached between the Bosnian government and the Bosnian Serbs on May 8, 1993, which stipulated that Bosnian Serbs would allow food and other humanitarian aid convoys into Srebrenica and respect the principles behind the U.N.-declared “safe area.” A U.N. official in Tuzla told Human Rights Watch/Helsinki representatives:

This was a deliberate tactic used by the Serbs to weaken the population of the enclave in order to prepare the area for a final offensive; the incremental denial of food, water, electricity and proper medical supplies by the Serbs over a long period of time should actually have been viewed as the true preparatory stages of the July assault on the enclave and should have served

²³ Human Rights Watch/Helsinki interview, Tuzla, August 1995.

²⁴ Human Rights Watch/Helsinki interviews with U.N. officials, Bosnia and Herzegovina, August 1995.

²⁵ Of the seventy-seven humanitarian convoys slated to go to Srebrenica in 1995, only nineteen actually reached the enclave. Human Rights Watch/Helsinki interviews with U.N. officials, Bosnia and Herzegovina, August 1995.

²⁶ Human Rights Watch/Helsinki interviews with U.N. officials, Bosnia and Herzegovina, August 1995.

as a warning signal to the international community that the so-called United Nations “safe area” of Srebrenica was in danger.²⁷

Margriet Prins, UNHCR’s head of logistics in Tuzla, warned the commander of the peacekeeping forces there not to use any of the humanitarian supplies that had been stockpiled. “I knew that the enclaves would fall. . . . I think most of us knew. It was obvious that the Bosnian Serbs needed a victory, since people on their side have been getting sicker and sicker of the war, and it was obvious that no one was going to stop them if they were serious.”²⁸ As Human Rights Watch/Helsinki representatives were told by a U.N. official, on July 2 a request was made to U.S. forces in Zagreb to initiate an airlift operation, to supply humanitarian aid to the Srebrenica pocket; the request was turned down because it posed security risks for U.S. pilots flying over Serb-controlled areas.²⁹ By early July, the U.N. soldiers within the enclave were completely out of fuel and patrolled regularly on foot. According to UNPROFOR/UNPF officials, it was not uncommon to see people combing the garbage dumps looking for food within the enclave at that time.

U.N. Failure to Prepare or React

Prior to the offensive, Bosnian Serb forces hampered peacekeeping effectiveness, as well as troop rotations into Srebrenica. Bosnian Serb forces also crippled the Dutch battalion’s military capability prior to the July offensive. The Dutch unit was equipped with TOW missiles capable of destroying tanks, but prior to the offensive Bosnian Serb forces confiscated vital TOW spare parts as the Dutch were bringing them into the enclave. This made the missiles inoperable.³⁰ Also, two rotations of Dutch troops stationed in the enclave had been allowed to leave, but the Bosnian Serbs refused their replacements entry. As a result, the force was reduced from an already gravely insufficient force of about 400, to about 300. According to U.N. officials interviewed by Human Rights Watch/Helsinki representatives, another larger rotation of between fifty and eighty Dutch troops was due to leave the enclave on July 5, the day before the offensive began, but they reluctantly remained as signs of the offensive flared up.³¹

Thus, the entire pocket — civilians and UNPROFOR troops alike — were psychologically and physically exhausted weeks prior to the offensive. One U.N. official admitted to Human

²⁷ Human Rights Watch/Helsinki interview with a U.N. official, Bosnia and Herzegovina, August 1995.

²⁸ David Rieff, “We Hate You,” *The New Yorker*, September 4, 1995.

²⁹ The request was denied after U.S. air force pilot Scott O’Grady had been shot down by Bosnian Serb forces in June.

³⁰ Charles Lane, “The Fall of Srebrenica,” *The New Republic*, (New York), August 14, 1995.

³¹ Human Rights Watch/Helsinki interview with U.N. officials, Bosnia and Herzegovina, August 1995.

Rights Watch/Helsinki representatives that the Dutch troops were so eager to leave that they avoided, with one exception, reporting serious signals of the looming offensive, such as troop movements, new reinforcements coming into the area, and large amounts of fuel being sent to the enclave. For example, just two days before the attack Bosnian Serb forces allowed one convoy carrying 100,000 liters of diesel fuel, an unprecedented amount, into the pocket. This fuel was then recaptured when the “safe area” was overrun. Given the embargo on the Bosnian Serbs, as well as their refusal to allow fuel into the enclave on previous occasions, their sudden influx of fuel should have been suspicious to the Dutch U.N. soldiers. Without the fuel, Bosnian Serb forces would not have been able to later bus tens of thousands of Muslims to Bosnian government-controlled territory.³² Instead of heeding these warning signals, U.N. officials initially brushed off the Bosnian Serb incursions into the “safe area,” claiming that they believed that the Bosnian Serbs intended only to capture the southeastern tip of the pocket.³³

In late June and the days leading up to July 6, the number of shells landing within 200 meters of U.N. observation posts inside the enclave had increased substantially, concentrated mainly in the southern part of the enclave. Bosnian Serb artillery and tanks also advanced towards the enclave from the north and northeast. In total, U.N. sources estimate that approximately 5,000 Bosnian Serb troops had surrounded the enclave by July 5 with fifty artillery pieces and fifteen to twenty battle vehicles, including tanks and armored personnel carriers (APCs). July 5 was the quietest day the pocket had seen in a month; almost no incidents were reported.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Power, “Bosnian Serbs Seize ‘Safe Area,’” *The Washington Post*.

Offensive against the UN Designated “Safe Area” of Srebrenica

Bosnian Serb forces³⁴ launched a full-scale offensive on Srebrenica at 3:15 A.M. on July 6. Bosnian Serb forces, already less than two kilometers from the center of the city, began to shell civilian targets within the enclave. This was the first in a pattern of incidents invoking widespread panic and chaos because there was no place for Srebrenica’s people to retreat. The shelling was too heavy to count the number of detonations, but U.N. estimates were in the thousands. The shelling did not stop until 3:00 P.M. and then resumed the next day at noon.

On July 7, the assault continued, although only a few casualties were reported. On July 8, Bosnian Serb forces heavily shelled central Srebrenica, advancing quickly. They attacked near the U.N. observation posts "U," "S" and "F" [see map at end of section] in the southern part of the enclave near a key road leading from Cepa - the adjacent eastern enclave - to the northern part of the Srebrenica pocket.

Given the scarcity of housing within the enclave, Srebrenica’s residents sought shelter as Bosnian Serb troops began taking control of U.N. observation posts one by one. By the time the offensive was over, fifty-five U.N. troops had been taken hostage.

During July 7 and 8, tensions between the Bosnian Army and the Dutch U.N. troops rose because Dutch troops refused several requests from the government to fight on its behalf.³⁵ Additionally, during the course of the attacks, the local defense force in Srebrenica tried several times to take their weapons from the U.N. collection sites, but the Dutch troops refused them access.³⁶ Bosnian Army soldiers then threatened to kill Dutch troops if they

³⁴ Human Rights Watch/Helsinki representatives interviewed persons displaced from the Srebrenica and Cepa “safe areas” in August 1995, in the cities of Tuzla and Zenica. Several witnesses interviewed by Human Rights Watch/Helsinki representatives at that time stated that Serbs from Serbia proper and from formerly Serb-held areas of Croatia were present or took part in the August 1995 offensive against the Srebrenica “safe area.” Persons interviewed by Human Rights Watch/Helsinki representatives reported that they recognized Serbian and Croatian accents (specifically from the Krajina area of Croatia) spoken by many of the soldiers. They also reported seeing emblems, insignias, patches and uniforms worn by troops from those areas. One witness testified that while in custody, one of his guards turned out to be an acquaintance who was a soldier in the Yugoslav army and who was a resident of Serbia proper, i.e., he was not a Bosnian Serb according to the witness.

³⁵According to Dutch U.N. Warrant Officer Be Oosterveen stationed in Srebrenica during its fall. See Lane, “The Fall of Srebrenica,” *The New Republic*.

³⁶ Human Rights Watch/Helsinki interviews with U.N. officials, Bosnia and Herzegovina, July 2, 1995.

UNPROFOR/UNPF officials maintain that the weapons were so few and meager, and the Bosnian Serb assault so severe, that the weapons would have made little difference in the end. Although the U.N. could not give exact figures, one official told Human Rights Watch/Helsinki representatives that the Bosnian Army had “a few rocket-propelled grenade launchers, a few battle tanks, anti-aircraft cannons and very few armored personnel carriers.”

ever abandoned their posts.³⁷ These tensions culminated on July 8, when Bosnian Serb forces overran observation post "F." As the U.N. troops retreated, a Bosnian soldier shot and killed a Dutch U.N. soldier.

In view of the increasing Bosnian Serb attack against the "safe area," Dutch soldiers within the enclave requested close air support from their U.N. commanders, but the date of the request remains disputed. Some contend that had close air support been provided sooner rather than later, the Bosnian Serbs might have halted their assault on the "safe area" and thereby prevented the subsequent displacement and execution of its inhabitants. U.N. officials interviewed by Human Rights Watch/Helsinki deny that Dutch troops in the "safe area" requested close air support on July 8, claiming such a request did not come in until July 10. Other evidence, however, suggests that Dutch troops in the enclave acted sooner and believed that close air support might have dissuaded the Bosnian Serbs from pressing their offensive. According to press accounts, Lt. Col. Ton Karremans requested close air support on July 8, after the U.N. soldier had been killed by Bosnian government troops. That request was reportedly turned down by a commander of U.N. forces in Bosnia, British Lt. Gen. Rupert Smith, in Sarajevo. "They [Smith and his staff] felt the U.N. in Zagreb would see it as too early and not worth the risk," a Western military source in Zagreb said. Smith and his staff in Sarajevo apparently also feared that the Bosnian Serb forces would then be motivated to capture and hold more U.N. troops.³⁸ By this time, the Bosnian Serb forces had already taken about thirty Dutch peacekeepers hostage.

On July 9, most civilians on the outskirts of town had flooded the city center as Bosnian Serb forces closed in. Roughly 26,000 people were now living in an area where only 4,000 had lived before the war. Dutch soldiers in observation post "A" were attacked, and Bosnian Serb troops advanced on Dutch soldiers in observation post "C". Elsewhere, Dutch soldiers in an armored personnel carrier had been taken hostage. Of the three U.N. observation post in the southernmost tip of the enclave, each with roughly eight Dutch U.N. troops inside, one (observation post "F") had retreated and regrouped into a blocking position, and two (observation posts "U" and "S") had surrendered, and the U.N. troops at these two points were taken hostage. In addition, U.N. troops in observation post "K" reported heavy fighting in their vicinity. These troops were surrounded by Bosnian Serb forces to the south, west and east and were not allowed to withdraw to the north by Bosnian government forces. Observation post "M" had already been shelled and its troops had withdrawn to the south. Observation post "D" was surrounded by Bosnian troops and the U.N. was negotiating a

³⁷According to Dutch U.N. Lt. Gen. Hans Couzy cited in: Lane, "The Fall of Srebrenica," *The New Republic*.

³⁸ *Ibid.* Lane quoting a U.N. official in Zagreb.

withdrawal with these soldiers.

NATO jets were called in on July 9 to fly overhead, but rather than strike, the U.N. opted to withdraw and set up a "blocking unit" with about seventy troops. The U.N. sent Mladic a letter warning that if Bosnian Serb forces crossed the U.N. "blocking unit," they would face NATO air strikes. "This attack against a U.N. safe area is totally unacceptable and is a grave escalation of the conflict. The U.N. demands that this offensive cease forthwith," the letter read.³⁹ U.N. officials echoed the written statement saying that any attempt by Bosnian Serb tanks to get past the platoon of Dutch soldiers outside the city would result in bombing by NATO.⁴⁰ The U.N. and the Bosnian Army stood their ground until July 11, when Bosnian Serb forces plowed past their defenses.

By the evening of July 9, the staff of Lt. Gen. Bernard Janvier, the commander of all U.N. troops in the former Yugoslavia, was recommending that the Dutch troops be given close air support, but Janvier refused. At that point, European Union mediator Karl Bildt was in Belgrade trying to negotiate with Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic for the recognition of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Janvier reportedly feared that air strikes against Bosnian Serb forces would jeopardize the talks. He argued, as one source present at the meeting puts it: "If Karremans can hold out without close air, let's try it."⁴¹

On July 10, the assault continued as a front opened up on the eastern side of the enclave. Bosnian Serb forces directly targeted the Srebrenica hospital between 1:00 P.M. and 4:00 P.M. According to UNHCR estimates, approximately 30,000 people began to evacuate Srebrenica and move back to the northern part of the enclave towards a U.N. base in Potocari — a village located halfway between Srebrenica and Bratunac. On the same day, observation post "H" emptied and the Dutch troops withdrew.

The Security Council condemned the attack and demanded that the Bosnian Serb forces surrender and that both parties respect the April 1993 agreement.⁴² The Bosnian Serbs then announced that the U.N. troops could have safe passage out of the enclave if they surrendered their weapons, and demanded that all civilians leave the town within forty-eight hours.⁴³ Meanwhile, a Pentagon official stated, "We don't think the city is falling. . . . It's under considerable stress. . . . Our belief is that this is in retaliation for the [Bosnian]

³⁹ Chris Hedges, "U.N. Warns Serbs of Bombing if They Attack Dutch Unit," *The New York Times*, July 10, 1995, p. A1.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Lane, "The Fall of Srebrenica," *The New Republic*.

⁴² Refer to Background section for a description of this agreement.

⁴³ Human Rights Watch/Helsinki interviews with U.N. officials, Bosnia and Herzegovina, August 1995.

government offensive around Sarajevo, and designed to generate refugees, intimidate the U.N. and discredit the government."⁴⁴

Finally, on July 11, two days after the Bosnian Serb forces had driven through the U.N. blocking position, the U.N. used the close air support it had at its disposal.⁴⁵ The request from the Dutch troops came at 8:00 A.M. on July 11, and was made in consultation with the Dutch foreign minister. The foreign minister approved the use of air strikes, despite the fact that Dutch U.N. troops were being held hostage, but the request was again denied by Gen. Bernard Janvier.⁴⁶ At noon, another request for air strikes was made by the Dutch troops as Bosnian Serb forces walked into Srebrenica. At this point, Janvier decided he had no choice but to order air strikes, and at 2:23 P.M., a NATO air strike was finally launched. Four U.S. F16 fighter planes took part in the attack, which resulted in the destruction of one Bosnian Serb tank. As one U.N. official said, "It was a meager display. Too little, too late."⁴⁷

After gathering some belongings and food from his home, J.N. retreated to the hills, from where he could see the activities of both NATO and the Bosnian Serb forces. He reported to Human Rights Watch/Helsinki:

From that hill we could see everything that was going on in town. We saw a village, which was burning. Tanks were firing on the village. We just sat and watched while houses were pummeled one by one. Then we saw a column of tanks, armored personnel carriers and different kinds of vehicles in Bibici - about one kilometer from Srebrenica. The Chetnik vehicles were placed along the whole road from Bibici to Srebrenica. We could see the Chetniks shelling all the villages in the vicinity. They used the kind of shells that explode into fire as soon as they hit objects, so the houses began to burn at once. The Chetniks were shelling exactly the places where the most people were concentrated. When I was sitting and looking at what they were doing to us, I started to cry and I said to myself that we would never survive this. My brother said he thought none of us would make it out alive. Then two NATO airplanes showed up and from this hill where we were, we could see everything. These NATO planes circled two or three times around

⁴⁴ Chris Hedges, "Serb Forces Fight Dutch U.N. Troops in Eastern Bosnia," *The New York Times*, July 11, 1995, p. A10.

⁴⁵ According to U.N. procedure for close air support, such requests must first be made by the U.N. commander on the ground, then approved by the commander of U.N. forces in Bosnia, and then approved by the U.N. secretary general's special representative to the former Yugoslavia and the military commander for all U.N. forces in the region.

⁴⁶ Human Rights Watch/Helsinki interviews with U.N. officials, Bosnia and Herzegovina, July 2, 1995.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Srebrenica and then they dropped a couple of bombs. But I saw each one come down, and I am sure that none of them hit their targets. Even while the planes were dropping the bombs, they were still firing their tanks at the towns and villages. These airplanes came about three or four times and after they left, the Chetniks began to bombard us harder than ever.⁴⁸

Bosnian Serb commander Ratko Mladic threatened to fire on the Dutch compound and the civilian population of Srebrenica and to execute Dutch peacekeeping hostages, if more air strikes were carried out. Following NATO's attacks on Bosnian Serb targets, Dutch Defense Minister Joris Voorhoeve contacted Yasushi Akashi, the U.N. secretary general's special representative to the former Yugoslavia and chief U.N. civilian officer in the U.N. mission, and demanded that air strikes be called off immediately. Such a request was apparently contrary to earlier requests by the Dutch Foreign Ministry for air strikes against Bosnian Serb forces. Akashi complied, the air strikes were not repeated, and the U.N. effort to save the U.N. designated "safe area" of Srebrenica shifted to damage control.

