

# Karadzic and the largest mass murder in Europe since WWII

THE INDEPENDENT ONLINE

The massacre of around 8,000 Muslims in Srebrenica in July 1995 stands out as the worst carnage of the Bosnian war and the largest mass murder in Europe since the Second World War.

The events in the Bosnian town, classed as genocide by the International Court of Justice and the UN War Crimes Tribunal, feature in the 15 counts faced by Radovan Karadzic of genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and other atrocities committed between 1992 and 1996.

Even now, bodies of the men and boys who were murdered at Srebrenica are being reburied after being reunited with their families following identification using DNA technology.

The shocking killings form part of the dramatic and violent changes that took place as the Yugoslav Federation, of which Bosnia-Herzegovina was a part, disintegrated during the 1990s.

Fighting had broken out in Croatia following declarations of independence by the Slovenes and



A July 11, 2006 file photo shows a Bosnian Muslim woman from the eastern Bosnian town of Srebrenica prays in front of the remains of 505 victims, who will be buried on the 11th anniversary of the Srebrenica massacre, during a memorial service in the town where Serb forces massacred more than 8,000 Muslim men and boys eleven years ago.

Croats in 1991.

The following year, in a referendum, Bosnia-Herzegovina, with its mixed population of Bosniak Muslims (Bosnian Muslims), Serbs and Croats, opted for independence.

But by then the country's Serbian population had declared a Bosnian Serb republic which was to remain in Yugoslavia.

An EU-hosted peace conference held in September 1991 initially brokered an agreement for ethnic power-sharing, but this soon broke down.

On April 6 1992, Bosnia was recognised by the United Nations as an independent state and on May 12 Karadzic was elected president.

Between December 17, 1992 and July 19, 1995, Karadzic served as sole president of the Serb Republic in Bosnia. He was also supreme commander of the armed forces.

In April 1992 war broke out with the Bosnian Serb siege of Sarajevo.

Under the guise of protecting the Serb minority in Bosnia, leaders such as Slobodan Milosevic

channelled arms and military support to them.

The war, which followed was to be characterised by one of history's most macabre euphemisms: ethnic cleansing.

Once towns and villages were securely in Serbian hands, Bosniak houses were systematically ransacked or burned, with civilians rounded up.

Men and women were separated and detained. Women were raped repeatedly.

During the months of the spring of 1992 fighting raged in eastern and north-western parts as the Bosnian Serb army took over 70% of the country.

A UN protection force, which had originally been deployed in Croatia, soon had its mandate extended into Bosnia-Herzegovina, initially to protect Sarajevo airport, but its role was expanded to help protect humanitarian aid.

British forces were first sent to Bosnia in the same year when Nato forces moved in to support UN efforts, monitor sanctions and enforce a no-fly zone.

# Psychiatrist-turned 'Butcher of Bosnia'

CNN ONLINE

Radovan Karadzic, whose Interpol charges listed "flamboyant behavior" as a distinguishing characteristic, was a practicing psychiatrist who came to be nicknamed the "Butcher of Bosnia."

Twice indicted in 1995 by the UN International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, Karadzic faces charges of genocide, complicity in genocide, extermination, murder, willful killing, persecutions, deportation, inhumane acts, terror against civilians and hostage-taking.

While president of the so-called Serbian Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Karadzic's troops were reported to have massacred over hundreds of thousands of Muslims and Croats during a campaign of "ethnic cleansing." Early estimates of the death toll from the 3-year war ranged up to 300,000, but recent research reduced that to about 100,000.

The US State Department had a \$5 million reward for information leading to his capture. His arrest brings an end to more than 10 years as a fugitive.

Karadzic was born on June 19, 1945, in Petnjica, Montenegro. He studied psychiatry and medicine at the University of Sarajevo during the 1960s and took courses in psychiatry and poetry at Columbia University from 1974 to 1975.

Karadzic, a Serb-Croat, in 1990 helped found the Serbian Democratic Party (SDS), a party aimed at unifying Serbs into a common state, and became its president.

Two years later, he became president of the newly declared Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, later called "Republika Srpska." During the

next three years, he ordered Bosnian Serb forces to seize the majority of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

From May 1992, the indictment alleged, Bosnian Serb forces under Mladic's command targeted civilian areas of Sarajevo with shelling and sniping during a three-year conflict within the city.



