



*žene u crnom
beograd*



Report

**May, June, July and
August 2023.**

As before, we bring you a brief report on the activities of Women in Black in the mentioned period, and should you be interested in more information, you can find it on our website www.zeneucrnom.org or contact us by e-mail at: office@zeneucrnom.org

Report

**May, June, July
and August
2023.**

As before, we bring you a brief report on the activities of Women in Black in the mentioned period, and should you be interested in more information, you can find it on our website www.zeneucnom.org or contact us by e-mail at: office@zeneucnom.org

Street actions:

Street actions: In this reporting period, we organized **(8)** events and we also actively participated in other street actions:

- Commemorations/marketing important dates of crimes committed in our name;
- Feminist, anti-fascist, anti-war, anti-racist, anti-militaristic actions...

COMMEMORATIONS/MARKING OF IMPORTANT DATES OF CRIMES COMMITTED IN OUR NAME, AS WELL AS OTHER CRIMES AGAINST THE CIVILIAN POPULATION, DURING AND AFTER THE WARS, IN THE TERRITORY OF FORMER YUGOSLAVIA:

May 24th, Kruševac

May 24th, Kruševac “We Remember the Brave Resistance of Women!” – Women’s organization “Peščanik” from Kruševac and Women in Black, Belgrade marked the 24th anniversary of the women’s protest against forced mobilization in 1999. By this peace action, organized on the occasion of May 24th – International Day of Women’s Action for Peace and Disarmament, activists recalled the courageous resistance of women to mobilization and war in Kosovo. And on this occasion, a request was sent *to the state of Serbia and the local administration in the Rasina District to declare May 24 as the Day of Remembrance of the May protests and brave resistance of the citizens of Kruševac and the Rasina District.*

The following banners were displayed during the vigil:

- *We remember the courage of the Rasina district women*
- *We remember women’s resistance to forced mobilization*
- *We remember women’s protests 1999!*
- *Everything for Peace, Health and Education – Nothing for Armament etc.*
- Stop the violence
- Stop the weapons

During the action leaflets were distributed, the reactions were positive until one man started screaming:

“All Women in Black should be sent to prisoner camps”!

The police officers in the car, which was parked nearby, did not react...

One female citizen supported us by saying: I agree with everything you hold and ask for!

Twenty-odd **(20)** female activists participated in the action.



Belgrade, June 19

Belgrade, June 19 "Stop war rape!"

On the occasion of June 19 - the International Day of Combating Sexual Violence in War, Women in Black, the Autonomous Women's Center and the Youth Initiative for Human Rights in Serbia organized a protest in mourning and silence **We remember the women raped in the war - we remember the women of Foča**, June 19 2023, from 1 pm to 2 pm, in Republic Square in Belgrade.



The following banners were displayed at the protest:

- We remember the women raped in the war
- Rape in war is a war crime
- Let's remember the Foča women
- June 19 – International Day of Combating Sexual Violence in War
- The State of Serbia does not recognize the war crime of rape - Admit it!

Twenty-odd activists (20) took part in the protest.



Žene u crnom, 1991 →

Belgrade, July 10

Belgrade, July 10 "We will never forget the Srebrenica genocide"

-On the occasion of the **28th anniversary** of the genocide in Srebrenica, Women in Black held, in Republic Square in Belgrade, a peace action in mourning and silence under the slogan "*We will never forget the Srebrenica genocide*", which consisted of the following elements:



- **Installing a symbolic/living memorial** - the continuation of the construction of the memorial to the victims of the Srebrenica genocide after our multi-year requests to approve the construction of a permanent memorial to the victims of the genocide in Srebrenica in Belgrade were rejected. Activists held a black band - a symbol of pain and mourning - with the inscription '**We will never forget the Srebrenica genocide**', as well as banners: **Solidarity – Srebrenica – Women in Black** and **Responsibility**.



- **8372 – stage action** - putting on the public stage the number of those killed in the genocide represents respect for the dignity of the victims, as well as respect for the facts established by the court. By the act of writing 8,372 in salt on the pavement, what is denied/falsified/downplayed in the majority of the Serbian public - the scale of the genocide in Srebrenica - is symbolically written. On the top step of the equestrian monument in the Square, women activists held a black banner with **8,372** written in silver.
- **White roses** – a symbol of tenderness and sublimity, care and attention to the victims of genocide, were distributed to the participants, who were then individually laid on the pavement next to the number **8,372**.
- **The factual truth about the genocide** – which most people in Serbia do not want to see, know or accept; the disclosure of long-known facts showed sympathy and solidarity with the victims; bringing to the public stage information about the genocide in Srebrenica:
- The Srebrenica genocide was carried out with the direct support of the Serbian regime.

