

15 Years Since Srebrenica – Time for Reconciliation?

Sunday, 11 July was the 15th anniversary of the genocide against around 8,000 Bosnian Muslims of Srebrenica.¹ More than 50,000 people, including many foreign delegations, gathered in Potočari, a village near Srebrenica, to commemorate all those who were murdered on 11 July 1995 by Serb forces under General Ratko Mladić.² This was the worst war crime in Europe since the Shoah.³ In 2001 the Hague Tribunal ruled that the Srebrenica massacre was genocide.⁴

Potočari was the last refuge during the war for the people of Srebrenica to escape the advancing Serb troops. But the city fell although the UN had declared it a "safe area". On 10 July 1995, Mladić's troops entered Srebrenica, where about 50,000 Bosnian Muslims had gathered. The Serbs' superiority struck fear into the Dutch "Blue Berets"

under UN Commander Thom Karremans. In contrast to the Serb troops they were only lightly armed. When Mladić's troops reached Potočari, Karremans negotiated a withdrawal for his own men. They were clearly outmanned and outgunned by the Serbs, according to the account he gave later.⁵ The debriefing report submitted by the Dutch defence minister in October 1995 states that further military options would have been irresponsible or were simply impossible. The Dutch UN soldiers concentrated solely on alleviating the desperate humanitarian situation among the refugees – their efforts prevented a humanitarian catastrophe, it says.⁶

That has a very hollow ring to it because Karremans's deal with Mladić meant the death warrant for the male refugees. Mladić had the families forcibly separated – thousands of women and children were forcibly transferred to Tuzla, while men and boys aged 12–77 were shot by a Serb death squad. Few people managed to flee the UN enclave.

To cover up the crime, the Serb units dug up the bodies after the massacre and hastily reburied them in various places nearby. The skeletons were often damaged in the process and body parts of one person can there-

¹ The International Commission on Missing Persons (IMP) in Sarajevo estimates that a total of around 8,100 persons were killed after the fall of Srebrenica in July 1995. See "DNA Results of the international Commission on Missing Persons Reveal the Identity of 6,481 Srebrenica Victims", press release, International Commission on Missing Persons, 9 July 2010, <http://www.ic-mp.org/press-releases/dna-results-reveal-6481-Srebrenica-victims/>.

² "Srebrenica mora ostati urezana u pamćenje", *Oslobođenje*, 12 July 2010, p. 2.

³ The Hebrew term Shoah means "catastrophe", "destruction" or "doom". In Modern Hebrew Shoah is used to refer to the persecution and murder of the European Jews under Nazism. See the preface to the German edition of *Enzyklopädie des Holocaust: Die Verfolgung und Ermordung der Europäischen Juden*, ed. Israel Gutman et. al., Argon Verlag, 1993, vol. 1, p. XVIII, 2, *ibid.*, p. XIX.

⁴ On 2 August 2001, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) sentenced Radislav Krstić, deputy commander of the Drina Corps of the Bosnian Serb army (VRS), to 35 years imprisonment. It found that Krstić had aided and abetted genocide in Srebrenica, among other crimes. See: Case Information Sheet: Radislav Krstić, convicted of aiding and abetting genocide, murders, extermination and persecutions, document prepared by the Communications Service of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, http://www.icty.org/x/cases/krstic/cis/en/cis_krstic_en.pdf.

⁵ The events in Srebrenica and the role of the Dutch UN Battalion are described in the comprehensive report of the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation. The Dutch government commissioned the Institute in autumn 1996 with a study on the incidents in Srebrenica. The report, which was not published until April 2002, is available online: <http://www.Srebrenica.nl/Pages/OOR/23/379.bGFuZz1OT A.html>.

⁶ "Srebrenica: Abwiegeln in Den Haag", *Zeit Online*, 7 July 2005, <http://www.zeit.de/2005/28/Holland>.

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fore be found in several places. This greatly complicates the work of the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP), run by Kathryn Bomberger, which is tasked with identifying the Srebrenica victims. For many survivors, the ICMP's DNA results are the last hope of finding murdered family members or friends and giving them a worthy burial. But some survivors are waiting in vain – many of the victims cannot be traced at all.

6,481 of the Srebrenica dead have been identified to date. Of these, 4,524 were given a last resting place in Potočari. But the ICMP has DNA-identified body parts of at least 1,800 more victims who have not yet been buried because their surviving relatives hope more remains will be found.⁷ 775 recently identified victims were buried at the Potočari Memorial during this year's commemoration. They include a Croat who fell in the fighting for Srebrenica on the side of the Bosnian Army. The search for the remaining victims goes on. At the end of June the exhumation of possibly the largest mass grave near Srebrenica began. It lay beneath a rubbish tip. Twelve such mass graves have been discovered to date.