The immediate reactions to the fall of the so-called U.N. "safe area" of Srebrenica were mainly of panic and disunity. The U.N. Security Council unanimously voted for a resolution, which demanded that the Bosnian Serb forces halt their offensive, immediately pull back from Srebrenica, and free the Dutch U.N. soldiers. French President Jacques Chirac put forth an offer — never seriously considered and perhaps so intended — to send French troops as part of a multinational force if the Security Council so requested, in order to return the status of Srebrenica to a "safe area." On July 13, Reuters reported that British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind had urged Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic to make the Bosnian Serbs "behave in a more civilized fashion." British Prime Minister John Major opted for inaction, however, by threatening to pull British U.N. peacekeepers out of Bosnia altogether. German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel recommended leaving the Srebrenica issue alone and concentrating instead on an impending attack on the "safe area" of Cepa. NATO announced that it condemned the taking of Srebrenica by Bosnian Serb forces and declared that it was "waiting for orders from the U.N."

In replying to the U.N. Security Council's resolution demanding that Bosnian Serb forces pull back from Srebrenica, rebel Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic announced that "Srebrenica is our land" and that there can be absolutely no word about retreat.⁴⁹ Bosnian Serb forces proceeded to pass through Srebrenica and continued on to Potocari without

⁴⁸Human Rights Watch/Helsinki interview, Tuzla, August 1995.

⁴⁹Milos Vasic, "Pad Srebrenice," Belgrade, *Vreme*, July 17, 1995, p. 8.

much resistance. More observation posts withdrew and U.N. troops and Srebrenica's civilians began to consolidate at a United Nations base in Potocari in the north.

Potocari

By the time the air strikes occurred on July 11, much of the enclave was already in Bosnian Serb hands and most of the civilian population had already begun to retreat toward the Dutch battalion's U.N. base in the village of Potocari. U.N. troops tried to organize a hasty evacuation from the city center of Srebrenica for the roughly 28,000 panicked, but widespread chaos prevailed.

Evacuation from Srebrenica

T.T. gave her account of her family's quick departure:

The U.N. began telling everyone they had to leave and they organized transportation to Potocari. Everyone then started climbing up into trucks, but because I was with my three children and one of them was an infant, I couldn't fight my way in, so I had to stay. Some of us managed to get into the trucks, but there were a lot who didn't, and the column of people who were walking was very long. The Chetniks were shelling the path that we were taking, and a lot of people were killed. Most of us tried not to look because we were just trying to save our own lives.⁵⁰

B.J., a twenty-three-year-old woman from the village of Orlica, gave a similar account of a hasty retreat:

When the Chetniks finally entered Srebrenica, everyone was still there — even many of the men who had fought to defend the town. The Chetniks pulled out again during the bombing, and we chased our men into the forests and mountains. Then mostly women, children, the elderly, the disabled, and many young boys and girls picked up and started to walk to Potocari where UNPROFOR made a large circle surrounded by barbed wire so we could all get inside. About 4,000 of us arrived in Potocari at first, but more came later.⁵¹

H.H., a fifty-five-year-old man from the village of Fojhar, believed the Bosnian Serb attack and the initial retreat of U.N. troops from Srebrenica were only temporary and would no doubt be reversed since the area was a U.N.-declared "safe haven." According to H.H.:

⁵⁰Human Rights Watch/Helsinki interview, Tuzla, August 12, 1995.

⁵¹ Human Rights Watch/Helsinki interview, Tuzla, August 1995.

By July 11, UNPROFOR soldiers were in a constant retreat. At 8:00 A.M. they were positioned near the mosque at Petri_ and began to retreat towards the center. By noon, they had moved back to the department store, by 12:30 P.M., they were at the bus station, and by 1:15P.M. they were at the gas station. At 1:20P.M., I locked the door of my house and joined the retreating civilians and soldiers — at this point the Chetniks were at Kazanski bridge. So many people like myself thought that what was happening would only be a temporary thing. We thought that soon the West and the U.N. would demand that the Serbian forces retreat from Srebrenica and that the “safe area” status would be restored. “It was a U.N. ‘safe haven,’ there is no way it will be allowed to fall,” I thought. That’s why I didn’t take anything with me when I left my house. I just locked my door and figured I’d be back in a few hours or a few days at the longest. Now all I have with me — of all the things I owned — are the keys to the front door of my house.⁵²

By Tuesday, July 12, the Potocari camp was completely overcrowded. Approximately 3,000 to 4,000 civilians were crammed inside the U.N. base, and over 24,000 others stayed in the surrounding buildings or outside the camp. Shooting continued throughout the Srebrenica pocket and Bosnian Serb commander Ratko Mladic warned that unless Srebrenica surrendered the pocket would be shelled into submission. T.Y., a fifty-five-year-old man from Pobuce, told Human Rights Watch/Helsinki representatives:

The Chetniks entered the area and started lighting up hamlets. Mortars were falling everywhere, and the people were all heading towards the U.N. base; everyone wanted to follow the UNPROFOR soldiers, because we didn’t know what else to do. But even as we met up with the UNPROFOR soldiers and retreated with them, the Chetniks still continued to shell us.⁵³

Bosnian Serb Forces Masquerade as U.N. Troops

Bosnian Serb forces had, by this time, completely surrounded the civilians in Potocari, and their tanks and artillery pieces in the hills were clearly visible from the camp. Most of Srebrenica’s able-bodied men between the ages of sixteen and sixty had gathered together in a separate location in order to escape capture. They set off on a long trek through Bosnian Serb-controlled territory in an effort to reach Bosnian government-controlled areas,

⁵² Human Rights Watch/Helsinki interview, Tuzla, August 1995.

⁵³ Ibid.

at the closest — about fifty kilometers away. The journey took the approximately 12,000 to 15,000 men between five and thirty-five days. Some men were still crossing over into Bosnian government-controlled area at the time Human Rights Watch/Helsinki representatives were in Tuzla during the entire month of August. On July 12, Serbian forces captured observation posts “R,” “Q” and “N;” only posts “A” and “C” remained under U.N. control. By this time, a total of forty-eight Dutch U.N. troops had been captured by the Bosnian Serbs, and most had been transferred to Bratunac.

Meanwhile in Potocari, Bosnian Serb troops were freely walking inside the camp among the civilians, with the U.N. reduced to bystanders. Many displaced persons told Human Rights Watch/Helsinki representatives that the Dutch troops had been stripped to their underwear and that many Bosnian Serb soldiers were wearing U.N. uniforms and helmets, walking among the displaced persons in Potocari, fooling civilians into thinking they were really U.N. troops.⁵⁴

T.N., a sixty-three-year-old refugee from eastern Bosnia who had been living in Srebrenica, recounted the following:

At one point during all this, a few Serbian soldiers stopped an UNPROFOR vehicle and pulled out two UNPROFOR soldiers. The UNPROFOR men were very angry. The Serbs were making them take off their clothes at gun point. One U.N. man got really mad, took his uniform off and threw it on the ground. Then the Serbs took off in their vehicle.⁵⁵

The UNHCR also reportedly confirmed that ninety-nine people, including twenty to thirty women and children, were killed by Bosnian Serb soldiers.⁵⁶ The soldiers, wearing the blue helmets and driving the white jeeps they had stolen from surrendering Dutch troops, had lured the refugees out of hiding to their deaths.⁵⁷

On Wednesday, July 13, Bosnian Serb soldiers stopped a U.N. medical convoy at Kravica, where UNPROFOR soldiers were forced to give the Bosnian Serbs their flak jackets. One witness reported seeing men dressed in U.N. uniforms, who spoke fluent Serbian, abducting

⁵⁴ UNPROFOR/UNPF representatives strongly denied such reports when Human Rights Watch/Helsinki inquired. However, a UNHCR official admitted it was true and furthermore told Human Rights Watch/Helsinki representatives that Bosnian Serb forces had amassed U.N. uniforms, equipment and vehicles from the previous hostage-taking of approximately 400 U.N. soldiers in May 1995.

⁵⁵ Human Rights Watch/Helsinki interview, Tuzla, August 7, 1995.

⁵⁶ Lane, “The Fall of Srebrenica,” *The New Republic*.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

two young women from Potocari.⁵⁸ N.P., a sixty-five-year-old man from Likari, described to Human Rights Watch/Helsinki representatives that he also saw Serbian soldiers dressed as U.N. peacekeepers:

When I arrived at Potocari on Tuesday, the Chetniks were already there. We saw some U.N. soldiers in their underpants. Initially, the people thought that U.N. soldiers were walking amongst them, only to discover that it was really Chetniks dressed up in their uniforms. I saw them pulling young boys and girls out of the crowd on Tuesday night. . . . Everyone at that time thought that the U.N. would guarantee our safety no matter what happened. We thought everything would soon be all over. If I had known that things would turn out like this and that I would never come back, I would have burned my own house down rather than have the Chetniks loot and vandalize it.⁵⁹

Evacuation of Potocari and Early Killings

Once the refugees had gathered in Potocari, the Bosnian Serbs began the mass transportation of civilians to Bosnian government-controlled territory. An evacuee list was prepared: first, the sick were to be evacuated; second, the weak; third, the women with children; and fourth, men between the ages of sixteen and sixty. The latter group would only be released after the men had been interrogated to determine if they had committed any “war crimes.” The actual deportations began on Wednesday and took one and one-half days to complete. The Bosnian Serbs transported the civilians in their own buses, each capable of transporting roughly seventy people. The aforementioned 100,000-liter shipment of U.N. gasoline, which had been allowed in by the Bosnian Serbs prior to the offensive, was apparently used to fuel the buses. Although most of the men had already fled to escape capture, some (mostly of non-draft age) remained. They were randomly separated from the rest of the people over the course of the next three days.

E.A., a woman, reported seeing twenty men being taken away and then one returning after he had been beaten. According to E.A.:

On Wednesday evening [July 13], Mladic arrived [in Potocari] and announced that transportation would be halted until 7:00 A.M. the next morning. That day I saw approximately twenty men being taken away by a tractor-trailer.

⁵⁸ Stephen Kinzer, “Bosnian Refugees’ Accounts Appear to Verify Atrocities,” *New York Times*, July 17, 1995.

⁵⁹ Human Rights Watch/Helsinki interview, Tuzla, August 1995.

Women were crying and screaming; then they took four or five more men away. The circle was very big. When the men were taken away, the women screamed and cried. I saw some other men — five or six of them — being taken away. One of them came back Thursday morning. He was from Suceska, but I don't know his name. He said that those five to six people who were taken away the night before would now "guard the area with the Chetniks together;" he must have been ordered to say this because it didn't make any sense at all.⁶⁰

Bosnian Serb soldiers searched the factories near the U.N. base and surrounding buildings, taking away specific individuals who had taken shelter there. Then, Bosnian Serb commander Ratko Mladic arrived in Potocari on Wednesday afternoon. After Serbian television had recorded him handing out candy to the children and telling the refugees that they would be taken care of, the atrocities began. According to T.Y.:

Suddenly a truck carrying water and bread pulled up next to the factory. The Serbs started throwing the bread out to us and everyone scrambled for it since we hadn't had any food the night before. Right away, Serbian photographers started taking pictures of how the Chetniks were giving us food and water. The journalists then left with Mladic, and the UNPROFOR soldiers were just left there in their underclothes. Afterwards, the Chetniks started pulling young girls and boys out of the crowd. While all of this was going on, I recognized one of the Chetniks; his name is Jovan Nikolic. He is about thirty years old and is from Kravica; he was a director of a school in Pobuce. By that night, the people who hadn't been transported out yet became hysterical and frightened. We began to hear talk about corpses being discovered in the area. Chetniks told us that we were Kurds. By Thursday morning, women were wailing and crying because many of their husbands and/or sons had been taken away by the Chetniks for one reason or another, but had not been brought back.⁶¹

T.T., originally from Srebrenica, described how she dressed her fifteen-year-old son as a woman to fool the Bosnian Serb soldiers picking young boys out of the crowd. According to T.T.:

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

They [the soldiers] said, “We won't hurt you - we are the regular army,” and then in the afternoon, on the second day Ratko Mladic showed up. He was standing just a few feet away from me when he spoke to us. He said everything would be fine, that there was no need to worry, that we would be safe here, and that nothing would happen to us. But not long after he left, about 1:00 P.M. or 2:00 P.M., the Chetniks came into the building wearing camouflage police uniforms with the kokarda⁶² on their caps, and they started to take boys out of the building. They took about thirty boys away, we don't know where, but we never saw them again. They told us they were only going to ask the boys a few questions - that nothing at all would happen to them. We didn't dare look too closely to draw attention to ourselves. I was hiding my son. That night while we were in the building, we could hear screaming from outside - terrible screams all around, and the women were all crying for their sons. My son and I spent that night together terrified. He said we shouldn't wait another day to leave - that we should leave tomorrow. So in the morning, on the third day, we left the building and headed toward the meeting area for the transports to Tuzla. At this place, the Chetniks were separating us into groups of men, or women with children. They were including little boys as young as twelve years old in the group of men, so I dressed my son up like a little girl. I put a scarf on his head and some bag on his back to make him look younger, and he snuck past them with me.⁶³

A Muslim woman, J.N., described to Human Rights Watch/Helsinki representatives how her son was killed:

After 2:00 P.M. when Mladic left, it got very bad. The soldiers began to drink. Mladic said all of us - all women and children - would be evacuated that night to Kladanj. I was about to go and look for my youngest son Elmadin; [he was] fifteen years old. He was in a circle with soldiers and dogs all around him, and I couldn't get through. I went to find this U.N. interpreter, Vahid, and asked for his help. He said there was nothing he could do - that there was nothing the U.N. [soldiers] could do because they had all been disarmed for the last four days. Then he said that I should find the particular man who took my son, because he is probably the only one who could help

⁶² The kokarda is a Serbian nationalist emblem which depicts a double-headed eagle and is worn by some Serbian paramilitary groups.

⁶³ Human Rights Watch/Helsinki interview, Tuzla, August 12, 1995.

me. Then I went up to this tent where there were ten Serbian soldiers, and I asked them what happened to my son. The Serb's name was Dragan. He said not to worry and that he had already sent my son to Kladanj, and that he was perfectly safe. I went back to the circle, and I was crying. Then at 4:00 the next day, they took my husband away. My husband was with two of my children, a daughter and my three-year-old son. They took my son out of his arms and just threw him on the ground. I was screaming, but they didn't stop. Then they made my daughter break away from my husband, and they threw her on the ground, too. And then my son Esmir It is just so hard to talk about this, I can't, it just breaks my heart. . . . I was holding him in my arms. He was my son from my first marriage. We were hugging, but they took him away. They grabbed him and just slit his throat. They killed him. They made me drink his blood. I just can't say anymore, I just can't, you have to understand that it is breaking my heart. I'm still hoping the authorities or anyone can still get my other son or my husband free. . .⁶⁴

T.N. described how her husband and she were beaten as they were being separated:

They had been separating the men and women, but my husband and I had managed to stay together somehow. Finally, when it was time to leave, we went to the buses together. We were holding each other tightly. Just before we were about to get on the bus, the Serbian soldiers told us to let go of each other. We wouldn't do it, and then one Serbian soldier winked at the other. One guy pulled us apart, and the other hit me with the butt of his gun so that we would let go. I fell on the ground, and he stamped me with his boot and injured my leg. I can hardly walk now, I'm an old woman. My husband and some other men were taken to a factory while we were getting on the buses. It was all women on the bus. Everyone had to give whatever they had left to the Serbs, who demanded valuables from us on the buses. My grandson, the last time he saw me, gave me his ring because he said that he might never see me again. They had taken him away earlier, but my granddaughter didn't want to worry me at the time, so she didn't tell me.⁶⁵

Several witnesses interviewed by Human Rights Watch/Helsinki reported that the Bosnian Serbs took away boys younger than sixteen and older men in their seventies. Other men

⁶⁴Human Rights Watch/Helsinki interview, Tuzla, August 5, 1995.

⁶⁵ Human Rights Watch/Helsinki interview, Tuzla, August 1995.

were separated from their families as they were boarding the buses or taken off the buses as they were driving to Kladanj.

There is also ample evidence indicating that many of the men taken from the Potocari camp were later killed. Several witnesses interviewed by Human Rights Watch/Helsinki representatives saw bodies of men whose throats had been cut or who had been shot, lying in houses in the hills surrounding the camp.

