

True Stories Market

Part of the Sarajevo Film Festival's Dealing with the Past programme, this is a unique event that connects filmmakers with organisations that are documenting and researching the Yugoslav wars of the 90's. Nine cases that have not yet been the subject of films or TV productions will be presented, followed by one-on-one meetings between filmmakers and organisations. The aim is to create an "open source" where they can meet and collaborate, with the aim of bringing these important stories to the wider audiences, using the urgency and power that cinema can offer.

The following cases will be presented at the True Stories Market session on Monday 14 August at 17:00

STORY 1: A BOSNIAN TURNED MUJAHEDDEEN THEN TERRORIST

Source: Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN), Bosnia and Herzegovina

The three-and-a-half-year-long war in Bosnia and Herzegovina attracted numerous foreign fighters, who came to join all sides of the conflict. Some of these volunteers came from the Arab world. Although no official figures are available, several hundred Arabs are estimated to have fought in the war as part of the El Mujahid unit. A number of these fighters stayed on after the war, mostly in Central Bosnia, settling down and starting families with local women. During the war, some Bosnians were so impressed by the religious dedication of these fighters that they embraced their hard-line brand of Islam, thus sowing the seeds of the Salafist movement in the country. While no official figures are available, several thousand Bosnians are believed to be members of the movement today, including some who live in isolated village communities such as Osve and Gornja Maoca. More than 200 members of the movement have left Bosnia for Syria and Iraq to join the wars there. Around 20 of them who returned to Bosnia were put on trial before national courts and sentenced on charges of terrorism.

STORY 2: FROM WAR DESERTERS TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE MOST NOTORIOUS WAR CRIME

Source: Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN), Bosnia and Herzegovina

The July 1995 massacre in the eastern Bosnian town of Srebrenica remains the worst crime committed on European soil since the Second World War. More than 8,000 men and boys were killed, and 40,000 women, children and elderly persons were expelled from Srebrenica. According to rulings by two Hague-based UN courts and several courts in the Balkans, these events constitute genocide. The courts have found various military, police and political leaders of the Republika Srpska guilty of this crime against humanity.

However, it is not widely known that a group of former police officers from Republika Srpska who were found guilty of the genocide had been deserters. These men were arrested in Serbia, where they hid after fleeing the war, and forced to return to Bosnia. The young men who refused to fight in the war were forced to go to Jahorina, or risk prison. They were trained to use weapons, then dispatched to Srebrenica. There, they first secured the roads to prevent anyone from fleeing, then hunted down those who had fled in the surrounding forests. Finally, some of them participated in the execution of survivors in Kravice. Some of these former police officers confessed to their crimes after being

arrested in Bosnia and Herzegovina. They were sentenced to five years in prison after agreeing to testify against other suspects, among them the commander of the Jahorina Police Training Centre.

STORY 3: PROFILE OF A MERCENARY SOLDIER – MAKING MONEY OFF THE WAR OR CRIMES

Source: Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN), Bosnia and Herzegovina

During the Bosnia War, all armies included mercenary soldiers. People of questionable morals, usually with a criminal record, joined the side that paid the most. The Army of Republika Srpska (VRS) had mercenaries from Serbia, Ukraine and Russia; the Croat Defence Council (HVO) had mercenaries from Croatia; and the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina (AB&H) had mercenaries from some Arab countries. These soldiers for hire often committed the worst crimes of the conflict.

Franc Kos might be the most representative example of a war mercenary in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Having served prison time for robbery and attempted murder before the war, Kos first fought with the HVO, then with the AB&H, and finally with the VRS. While serving with the AB&H, he participated in the destruction of bridges in Bijeljina used by VRS soldiers. After that, he joined the 10th Sabotage Detachment, an elite VRS unit under the direct command of Ratko Mladić, during which time he participated in the Srebrenica genocide. Kos was prosecuted after the war and is currently serving a prison sentence. It is possible to interview him in prison if approval is secured from the Ministry of Justice of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

BIRN BiH is a non-governmental organisation based in Sarajevo that specialises in monitoring and reporting on war-crime trials. The organisation was founded in 2005 with the aim of providing the public of Bosnia and Herzegovina with objective and timely information about transitional justice processes taking place in the nation and the region. Since 2015, BIRN BiH has developed a new sub-programme dedicated to monitoring and reporting organised crime, corruption and terrorism cases, as well as monitoring the work of judicial institutions in the country.

STORY 4: CONCENTRATION CAMP MAMULA

Source: Centre for Civic Education (CCO)

A Second World War concentration camp on the island of Lastavica, popularly known as Mamula, was dissolved 73 years ago after Italy surrendered to the Allied forces on 14 September, 1943. Ever since, an annual gathering is held on the island in September to commemorate the victims of the crimes committed there. The camp was established on 30 March, 1942, on the orders of 6th

Italian Army Corps Admiral Renco Dalmaz. Its purpose was to hold anti-fascists, prisoners of war and political prisoners from Montenegro, eastern Herzegovina and southern Dalmatia. At the time, Campo Numero 11 – as it was officially known – and another prison camp in Pevlaka held 2,332 prisoners, among them 50 who died of starvation and a further 80 who were sentenced to death and executed.