Life has been difficult in Srebrenica since the massacre. The population structure has changed irrevocably. Almost 40,000 people lived in Srebrenica before the war. About 73% were Bosnian Muslims and just under 25% Serbs.⁸ There is no accurate information on the ethnic composition today. It is estimated that only about 10,000 people still live in Srebrenica. So far, no more than 4,500 Bosnian Muslim refugees have returned. For many, the city's terrible past

makes return impossible. The economic situation is also unattractive, although many international investors, including Germany, are trying to improve the basic conditions. This is far from straightforward since Srebrenica and the surrounding area depend strongly on agriculture and the transition to a modern system is a protracted and costly process.⁹

Last year the European Union proclaimed 11 July the European Commemoration Day for the Victims of Srebrenica. But in Bosnia-Herzegovina itself the occasion is not recognised. Only the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the entity populated predominantly by Muslims and Croats, endorsed the decision. Republika Srpska, the other entity, which has a largely Serb population, still refuses to officially commemorate the victims of Srebrenica. The Prime Minister of Republika Srpska, Milorad Dodik, conceded in an interview with the Austrian daily paper "Die Presse" in early July that the events in Srebrenica constituted a crime – but not a genocide because women and children were not killed.¹⁰ (It should be noted that this does not contradict the international legal concept of genocide.) In Dodik's view, Srebrenica was "the culmination of what happened in this area in the years before: the Muslim commander of Srebrenica, Naser Orić, and his men attacked Serb villages and killed thousands of Serbs." According to this interpretation, the Serb units were not conducting a war of extermination against the Bosnian Muslim population in the areas of east Bosnia but were defending the Serb villages in the local area that were being menaced by Muslim fighters. Dodik's purport is clear: Srebrenica was no different to the other war crimes. The murder of the

⁷ "DNA Results of the International Commission on Missing Persons Reveal the Identity of 6,481 Srebrenica Victims", press release, International Commission on Missing Persons, 9 July 2010, <http://www.ic-mp.org/press-releases/dna-results-reveal-6481-Srebrenica-victims/>.

⁸ "Rückkehr nach Srebrenica: Zusammen mit den Toten kehren auch die Lebenden zurück", Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker (Society for Threatened Peoples), http://gfbv.ba/index.php/genocide_in_Srebrenica/articles/rueckkehr-nach-Srebrenica.html.

⁹ Several projects have nevertheless been successfully implemented, such as the renovation of the hospital. See Marinko Sekulić Kokeza, "Srebrenica u jeku obnove", *Deutsche Welle*, 11 July 2010, <http://www.dw-world.de>.

¹⁰ "Bosnien: Der Hohe Repräsentant ist ein Störfaktor", *Die Presse*, 4 July 2010, <http://diepresse.com/home/politik/ausussenpolitik/578877/index.do>.

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Bosnian Muslims there was not the goal of the Bosnian Serbs in the war but a consequence of the fighting going on throughout the country. Dodik makes no mention of the fact that the former Bosnian Serb leadership around the war-crimes suspect Radovan Karadžić, who is currently on trial at the Hague Tribunal, planned the murder of the Bosnian Muslims in Srebrenica well in advance, nor does he point out that Naser Orić has already stood in the dock in The Hague. In 2006 Orić was sentenced to two years imprisonment. The verdict stated that he had failed to take measures to prevent the torture and killing of Serb detainees by the troops under his command or to punish the perpetrators. But Orić appealed against the verdict and was acquitted – the Tribunal declared that there was insufficient evidence to establish that Orić could have prevented the crimes against the Serbs.¹¹ There are still no leads as to the whereabouts of Mladić, the prime suspect for the crime in Srebrenica.