E.A. reported seeing the bodies of ten men who had previously been at the camp when she went looking for water. According to E.A.:

A friend of mine, Majda, and I were sent to get water. We went to some nearby houses. In the first three or four houses there was no water, so we had to go further. When we arrived at the first house with water, we saw blood all over the place. The furniture inside was a mess. On our way back, we saw about ten bodies with their throats slashed; it was around 8:00 A.M. We walked back the same way we came, but we hadn't seen the bodies on the way there because we had been talking and we hadn't really paid attention to what was happening around us. But when we saw blood on the way back we began to look around a bit, and that's when we saw the bodies. I knew that these were men from the group of twenty taken away the night before, because I recognized some of the men and their clothes. We were frightened and went back to the circle. After that event, the Chetniks forbade us to go there for water; instead, they brought a water cistern down to us.⁶⁶

Others recounted similar experiences. One woman interviewed by Human Rights Watch/Helsinki reported that she had seen three to four bodies in a house. Another said she had seen altogether about fifty bodies, all of men and boys.

International observers in Srebrenica also witnessed beatings and killings. Two international observers saw a man forcibly taken from a large group of people. A short time later they heard screams and upon investigation saw a Bosnian Serb soldier shoot the man in the head.⁶⁷ International observers also saw a man being beaten with rifle butts and then dragged into a house. He then heard one shot and concluded that the man had been

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ U.N. Economic and Social Council, "Final periodic report on the situation of human rights in the territory of the former Yugoslavia submitted by Mr. Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Special Rapporteur of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, pursuant to paragraph 42 of Commission Resolution 1995/89," E/CN.4/1996/9, August 22, 1995, paragraph 14.

killed.⁶⁸ Many witnesses said they heard screams in the middle of the night on Wednesday, July 12, 1995. International observers found nine or ten bodies dressed in civilian clothes lying near a creek. The bodies were all lying face down with their heads almost in the water. There appeared to be gunshot wounds in the back and sides of the bodies.⁶⁹ Another witness had seen the ten men being taken in the direction of the creek. Two more international observers witnessed the same scene later in the day. Although a group of six to seven bodies in civilian clothes was reported to have been seen in another location, accounts vary as to whether the cause of death had been the cutting of throats or gunshot wounds.⁷⁰

Dutch peacekeeping troops evacuated from Srebrenica said on July 23 in Zagreb that Bosnian Serb soldiers executed at least ten Muslim defenders and abducted between 150 and 300 men between the ages of sixteen and sixty, of whom nine were executed in the house, shot in the back. The Dutch officers acknowledged that with Bosnian Serb soldiers restricting their movements and stealing their vehicles, they may have witnessed only a limited picture of what really happened.⁷¹

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, paragraph 15.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, paragraph 16.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, paragraph 16.

⁷¹ Alan Cowell, "Peacekeepers at Fallen Enclave Confirm Some Atrocities but Say They Saw No Rapes," *The New York Times*, July 24, 1995.

The List of Missing Men and Boys from Potocari

While in Tuzla, Human Rights Watch/Helsinki representatives were told by I.O., a displaced person from Srebrenica, that a list had been compiled of Muslim men who had been in the Dutch compound at the U.N. base in Potocari.⁷² The list contains the names of 239 military-aged boys and men who had been at the base, had surrendered to the Bosnian Serbs, and are now missing. The list was compiled by a Muslim from Srebrenica who had been at the Potocari base. His wife and son are also missing. I.O. told Human Rights Watch/Helsinki representatives that the list had been given to a Mr. Franken, a Dutch military officer at the Potocari compound. Mr. Franken reportedly told the Bosnian Serb soldiers that a list containing the names of the men and boys within the Potocari base had been compiled, that he retained a copy of that list, and that he would pass it on to “officials in Holland and Geneva” as a guarantee that the prisoners should not be mistreated by the Bosnian Serb forces.

Upon arriving in Bosnian government-controlled territory, I.O. began to contact various government, human rights and humanitarian organizations in Geneva and the Netherlands only to be told that no one had heard of such a list. Human Rights Watch/Helsinki representative then inquired with the Dutch Foreign Ministry about the existence of the list, but were told that it had no knowledge about the existence of such a list. However, following Human Rights Watch/Helsinki’s request, an internal inquiry within the Dutch government was conducted and the list was eventually found in the Dutch Defense Ministry. A copy was then forwarded to the Dutch Foreign Ministry, which subsequently sent a copy to Human Rights Watch/Helsinki. A transcribed copy of the list appears as Appendix A of this report.

In the interim, Human Rights Watch/Helsinki learned that the U.N. peacekeeping mission’s headquarters in Zagreb reportedly also retained a copy of the list, if not the original. On September 13, 1995, Human Rights Watch/Helsinki sent a letter to Maj. Gen. Ton Kolsteren, the U.N. force’s chief of staff, asking whether the U.N. retained a copy of the list and whether it had raised the fate of the missing men and boys with Bosnian Serb officials. As of October 4, we had received no reply. We also sent a letter to U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke, appending a copy of the list and asking that the fate of these men and boys be raised with the Yugoslav/Bosnian Serb delegation during talks in Geneva on September 8. To date, we have not received a reply from the U.S. government regarding our letter.

⁷²It is unclear whether the list contained the names of all or just some of the men and boys at the Potocari base.

Although the Dutch press is questioning whether and why their Defense Ministry suppressed the list, no one appears to have inquired about the fate of the missing men and boys, with the exception of the International Committee of the Red Cross, which has been lobbying for access to detention centers controlled by Bosnian Serb forces.

Evidence of Human Rights Abuses in Potocari Destroyed by Dutch Government

According to a documentary aired on BBC2 in Britain on August 16, 1995, and an article published a week earlier by *The Observer*,⁷³ the United Nations destroyed video footage showing scenes of U.N. troops standing by while Bosnian Serb forces organized the massacre of Muslim men at the U.N. base at Potocari. According to *The Observer*, a Bosnian Serb cameraman filmed some of the same scenes that U.N. troops in Srebrenica were known to have captured on video. The footage reportedly reveals Bosnian Serb soldiers wearing looted U.N. berets and flak jackets and U.N. soldiers standing by while Bosnian Serb troops separate men from women and children. The film also reportedly depicts “a group of Muslim men prisoners herded into a field as Bosnian Serb soldiers were readying their weapons and there the film goes to black.”⁷⁴ General Hans Couzy, commander-in-chief of the Royal Netherlands Army, has admitted that the video footage “was destroyed” on his orders because it also identified Dutch troops.⁷⁵

The withholding of the aforementioned list and the destruction of video footage of certain atrocities, that were carried out in the presence of United Nations peacekeepers, deprived the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia of valuable evidence linking possibly identifiable perpetrators to their war crimes and denied Muslim families the opportunity to identify and possibly discover the fate of their missing relatives.

⁷³John Sweeny, “U.N. Cover-Up of Srebrenica Massacre,” *The Observer* (London), August 10, 1995.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*

⁷⁵*Ibid.* See also Sylvain Ephimenco, “Soupçons sur les Casques bleus bataves,” *Liberation*, (Paris).

Transport to Kladanj: Bosnian Serbs Terrorize Evacuees, Slaughter Fleeing Men and Boys

Bosnian Serb forces began transporting women, children and the elderly to the Bosnian government-controlled town of Kladanj on July 12. Approximately fifty buses and trucks were made ready by the Bosnian Serbs to transport Muslims from Potocari to the border of Bosnian Serb-held territory near Tisca. The drive lasted about two and one-half hours, via Bratunac and Vlasenica. The displaced persons were then forced to walk some six to eight kilometers across front lines to Bosnian government-held territory at Kladanj. Along the way the buses were frequently stopped by Bosnian Serb soldiers, who demanded money and jewelry. Bosnian Serb civilians stoned and harassed the passengers, calling them “Balije,” the derogatory term used to describe Muslims. Many men of military age who had attempted to make the trek through Bosnian Serb-held territory were captured along the way.⁷⁶ Although the numbers varied, evacuees spotted many captured men en route to Tisca. T.T. reported seeing about 2,000 men rounded up about one kilometer from Konjevic Polje. According to T.T.:

As we drove through their territory, the Chetniks showed us the three-finger salute [used by the Serbs] and said things like “Srebrenica is our territory - get out of here you Balije.” Then as we drove on the Glogova road, I saw about seven young men; all of them had their throats cut. They were lying on the side of the road, and one of them was around the same age as my son. His head was lying on top of a bag, but you could see clearly that his throat had been cut. Then, near Konjevic Polje, I saw some other young men who I recognized from Srebrenica, but they were showing the three-finger Serb salute and one of them was holding a white shirt. I figured the Chetniks had found them in the forests and forced them to surrender. . . . The Chetniks were making them hold their three fingers up behind their heads as they led them up the hill. Then we came to Konjevic Polje, and they stopped the bus near a café bar. Three soldiers came onto the bus and told us to give them the youngest child on the bus so that they could slit his throat. In fact, he said “Give us your youngest Ustasa”⁷⁷ - not “child.” So they told us to

⁷⁶ The trek is described in greater detail below.

⁷⁷ With the backing of the Nazi and Italian fascist governments, Croatian fascists (known as Ustase) established the puppet state of the Independent State of Croatia (Nezavisna Drzava Hrvatske — NDH). Under the Ustasa regime, thousands of Serbs, Jews, Romas and others were killed between 1941 and 1945. Some Muslims were members of the NDH government and some Muslim forces fought on the side of the Ustasa regime during World War II. Serbian military and paramilitary forces commonly refer to Croat and, to a lesser extent, the predominantly Muslim forces of the Bosnian government as “Ustase.” Most Croats

give them all the money and jewelry we had. They said that those who didn't hand it over would be taken from the bus and their breasts would be chopped off. They didn't do anything to us because all of us had something to give - we gave some gold and some money. I think all in all they probably collected about 1,000 German marks from us. Then the bus driver was allowed to proceed. About one kilometer from Konjevic Polje — on the road to [Nova] Kasaba — I saw about 2,000 of our men who had been caught by the Chetniks in the forest. They had their hands tied above their heads. They were showing us the three-finger salute as well. They were all around the road and on the sides of the road. The _etniks were standing around them with their guns at ready, and they were all heading in the direction of [Nova] Kasaba.⁷⁸

Many people said they saw smaller numbers of prisoners along the sides of the road. For example, E.A. said she saw about twenty prisoners standing in a field in Kravica and another fifty in Nova Kasaba. N.T., a twenty-six-year-old woman from Konjevic Polje, saw twenty prisoners in Kravica. Additionally, international observers and a displaced person reported that they saw between 300 and 500 men at a soccer stadium in Nova Kasaba.⁷⁹ T.Y. from Pobuce confirmed that a large number of Muslim men were rounded up in the Nova Kasaba area:

My convoy was made up of seven buses. All along the roadsides, I saw corpses and captured men from Srebrenica walking with their hands behind their necks; especially when we were passing [Nova] Kasaba — there was a tremendous number of prisoners gathered around there. Many of the women in my bus recognized the men who were captured. Meanwhile, Chetniks were boarding our bus and looking for money or jewelry.⁸⁰

Some people were forcibly removed from the buses during the journey. At one point, three elderly men were taken off one bus during a stop at Kravica.⁸¹ Nine women — mainly between the ages of fifteen and twenty — were taken off a bus at Bratunac. The fate of these persons remains unknown. N.P. from Likari told Human Rights Watch/Helsinki representatives that during the trip from Potocari to Kladanj, the Serbs indiscriminately

and Muslims reject the label and vehemently deny that they are Ustasa sympathizers or fascists.

⁷⁸ Human Rights Watch/Helsinki interview, Tuzla, August 12, 1995.

⁷⁹ U.N. Economic and Social Council, "Final periodic report. . .," paragraph 24.

⁸⁰ Human Rights Watch/Helsinki interview, Tuzla, August 1995.

⁸¹ U.N. Economic and Social Council, "Final periodic report. . .," paragraph 21.

detained civilians from the groups being transported. According to N.P.:

We heard that some drivers were good and didn't stop at all [to let Serbian soldiers on board], but ours did. Serbian civilians and soldiers alike climbed on board demanding anything valuable. I saw people being dragged off of the other vehicles in our convoy. We were terrified. Even when we arrived at our drop-off point in Tisca, groups of Chetniks there were calling out and looking for people from certain villages, places and towns. People were being dragged away to the sides of the road and out of view. A Chetnik grabbed me by the arm and told me to follow him behind a bus. I saw that nobody was going in that direction. He told me there was a handicapped person there who needed help. I was frightened, because I knew he was lying. He told me I'd be right back, but as soon as his attention shifted to someone else, I broke away and slipped into the crowd.⁸²

In addition to the prisoners, many passengers saw dead and mutilated bodies on the sides of the road. According to N.T.:

We arrived in Kravica and from the window as we drove by I saw two women and about twenty men who had been captured by the Serbs. The Serbs were standing there with their machine guns pointed at their heads. I recognized them from Srebrenica. I was looking to see if my husband or some of my brothers were in that group. They had their hands behind their heads, and their faces were all black and blue and bloody. When we arrived in Lolici, I saw that some of our captured people were sitting at the side of the road. Their backs were turned to us. They were beaten up too, and some of them were only in their underwear. Then at about 10:00 A.M. as the bus drove by slowly, I also saw about one hundred men dead on the side of the road. The bus was going towards Konjevic Polje. . . . There were a lot of corpses lying by the road in Konjevic Polje. Some were by the road and others near the creeks, but they were very near the bus and we could see them clearly. . .

At Kasaba there were about ten Chetniks. They had two boys captured who looked like they were only about ten to twelve years old. . . . The soldiers then told us that they had just made the two boys call out to their fathers in the forest. I didn't dare go out, because I knew they would capture me too.

⁸² Human Rights Watch/Helsinki interview, Tuzla, August 1995.

They were, nevertheless, yelling out towards the forests: "We have your wives and children here. We will kill them unless you all surrender." Their guns were pointed towards the trees, because I guess they knew a lot of our guys were near. They told us to get out of the bus, because they were going to kill us all. My son was crying "Daddy, daddy." We didn't get out of the bus. We just sat there for about half an hour. Then they gave up on us, and we started towards Kladanj.⁸³

Another witness whose transport was stopped in Kravica testified:

They said to us, "See your army?" Kneeling in the grass were many men I knew. They had their hands behind their necks. I saw one of my sons among them. But I could say nothing to him. I do not know if he saw me.⁸⁴

After the buses made the journey, they let the refugees out at Tisca from where they walked across front lines to Kladanj in Bosnian government-held territory. Many of the refugees reported seeing dead bodies on the side of the road during the walk. N.N. reported her experience to Human Rights Watch/Helsinki representatives:

We reached the end of the road, and he stopped the bus and let us out. We had to walk towards Kladanj. On the way, I saw them stop one woman and ask if she was a man dressed as a woman. When she said no, they laughed and asked her who would ever fuck her? As we were walking, I could see a lot of dead people by the side of the road. I saw a man with his throat cut, but he wasn't completely dead yet. He was still grasping for breath. The Chetniks told us to stay away from the sides of the road and not to go by the creek because it was dangerous. But they didn't want us to go there because there were dead bodies all around. I saw about four of them - two of which were not completely dead. Some of our people went to the creek. When they came back, they said there were a lot of dead there as well.⁸⁵

⁸³Human Rights Watch/Helsinki interview, Tuzla, August 16, 1995.

⁸⁴Anthony Lloyd, "Srebrenica's Exiles Tell Grimly Familiar Stories of Murder," *The Times*, (London) July 15, 1995.

⁸⁵ Human Rights Watch/Helsinki interview, Tuzla, August 1995.

Rape and Other Inhumane Treatment

Women were raped and sexually abused during the fall of Srebrenica, although the extent of such abuse remains unclear. Human Rights Watch/Helsinki representatives only identified one victim of rape⁸⁶ while conducting random interviews with those displaced from Srebrenica, but other international observers have reported other instances of sexual abuse. The victim Human Rights Watch/Helsinki spoke to had left Srebrenica on a bus with several wounded people. When she arrived at Tisca with the other refugees, she was taken from the bus and raped.

