

# **Batajnica 744 – The buried truth**

**The public action, organized on the occasion of turning 20 years since the crime committed against the Albanian civilians in Kosovo, is being held on March 26th, 2019 in Belgrade, from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m., starting off in Knez Mihailova Street, at the Delija Fountain, and ending in front of the Serbian Parliament. The public action is being organized by: the Humanitarian Law Center, Youth Initiative for Human Rights and Women in Black.**

Besides being exposed to the NATO bombing, the Albanian civilian population in Kosovo was at the same time subject to ethnic cleansing by the regime of S. Milosevic. The armed formations (Serbian Ministry of Internal Affairs, Yugoslav Army and paramilitary units) committed unnumbered crimes in Kosovo, which culminated during the NATO intervention. The crime consisted of transporting the bodies of dead Kosovar Albanians to massive graves throughout Serbia. Before being transported to Batajnica the bodies of the killed Albanians were buried in their primary massive graves in Kosovo. To this day since 2001, massive graves on four locations on the territory of the Republic of Serbia have been found with **941** bodies of Albanians killed in Kosovo in 1999, most of them being murdered as civilians, not in armed fights. The massive graves of Batajnica contained the bodies of Albanian victims killed in Kosovo from March 24th to May 22nd, 1999.

**According to the data by the UNMIK's Office for Missing Persons and Forensics, the remains of 744 Kosovar Albanians were found in Batajnica.**

# „Batajnica 744: The buried truth”

*March 26th, 2019 - Public action*

**A white paper with the names of the victims** – we are symbolically engraving into the collective memory something that is being denied and minimized in Serbia’s public majority - the Albanian victims of the war crimes committed in Kosovo who were then secretly buried in a massive grave in Batajnica. By this act we demonstrate that we know about the committed crime, we know who committed the crime - we ask for responsibility to be taken for the crime.

**The dirt** - which the names of the victims are to be covered with is an act of non-violent resistance against the hiding of the truth about the crimes committed in our name, against the vow of silence and the organized oblivion of the crime. Instead of erasing the traces of the existence of the victims, instead of resisting alongside the state and the society to confront the burden of the atrocities of the past, we are uncovering the truth about the crime, we are exposing it, we are remembering the victims...

**Walking the city streets** - this way we are speaking to the society we live in. Through this act we want to share with our fellow citizens compassion, solidarity and responsibility that we feel towards the victims of the crimes, so that we could put our efforts together in building a different moral system, which is possible only by showing resistance to the habit of oblivion, denial and normalization of the crimes, refuting the lies about the crimes and discontinuing the practice of insensitivity and indifference.

**Forming a symbolic memorial in front of the Parliament** – we are addressing the elected representatives requesting that they fulfill their duty towards the victims of the crimes committed in Kosovo, by which they would contribute to implementing the rule of law, starting the political practice of crime penalty and respecting the dignity of the victims. We are presenting the paper with the names of the victims in front of the Parliament - encouraging the deputies to confront the burden of the crimes committed in our name.

*Belgrade, March 26th, 2019*