It hardly comes as a surprise that Dodik contests the number of victims in Srebrenica.¹² Although Republika Srpska's "Commission on Srebrenica" admitted back in 2004 that about 8,000 people were murdered there, Dodik disputed this again recently.¹³ Dodik's perspective is not unique. The belief that no genocide was committed against the Bosnian Muslims in Srebrenica is still widespread in nationalist political circles among the Bosnian Serbs. Mladen Bosić,

chairman of the Serbian Democratic Party (SDS), announced an award to the former chairman and founder of the party, Radovan Karadžić, the day before the commemoration in Srebrenica. Bosić's justification for this decision was that his party aimed to do away with the image of Serbs as war criminals.¹⁴ Not that this would entail any discussion about Karadžić and Mladić's responsibility for the genocide in Srebrenica... Bosić's words did not draw any criticism from the incumbents in Banja Luka. What annoys Dodik more, it seems, is that the SDS is presently among the staunchest opponents of his government. The Prime Minister's nationalist overtures are designed to woo the SDS and its voters because Bosić's party has joined the opposition coalition "Together for Srpska". Elections are to be held in Bosnia-Herzegovina on 3 October at national, entity and cantonal levels. The opposition coalition is pursuing the objective of ending what is essentially the single-party rule of Dodik's Independent Social Democrats in Republika Srpska, and thus it denounces the Prime Minister at every opportunity.

Dodik's fishing in nationalist waters shows that many politicians in Bosnia-Herzegovina still believe they can best win votes by resorting to nationalist pronouncements. This does not apply to representatives from Republika Srpska only. In the Federation, too, the course of the election campaign is being set in this direction. The commemoration in Srebrenica showed this clearly, too. No representatives from Republika Srpska were present, and Dodik was conspicuously absent from the commemoration. He chose rather to light a candle for Serb war victims in the Drina region. A commemoration service for the victims was held at a military cemetery in the town of Bratunac, not far

¹¹ Trial Chamber: Nasir Oric Convicted, Press Release, The Hague, 30 June 2006, OK/MOW/1094e, <http://www.icty.org/sid/8727>.

¹² "Serben-Führer leugnet Völkermord in Srebrenica", *NZZ Online*, 14 July 2010, <http://www.nzz.ch>; "Vlada RS preispituje izveštaj o Srebrenici" *RTV Republika Srpska*, 8 April 2010, www.Rtv.rs/sr_lat/news/print/182839; see also "Bosnian Serb Leader Denies Srebrenica was Genocide", *BH-news*, 13 July 2010, www.bh-news.com.

¹³ Republika Srpska's then government accepted the report. See "Izveštaj Komisije Vlade RS o zločinu u Srebrenici 1995: Otvaranje najmračnije stranice", *Vreme*, 1 July 2004, www.vreme.com. The commission was established after the House of Peoples of Bosnia-Herzegovina ordered Republika Srpska to produce a report on the events in Srebrenica. For details see DECISION ON ADMISSIBILITY AND MERITS (delivered on 7 March 2003), <http://www.hrc.ba/DATABASE/decisions/CH01-8365%20Selimovic%20Admissibility%20and%20Merits%20E.pdf>.

¹⁴ "Karadžić Decorated on Eve of Srebrenica Anniversary", *BalkanInsight*, 11 July 2010, <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/main/news/29374/>; "Regierungspartei empört über Auszeichnung für Karadžić", *Der Standard*, 13 July 2010, <http://derstandard.at>.

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from Srebrenica. Here, unlike Srebrenica, the dead are mostly fallen soldiers.¹⁵ The timing of the event, one day after the commemoration in Srebrenica, was probably not coincidental but calculated to make a point to the world: "If there was genocide, it was committed against the Serbs of eastern Bosnia."¹⁶

The Serbian side was nevertheless represented at the commemoration in Potočari: Serbia's President Boris Tadić was among the participants. Haris Silajdžić, incumbent Bosniak Member of the Presidency and Chairman of the Party for Bosnia-Herzegovina, used the attendance of Tadić to castigate the Bosnian Serbs. He demanded that the EU call on the Parliament of Bosnia-Herzegovina to pass a law making it punishable to deny the genocide in Srebrenica. Passing such law in the parliament has been impossible until now – it has always been prevented by the Bosnian Serbs.¹⁷ Haris Silajdžić left no doubt in his speech that he blames the leadership of Republika Srpska for this impasse:

"The genocide is not denied anywhere in the world – except in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The draft bill to ban denial of the Holocaust and the genocide has been blocked by those who support the genocide. But there is no doubt that today's genocide-deniers will end up on the scrapheap of world history and the history of the Serbian people just like

Slobodan Milošević and Radovan Karadžić."¹⁸

Silajdžić's choice of words shows that the tone between political rivals in Bosnia-Herzegovina is becoming harsher as the elections draw nearer – Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina are no different in this regard. Such rhetoric leaves little leeway for initiatives to promote rapprochement between the constituent peoples of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Nor can the initiatives of the neighbours do anything to change this. Serbia's leadership has experienced several times that its diplomatic drives are by no means automatically supported by their "Serb brothers" in Republika Srpska. For example, the political representatives of Republika Srpska rejected the "Srebrenica Resolution" passed by the Serbian Parliament at the end of March.