In another case, reported by a foreign journalist,⁸⁷ a woman said she sat near twelve-year-old M.S. and fourteen-year-old F.S. — two girls she had known well — while she was awaiting transport in Potocari. Three Bosnian Serb soldiers passed through the factory about midnight on Tuesday, July 11, and abducted the two cousins, as well as twenty-three-year-old N.O. The witness said the soldiers were wearing United Nations uniforms and helmets, but their appearance, demeanor and fluency in the Serbian language made her certain they were Serbs. When the three returned several hours later, they reportedly were naked and covered with scratches and bruises, and the two young cousins were bleeding from the assault. “M. was crying the most. She was saying, “We are not girls anymore.”” Reportedly, there was no water to wash the blood off themselves, so they tried to wipe it off with clothes that people gave them. Near dawn on Wednesday, Bosnian Serb soldiers came searching for men. “They took some boys who were about ten or eleven. We never saw them again. Everyone was in a panic, trying to hide their boys. While this was going on, F. slipped off to the side, took a scarf, tied it around her neck and hanged herself from a beam. By the time we found her she was dead.”⁸⁸

In another case documented by another foreign reporter, two women described how they watched through half-closed eyes, pretending to be asleep, and hoping that they would not be next, as four Bosnian Serb soldiers raped a twenty-eight-year-old Muslim woman whom the soldiers selected from among those in Potocari. One of the witnesses — a nineteen-year-old woman — said she held one of her sister’s children in her arms, hoping that would make her a less likely candidate for abuse. “Two took [the victim’s] legs and raised them up in the air, while the third began raping her. Four of them were taking turns on her. People were

⁸⁶ The victim was willing to speak, but her psychologists felt that it would be detrimental to her therapy. Therefore, she was not interviewed at length by Human Rights Watch/Helsinki representatives.

⁸⁷ The following account is reported in Kinzer, “Bosnian Refugees’ Accounts Appear to Verify Atrocities,” *New York Times*.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

silent, no one moved. She was screaming and yelling and begging them to stop. They put a rag into her mouth and then we just heard silent sobs coming from her closed lips.”⁸⁹ The former U.N. special rapporteur on the former Yugoslavia reported that nine women between the ages of fifteen and twenty were taken off a bus at Bratunac and not seen again.⁹⁰ Another foreign journalist interviewed witnesses who said they saw women and girls taken from trucks in Kravica.⁹¹

H.H., a fifty-five-year-old man from Fojhar, reported that civilians who were rounded up in Potocari were terrified, especially about disappearances, suicide, erratic behavior and the talk of rape. According to H.H.:

I saw Chetniks leading young people away from Potocari. They were taking young girls and young men away from the “circle” and from the crowds gathered outside of it. I didn’t see any of them return during my stay in Potocari. I saw people going crazy, losing their minds, having nervous breakdowns. I asked some people what happened to one particular girl who looked like she lost her head; they told me she was raped. I saw about seven people who hanged themselves in the zinc factory — six men and one woman who, I was told, was raped.⁹²

Human Rights Watch/Helsinki representatives also collected several accounts of injections being administered to the civilians in Potocari and men making the journey through the forest. N.N., one woman interviewed by Human Rights Watch/Helsinki reported that she had been given an injection while staying at a factory called “the 11th of March factory.” She reported that the injections caused her to have severe hallucinations.

After hearing her testimony, a Human Rights Watch/Helsinki representative escorted N.N. to a medical tent run by the Bosnian government at the refugee camp. The doctor told Human Rights Watch/Helsinki that several patients had reported receiving injections of drugs, but could not recall specifically how many.

⁸⁹Snjezana Vukic, “Refugees Tell of Women Singled Out for Rape,” *The Independent* (London), July 18, 1995.

⁹⁰U.N. Economic and Social Council, “Final periodic report. . .,” paragraph 21.

⁹¹Lloyd, “Srebrenica’s Exiles Tell Grimly Familiar Stories of Murder,” *The Times* (London).

⁹²Human Rights Watch/Helsinki interview, Tuzla, August 1995.

Trek through Serbian-Controlled Territory

As Srebrenica was falling, the overwhelming majority of military-aged men and boys and a smattering of women and children gathered in a separate location in order to make a journey through Bosnian Serb-held territory to reach Bosnian government-controlled territory. The majority of the persons in this group were civilians; men and boys interviewed by Human Rights Watch/Helsinki representatives stated that of the 12,000 to 15,000 trekkers, between 3,000 to 4,000 of whom were armed.⁹³ These armed persons were primarily located in the front and brought up the rear while civilians and wounded filled the middle. Some of those in between were also armed, although the vast majority were not.

Most men and boys of military age began grouping together and leaving the Srebrenica pocket in the evening and early morning of July 11 and 12. They formed a column, which stretched for approximately ten kilometers. The men had to walk in such a vulnerable formation because they had been warned of mined terrain. During the trek, the column was exposed to numerous attacks and ambushes by Bosnian Serb forces, during which violations of humanitarian law were committed. These included: attacks against civilian targets,⁹⁴ indiscriminate and disproportionate use of force,⁹⁵ and summary executions.⁹⁶

⁹³Also, see Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights, "Final Periodic Report. . .," paragraphs 29-36.

⁹⁴ Customary international law and the Geneva Conventions and their protocols expressly recognize that civilians and civilian objects may not be the direct objects of attack, notwithstanding that damage may occur among civilians and civilian objects collateral to a legitimate attack against military targets. (See Respect for Human Rights in Armed Conflicts, General Assembly Resolution 2444, 23 U.N. GAOR Supp. (No 18), p. 164; U.N. Doc. A/7433 (1968); and Articles 48, 50, 51 (2), 52 and 53 of the 1977 Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and Relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts, which prohibit attacks against civilians or cultural property and define the principles of proportionality, which places a duty on combatants to choose means of attack that avoid or minimize damage to civilians.). Furthermore, Article 32 of the Fourth Geneva Convention states that parties are "prohibited from taking any measure of such a character as to cause the physical suffering or extermination of protected persons in their hands. This prohibition applies not only to murder, torture, corporal punishment, mutilation and medical or scientific experiments not necessitated by the medical treatment of a protected person, but also to any other measures of brutality whether applied by civilian or military agents."

⁹⁵Article 51(5)(b) of Protocol I formulates this rule as follows: "an attack which may be expected to cause incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, damage to civilian objects, or a combination thereof, which would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantages anticipated."

⁹⁶The summary execution of civilians and persons *hors de combat* is prohibited under Article 75 of Protocol I and, moreover, under Article 85(3)(e) of Protocol I and Article 147 of the Fourth Geneva Convention is considered a "grave breach." Moreover, Article 13 of the Third Geneva Convention states: "Prisoners of war must at all times be humanely treated. Any unlawful omission by the Detaining Power causing death or seriously endangering the health of a prisoner of war in its custody is prohibited and will be regarded as a serious breach of the present Convention." Prisoners are to be treated humanely "from the time they fall into the power of the enemy and until their final release and repatriation." (Article 5, Third Geneva Convention); i.e., after the combatants are rendered unable to bear arms as a consequence of surrender, wounds, illness or otherwise, the person no longer constitutes a legitimate military threat and, therefore, cannot be the subject of attack, is to be treated humanely and cannot be summarily executed.

After the U.N. failed to defend the “safe area” of Srebrenica, the enclave’s military-aged men no longer trusted the UNPROFOR/UNPF troops, nor did they believe their safety would be guaranteed. I.N., a twenty-year-old born in Gladovici in the municipality of Srebrenica, recounted that he decided to leave the “safe area” on his own after he found out that the U.N. could do nothing to protect the enclave and its residents:

The Chetniks bombed the civilian center every day from the beginning of the offensive on June 27 until the end when they came in. Everyone from the outlying areas of the city flooded down into Srebrenica around July 5 or 6; there was intense shelling. The Serbs advanced from the east, north and south, lighting up hamlets and villages as they got closer. We held out in the west, but they burned that area after Srebrenica had fallen. Since I had worked at a U.N. humanitarian distribution base before, I asked the Dutch why they weren’t protecting us and why there were no air strikes; they told me it was because the Serbs said they would slaughter their [U.N.] hostages who were now in Bratunac [if the U.N. attacked].

J.N., a man from Konjevic Polje - who was a logger before the war - described the atmosphere in the “safe area” on the last night in Srebrenica during the planning phase of the trek:

The Serbs were already in the town, so the men tried to escape through the forest. I said goodbye to my wife and kids and went to meet up with the other men. We went to the big circle where the U.N. was, to wait for transportation to Tuzla. The boys and men first went to Lipa hill to discuss with everyone what our strategy would be. We called that route “the way of life and death.” We realized that we had no other choice and that many of us would die. But this way maybe at least some of us would survive. If we surrendered to the Serbs, then we surely had no hope.

From that hill we could see everything that was going on in town. Then we saw a column of tanks, transporters and different kinds of vehicles in Bibici - about one kilometer from Srebrenica. The Chetnik vehicles were placed along the whole road from Bibici to Srebrenica, and we could see the Chetniks shelling the villages all around. They used the kind of shells that explode into fire. The houses began burning as soon as they were hit. The Chetniks were shelling exactly those areas with the most people.

During the day, thousands of men arrived at Lipa. At about 6:00 P.M. we headed out towards Tuzla. There were maybe about 15,000 of us.⁹⁷

J.T., a thirty-seven-year-old miner from Srebrenica, gave a similar account of the departure:

In the evening about 8:00 or 9:00 P.M., about 15,000 men all met at Jaglici. There were even some women and children there who either wanted to go with their men or did not trust the Serbs to transport them safely. We had to decide whether or not to go to Cepa or Tuzla, but finally decided to go to Tuzla. At about 5:15 A.M., my sector headed towards Konjevic Polje. We headed out in one column of two-by-two rows, and I was in the first section at about the 153rd position.⁹⁸

The men and boys began the journey by making their way through a forest in a column-like fashion. During the first section of the trek, while they were still in so-called “safe-area” territory, they experienced shelling and grenading, but no direct ambushes or assaults. However, during the second part of the journey, the column of men and boys was exposed to direct ambushes, as well as shelling.

J.C., born in May 1952, in Pomol in the municipality of Vlasenica, recounted that Bosnian Serb forces knew the men and boys from Srebrenica would attempt to escape through enemy territory:

The first of us left Jaglici at 4:30-5:00 A.M. on July 12. Scouts went out first to see what kind of conditions were up ahead; the column of men followed shortly. The Chetniks knew we were going to head for Bosnian government-controlled territory from Jaglici, so they shot at us, threw grenades at us, and kept on shouting to us - most of the time through bullhorns - “We know you are going to try and pass through with your column! Better for you to go to Potocari and leave with the buses!” My section of the column departed at 12:30 P.M.⁹⁹

J.N. was situated at the front of the column and described the departure:

⁹⁷Human Rights Watch/Helsinki interview, Tuzla, August 1995.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

I was in the first group with about 1,000 people, because I knew the terrain pretty well. We passed the first _etnik bunkers without a lot of problems, and in the morning we arrived near Kamenica. Those at the end of the column had a lot more problems, because the Serbs allowed a large portion of us in to penetrate their lines and then they began to ambush the middle. While we were stuck at Kamenica, all the wounded were being brought to a place nearby. We stayed there for the rest of the day and the night. After a while, we realized that we had to move, one way or another, or else we were surely dead. The Serbs knew this, too, so they just waited. They had squeezed everyone into one small spot near Kamenica. After we walked about 500 meters, the Serbs began shooting everywhere. I remember a tree falling down and killing more than twenty people at one point. I'm sure more than 2,000 people were killed from shooting and shelling there.

Serb tanks were placed all along the route from Kravica to Konjevic Polje up to the intersection at Konjevic Polje. My brother and I saw people falling down. Dead and wounded were all around. We were simply running without knowing where we were going. One shell fell near me, and I was terrified. That's when my brother and I separated. I haven't seen him since. There were people all around who were shot in the legs, arms, stomach. I saw so many bodies. At this point, the Serbs were all along the road from Kravica to Konjevic Polje preventing us from crossing. We were trying to find our way through from the village Krajnovici to Kaldrumica road, but the Chetniks were waiting for us. Their APCs and tanks were placed all along the road. When we realized that there was no way we could cross, we decided to retreat towards Nova Kasaba.¹⁰⁰

J.T. described what he saw after an initial section of the column was attacked:

We went through the forest and then down by a creek. There were Chetniks on both sides. Almost immediately we began to hear detonations up ahead. They were shelling the people who had left before us. In any case, we had to keep going, and after about 700 or 800 meters, we came to an area where there were a lot of dead and wounded. My wife's brother was among the dead. We tried to cover them with leaves, because we didn't have time to make a grave, but we couldn't do them any justice.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

As we approached a creek we were elated because we thought we would be able to drink some water. But then we saw all the dead bodies, and I couldn't even think about taking a drink. I think what happened was that the first group had come down to the creek to get some water when the shells landed there and killed all those people. The bodies were lying all over the place like little pieces of wood.¹⁰¹

P.I., a thirty-five-year-old man from Suceška in the Srebrenica municipality, stated:

By the time we reached Siljkovici/Buljim mountain we had already been shelled by grenades, anti-aircraft guns and anti-aircraft machine guns [PRAGAs and PAMs]. The Chetniks tried to cut the column up as much as they could. In a meadow in the middle of a forest at Siljkovici, we sat down to take a rest at around 3:00 P.M. There we decided to wait until dark to cross the road at Konjevic Polje. About thirty of our badly wounded people had to be left near a stream. Complete chaos erupted when thousands of us started to depart. Suddenly there was a burst of weapons fire, and some rockets fell into the meadow. PRAGAs and PAMs started to hammer from all sides. There was massive panic among the thousands of us. It was completely dark. There were weapons firing from all sides, and many people were being killed.¹⁰²

Picking up and carrying as many of the wounded as they could, the men and boys continued to move ahead, but the chaos, panic and disarray produced by the ambushes caused large segments of the column to break apart and split into smaller groups and individuals. Survivors of the trek described to Human Rights Watch/Helsinki representatives how Bosnian Serb ambushes repeatedly cut the column into segments. Many of those fleeing became hysterical with terror and lost all emotional control, others decided to surrender, or as mentioned below, commit suicide. Also, people who were located in the back of the column recounted how they found piles of corpses of people who had been in the front and middle of the columns, littered along the terrain, near streams, rivers and meadows. Many had slit throats. I.N. vividly described the horrific ordeal which the men and boys experienced:

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

On July 12, around 11:00 A.M., I left Srebrenica with approximately 6,000 to 7,000 men. Our scouts told us to leave by walking in two columns because everything in the area was mined. We were so vulnerable to ambushes — walking in two long columns like that — but it was the only thing we could do to avoid getting blown up [by mines]. Around 5,000 to 6,000 men had left already, and they were already approximately fifty to seventy kilometers ahead of us. After about three kilometers, we encountered our first ambush at a stream. The center of our column was hit by anti-aircraft machine guns [PAMs] and mortars; around 200 people died just from that. The Chetniks then came down from the hills, and about 2,000 men from the middle of the column got caught in the line of fire. The people at the front and back of the columns scattered everywhere. I was in the middle and saw how the Serbs were shooting everyone and slaughtering us with bayonets. These soldiers were not local Bosnian Serb soldiers who looked more like paramilitary bands; these soldiers must have come over from Serbia, because they were all wearing black uniforms with white bands on their necks. I managed to escape to a stream where I saw about fifty bodies; from there I tried to go to Kravica. At one point on the way I saw - about 200 meters in front of me - about one hundred people yelling “Don’t shoot! We give up” and giving themselves up to the Chetniks who rounded them up and took them away. I turned into a forest and ran into about thirty guys. We wandered around and after a while, we ran into a large group of about 3,000.¹⁰³

T.I., a sixty-three-year-old from Cerska, stated:

Even though I am sixty-three years old and was supposed to leave Srebrenica with the women, children and elderly on the buses and trucks, I was picked to follow our men out of Srebrenica, because I had a horse and could help transport some of the wounded. I think everyone who had a horse and could move the wounded was told to come along, because there were others. On July 11 or 12, I left in a column of about 5,000 to 6,000 people — civilians and soldiers from age twelve, thirteen and up. The guy I had to transport had a head wound and a hand injury. We were heading out towards Pobudze-Kamenica.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

We walked for about twenty-four hours. Then our column began to diminish, because people were breaking off and running into the woods and mountains individually and in little groups. Along the way we saw bodies, wounded people and a few who had just lost their minds. We encountered our first ambush near Nova Kasaba. We were in the woods, where our column had to stop and leave our wounded. The Chetniks started shelling the woods with mortars and calling for us to come out and give up. They told us that they would send the elderly to their families and that they would keep the younger men for exchanges. When we realized we were surrounded, people from the column started killing themselves, committing suicide; some threw themselves on top of grenades, others shot themselves in the mouth and others were shooting themselves in order to wound themselves in the hope that maybe their injury would somehow save them after they were captured by the Chetniks. We ended up surrendering.¹⁰⁴

During the nighttime and during the ambushes, Bosnian Serb soldiers in civilian clothing managed to infiltrate the column — spreading disinformation and confusion, giving wrong directions, injecting men with what were believed to have been hallucinatory drugs, drawing groups and individuals away from the column, and killing people from within the column. I.N. continued with his account:

After a while I carefully got up and looked around. There was about 200 dead bodies lying around me. I listened carefully. I didn't know where I was. Then I heard someone talking, and I . . . realized there were about a thousand of our guys. Again - just as before - we got into columns and walked, but by now almost none of us had weapons left. We carried the wounded and injured from the first and second ambush in woolen blankets. I had to leave the wounded guy I was carrying at the side of the road; I couldn't carry him anymore. He was about a twenty-year-old kid.