The camp, which could only be accessed by sea from the East, held among its prisoners 110 women and children, the youngest being an eight-day-old baby. In February, 2015, the government of Montenegro granted a 49-year lease of the island and the fortress to the private company Oraskom t the price of €1.5/m² of land and €0.90/m² of waterfront area. Oraskom plans to invest €15 million to turn the island into a holiday resort. Some in Montenegro, including those at the Centre for Civic Education, strongly oppose this decision, insisting that Mamula should be preserved in its current form to commemorate the camp victims.

Mamula is just one of many places in Montenegro where crimes were committed during the Second World War. Its history should be studied in schools, with the histories of other places of suffering. Visits to the island should be organised only as part of a special educational tourism offer. This would serve the purpose of a culture that respect human rights, while enabling visitors from other countries to learn about history of anti-fascist resistance in this part of the world.

Established in 2002, the Centre for Civic Education (CCE) is a non-governmental, non-profit organisation. Its vision is one of Montenegro as a democratic society of responsible citizens. The mission of the CCE is to contribute to the development of civil society and participation of citizens in policy shaping and decision-making through the education of various actors in the fields of democracy, human rights and European integration.

STORY 5: DEPORTATIONS OF REFUGEES FROM SREBRENICA

Source: Humanitarian Law Centre

The fall of the UN's "safe haven" of Srebrenica into the hands of the Army of Republika Srpska (VRS) commenced with the entry into the town of soldiers from the 10th Sabotage Detachment of the VRS on 11 July, 1995. Over the following days, VRS soldiers systematically captured and executed Bosniak men and boys found in Srebrenica, including many who were hunted down while they tried to flee. By 16 July, more than 8,000 Bosniak men and boys were executed. Some men managed to escape and reached the border at the Drina River, hoping they would be allowed to cross into Serbia and find protection there. However, their attempt to cross the border was prevented by the border guards of the

then Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, who returned them to the VRS to be executed.

By 1 August 1, at least 30 Bosniak men had been captured by border guards and turned over to the VRS. The remains of 15 of these deported men were found in mass graves in Srebrenica; nine others are still reported missing; only six managed to survive. The deportees' personal possessions were confiscated and kept as spoils of war by the VRS.

One such deportee was the pre-war Head of the Bratunac police, Resid Sinanović. He survived a mass execution in Kozluk on 15 July, 1995, when the VRS killed at least 815 men from Srebrenica. Sinanović, who suffered bullet wounds to his chest, entered the Drina and called for help. The villagers of Gornja Koviljaca (in Serbia) rescued him and took him to a local hospital, but he was transferred to a hospital in nearby Loznica due to the severity of his wounds. A Loznica hospital doctor who was originally from Bratunac recognized Sinanović and reported him to the Bratunac police. Serbian police officers took Sinanović out of the hospital and turned him over to Bosnian Serb police in Zvornik. His remains were found in a mass grave near Zvornik.

At the time the deportations took place, the leaders of the Serbian government knew of the mass killings in Srebrenica. By turning over the men who had fled Bosnia to the VRS knowing they were likely to be killed, Serbia violated its international obligation to protect refugees and effectively assisted the VRS in committing war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

STORY 6: CRIMINAL COMPLAINT OVER CRIMES COMMITTED IN DOBOJ

Source: Humanitarian Law Centre

Today, Radojica Božović works as the chief security officer for the management of the Serbian football club Partizan. Until recently, he worked as a football manager in Montenegro, and for a while he was also the president of the Montenegrin football club Zeta. In 1994, Božović was a member of Serbia's state security service. In 1997, he joined the Serbian Interior Ministry's special operations unit, the Red Berets, and was a member until 1998. In 1992, Božović was the commander of the third tactical detachment of the Red Berets unit stationed on Mount Ozren, near the Bosnian town of Doboj. Members of the Red Berets captured Doboj on 3 May, 1992. On Božović's orders, unit members participated in deportations, killings, torture and inhumane treatment of the Doboj civilians. Close to the end of May, 1992, the Red Berets deported the Bosniak population of the village of Bukovacke Cvicije. Some deportees were exchanged for captured Serbs, while others were taken to a prison camp set up in a factory in Usora. Further, until August, 1992, Božović and other members of the Red Berets had effective control over the prison guards at the district prison in Doboj, and indicated to them which prisoners to torture. Božović himself forced prisoners to sing nationalist Serbian songs, threatening to slaughter them if they refused. On one occasion, he ordered one of the imprisoned men to select 10 other prisoners to be executed. When the man refused, Božović beat him, cut him with a knife and threatened to kill him. Houses of deported and abused Bosniaks were pillaged and Božović personally took gold from the house of the local goldsmith. Bosniaks who had been imprisoned at the Doboj police building gave Božović large sums of money to secure their release. At the end of May, 1992, Božović ordered the murder of a local member of the Croatian National Guard. Members of the Red Berets immediately shot and killed the man. On 21

June, 2017, the Humanitarian Law Centre filed a criminal complaint against Radojica Božović and two other former members of the Red Berets, accusing them of participation in the crimes noted above.

