

We remember women raped in war!

FoÅ•a, June 19, 2018

On June 19, 2018, the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict designated by the United Nations in 2015, Women in Black from Belgrade commemorated this day in Foca (Bosnia and Herzegovina) - the place where the crime of sexual slavery was most widespread in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The day before, on June 18 a meeting with the women was held at the Association of Women Seka in Gorazde. One of the women present at the meeting said that the women who survived the war crime of rape are not able to participate in the commemoration or even go to Foca. Another woman said: "The common sense was telling that the war was about to start but the soul could not accept that at all."

The commemoration was organized with the support of: Citizens Association GoraÅ¾danke from GoraÅ¾de, Association of Women Seka from GoraÅ¾de, Association of War Victims FoÅ•a 92-95 from Sarajevo, Association of Women Victims of War from Sarajevo, Foundation Cure from Sarajevo, Autonomous Women Center from Belgrade, Women Against Violence Network and Women in Black Network from Leskovac, Kraljevo and Pljevlje.

Before the commemoration of this day, a group of women activists met with the President of the Municipality Parliament of Foca Izet Spahic, who organized the meeting, and with the Vice President of the Municipality of Foca Zoran Elez. At the meeting the Representative of the Association of Victims of War FoÅ•a 92-95 Halida UzunoviÄ presented the following data:

"Out of all people killed in Foca bodies of 1014 persons were found. Out of those 887 were identified (610 of them were men and 277 women). Another 127 remain unidentified. Out of a total of 1514 people missing, 434 are men and 191 women."

The commemoration started with a protest in front of the Sports Arena Partizan (as one of the numerous places of imprisonment and sexual violence against women) where flowers were laid down next to the banner We remember women raped in war. After that the group of gathered people headed to the main square where they held the protest with the following banners:

- We remember women raped in war,
- We remember women of Foca,
- June 19 - International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict,
- We remember women raped in war,
- Solidarity,
- Responsibility.

The group continued walking through the city, passed by KP dom FoÅ•a (one of the numerous places of imprisonment, violation and killing of men) and came to the bridge (where people were being murdered).

A scene action with mirrors was played at the bridge on the River Drina. Ten women activists held ten mirrors which had We remember women of Foca written on a piece of a black track. By this action the following was stated:

- We are carrying out into the public what is being hidden, denied and undermined - the crimes of the past.
- We are calling on the community/society in which name the crimes have been committed to look itself in the mirror of the victims - to confront with the truth about the crimes, to think about the victims but also about themselves - to confront with its own reflection in the mirror.

The banner We remember the crime places and a mirror were left on the bridge while the flowers were thrown into the river.

The commemoration ended in a place called Miljevina (near Foča), in which the flowers were being laid down at the gate of The Karaman's House (one of the most infamous places of imprisonment of women and sexual slavery of women in war) next to the banner We remember women raped in war.

This was the first commemoration of the committed war crimes organized in this city, after 26 years of crimes. Twenty six years later and the silence still surrounds the same people. Whether our protest after 26 years was the first voice of fear or hope, we don't know.