As night fell, we saw groups of men merging into our column. I saw unfamiliar faces; one of them started saying, "Hurry up with the wounded! Hurry up with the wounded!" All of a sudden we realized that the unfamiliar men were Chetniks who had infiltrated our column. There was a lot of them, about 300. They ordered us to leave the injured and wounded at the side of the road, while their men started giving them injections and making them

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

swallow some kind of pills. Later, people who were at the end of our column said that the injured and wounded people looked like they were dying after they were injected or forced to swallow the pills.

All of a sudden, in all that chaos, we noticed that the chetniks had suddenly disappeared; panic erupted. We were all in a meadow, when shooting suddenly erupted from a hill behind us. I ran for the woods right away. The Chetniks came out into the meadow and started to kill and slaughter everyone they could. I ran about 500 meters with about twenty guys towards a creek when suddenly three grenades emitting red fire and smoke dropped in front of us. My eyes, nose and mouth started stinging. I thought it was some kind of poison, and for the first time, I became really frightened that I was going to die. Fortunately, a wind started carrying the smoke up the hill, so I turned downhill with about five guys. The stinging lasted for about half an hour. We descended to a creek where we heard running water. We wanted to go in, but we saw about twenty massacred bodies floating in it, some decapitated.¹⁰⁵

J.C. gave a similar account of the “infiltration tactic” used by Bosnian Serb forces:

The Chetniks who had mixed into our column started telling us that they knew the way to safety. Many small groups broke off from our larger group of about 2,000 to follow these men - faces I had never seen before in Srebrenica. These unknown men told our guys to take the wounded with them; we never saw any of those wounded men again.

I came out onto a meadow near the village of Krajnovici where I found my cousin, Ibrahim Mujicic, and a friend. There, we were ambushed by the Chetniks; they started slaughtering our men. The three of us ran to the bank of a creek to hide. During the ambush, three other men crawled up to us; one with a rifle and the other two with knives. One of them suddenly took Ibrahim by the beard and cut his throat. They got my friend, too. I jumped into the creek and ran about thirty meters while they shot at me. I hid in the bushes, and fifteen minutes later I saw them looking for me. They kept on saying, “He must be here somewhere.” One of the Chetniks walked about half a meter away from me; I was extremely frightened. They searched the

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

area all day for other escapees as well. I remember that one of the Chetniks said, "I mostly killed the wounded." I didn't hear that much shooting from the meadow, so I think most of our men there were slaughtered with knives just like Ibrahim was. I remained hidden until late that night, until I thought that everyone had left the area. I started to walk across the meadow - which was about 500 meters long - and must have seen about 200 corpses there - most of them slaughtered. I headed for the forest, walked through it, and came upon the Kravica river, which I crossed.¹⁰⁶

J.T.'s account of Bosnian Serb soldiers infiltrating the column closely corroborates I.T.'s and J.C.'s:

As we continued, we saw hundreds of dead people. Everyone was just trying to save themselves. Some were killed by shells, others by bullets. Then the Chetniks began infiltrating our column. They were dressed in civilian clothes so of course at first we couldn't tell if they were our guys or not. They were killing our people, sometimes with wires and sometimes with a knife by slitting their throats. They didn't want to use guns because it would make noise and they did not want to draw attention to themselves.¹⁰⁷

A thirty-year-old bus conductor, from the Vlasenica area, G.I., witnessed how people in the column were being given injections at random by the Bosnian Serb infiltrators. Human Rights Watch/Helsinki representatives collected many testimonies in which men and boys gave similar accounts:

The Chetniks were among us in the column. They were also in civilian clothes so we couldn't tell who was one of us and who was one of them. One of them was carrying water, and they had needles for injections with them. They began shoving the needles into people and injecting them. A lot of people around me were going crazy and acting very strange. They were having hallucinations. They were saying things like, "What a pretty rose that is," or "what a pretty cucumber." The Chetniks were offering water to us, too, pretending that they were one of us. Some of them fell for it. I had a feeling they were Chetniks, because this one guy, who said he was Admir from Cepa, had brand-new sneakers on and he was clean-shaven. They weren't nervous

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

at all. They would lure people away from the columns by offering water to them and saying that they knew the way to go.¹⁰⁸

N.T., a forty-year-old man originally from Bratunac, described what he saw as a systematic tactic: “The Chetniks continually shelled the columns in order to kill as many men as possible, but the shelling also diverted our attention from the infiltrators.” He recounted how his part of the column was also ambushed from “the inside”:

The column and the forest through which we were moving were shelled by the Chetniks at random the whole way. At around 3:00 P.M. that day, the column stopped in the forest so we could wait for the end of the column to catch up. We waited until about 6:00 P.M. At around 7:00 P.M., we headed out again and encountered the largest ambush near Pobuce near Kravica. It happened around 8:30 P.M., when it got dark. We were hit by anti-aircraft guns [PRAGAs] from Kravica, while Chetniks, who had infiltrated into our column earlier, suddenly opened fire on us from within the column. Everyone just dove to the ground; it was complete chaos; nobody knew what was going on, everyone was panicking, and there were massive casualties. The ambush lasted for about ten to fifteen minutes. Then the shooting stopped, and it was completely dark; we had to regroup and collect all the wounded. Everyone was screaming and shouting amidst the chaos. We ended up taking the lightly wounded with us and leaving the heavily wounded behind.¹⁰⁹

As the ambushes and infiltrating Bosnian Serbs continued to pick away at the column, men and boys tried desperately to regroup after the ambush. During the day, the men and boys stopped along the way to allow stragglers to catch up and to figure out who the infiltrators were. N.P., a twenty-five-year-old from Lehovici in the municipality of Srebrenica, described the exhaustion and extremity to which the victimized men were pushed:

At dawn, the thirteen of us headed out. One of the men in the group was from Pobude and suggested that we head toward Kamenica, since he was familiar with that area. We made it to his village sometime in the morning of July 13. It was completely burned. On the way there, we ran across two wounded men - one of them had his leg blown off. They were good friends,

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

and the former did not want to leave his partner at all. He begged us to call the Serbs so that his friend could get medical help. We told him that he was crazy - that the Chetniks would surely execute them. Anyway, he didn't want to leave his immobile friend and go with us. He said, "We'll stay together no matter what; even if we have to die together. We have two guns, and if no one comes for us we'll shoot each other." So we left them and pushed on.¹¹⁰

N.T. gave an account of psychological exhaustion and paranoia gripping the men:

When we arrived at Ljiplje at around 2:00 P.M., we were ambushed by anti-aircraft gun [PRAGA] and anti-aircraft machine gun [PAM] fire from a fortification, and again, by Chetniks within our group who opened fire. The attack lasted for about an hour; we all ran for low ground, took cover and then ran toward the forest. That night, the Chetniks started infiltrating our group again. But some of us were more guarded now; trying to see whether anyone recognized these people who announced that they knew the way or where the Chetniks were hiding. This time we caught one of them and killed him immediately when he couldn't answer some of the more detailed questions about "his history" in Srebrenica. It was a torturous state of mind to be in; no one knew whom to trust.¹¹¹

The column eventually became smaller and smaller in number, and smaller groups were left behind and separated from the rest. Many men and boys surrendered, and several witnesses told Human Rights Watch/Helsinki representatives that they saw unarmed men shot in the process of surrendering.

After running into a number of other stragglers from the column, I.N. recounted the following:

We made our way back to the main road where we came upon another group of corpses, between 200 and 220, which looked like they were killed with grenades. They didn't have bullet wounds, but it looked as if they were all torn up, like they were killed with shrapnel. We spent the next two days and nights walking through the forest, where we could follow the main road but not be seen by the Chetniks. In that time, we must have seen about one hundred men coming down from the forest, onto the road, so they could give

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

themselves up; but they were all being killed. We kept on walking for four days and four nights until we arrived at Krizevici. Finally, I passed Chetnik lines and crossed over into Memici in Kalesija around 9:00 A.M. and ran into a few Bosnian soldiers who showed me their I.D. cards and gave me a pack of cigarettes with a *ljiljan*¹¹² on it. I knew then that I had made it to Bosnian government-controlled territory.

When we were sneaking past all these villages in Chetnik-controlled territories in eastern Bosnia, the amazing thing is that, in the area that had been “ethnically cleansed” of Muslims, there were no Serbian civilians. All the Muslim villages are burned out and empty. You can tell they haven’t been inhabited for a long time, because the grass is overgrown and in some places as tall as me. The only things we had to worry about were Chetnik patrols and groups of soldiers that were traveling back and forth looking for us; they were everywhere. The other thing I noticed during our trek through Chetnik territory was that, many times, as we listened to Chetnik patrols and guards, many of the soldiers spoke with Krajina¹¹³ accents; they had distinct Croatian accents.¹¹⁴

¹¹² A *ljiljan* is a fleur-de-lis and is the national symbol of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

¹¹³ Krajina is a region in Croatia that, until August 1995, was controlled by rebel Serbian forces.

¹¹⁴ Human Rights Watch/Helsinki interview, Tuzla, August 1995.

The Massacre Sites

Human Rights Watch/Helsinki conducted interviews with a witness to a massacre in Kaldrumica (in the Nova Kasaba-Konjevic Polje area), and with four persons who were detained by Bosnian Serb forces and later sent to mass executions at two sites in the Karakaj area (a town north of Zvornik on the Bosnian-Serbian border). Mass summary executions were also carried out at at least two locations in the Bratunac area, and there is strong evidence pointing to the existence of a third site.¹¹⁵

The Nova Kasaba-Konjevic Polje Area: Prisoner Detention/Transit Center and Massacre Site

On August 10, while Human Rights Watch/Helsinki was conducting fact-finding mission, the U.N. Security Council held a closed session, at which Amb. Madeleine Albright, the U.S. delegate to the U.N., showed eight photographs — three of which were reportedly later made public. These American satellite and airplane photographs taken in eastern Bosnia around July 13 to 14 depicted people crowded into a soccer field in the Nova Kasaba area. Several days later, U2 aircraft photography recorded an empty stadium, but four patches of freshly dug earth and truck tracks in the nearby field. John Shattuck, the assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights and labor, who was in Bosnia and Herzegovina in early August for a two-day fact-finding mission, stated: “The reasons [the U.S. suspects there are mass graves] are five-fold. First, there is newly disturbed earth where refugees were known to be. Heavy vehicle tracks were there where none was there before. There is no apparent military-industrial or agricultural reason for the tracks or disturbed earth. There are multiple confirming accounts from refugees. And there is no vegetation on the site.”¹¹⁶

The information present in the testimony collected by Human Rights Watch/Helsinki representatives from the witness to the Kladrumica massacre tends to corroborate details of the photographs presented by the U.S. Furthermore, *Christian Science Monitor* reporter David Rhode’s personal on-site observation and description of the massacre site in the Nova Kasaba area,¹¹⁷ is consistent with the information collected by Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, as well as the photographs.

¹¹⁵ Human Rights Watch/Helsinki has gathered compelling secondary evidence through interviews and collection of various media sources which give strong indication that a third massacre site exists in the Bratunac area. To date, Human Rights Watch/Helsinki representatives have not been able to make contact with any persons claiming to have survived a mass execution in Bratunac. Further investigation will be necessary.

¹¹⁶ “Bosnia: U.S. Spy Photos, Witnesses Indicate Mass Killings,” International Report: An Online Newsletter, August 10, 1995.

¹¹⁷ David Rhode, “Evidence Indicates Bosnia Massacre,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, August 18, 1995.

According to testimonies collected by Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, from the men and boys who made the trek, Bosnian Serb forces strategically positioned themselves along major roads and rivers over which the men would have to cross in order to reach Bosnian government territory: at the Milici-Zvornik road, the Bratunac-Konjevic Polje road, the Karakaj-Memici road, the Sekovici-Kusonje road, and at the Kravica, Jadar, Drinjaca and Kamenica rivers.¹¹⁸ Apart from setting ambushes in the hills and forests outside of Srebrenica, Bosnian Serb forces were especially concentrated at the Milici-Zvornik road and the Bratunac-Konjevic Polje road; Bosnian Serb forces apparently tried to capture as many men as possible before they reached this point, so that they could be detained at sites around Nova Kasaba and Konjevic Polje. As described in earlier testimonies, Bosnian Serb forces communicated orders to the men on how and where to surrender before they reached the two roads. All massacre survivors interviewed by Human Rights Watch/Helsinki said they were either detained or rounded up in this area. According to I.N., a large massacre was carried out here as well:

After being separated from the column, I found about 300 of our guys in the burned-out and deserted villages in the Pobuce area. We spent one night there, hiding in different houses. We ate some fruit and whatever else we could find. The next day about ten of us headed out towards Konjevic Polje. We walked by the road until we arrived at the bus station in Kaldrumica, where we stayed for two days and two nights. The place was full of Chetniks so we hid in some high grass and waited. All we saw during those two days was Muslims giving themselves up and Chetniks killing them. [I overheard] Chetniks from Kravica, and they announced over a loudspeaker that Muslims should “Come out! We won’t harm you! Drop your weapons, drop your bags and put your hands on your head!” Muslims were coming down onto the main road from everywhere, giving themselves up.

The Chetniks picked out Muslims whom they either knew about or knew, interrogated them and then made them dig pits which would be used as mass graves. During our first day there, the Chetniks killed approximately 500 people. They would just line them up and shoot them into the pits. The approximately one hundred guys whom they interrogated and who had dug the mass graves then had to fill them in. At the end of the day, they were ordered to dig a pit for themselves and line up in front of it. Milan Savic, whose name I overheard and who seemed to be the one in charge, ordered

¹¹⁸ See map at back of report.

the men to “line up,” and then with an M-53 machine gun, they were shot into the mass grave.

All night, people came onto the main road and gave themselves up. I couldn't see because it was dark, but I heard shooting all night. At dawn, it was still the same. A bulldozer arrived and dug up a pit, which seemed to be about thirty meters long and about fifteen meters wide, and buried about 400 men alive. The men were encircled by Chetniks; whoever tried to escape was shot. After that, they packed down the earth so it almost looked as good as new. Later, about 2:30 P.M. under Kaldrumica, over towards the Jadar river, I saw about 150 men collected together who were fired on by a tank and killed.¹¹⁹

In describing the rest of his trek towards Bosnian government-controlled territory, I.N. ran into other sites with great numbers of corpses:

We then decided to head out. We were about five kilometers from Konjevic Polje and about five kilometers from Nova Kasaba. We crossed Kaldrumica, past the mass graves and through some kind of shallow pond. By morning, we made it to Cerska, and when it started getting lighter outside we realized that what we crossed last night was not a pond, but a pool of blood. All of our clothes were completely covered in blood. In Cerska we were able to hide out and wash ourselves off. From there we set out to reach Snagovo and again, around 2:30 P.M. we were ambushed on a meadow. We were fired on with PAMs [anti-aircraft machine guns] and grenades. We all ran in different directions. . . . I came to a stream where I discovered about 1,000 to 1,500 corpses for sure. I didn't know where to go, and after a little while I heard some voices in the distance. I saw someone ahead of me who was overturning the corpses as they moved towards me. I then saw that it was actually five soldiers moving my way and clearing a path for themselves. I lay amongst the corpses and they threw two bodies on top of me as they walked by.

After they left, I proceeded for approximately fifty meters. Then I heard someone up ahead talking on a military radio to Mladic. All I overheard was, “How is the job proceeding? Tell the men [*momcima*] that the authorities

¹¹⁹ Human Rights Watch/Helsinki interview, Tuzla, August, 1995.

promised a triple reward [*trostruku nagradu*].” The man responded: “Mister General Mladic [*Gospodine generale Mladicu*], the job is following the plan [*tece po planu*].” I left the area quickly and hid among the bodies.¹²⁰

All the survivors of the massacres in the Karakaj area whom Human Rights Watch/Helsinki representatives interviewed described how they were rounded up and detained in the Nova Kasaba - Konjevic Polje area, only to be transported to Bratunac, and later to Karakaj. During this time, many men and boys also described seeing buses full of women, children and the elderly passing by, and empty buses returning from the direction of Bosnian government-held territories. In addition, many described seeing Bosnian Serb soldiers dressed in U.N. garb and driving around in white, U.N. armored personnel carriers. After surviving a number of ambushes by Bosnian Serb forces, P.I. described his capture and arrival in Konjevic Polje:

The Chetniks started to announce over their megaphone: “You are surrounded. You’ll die. People are getting killed; no one cares now. The only exit is towards Kravica; go there or else you’ll be killed.” The Chetnik lines started to squeeze us. Shelling continued the whole time. . . . They told us to put our hands behind our necks and leave the dead. There were many corpses, between fifty and one hundred. We had to carry the wounded onto the road.