The resolution condemns the murder of the Bosnian Muslims in Srebrenica but, unlike the Declaration of the European Parliament of January 2009, makes no mention of the word "genocide".¹⁹ The number of victims and the causes of the crimes go unmentioned. Instead, the text only refers to a decision of the International Court of Justice. (The Court established therein that the crime in Srebrenica was genocide.)²⁰ Toning things down and avoiding the "g-word" was necessary in order to secure a parliamentary majority for the resolution. Despite its weaknesses, the resolution is an

¹⁵ "Bratunac Victims Commemorated. Candles Lit for Serbs Killed in the Drina Region", *Bosnia Daily*, No. 2306, 13 July 2010; "Dodik u Bratuncu opet osporio genocid: Nisam išao u Potočare, jer se taj događaj politizira!", *Dnevnik.ba*, 12 July 2010, <http://www.dnevnik.ba>; for more details on the number of Serbian war victims in Bratunac, see "Mit o Bratuncu: Sramotna manipulacija brojevima", Research and Documentation Center Sarajevo, http://www.idc.org.ba/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=259%3Abratunac&catid=115%3Aljudski-gubici-ostalo&Itemid=147&lang=bs.

¹⁶ "Bratunac Victims Commemorated. Candles Lit for Serbs Killed in the Drina Region", *Bosnia Daily*, No. 2306, 13 July 2010, p. 1.

¹⁷ Most recently in January 2010. See "Usvojene izmjene Kazenog zakona BiH: Dopušteno negiranje holokausta i genocida!", *Dnevnik.ba*, 21.1.2010, www.dnevnik.ba.

¹⁸ Obraćanje predsjedatelja Bosne i Hercegovine dr. Harisa Silajdžića u povodu obilježavanja 15. obljetnice genocida nad Bošnjacima "Sigurne zone UN-a" Srebrenica i ukopa identificiranih žrtava iz sprnja 1995. godine u Memorijalnom centru Potočari, 11. srpnja 2010. godine, <http://www.presjednistvobih.ba/gov/1/Template.aspx?cid=14918,3,1>.

¹⁹ European Parliament resolution on Srebrenica; <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?language=EN&reference=RC-B6-0022/2009>.

²⁰ Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Bosnia-Herzegovina v. Serbia and Montenegro), Press Release 2007/8, 26 February 2007, <http://www.icj-cij.org/presscom/index.php?pr=1897&pt=1&p1=6&p2=1> (6 April 2010).

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important step towards promoting reconciliation with Bosnia-Herzegovina.²¹

Milorad Dodik disqualified the document, claiming it was "unnecessary and misleading".²² The passing of a resolution goes too far for him. Doing justice to the atrocities of the war in ex-Yugoslavia, in his view, would mean taking into account the crimes committed against the Serbs.

On the other hand, Serbia's resolution did not go far enough for many Bosnian Muslims, first and foremost the "Mothers of Srebrenica". They demand that Serbia explicitly recognise the genocide.²³ The historical and political differences that exist within Bosnia-Herzegovina are one of the reasons why relations between Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina have not improved. To this day there is no shared narrative about the wars of the recent past in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Each of the three constituent peoples of the country has a dominant historical discourse that focuses on the suffering of their own group. The deepest divisions are between the Bosnian Serbs and Muslims. The meeting between Silajdžić and Tadić on 24 April in Istanbul, at Turkey's invitation, therefore did little to transcend the gap. Turkish diplomacy facilitated the signing of a declaration, in which Silajdžić and Tadić affirmed their will to cooperate and confirmed their wish to support the territorial integrity of Bosnia-Herzegovina and help each other on the path of EU integration.²⁴ This recent Turkish reconciliation initiative seems above all to have improved relations between Ankara and Belgrade. It

was no coincidence that the Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan headed for an official visit to Belgrade the day after the commemoration. There the foreign ministers Vuk Jeremić and Ahmet Davutoğlu signed an agreement on the abolition of visa requirements – a step to facilitate economic cooperation.²⁵

For Bosnia-Herzegovina, the declaration is hardly worth the paper it is written on. As long as the document is not recognised by the representatives of Republika Srpska it remains a declaration of good intent and nothing more. But at least Prime Minister Erdoğan and President Tadić agreed in Istanbul to participate in the Srebrenica commemoration together.²⁶ In Potočari Erdoğan called on Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and their neighbours to intensify regional cooperation.