The Humanitarian Law Centre (HLC) supports post-Yugoslav societies in the promotion of the rule of law and acceptance of legacy of mass human-rights violations for the purpose of establishing criminal responsibility of the perpetrators, delivering justice and preventing the recurrence of such crimes. Since its founding in 1992, the HLC has been documenting and reporting on war crimes and other crimes committed during the wars in the former Yugoslavia.

STORY 7: SERBIA AND KOSOVO: INTERCULTURAL ICEBREAKERS

Source: Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia

The art colony Serbia and Kosovo: Intercultural Icebreakers is made up of a group of young artists from Serbia and Kosovo. They have worked on joint art campaigns and met artists from both countries, which changed their lives. The participants were children during, or born after, the war in Kosovo, during which there were massive violations of human rights. They experienced different traumas during their childhood years. The young artists from Kosovo and Serbia grew up with stereotypes about one another and feared meeting one another. Visiting the country of the "enemy" was a challenging experience for those involved.

As one of the leading NGOs in Serbia, Helsinki Committee (HCHRS) examines the situation of human rights in Serbia against country's overall socioeconomic and political context. Dealing with the past is the organization's landmark program. Through rich publishing and film production, as well as the very new web-portal YU historija, the Committee is dealing with the roots of Serbian nationalism, the history of Yugoslavia, as well as the causes of its disintegration and war. HCHRS is notably engaged in overcoming Serb-Albanian rancour since 1997.

STORY 8: ZEHRA

Source: Medica Zenica

In 2014, Medica Zenica conducted research on the long-term effects of wartime rape and the coping strategies of survivors in Bosnia and Herzegovina entitled, "We are still alive. We have been harmed but we are brave and strong." For the purposes of the study, Medica Zenica combined quantitative and qualitative research methods. The qualitative part of the study relied on life-story interviews with survivors of war rape.

After publishing the research report, researchers decided to make short films based on the collected life stories. In each of the seven films, a professional actress reads the life story of an interviewee. The short film screening at the 2017 Sarajevo Film Festival is based on the life story of a 54-year-old woman who was 32 when she was raped.

Established in April 1993, Medica Zenica is the oldest expert non-governmental organisation that provides comprehensive assistance, support and care to women and children survivors of war-time and post-war violence, including to the victims of war rape and other forms of wartime torture, the victims of post-war sexual and family violence, and victims of human trafficking. Over the past two-and-a-half decades, Medica Zenica has provided more than 450,000 services to its beneficiaries all around Bosnia and Herzegovina, and has published more than 90 publications.

STORY 9: CRIMINALS AMONG US

Source: Association for Social Research and Communications

On October 13, Radio of Bosnia and Herzegovina reported on a prisoner exchange, as part of which the prisoners of the Batkovic prison camp were to be released. At that moment, Senija was at work on her new job at Himzo Bajric's hair salon in Gracanica. She was shaving a customer when the radio reported that 180 men from Brcko had been exchanged and that only Edhem was not among them. A few tears rolled down her cheeks, but nobody at the salon realised what was happening. She did not tell anyone. She thought she might have misunderstood the reporter or that maybe the reporter was wrong. However, in a new report broadcast at 11 am, the reporter repeated that Edhem had been killed, confirming Senija's dreadful suspicion. "I continued working although it was hard," she remembers. She asked an apprentice to bring her a glass of water and a bit of sugar to help her calm down, then continued to work. "I did not even consider stopping because I knew I needed that job to feed my two children." Although her colleagues insisted she take a break, she refused. After work, she went home and shared the tragic news with her daughter Dijana. Dijana started crying. Senija continued her fight for survival. Later she asked the International Committee of the Red Cross for confirmation of Edhem's death. The ICRC office in Zagreb confirmed that Edhem had been killed at the Batkovic camp, near Bijeljina.

Edhem was held prisoner in two camps; first at Camp Luka in Brcko, then Camp Batkovic near Bijeljina. In Brcko, he survived torture and witnessed sadistic, cold-hearted and enthusiastic killings of prisoners by Goran Jelusic, known as the Serb "Adolf". At Batkovic, Edhem survived mock executions staged by Fikret Smajlovic, known as Piklic, and Dzemal Zahirovic, known as Spajzer. On 13 October, as local villagers waited to collect prisoners from the camp to work on their farms, Edhem ran to the nearest villager and slapped him on the face. It was a clear sign that Edhem no longer wanted to live and the camp guard eagerly granted him his wish. A machine gun rattled. Edhem fell to the ground, but he gathered strength to raise his head once more before dying and shouted: "Shoot, you cannot kill me!"

The Association for Social Research and Communication (UDIK) is a regional non-governmental organisation for human rights and international humanitarian law, established in 2013. UDIK has two offices, one in Sarajevo and the other in Brčko. In order to assist in efforts to deal with the region's brutal past, UDIK researches post-war memorials built in the former Yugoslavia, collects and publishes documents on war crimes committed in the 1990s, educates young people and history teachers, and maps post-war memorials to create a Central Register of Monuments.

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