People were beaten and harassed during this whole process. As we had started walking towards Konjevic Polje, a commander in a black uniform drove back and forth from the front of the column to the back in a black car; I think it was a Renault. . . . During our walk, a U.N. transporter drove up the side of the column from the direction of Konjevic Polje and stopped in the middle, but then turned around and headed back in the direction of Konjevic Polje. By the time we made it to Nova Kasaba, there were about 2,000 prisoners who had been rounded up.

When we arrived at Konjevic Polje, they broke us up into groups. I was separated and taken towards Zvornik to an area where three buildings were under construction. This was July 13. I was put inside one of the buildings with about 200 to 300 people. . .

¹²⁰ Ibid.

Then, I saw Mladic and a few other people get out of an armored personnel carrier. He came over to the field and started speaking to us. He announced that he is General Ratko Mladic and asked us rhetorically, “Where is your country? Where is your [Bosnian President] Alija [Izetbegovic]? Where is your [Bosnian Prime Minister Haris] Silajdzic? Why are you trekking through the forest and leaving your women with the U.N.? You killed some of my soldiers, but not one more of you will get through. . . . All of you will be taken to your families. Srebrenica is Serbian, so you must go to Tuzla. You’ll all be taken away tomorrow. Now you’ll get back into the trucks and buses, and you’ll be taken to Kravica. There you’ll eat and sleep.” After his speech, Mladic walked back to his vehicle and we were ordered to get into trucks and buses.

We got into about ten trucks with tarpaulins. About 120 of us were loaded into one truck, and they pulled the tarpaulin down. I didn’t see whether any people were left on the field. I saw that there was a truck in back of ours and in front of ours. Our truck headed towards Konjevic Polje, towards Kravica and then Bratunac.¹²¹

O.B., a seventeen-year-old from the municipality of Vlasenica, described how he was captured after his section of the column passed Buljim, a small mountain northwest of Potocari:

When we reached the forest at night, the situation became chaotic and crazy. That’s when all the shooting and shelling started. . . . Finally, we had to give up because we were completely surrounded. Around 3:00 P.M. on July 13, the column made its way over a hill, and we suddenly saw approximately 300 bodies lying everywhere. When we reached the Konjevic Polje - Bratunac road, the Chetniks took us prisoners. All of them had one-piece camouflage uniforms and most of them were cleanly shaven. There were about 2,000 of us captured men. We had to carry all the wounded, too. While on the road I saw buses passing by full of women and children. We were then made to run towards Kravica in two columns side by side, holding our hands up with the three-fingered salute. While running, I heard the Chetniks beating one person up behind me, but I wasn’t allowed to look back.

¹²¹ Ibid.

We ran about one kilometer to Santici, right before Kravica, and were made to sit in a meadow. . . We then had to lie down on our stomachs with our hands behind our heads and clap while shouting, “Long live the King! Long live Serbia!” The Chetniks were shooting, but I couldn’t see if they were shooting at someone, because we weren’t allowed to look up. When we got up it was a little before dusk. They told us to rest a little and then we’d be taken to Bratunac.¹²²

T. I. remembered:

After we surrendered to the Chetniks in the Nova Kasaba area, they brought us to a soccer stadium at [Nova] Kasaba and held us there for a while; there were about 3,000 of us there. We had to sit there with our hands behind our necks and not move until we had to go to some kind of registration. Then Mladic arrived and made a speech, in which he said that nothing would happen to us, that no one would beat us, and that they would send us older people to Tuzla. Then in the afternoon, a whole truck load of us was taken to Bratunac. The truck was covered with a tarpaulin; they put about a one hundred of us inside. It was night when the truck stopped at Bratunac.¹²³

Massacre in the Karakaj Area

Most of the massacre survivors’ testimonies about events after reaching Bratunac are very similar. The fact that four of the survivors were detained in and transited through the Nova Kasaba - Konjevic Polje area and were then bused to Karakaj via a stop in Bratunac suggests that the campaign carried out by the Bosnian Serb forces was systematic in nature.

All the survivors interviewed by Human Rights Watch/Helsinki representatives recounted that, before leaving for Karakaj, they spent the night in Bratunac, in the back of trucks as Bosnian Serbian soldiers randomly pulled people out and summarily executed them. N. P. remembers:

At Bratunac, the trucks pulled up in front of the Vuk Karadzic school. Altogether, there were four full buses in front of the school. Two policemen went into the school and came back later telling us that we had to spend the

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

night in the buses.

The whole night, the Chetniks kept on pulling people out of the buses. They pulled about two people from my bus and about ten to fifteen from the other buses. None of them ever returned. They also killed one person in front of the buses; three Chetniks pulled him out and shot him. . . . All night long we heard gunshots and moaning coming from the direction of the school. That was probably the worst experience, just sitting in the bus all night hearing the gunfire and the human cries and not knowing what will happen to you. We stayed in the buses until 11:00 A.M. the next morning (July 14), when the policeman said that we would be transported to Kladanj. There were six buses and four trucks full of people. Later the convoy stopped to wait for the other vehicles to catch up, and a white U.N. transporter with caterpillar tracks showed up. For a second I thought we'd be saved, that we'd be exchanged, but when I saw the Chetniks saluting and talking to the four U.N. soldiers who turned out to be Chetniks themselves, I realized that it was all over.¹²⁴

P.I. gave a similar account:

When we got to Kravica around 4:00 P.M., the other trucks continued on towards Bratunac. We ended up spending the night in the truck, 119 of us, crammed together. During the night, guards would come around with guns and shout. They were looking for certain people from certain places, especially from Kamenica, Zedenska and Glogova. Here I recognized Milan Grucic [a Serb] from Orahovica, born around 1961 or 1962. We went to the same school for one year. I was a year younger. They wanted to extract information about who killed some Serbs. I saw five people executed around twenty meters away from the truck.

T.I.'s experience in Bratunac corroborated N.P.'s and P.I.'s testimonies:

The driver told us that we'd stay in Bratunac until morning, when he would find out where he was supposed to take us. Later a group of people started calling some of us out of the truck. They told them to step outside, that they would get a smoke. They called out about ten people out. Each time someone left, they didn't return. We couldn't see anything, but we heard

¹²⁴ Ibid.

what sounded like questioning, then it sounded like they were beating them, and finally, we would hear rifle shots. Later they started questioning another group of people from Santici and Golice. Again, it was the same, they would call someone out, tell them they could smoke, then we would hear some kind of talking, more beatings and gun shots.

The following day, the men were transported to Karakaj, where they were detained in one or possibly more schools. There, the prisoners were interrogated, harassed and beaten before being loaded onto trucks for transportation to the mass execution sites. Since two of the four massacre survivors were not able to give an articulate description of the school they were confined in, Human Rights Watch/Helsinki could not determine whether or not one or more schools in the Karakaj area were used as detention/transit centers. Moreover, since the descriptions of the execution sites varied among the two sets of testimonies, the existence of more than one detention/transit center cannot be ruled out. According to their accounts, P.I. and O.B. were most probably detained in the same school as their experiences and descriptions of the environment are almost identical. What is more, they ended up at the same execution site. P.I. recounted:

After Zvornik, we passed through Karakaj, turned left and pulled up to a school in front of which trucks were already parked. People were saying that we were in Petkovici, near Karakaj. The Chetniks took us out of the truck one by one; we had to keep our hands behind our necks and yell, “Long live Serbia! Srebrenica is Serbian!” I was able to count four parked trucks while standing around outside. . . We were put into large, unfurnished classrooms with closed windows. In the middle of the room were two civilians, one about thirty-five years old, the other about forty-five to fifty, who were beaten to a pulp. One of them was Munib Ademovic from Susnjari. They were bleeding and barely breathing. Between 150 and 200 of us had to sit in a circle. The Chetniks told one of the prisoners that if there was any noise or commotion in the room, he’d be the first one to be shot.

Outside in the hallways, we heard constant shooting. People were thirsty, and some were losing consciousness. . . . Salih Mehmedovic from Sucevka, born around 1967, got up to look for water in the corridor twice. The second time he didn’t come back. . . . By now I was dying of thirst. Meanwhile, the Chetniks were taking two people at a time out of the classroom and into the hallway. I don’t know what happened to me, maybe I lost consciousness,

but when I came to, I saw that there was only ten to fifteen people left in the classroom. It was dark outside and the classroom was lit up by a single light bulb. A man next to me, Kardrija Becirovic from Pomol, municipality of Vlasenica, born around 1965 or 1967, said to me, "Let's go, the two of us." I walked out into the corridor with him and saw about five or six Chetniks. There were also two or three corpses lying in the corridor and it was covered in blood. We were ordered to strip to the waist, take off our shoes and hand over all documents and personal identification. I left my undershirt on and they tied our hands behind our backs. We had to stand in front of a wooden railing and turn away from the Chetniks. They asked us where we were from, and when we answered Srebrenica, they cursed at us. They were looking for people from Kamenica. I received blows to the side of my head and was thrown into a dark, unlit classroom which was filled with people lying on the ground.

Fifteen to twenty minutes later, we were ordered to run out into the corridor. We were running barefoot on a floor which was covered in blood. I saw about twenty corpses lying near the front door. They beat us while we climbed into the trucks with our hands tied behind our backs. I got into the truck when it was just half full. The Chetniks kept on yelling to load more and more people into the truck until it was crammed full, and then they closed the back. They ordered everyone to sit, but we couldn't because it was so tightly packed with people whose hands were tied behind their backs. The Chetniks started to shoot at people in order to make us sit down. There were many wounded prisoners.¹²⁵

O.B. told a similar story:

The next day, we passed through Karakaj but didn't know where we were going. When I got out, I saw that we were at a school. One Chetnik was ordering everyone where to go, while another one was hitting people with the barrel of his gun. They would shout, "Whose country is this?" "This is Serbian land; it always was and it always will be!" They also shouted, "Whose is Srebrenica?" "Srebrenica is Serbian; it always was and it always will be!" We all had to repeat this. Inside the school, we were placed in about four or five large classrooms. They were all completely full; there was

¹²⁵ Ibid.

absolutely no room in there. . .

In the hallway, I heard Chetniks ordering and pulling people out of the classrooms: they would shout, “two,” or “three Balije!” Then around midnight, one man came into our classroom and said, “Now you’ll come out in twos for questioning.” There was no more sound coming from the other rooms. Every time two prisoners went out in the hallway, I heard gunshots. After about half the men emptied out of the classroom, I got up with another guy and walked out. In the corridor, the Chetniks made us strip to the waist and take our shoes off. They tied our hands behind our backs and threw us into another classroom with no lights. After about twenty minutes, they ordered us to come out one by one. On my way out of the school I felt that the floor was sticky. The next day when I looked at the bottom of my feet I saw that they were covered in blood. I also saw dead bodies lying next to the front door.

The trucks outside the school were now parked in the other direction. We had to climb in one by one. We were all crammed in with our hands tied behind our backs, and they ordered us to sit down. We couldn’t, there were just too many of us, so they started shooting into the truck. Someone started screaming. I heard cursing. Somehow we managed to sit down after that. The Chetniks pulled down the tarpaulin, and the trucks left the school.¹²⁶

N.P. and T.I. were detained in the same school, since N.P. testified to seeing T.I. in the gymnasium. N.P. described, among other things, seeing Gen. Ratko Mladic at the school:

When we got near Kuslat, we were all ordered to put our heads down. I had to cover my face with my hands. I kept on peeking and saw that we passed Drinjaca, Zvornik and that we were headed for Karakaj. There we turned left onto a macadamized road and pulled up in front of a school in some small hamlet. The terrain was flat, and we passed in front of an “Elementary School M.” I didn’t have enough time to read the name of the school, but it started with an M and it was written in Cyrillic.¹²⁷

We were then allowed to get off the bus. We ran through a corridor and into a

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ A map of the school to which the witness refers is appended to this report as Appendix B.

gymnasium. When we got into the sports hall, there were already about 300 people sitting there in a semi-circle. . . . Now, the men were forced to turn around so that each line of prisoners would face one of the four walls. My line had to face the door from which we came. A little before 2:00 P.M., Mladic walked in with a few men and stayed in the gym for about four to five minutes. From a door on the right onto which the Chetniks put up wooden boards made from benches, a stand was set up with water. When the prisoners saw the water, everyone lost their minds because we were so thirsty. About twenty-five people were made to stand up, were blindfolded by two Muslims who were picked out by the Serbs, and were then made to drink the water and exit through the door. Four kids under fifteen years old delivered the water, and I still wonder what happened to them. Outside we were loaded onto small trucks. I left the gym around 6:00 P.M. On the way out I saw my cousins Edhem Hasanovic from Milacevici, Hakija Malic and Esad [Hakija's son] and Enez Hasanovic. When we were getting into the trucks outside, a Serbian woman standing in front of her house was watching us. She was good-looking, and if the circumstances were different, maybe I would have winked and said something.

T.I. gave a similar account of events in the gymnasium:

In Karakaj, we were brought into a sports hall in which about 3,000 people were held captive. It was around 11:30 A.M. when we arrived. We had to take off our clothes down to our underwear. We weren't supposed to look anywhere, not even from side to side. If you did, they'd shoot in the air and start cursing at you. I managed to look around a little bit. They just kept on bringing people in the whole day, and I saw a few people I recognized. The Chetniks continued to pick out individuals from the group and lead them away for questioning.

It was when the Chetniks started ordering groups of about twenty-five to fifty to get up for water that I realized that something was wrong. We were blindfolded when we got water. I managed to tell my neighbor that if they don't want us to see who they are, something dirty is going to happen. The water which they gave us tasted terrible; it made my mouth sting. But right away, they put about sixty or seventy of us into a truck and left with a car following behind. I knew this because I managed to move my blindfold a bit

and then take it off, but right away a Chetnik yelled, ‘Ustasa! Put it on!’ and started shooting.¹²⁸

Finally, the men and boys were loaded onto trucks and driven about two to three kilometers or about four to five minutes, on an asphalt road before turning onto a macadamized road where they were driven to outdoor locations and ordered to get out of the trucks in groups of five or ten and line up in front of the Bosnian Serb soldiers who fired on them. The two pairs of men, each of whom was taken to different sites, were able to describe the surroundings in detail. These men, survivors of the massacres, were later to get up from the field of bodies and escape. They disclosed details which indicate that the mass executions were well planned and systematically carried out. For example, all noted that, for extended periods of time, trucks pulled up to the site and dropped off loads of prisoners. Firing squads would execute several groups, and were then ordered to walk among the corpses to make sure everyone was dead. The presence of bulldozers, which pushed the dead bodies onto tractor trailers, indicates that Serbian authorities had prepared for large numbers of persons to be executed at the sites.

N.P. and T.I. were part of a mass execution carried out on a meadow. N.P. recounted:

There were twelve of us in the small truck. We were driven for about two to three minutes, and when the truck stopped we were ordered to get out by twos. My cousin Haris called for me. When we jumped out we were directed to go left. I saw grass underneath the blindfold. Haris took my hand. He said, “They’re going to execute us.” As soon as he said that, I heard gunfire from the right side. Haris was hit and fell towards me, and I fell with him. I heard moaning from people who were just about to die, and suddenly Haris’s body went limp.

I heard the Chetniks talking. They sounded young. They kept on calling each other by Muslim names. It must have been some kind of tactic so there wouldn’t be any danger of revealed identity. Someone was ordering them to finish us off individually. This process continued all day. I was frightened during the next “tour” of prisoners, which was to be shot after us. They were executed about twenty meters away from me. I heard all the bullets whizzing

¹²⁸ Human Rights Watch/Helsinki interview, Tuzla, August 1995.

by and thought I would be hit. During that day I also heard trucks continuously driving up to another area about one hundred meters away and gunshots, which would follow shortly thereafter. There must have been two execution sites right next to each other. I also heard a bulldozer working in the background and became horrified. My worst nightmare was that I would be buried alive.

I kept hearing people gasping, asking for water so they wouldn't die thirsty. Others kept on repeating, "Kill me. Just finish me off," until they were. I lay on the ground with no shirt on all day; it was extremely hot, and ants were eating me alive. I couldn't budge a millimeter for fear of being seen. Soon many of my body parts fell asleep. There were moments when I just wanted to get up and have them shoot me. By dusk I started to feel sleepy. I woke up, I wasn't sure whether I blacked out or fell asleep, and it was drizzling. It was night time and I saw light beams from a bulldozer's headlights. I still heard the same noises as before - trucks driving up, people getting out and gunshots. I also remember distinctly an older voice calling, "Don't kill us, we didn't do anything to you," followed by gunfire. Later, I heard a truck pull up and someone saying, "No more left; it's late. We won't finish tonight. Leave some guards here and we'll take the bodies away tomorrow." The Chetniks started arguing, because no one wanted to stay and guard the field of corpses. They said, "They're all dead anyway," and then left.