Relations between Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina remain fragile, despite all efforts. Republika Srpska's obstruction is not the only impediment to attempts to foster reconciliation between Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia: broad sections of the Bosnian Muslim population continue to harbour mistrust of Belgrade's policies. Particularly since Ratko Mladić is still at large. Mladić is assumed to be in Serbia. The ex-general is the prime suspect for the genocide in Srebrenica and his arrest would obviously be a precondition for putting him on trial. This breakthrough would significantly boost the prospects for reconciliation between the Bosnian Muslims and Serbs. Those responsible in the EU know this too and have made Mladić's extradition a condition for Serbia's EU integration. The international community was well represented at the

²¹ Sabina Wölkner, "Ambivalente Versöhnung: Belgrad, Srebrenica und der Fall Ejup Ganić", KAS Country Report 22 April 2010, http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_19423-544-1-30.pdf.

²² "Dodik: Deklaracija nepotrebna i ne obavezuje institucije RS", *Sve vijesti*, www.vijesti.ba, 31 March 2010.

²³ "Michael Martens: Völkermord im Nebensatz", *FAZ*, 31 March 2010, www.faz.net; "Serbien entschuldigt sich für Srebrenica-Massaker", *Focus Online*, 31.03.2010, http://www.focus.de/politik/ausland/parlament-serbien-entschuldigt-sich-fuer-Srebrenica-massaker_aid_494722.html.

²⁴ 24 April Istanbul Trilateral Summit Declaration, Istanbul, 24 April 2010, <http://www.seecp-turkey.org/icerik.php?no=60>.

²⁵ Bojana Barlovac, "Serbia, Turkey abolishes visa requirements", *Balkaninsight*, 12 July 2010, <http://www.balkaninsight.com>;

Turkish Airlines is considered the most likely partner for the Serbian air freight company JAT Airways. A Turkish company is tendering to build the motorway from Belgrade to Boljare and has good prospects. See Igor Jovanović, "New beginnings in the Balkans?", *ISN ETH Zürich*, 21 May 2010, <http://www.isn.ethz.ch>.

²⁶ Istanbul Declaration (see footnote 22).

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commemoration in Srebrenica. The French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner and Yves Leterme from Belgium, which currently holds the EU Presidency, attended for the EU and its member states. European Parliament delegates Doris Pack (EPP/CDU) and Eduard Kukan (EPP/SDKU-DS) were present, as was the German MP Marieluise Beck (Alliance '90/The Greens). The USA was represented at the commemoration by its ambassador to Bosnia-Herzegovina, Charles English, and several senior representatives of the US Administration. Germany's ambassador, Joachim Schmidt, attended for his country. The representative of the international community in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the High Representative Valentin Inzko, made it clear in his address that the community of states and the EU greatly welcomed Serbia's striving for reconciliation, but for the time being the most important thing was for the truth to be acknowledged and for those who were involved in the killings in Srebrenica to be called to account and punished.²⁷

Up to now Radislav Krstić, former commander of the infamous Drina Corps, and Drago Nikolić, former security chief of the Zvornik Brigade, have been given long prison sentences.²⁸ Serbia's President Tadić, who did not speak at the commemoration in Srebrenica, confirmed that his country was doing everything possible to catch Mladić, who is still on the loose.²⁹ But at the moment it does not look like he is about to be apprehended. This assumption is strengthened by recent attempts by the general's family to have him legally declared dead. If he is still alive, this would be a step towards

evading extradition.³⁰ So far the Serbian authorities have rejected this request, but the last word has not yet been spoken.³¹ What is certain is that Mladić's arrest would be a setback for nationalist circles in Serbia and Republika Srpska. Mladić's testimony in court could provide evidence that Serbia was directly involved militarily in the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, as experts have long suspected.³² Belgrade still resolutely denies this accusation.³³ The leadership in Banja Luka, on the other hand, fears that successful proceedings against the former general would force it to acknowledge the genocide, and then it would be faced with compensation claims from the surviving dependents of the victims. For this reason they also reject the Serbian Parliament's "Srebrenica Resolution" and insist that Srebrenica be put on par with the other war crimes.