This recent handout photo released yesterday in Belgrade shows top war crimes suspect Radovan Karadzic (R) at an undisclosed location. Indicted war crimes suspect Radovan Karadzic, one of the world's most wanted men, was practising medicine and living in Belgrade when he was arrested on genocide charges late Monday.

# World hails Karadzic arrest

AFP, The Hague

World leaders united in hailing Serbia yesterday for the arrest of indicted war criminal Radovan Karadzic, with only Russia sounding a contrary note over whether he would receive a fair trial.

In Brussels, the European Union's foreign policy chief, Javier Solana, sounded hopeful that the arrest would unlock Serbia's EU accession talks, which had been made conditional on Belgrade's cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

"We have to talk to the prosecutor of the international tribunal but I am almost certain he is going to say there is 'full cooperation'," Solana said.

That reaction was echoed across European capitals, the United Nations and the White

House, but with a dissident note coming from Russia's envoy to Nato, who called for Western leaders to join Karadzic in the dock.

"If the Karadzic case merits being considered in the Hague, then next to him in the dock should be those who took the decision to bomb entirely innocent people, hundreds of whom died during the 'democratisation' of the Balkans by the West," Dmitry Rogozin said in Brussels, cited by Interfax news agency.

The Russian foreign ministry stressed that any trial should be "impartial," accusing the UN war crimes tribunal of "an often biased approach."

Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt, who served as a mediator in the Balkans conflict, hailed the capture of Karadzic as "late, late, late, but good, good, good," in comments to Swedish Radio.

The EU's current French presi-

dency said it marked "an important step on the way to Serbia's drawing nearer to the European Union".

That positive note was echoed by EU Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso, who called the arrest "very important for Serbia's European aspirations."

German Chancellor Angela Merkel hailed an "historic moment."

"The victims must know: massive human rights violations will not go unpunished," she said in a statement.

The French Foreign Minister, Bernard Kouchner, told reporters in Brussels: "At last! We've been waiting 13 years for this. A page has been turned."

The US congratulated the government of Serbia on the capturing Karadzic, calling his arrest a "tribute" to the victims of atrocities there.

# Relief but little joy for Srebrenica families

AFP, Srebrenica

For the families of those he stands accused of massacring, relief at the arrest of Radovan Karadzic is profound but not deep enough to drown the memories of the past.

The streets of the eastern Bosnian town of Srebrenica were deserted on a rainy Tuesday and, among the few passers-by, Serbs refused to comment on Karadzic's long-awaited capture, while Muslim delight was tempered by sadness.

"I'm happy but nothing could heal my wounds," said Asim Ahmetovic, who managed to escape the 1995 Srebrenica massacre and reach Tuzla in the north after having marched for 13 days through forests with a gun wound to his arm.

"For us, Karadzic is a symbol of evil," said Ahmetovic, 37, who lost 40 members of his family in the killings.

Karadzic, 63, who had evaded capture for nearly 13 years, was arrested by Serbian security forces late Monday.

Like his army chief Ratko Mladic, he is wanted for genocide over the massacre of some 8,000 Muslim men and boys in Srebrenica -- Europe's worst atrocity since World War II.

Restaurant owner Omer Spahic said he was pleased the alleged mastermind of the atrocity would finally face justice.

"I'm satisfied that he will end up before the UN tribunal. But, even that

tribunal could never hand out a verdict severe enough to punish his crimes," said the 68-year-old, who returned to Srebrenica in 1999.

"Muslims are happy without being euphoric, while Serbs are sad but not depressed since everybody is preoccupied with how to make a living in Srebrenica," he said.

The town's Muslim mayor, Abdurahman Malkic, said he saw no reason to celebrate.

"His arrest is good news, a small satisfaction, but there is no room for happiness. Nothing could bring back to families their beloved ones who were lost in the massacre," he said.

Referring to the fact that 13 years have passed since Karadzic was indicted by The Hague-based International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY) Malkic said that "justice is sometimes slow, but far-reaching."

"Once his verdict will be handed down we hope that it would contribute to make Serbs here accept the fact about the massive proportion of crimes and genocide in Srebrenica which many still deny," Malkic stressed.

Zahida, a waitress in a bar here, was unequivocal in her judgement of the captured suspect.

"Karadzic deserves to be hanged! He should suffer in the same way that he made suffer an entire people," said the 38-year-old who lost 16 members of her family, including her father during the war.

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