I waited for about four or five minutes to make sure it wasn't some kind of trick. It had stopped raining by now, and the moon was shining. When I finally decided to get up, I couldn't; my whole body was numb. It took me a few minutes to get adjusted, but when I got up I saw corpses littering a meadow about 150 meters by one hundred meters. Suddenly I heard someone ask, "Are you wounded?" I answered that I wasn't. It was sixty-year-old I.T. from Ornica in Suceška. I tried to make my way over to him without stepping on the dead. It was impossible, so I tried at least not to step on the chests and torsos, but onto arms and hands. We saw two other wounded men, both in their thirties, one was shot in both legs and the other one was shot in the hip and in one leg. We checked to see if they could move and realized there was no way we could help them. They realized this too, and told us to run away as quickly as possible. Before we left, the man who was wounded in the legs told me he was cold and asked me to take a shirt or

something off one of the dead bodies so that he could cover himself. The last thing I heard them say was, “Run brothers, save yourselves.”

We ran into the forest, passing a burying pit, and spent six days wandering around. We ran into T.I. while we were making our way back, and the three of us traveled along rivers and valleys until we crossed over into Bosnian government-controlled territory.¹²⁹

T.I. told Human Rights Watch/Helsinki representatives:

We came near to what I saw through my right eye was a wooded area. They took us off the truck in twos and led us out to some kind of meadow. People started taking off blindfolds and yelling in fear because the meadow was littered with corpses. I was put in the front row, but I fell over to the left before the first shots were fired so that bodies fell on top of me. They were shooting at us with about five or six anti-aircraft machine guns [PAMs] from all different directions.

About an hour later, I looked up and saw dead bodies everywhere. They were bringing in more trucks with more people to be executed. After a bulldozer driver walked away, I crawled over dead bodies and into the forest. I reached some railway line which led me to Krizevici.¹³⁰

P.I.’s and O.B.’s accounts, on the other hand, describe the mass execution site as a plateau of gravel located near a dam. P.I. recounted how he survived the mass execution and how he met up with O.B.:

We were driven about two kilometers. . . . When the truck stopped, they told us to get off in groups of five. We immediately heard shooting next to the trucks. I got off with Kadrija onto a gravel field full of dead bodies. About ten Chetniks with automatic rifles told us to lie down on the ground face first. As we were getting down, they started to shoot, and I fell into a pile of corpses. I felt hot liquid running down my face. I realized that my head was only grazed. As they continued to shoot more groups, I kept on squeezing myself in between the dead bodies. Over and over I kept on hearing the command

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

to shoot. After about half an hour, I heard someone yell out an order to check the corpses to see if anyone was left alive. I heard shots here and there, and when they got to me, one of them said, "Simo - take a look at the bones in this guy's back! If you saw it in the daylight you would freak out!" The Chetnik just kicked me in the head to check if I was dead and moved on.

Again, I don't know if I lost consciousness or fell asleep, but suddenly I came to. My wrists were completely cut by the thick cords I was tied with. I guessed it was about 2:00 or 3:00 A.M. Everything was quiet. I didn't hear anything, so I began to crawl out from under the pile of corpses. Two huge lights shone down on the field, and I saw that it was a dam. The gravel field was on a plateau, about one hundred meters big, and there must have been around 1,500 to 2,000 corpses there. I was about five to ten meters from some trees. I tried to free my hands and heard a voice from about ten meters away say, "Hey friend, are you alive? Don't get up yet, maybe the Chetniks are still here." I replied, "If you're alive, let's get out of here." The other person somehow made it over towards me.

In the canal, I told my friend to take two rocks and cut my ropes. We introduced ourselves; his name is O.B., a seventeen-year-old from the municipality of Vlasenica. I then took care of his wounds: besides his foot, he was wounded in his right arm and had bullet wounds on the right side of his torso. I took off my undershirt and tied his side and elbow up as best as I could. We had no idea where we were. It was getting close to dawn, and we decided to stay in the area until night time. Again that day, we heard more shooting and shouting and the sounds of tractors one hundred meters above us.

We hid until the next morning and then set off towards a hill where we had to cross a road. There we came upon a Muslim village which was all burned out. From there we could see the whole area around us clearly. We saw that near the execution site there was a body of water and some sort of dam. We also watched how a bulldozer was scooping up dead bodies, dumping them near a forest and coming back to repeat the same. We suddenly heard gunfire, and we started to run.

We made it to a stream, where we found some apples. By following the

sounds of far-away detonations and by spotting what looked like the Majevisa communication tower [near Tuzla], we guessed that that was the direction we had to head towards.¹³¹

O.B.'s testimony almost mirrors P.I.'s:

When the truck stopped, we immediately heard shooting outside; stones were bouncing off the tarpaulin. The Chetniks told us to get out, five at a time. I was in the middle of the group, and the men in the front didn't want to get out. They were terrified, they started pulling back. But we had no choice, and when it was my turn to get out with five others, I saw dead bodies everywhere. A Chetnik said, "Come on Balije, find some space." We stood in front of the Chetniks with our backs turned to them. They ordered us to lie down, and as I threw myself on the ground, I heard gunfire. I was hit in my right arm and three bullets went through the right side of my torso.

I don't recall whether or not I fell on the ground unconscious. But I remember being frightened, thinking I would soon be dead or that another bullet would hit. I thought it would soon be all over. While lying there I heard others screaming and moaning. . . . During one of the following executions, I felt a sharp pain in my foot. . . . The man next to me was moaning, and one of the Chetniks ordered the others to check and see what bodies were still warm, "Put a bullet through all the heads, even if they're cold." Another Chetnik replied, "Fuck their mothers! They're all dead!" Only one Chetnik came over to the pile and shot the man next to me, and I felt stones hitting the upper part of my right arm. He continued his job until he was done.

Later I heard a truck leave. I didn't know what to do. First I thought that I should call them to shoot me and finish me off, but then I decided to look up. I saw someone moving about ten meters away from me and asked, "Friend, are you alive?" I then told him to stay down a little more because there still might be some Chetniks waiting around. I crawled over to him and tried to unfasten his ropes with my teeth, but they were tied around too many times. So he turned around and freed me instead. I only got two of his knots untied before we heard an engine of a truck or a tractor approaching. The man told me his head hurt, but otherwise he was okay. We made our way over to a

¹³¹ Ibid.

canal. A few lights were turned on, and we saw that there was some kind of dam there.

In the canal, I cut the other two cords with stones. There, we also introduced ourselves to each other. His name is P.I. from Suceska. He then tore his undershirt to wrap around my wounds. Above us we continued to hear trucks pulling up to the site and more gunfire. We stayed in the canal until dawn and then in the morning headed out through a forest and up onto a hill. . . . From the top of the hill we saw the execution site and how a yellow bulldozer was dumping the dead bodies into a tractor-trailer. The tractor would transport the corpses near a forest and dump them there and return to load up again.

We traveled hill to hill, road to road, stream to stream. P.I. was carrying me most of the time, since my foot was wounded. On the fourth day, I couldn't go on. I wanted to give up, but P.I. kept on telling me to keep my courage up. If it wasn't for him, I would have never made it. We passed a few Chetnik bunkers, and getting past the guards and the front lines was worse than anything I had experienced before. But finally we made it to our territory. I just want to find my father now.¹³²

Massacre in the Bratunac Area

In addition to the two massacre sites discussed above, Human Rights Watch/Helsinki has collected numerous reports of a third site, located in the town of Bratunac. However, during the mission conducted in August, Human Rights Watch/Helsinki representatives were not able to locate any survivors of the massacres reportedly carried out in that area. Instead, much second-hand information was gathered from people who heard of executions being carried out in Bratunac days after Srebrenica fell. The fact that almost all prisoners who were rounded up by the Bosnian Serb military transited through Bratunac on the way to Karakaj, lends credence to these reports. Furthermore, in the past two and one half months, a number of newspaper articles strongly support such allegations. Nevertheless, a more detailed investigation must be carried out in order to determine the extent to which human rights violations were committed in the Bratunac area.

A Dutch U.N. soldier, Johan Bos, a thirty-year-old sergeant with the 13th battalion of the

¹³² Ibid.

Dutch Air Mobile Brigade who was held by the Bosnian Serbs for seven days in Bratunac, told how his guards had “bragged about how they murdered people and raped women.”¹³³ Another Dutch U.N. soldier whom the Bosnian Serb authorities had held hostage in Bratunac,¹³⁴ Ynse Schellens, stated that he saw a truck filled with bodies when Bosnian Serb troops transported him and other hostages to Bratunac. “We drove next to the truck. There were dead bodies to the left and to the right of it, and the truck itself was filled to the top with corpses.” He added that the bodies were male, probably Bosnian soldiers.

A number of citizens of Bratunac and its surrounding villages who crossed the bridges on the Drina into Serbia proper told about the violent deaths of a large number of men from the eastern Bosnian enclave. The villagers’ accounts were consistent in many details, including the place and the method of execution. Villagers consistently reported that the massacres took place in a playing field (*igralište*) in Bratunac and in a warehouse behind a school. One woman, a resident of Serbia proper, reportedly said she had just been to visit her brother-in-law, who was a Bosnian Serb soldier. “He and his friends are quite open about what is going on,” the woman said. “They are killing Muslim soldiers. They said they killed 1,600 yesterday [Monday, July 17] alone and estimated that in all they had killed about 4,000 men. They said they were in a big hurry, so they were shooting most of them. Only the known ‘war criminals,’ the ones that they have been looking for, had their throats slit.”¹³⁵ Another woman from Ljubovija, in Serbia, reportedly said her husband, who is in the Bosnian Serb army, had told her of mass shootings in a playing field. She believed the number killed was approximately 3,000. “Many of the Muslim men were known personally to the Bosnian Serb soldiers,” she said. And a man in Ljubovija claimed that the total number of detainees in Bratunac was about 4,000. According to him, they had been held in three locations: the Bratunac soccer field, a school in the nearby village of Handzari, and a camp further afield in Batkovic, near Bijeljina.”¹³⁶ Similarly, accounts collected by Human Rights Watch/Helsinki to date indicate that prisoners were executed in a playing field, while men who had been identified as “war criminals” by the military and civil authorities were taken into the warehouse and reportedly later slaughtered.

To date the Bosnian Serb authorities have not disclosed where prisoners are located in Bratunac, nor have they allowed humanitarian organizations to visit them. Two international staff of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, who tried to determine the whereabouts of

¹³³ Abi Daruvalla, “My Jailers Bragged of Murders,” *The Independent*, July 23, 1995.

¹³⁴ U.N. peacekeepers were held hostage by Bosnian Serb soldiers in Bratunac during the attack on Srebrenica and were subsequently released on July 15.

¹³⁵ Robert Block, “Mass Slaughter in a Bosnian Field Knee-Deep in Blood,” *The Independent*, July 21, 1995.

¹³⁶ Louise Branson, “Serbs Confirm Mass Killings,” *The Sunday Times* (London), July 23, 1995.

the detainees and remaining displaced persons from the Srebrenica-Bratunac area, were expelled on July 14 by Bosnian Serb authorities and sent to Serbia.¹³⁷ Thus, the U.N.'s efforts to gain immediate access to areas of eastern Bosnia where U.S. aerial photographs indicate possible mass graves has been obstructed by the Bosnian Serbs.

A convoy of seventeen vehicles from the ICRC was able to cross the river Ljubovija, in Serbia, into Bratunac during the third week of July. Bosnian Serb authorities gave them permission to evacuate about one hundred Muslims who had been wounded at Srebrenica. However, when the Geneva team of the Red Cross arrived in Bratunac, they were told that twenty-three of the injured prisoners would not be allowed to leave. They could not determine what actually happened to these prisoners. The health center in Bratunac refused to provide any information on the wounded.¹³⁸

¹³⁷UNHCR, "Update on ex-Yugoslavia," Public Information Section, Geneva, July 15, 1995 .

¹³⁸Dragan Micic of Serbia for the Paris-based AIM (Alternative Information Mreza) - an independent news source on the former Yugoslavia, July 1995.

Conclusion

The July 1995 attack on the U.N.-declared “safe area” of Srebrenica by Bosnian Serb forces was planned well in advance and abuses perpetrated after the fall of the enclave were systematic and well-organized. Bosnian Serb commander Ratko Mladic was present at various areas within the enclave while abuses were taking place. Given the widespread, premeditated nature of the abuses, it is highly unlikely that Mladic knew nothing about these abuses. By failing to act to prevent such crimes — indeed by possibly ordering such abuse — Mladic is still further implicated in the commission of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

According to the ICRC, up to 8,000 men — including boys as young as twelve years old — remain disappeared, and many are believed to have been killed or executed. On August 10, 1995, the U.N. Security Council adopted a resolution in which, among other things, it expressed concern for the fate of the estimated 8,000 men and boys who are still unaccounted for since Bosnian Serb forces overran the enclaves of Srebrenica and Cepa.¹³⁹

Although U.N. member states and U.N. officials have been ready to condemn war crimes and crimes against humanity in the former Yugoslavia, they have done little to prevent or stop such abuses from taking place. When asked during a July 12 press conference whether the fall of Srebrenica represented the U.N.’s biggest failure in Bosnia and Herzegovina, U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali responded, “No, I don’t believe that this represents a failure. You have to see if the glass is half full or half empty. We are still offering assistance to the refugees ... and we have been able to maintain the dispute within the borders of former Yugoslavia.”¹⁴⁰ The secretary-general did not indicate that the U.N. had a responsibility to protect the “safe area” in Srebrenica and its inhabitants at a time when Bosnian Serb forces were overrunning it, holding Dutch U.N. soldiers hostage, and executing the enclave’s residents.

¹³⁹ According to U.N. Security Council Resolution 1004: “The Security Council 1. Demands that the Bosnian Serb party give immediate access for representatives of the UNHCR, the ICRC and other international agencies to persons displaced from Srebrenica and Cepa who are within the areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina under the control of Bosnian Serb forces, and that the Bosnian Serb party permit representatives of the ICRC to visit and register any persons detained against their will, including any members of forces of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina; 2. Also demands that the Bosnian Serb party respect fully the rights of all such persons and ensure their safety; 3. Reiterates that all those who commit violations of international humanitarian law will be held individually responsible in respect of such acts; 4. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the Council no later than 1 September 1995 with any information available to United Nations personnel regarding compliance with this resolution and concerning violations of international humanitarian law.”

¹⁴⁰DPI International Report, Online Newsletter, July 12, 1995.

The only high-ranking U.N. official who was publicly outraged by U.N. behavior surrounding the fall of the Srebrenica “safe area” was Tadeusz Mazowiecki, the special rapporteur for the former Yugoslavia for the U.N. Commission on Human Rights. In a July 27 letter to the commission’s chair, Mazowiecki announced his resignation, citing the U.N.’s having allowed the Srebrenica and Cepa “safe areas” to fall to abusive forces as the reason for his departure. In his letter of resignation, Mazowiecki stated:

One cannot speak about the protection of human rights with credibility when one is confronted with the lack of consistency and courage displayed by the international community and its leaders. . . . Crimes have been committed with swiftness and brutality and by contrast the response of the international community has been slow and ineffectual. . . . The very stability of international order and the principle of civilization is at stake over the question of Bosnia. I am not convinced that the turning point hoped for will happen and cannot continue to participate in the pretense of the protection of human rights.¹⁴¹

The Dutch battalion present within the “safe area” at the time of its fall did little or nothing to prevent the commission of war crimes, and allegations of misconduct by U.N. forces within the enclave persist. In light of these concerns, one of the last things Mazowiecki suggested in his final report as special rapporteur was to call for an investigation into the conduct of U.N. troops.¹⁴²

* * *

This report is based on a mission conducted by Ivan Lupis, research assistant to Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, and Laura Pitter, consultant to Human Rights Watch/Helsinki from July 31 to August 23, 1995. This report was written by Ivan Lupis and Laura Pitter, and edited by Ivana Nizich, research associate and Holly Cartner, executive director of Human Rights Watch/Helsinki. Anne Kuper provided invaluable production assistance.

Human Rights Watch/Helsinki

Human Rights Watch is a nongovernmental organization established in 1978 to monitor and promote the observance of internationally recognized human rights in Africa, the Americas, Asia, the Middle East and among the signatories of the Helsinki accords. It is supported by contributions from private individuals and foundations worldwide. It accepts no government

¹⁴¹ Letter from Tadeusz Mazowiecki, special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the territory of the former Yugoslavia, to His Excellency Tan Sri Dato’Musa Hitam, chairman of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, Center for Human Rights, Geneva, Ref. No.: G/SO 214 (77-3), July 27, 1995.