There is still hope for reconciliation. This was the impression given by the meeting between Tadić and Kada Hotić, a woman who lost her husband, two sons and brother in Srebrenica. Hotić greeted the Serbian President with the words: "We welcome you in peace."³⁴ Some Bosnian Serb politicians have also begun to revise their opinions. Bojan Bajić, chairman of the party "Naša stranka", a rallying point for those who are disaffected with the established parties, said that as an ethnic Serb citizen of Bosnia-Herzegovina he was ashamed that genocide had been perpetrated against the Bosnian Muslims of Srebrenica in the name of his

²⁷ "Remarks by High Representative and EU Special Representative Valentin Inzko at the Memorial Ceremony for Victims of the Srebrenica Genocide", Srebrenica 12 July 2010, Press Office, Office of the High Representative, http://www.ohr.int/print/?content_id=45139.

²⁸ "Srebrenica Sentences Total 476 Years", BIRN Justice Report, 10 July 2010, <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/main/analysis/29367/>.

²⁹ "Tadić: Neću odustati od hapšenja odgovornih za Srebrenicu", *Sve vijesti*, 11 July 2010, www.vijesti.ba.

³⁰ Michael Martens, "Ratko Mladić. Für tot Erklärte leben besser", *FAZ*, 10 July 2010, www.faz.net.

³¹ "Brammertz odbacuje zahtjev da se Mladića proglasi mrtvim", *Dnevnik.hr*, 18 June 2010, <http://www.dnevnik.hr>.

³² As claimed by witnesses in the proceedings against Jovica Stanišić, former head of the secret police in Serbia and Yugoslavia from 1991 to 1996. See "Dokazi koji potvrđuju ulogu Srbije u ratu u BiH", 4 February 2010, *Dnevnik.ba*, http://www.dnevnik.ba/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3603:dokazi-koji-potvrjuju-ulogu-srbije-u-ratu-u-bih&catid=89:svijet&Itemid=463; see also Boris Babic, "Why is Mladić free in Serbia", *Bosnia Daily*, 9 July 2010, p. 8.

³³ "Vekarić: Nismo priznali agresiju na BiH!", *Vesti online*, 6 July 2010, <http://www.vesti-online.com>.

³⁴ "Sabina Arslanagić: Hundreds of Victims Buried on 15th Anniversary of Srebrenica Massacre", *BIRN*, 11 July 2010.

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people.³⁵ At the same time, the annual campaigns of many local NGOs help keep the memory of Srebrenica alive. The "March of Death – Path of Freedom", for example, attracts several thousand people each year and ensures that the Commemoration Day receives media attention. The marchers retrace the route that some residents of Srebrenica took 15 years ago when they managed to flee from the UN enclave. The path is 120 kilometres long. To keep the memory of Srebrenica alive the "Limit" Cycling Club organised a long-distance ride from the west Bosnian city of Bihać, which lies on the border with Croatia, to Srebrenica – a route of almost 500 kilometres. More than 200 cyclists took part in this event.³⁶ Some Serbs also participate in the commemoration activities. One of them, Miloš Urošević, is an associate of "Žene u crnom" (Women in Black), a critical women's and human rights organisation in Belgrade that for many years has advocated open discussion about the responsibility for the war crimes committed in the Bosnian War. In his view there are far too few Serb citizens involved. The majority are not interested in such activities. What is more, they perceive them as a threat because they don't want to be confronted with the dark chapters of their country's history.³⁷ But, encouragingly, the youngest participant in the march to Srebrenica was a twelve-year-old from Belgrade.³⁸ It is still a long way to reconciliation between the people of the two countries. It is a political challenge to set the right course.

³⁵ Bojan Bajić, "Stidim se...", *Oslobođenje*, 12 July 2010, p. 4.

³⁶ "Marš mira – putem smrti do slobode", *Sve Vijesti*, 9 July 2010, www.vijesti.ba.

³⁷ "Šta se u Srbiji promenilo u odnosu prema Srebrenici?", *Sve vijesti*, 9 July 2010, www.vijesti.ba; for an account of young Serbians' attitudes to history, see Miljenko Dereta, "Srpska Mladost", *Politika Online*, 18 July 2010, <http://www.politika.rs/pogledi/Miljenko-Dereta/SRPSKA-MLADOST.lt.html>.

³⁸ This boy, Rastko Pocesta, is an exceptional personality. The young Serb is involved in a range of human rights organisations, has written two books and advocates Serbia's recognition of Kosovo's independence. See Maja Nikolić, "Rastkov put srebreničkom stazom smrti", *Radio Slobodna Evropa*, 9 July 2010, http://www.slobodnaevropa.org/content/Srebrenica_genocid_rastko_pocesta/2095491.html.