¹⁴² U.N. Economic and Social Council, “Final periodic report . . .,” paragraph 66.

funds, directly or indirectly. The staff includes Kenneth Roth, executive director; Cynthia Brown, program director; Holly J. Burkhalter, advocacy director; Robert Kimzey, publications director; Jeri Laber, special advisor; Gara LaMarche, associate director; Lotte Leicht, Brussels office director; Juan Méndez, general counsel; Susan Osnos, communications director; Jemera Rone, counsel; Joanna Weschler, United Nations representative; and Derrick Wong, finance and administration director. Robert L. Bernstein is the chair of the board and Adrian W. DeWind is vice chair. Its Helsinki division was established in 1978 to monitor and promote domestic and international compliance with the human rights provisions of the 1975 Helsinki Accords. It is affiliated with the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, which is based in Vienna, Austria. Holly Cartner is the executive director; Erika Dailey, Rachel Denber, Ivana Nizich and Christopher Panico are research associates; Ivan Lupis is the research assistant; Anne Kuper, Alexander Petrov and Lenee Simon are associates. Jonathan Fanton is the chair of the advisory committee and Alice Henkin is vice chair.

Appendix: The List of Missing Men and Boys from Potocari

Name and Surname IME I PREZIME	Year of Birth GODINA RODJENJA	Place of Residence Before the War MJESTO PREBIVALISTE PRIJE RATA
As listed on page 2 of fax sent from Dutch Foreign Ministry: ¹⁴³		
1. Hasanovic, Aziz	1950	Poljak
2. Omanovic, Izam	1972	Zapolje
3. Omanovic, Almir	(NAME IS CROSSED OUT -- NO OTHER INFORMATION PROVIDED)	
4. Nemic, Nuriya	1964	Srebrenica
5. Huseinovic, Ismet	1954	Bucinovici
6. Hrustic, Semil	1973	Bratunac
7. ?, Nezir	1968	Bukovik
8. Salihovic, Bajro	1962	Biljaca
9. Mujic, Hamdija	1973	Zanjevo
10. Smajic, Jusuf	1972	Voljavica
11. Salihovic, Senalid	1962	Voljavica
12. Avdic, Abid	1953	Srebrenica
13. Dzoic, Elvis	1972	Srebrenica
14. Alic, Hajrudin	1959	Brezovice
15. Kolic, Bekir	1960	Sivlic
16. Jusic, Kasim	1975	Poznanovici
17. Vilic, Sadik	1960	Voljavica
18. Jakubovic, Mehmed	1973	Zozercko
19. Music, Mehidin	1966	Vlasenica
20. Dedic, Osman	1956	Gerovi

¹⁴³ Human Rights Watch/Helsinki retains a copy of the list that was fax to us by the Dutch Foreign Ministry. Some of the names on the list are not clearly legible and Human Rights Watch/Helsinki has transcribed, to the best of its ability, the name of each of the men on the list. It should, however, be noted that the spellings of some names and towns and dates may be incorrect, due to the poor quality of the list.

21. Becic, Azem	1951	Kledjevac
22. Tabakovic, Sufrija	1973	Osmace
23. Mehmedovic, Besim	1944	Kamenica
24. Smajlovic, Idriz	1956	Srebrenica
25. Spriodic, Rifet	1966	Dugo Polje
26. Muhamedagic, Omer	1971	Srebrenica
27. Ahmedovic, Islam	1964	Djogazi
28. Sulejmanovic, Nehrudin	1975	Sase?
29. Smajic, Hasan	1966	Djogazi
30. Mehmedovic, Mujo	1966	Skugici
31. Rizvanovic, Hajro	(NAME CROSSED OUT - NO DATE OF BIRTH GIVEN)	Zaluzje
32. Muhamedagic, Mujo	1940	Srebrenica
33. Beganovic, Sabahudin	1977	Poligon
34. Selimovic, Ibro	(NAME CROSSED OUT-NO FURTHER INFORMATION GIVEN)	
As listed on page 3 of fax sent from Dutch Foreign Ministry:		
1. Durakovic, Sead	September 3, 1967	Dugo Polje
2. Hidic, Sasa	March 31, 1964	Podgorica
3. Durakovic, Alija	May 6, 1975	Dugo Polje
4. Karic, Hasim	August 26, 1972	Drinjaca
5. Karic, Halil	January 2, 1975	Drinjaca
6. Osmanovic, Fikret	April 24, 1965	Bratunac
7. Osmanovic, Rasim	May 13, 1960	Bratunac
8. Ahmetovic, Samir	January 21, 1965	Bratunac
9. Jahic, Sadija	February 3, 1961	Sarajevo
10. Durakovic, Junuz	September 22, 1954	Dugo Polje
11. Durakovic, Muhidin	September 22, 1977	Dugo Polje
12. Abdurahmanovic, Izet	October 20, 1961	Dugo Polje
13. Abdurahmanovic, Mirzet	January 2, 1966	Dugo Polje
14. Hasanovic, Jasmin	March 1, 1976	Dugo Polje

15. Hasanovic, Asim	February 28, 1948	Dugo Polje
16. Ramic, Saban	May 7, 1965	Jagodnja
17. Kiveric, Ramiz	March 10, 1956	Jagodnja
18. Kiveric, Fikret	October 1, 1978	Jagodnja
19. Hidic, Mustafa	August 5, 1955	Nova Kasaba
20. Jusic, Sejdin	January 7, 1941	Potocari
21. Djozic, Kiram	January 4, 1957	Zabojna
22. Ademovic, Zulfo	May 5, 1957	Vlasenica
23. Isakovic, Senad	1976	Orlica
24. Suljic, Kadrija	March 7, 1951	Risici
25. Salkic, Muhamed	March 25, 1968	Drinjaca
26. Muharemovic, Mahmut	April 13, 1962	Podcaus
27. Music, Ahmet	May 7, 1940	Peciste
28. Suljic, Kadir	April 10, 1975	Risici
29. Ikanovic, Ilijaz	October 8, 1961	Srebrenica
30. Delic, Habib	1940	Osmace
31. Jusic, Damir	June 17, 1980	Podcaus
As listed on page 4 of fax sent from Dutch Foreign Ministry:		
1. Hasanovic, Sefik	1959	Skelani
2. Hamdic Huso	1935	Srebrenica-Kaz a?
3. Mehinovic, Safet	1964	Dobrak
4. Salihovic, Nevzet	1961	Voljavica
5. Alic, Izet	1962	Voljavica
6. Tabakovic, Sead	1975	Voljavica
7. Hodzic, Salih	1945?	Pobudja
8. Camdic, Mustafa	1935	Karacica
9. Tabakovic, Ismet	1950	Nurici-Zutica
10. Alic, Hasan	1953	Srebrenica
11. Alic, Elvis	1977	Srebrenica
12. Delic, Haso	1950	Srebrenica

13. Kamenica, Muhamed	1936	Srebrenica
14. Mehimovic, Mehmed	1950	Skelani
15. Bajramovic, Mehmedija	1935?	Dobrak
16. Muhic, Izet	1948	Voljavica
17. Jumuzagic, Alija	1947	Knimanici-Resagici?
18. Hasanovic, Meho	1980	Zauzje
19. Muhic, Sukrija	1935	Voljavica
20. Music, Mensur	1980	Vlasenica
21. Alic, Nedib	1957	Turbe
22. Malagic, Elvir	1975	Voljavica
23. Rizvanovic, Bebudil	1979	Cerska
24. Jusupovic, Mirsad	1979	Konjevic Polje
25. Mujic, Mujo	1936	Karacici
26. Dagic, Osman	1936	Pobudze
27. Suljic, Camil	1936	Ljesovik
28. Tabakovic, Mirzet	1980	Nurici- Vlasenica
29. Đananovic, Đemal	1980	Skelani
30. Memisvic, Mevlid	1978	Brezovice
31. Selimovic, Ibrahim	1938	Peruani?
32. Hrnica, Nezir	1938	Kamenica
33. Mujic, Redjo	1951	Sase
As listed on page 5 of fax sent from Dutch Foreign Ministry:		
1. Salihovic, Senad	1979	Drinjaca
2. Hasanovic, Behadil	1957	Krivace
3. Alic, Ibrahim	1940	Jagodnja
4. Alic, Jurmo	1945	Trubari
5. Ljumbic, Ahmo	1932	Mehmedovici
6. Bajic, Isemrija	1969	Bratunac
7. Kadnik, Alija	1939	Karacici
8. Nuhanovic, Sefih	1959	Peci

9. Mehmedovic, Muhamed	1975	Dobrak
10. Ljusic, Meho	1940	1940
11. Ljusic, Meharis	1979	Rijeke
12. Pitarevic, Besim (NAME CROSSED OUT)	1980?	Peci
13. Lolic, Mihret	1979	Peci
14. Boljalovic, Zaim	1947	Ljobrulje
15. Bajric, Ismet	1950	Daljagosta
16. Spiodic, Reljik	1960	Dugo Polje
17. Bektic, Suad	1979	Memedovici
18. Bektic, Atif	1972	Poljak
19. Malkic, Jusuf	1936	Osat
20. Osmanovic, Hamed	1934	Zanjevo
21. Begic, Salih	1936	Radovcici
22. Begic, Halid	1966	Radovcici
As listed on page 6 of fax sent from Dutch Foreign Ministry:		
1. Mehic, Mirsad	1964	Dugo Polje
2. Mustafic, Emin	1969	Drinjaca
3. Mujic, Esad	1979	Dugo Polje
4. Mujic, Manjo	1960	Dugo Polje
5. Mujic, Dzevad	1977	Dugo Polje
6. Mujic, Admir	1977	Dugo Polje
7. Mujic, Malco	1950	Dugo Polje
8. Mujic, Bajro	1958	Dugo Polje
9. Mujic, Suad	1967	Dugo Polje
10. Begovic, Ahmo	1948	Biljaca
11. Zukic, Zurijet	1969	Karacici
12. Huremovic, Nedjib	1977	Dugo Polje
13. Isakovic, Safet	1972	Zanjevo
14. Huremovic, Nezir	1942	Dugo Polje
15. Omerovic, Amir	1969	Lolici

16. Omerovic, Avdurahman	1950	Kamenica
17. Avdic, Mehmed	1943	Osat
18. Avdic, Dzermal	1941	Osat
19. Salkic, Mirsad	1962	Osat
20. Mehic, Hazim	1942	Lolici
21. Halilovic, Nazif	1935	Klotijevac
22. Smailovic, Samir	1971	Zaluzje
23. Dzananovic, Ramo	1961	Jagonja
24. Cakanovic, Irfan	1950	Srebrenica
25. Omerovic, Osman	1960	Biljaca
26. Omerovic, Juso	1939?	Biljaca
27. Dzananovic, Husein	1954	Besirevici
28. Bajramovic, Tahir	1977	Poljak
29. Dzanic, Edhem	1942	Dobrak
30. Mehmedovic, Ahmo	1950	Dobrak
31. Hasanovic, Ramiz	1979	Cerska
32. Alic, Hasan	1940	Brezovice
(listed as 33 - not 32 on original)		
33. Dautovic, Habib (listed as 34)	1939	Bubin
As listed on page 7 of fax sent from Dutch Foreign Ministry:		
1. Saib, Jahic	1960	Osatica
2. Alic, Seid	1964	Trubari
3. Salkic, Omer	1952	Biljaca
4. Salkic, Sevdahet	1978	Biljaca
5. Mujcinovic, Ejub	1960	Dugo Polje
6. Masic, Ramo	1957	Zapolje
7. Smajlovic, Hasan	1974	Tokoljaci
8. Memisevic, Meho	1942	Brezovice
9. Djogaz, Vahid	1972	Dugo Polje
10. Djogaz, Hajrudin	1955	Đogazi

11. Jusic, Husein	1968	Dedici
12. Avdic, Hajrudin	1954	Sebjocina
13. Djananovic, Fikret	1961	Besirovici
14. Bektic, Kiram	1953	Srebrenica
15. Pasic, Mevludin	1950	Srebrenica
16. Osmanovic, Rifet	1946	Pecista
17. Cakco, Ramiz	1953	Drinjaca
18. Harbas, Enes	1947	Velika Daljeg
19. Selimovic, Ismet	1940	Tokoljaci
20. Osmanovic, Esad	1966	Demirovci
21. Mustafic, Rifet	1935	Drinjaca
22. Isakovic, Memis	1972	Pobudze
23. Hodjic, Sabahudin	1965	Bratunac
24. Mehmedovic, Avdija	1967	Srebrenica
25. Krdjic, Dahmo	1979	Osmace
26. Huseinovic, Hadrudin	1944	Potocari
27. Jamic, Hamed	1945	Osmace
28. Sahman, Becrovic	1948	Nedeljista
29. Subljic, Sulejman	1945	Pusnolici
30. Jusic, Ahmo	1977	Bratunac
31. Ljeskovica, Murat	1936	Skelani
32. Golic, Sadik	1974	Glogova
As listed on page 8 of fax sent from Dutch Foreign Ministry:		
1. Idriz Sinanovic	1949	Osmace
2. Salko Delalic	1966	Dobrak
3. Hamid Ibrahimovic	1958	Bratunac/Podgradac
4. Sabahudin Gluhic	1953	Srebrenica
5. Suljic Smerija	1939	Bratunac
6. Elvis Alic	1978	Srebrenica
7. Sabahudin Omerovic	1975	Jassadva?/Srebrenica

8. Ejub Hasanovic	1955	Zalozje
9. Alija Smajlovic	1949	Dodici/Srebrenica
10. Nuriya Smajlovic	1978	Dodici/Srebrenica
11. Begic Zikrija	1938	Pribidoli
12. Samir Begic	1979	Pribidoli
13. Salih Mustafic	1962	Pribidoli
14. Nubedin Krzic	1976	Vidikovac
15. Sagit Krdzic	1976	Osmace
16. Nevzet Salihovic	1961	Voljavica
17. Ahmo Djogaz	1951	Dugo Polje
18. Rifet Hasic	1960	Tegare
19. Himzo Beutic	1940	Brezovice
20. Ibrahim Selimovic	1939	Osat
21. Mehmedalija Bajramovic	1944	Dobrak
22. Hamza Civic	1956	Tokoljaci
23. Mehmed Mehmedovic	1954	Pobudze
24. Esad Omerovic	1946	Lolici
25. Adem Hodzic	1951	Prohici
26. Mehmed Salkic	1943	Osat
27. Senad Sinic	1978	Olovo
28. Ramo Osmanovic	1973	Poznanovici
29. Munib Lemes	1953	Desirovici
30. Injaz Lemes	1976	Desirovici
31. Jusuf Jusufovic	1946	Drinjaca
As listed on page 9 of fax sent from Dutch Foreign Ministry:		
1. Rebic, Hakia	1951	Pribidoci
2. Aljic, Latif	1959	Dobrak
3. Jukic, Alija	1936	Urisic
4. Djanic, Halid	1942	Podcaus
5. Zimic, Salih	1962	Peci

6. Ibrisevic, Salih	1943	Pripitolji
7. Sedkic, Zulfo	1966	Posevar
8. Smaic, Alia	1939	Tokoljaci
9. Hasanovic, Semir	1975	Prohici
10. Masic, Ohran	1959	Zapolje
11. Sulejmanovic, Salko	1942	Biljaca
12. Omerovic, Ibrahim	1940	Ljeskovik
13. Osmanovic, Hasib	1930	Ljeskovik
14. Mehic, Mehmed	1954	Jagodnja
15. Rizvic, Sulejman	1947	Kamenica
16. Sejmenovic, Mehmed	1946	Rovasi
17. Alic, Jahic	1936	Osat
18. Kabilovic, Edhem	1936	Karacici
19. Mustafic, Nazif	1965	Drinjaca
20. Mustafic, Huso	1975	Drinjaca
21. Handjic, Sevdalia	1965	Osmace
22. Krdjic, Sadik	1942	Osmace
23. Salihovic, Abdulah	1977	Skolici
24. Jusic, Fajko	1936	Podcaus

239 in total signed

The person who compiled this list, did not include his name (Ibro Nuhanovic, born 1943) and the name of his wife (Nasiha Nuhanovic, born 1947) and his son (Muhamed Nuhanovic, born 1974) on the list. All three were present at the Dutch battalion's U.N. compound in Potocari when they surrendered to Bosnian Serb forces. Affidavits signed by three U.N. military observers (UNMOs) who also were present at the Poto_ari base at the time attest to the presence of the three aforementioned persons (Human Rights Watch/Helsinki retains copies of the three affidavits). Thus, the total number of persons whose names are contained on this list is 242.