- The genocide in Srebrenica was carried out **from July 11 to 22, 1995**.
- **8,372** Bosniak men between the ages of **12 and 77** were killed in the genocide.
- Places of mass executions: Jadar, Cerska, Tišća, Grbavci, Orahovac, Pilica, Branjevo.
- More than **20,000** members of Serbian armed formations participated in the genocide.
- The remains of those killed were found in over **60** mass graves.
- All deportation buses were from Serbia: July 7-Šabac, Strela-Valjevo, Raketa-Užice...
- On 15 January 2009, the European Parliament proclaimed July 11 the European Commemorative Day for the victims of the Srebrenica genocide.
- **On June 8, 2022**, Ratko Mladić was sentenced to life imprisonment. The Hague Tribunal sentenced **12** people to **255** years in prison for the genocide in Srebrenica.
- **Remove the mural of war criminal Ratko Mladić!** - an act of rebellion against murals celebrating a war criminal convicted of genocide in Srebrenica, a request to remove murals located throughout Serbia.

Arriving at the square, we found two women who, holding banners denying the genocide in Srebrenica, took a position directly under the monument and did not want to move away. Uniformed policemen set up a cordon between us and them.

We asked the policemen when their gathering was reported, and the policemen pretended not to hear the question or did not want to tell us – apparently, they were forbidden to communicate with us. After the same question was put to the inspector present, he left the scene, held telephone consultations, probably with his superiors, and upon his return convinced the aforementioned two women to move away from the monument, after which they joined the group on the other side of the square interfering with the action. Namely, even before the arrival of the Women in Black, a group of about twenty people - mostly men and a couple of women - gathered at Republic Square, who disrupted the action by insulting, shouting, and threatening:

- *Srebrenica is not genocide!*
- *Ratko Mladić – Serbian hero!*
- *Ratko Mladić fought against terrorism, he excelled in numerous battles...*
- *Fuck you 8372!*
- *Mladić will fuck you again!*
- *You are the shame of Serbia!*
- *You will end up in a camp, all of you!*
- *This is Serbia, you came here to breed!*
- *Get out of Serbia!*

- *You cunts!*
- *Look at them – how ugly and stupid they are, none of them looks good!*
- *Your children and grandchildren are ashamed of you!*
- *Sofija – aren't you ashamed! (To Sofija Todorović, Youth Initiative for Human Rights)*
- *Staša, you whore – Zajović, pick your coffin! (WiB activist)*
- *Shaggy Miloš, we'll get you! (WiB activist),*
- *Our time will come, and then you'll see!*

Near the end of the action, a couple of eggs were thrown from the direction of the monument, and at the very end the mentioned group chanted: Long live Ratko Mladić, Long live Serbia, Long live Republika Srpska!

Over fifty (**55**) activists from Belgrade, Novi Sad, Leskovac, Vlasotince, Kruševac, Kraljevo, Novi Pazar, Pančevo, etc. participated in this action. After returning from the funeral in Potočari, on 11 July 2023, at around 8:30 p.m., WiB activists saw stickers with the face of convicted war criminal Ratko Mladić at the front door of the building where the Women in Black premises are located (Jug Bogdanova 18), which read Ratko Mladić is a hero and Srebrenica is not genocide.

FEMINIST, ANTI-FASCIST, ANTI-WAR, ANTI-RACIST, ANTI-MILITARISTIC ACTIONS:

In this period, we organized the following street actions:

Zrenjanin, May 1 – The solidarity march on the occasion of the **International Labor Day** was organized by the Zrenjanin Social Forum, Roza - a group for women's labor rights, and a dozen WiB activists participated in this march, as well as other activities on the occasion of May 1.

Belgrade, May 12 and June 16 – “We believe in Milena Radulović!”

- Women in Black, the feminist initiative Verujem ti (I believe you), Women's Solidarity and the Autonomous Women's Center organized a protest in front of the Palace of Justice on the occasion of the trial of Miroslav Mika Aleksić, accused of rape and sexual abuse of students of the drama studio 'Matter of the Heart' whose owner he was at the time.

We held banners that read:

- *We believe Milena Radulović*
- *Those who raped in war, also rape in peace ...*
- *Justice for the victims, sanctions for the perpetrators*

Ten (10) activists participated in these protests.

Beograd, 12. maj i 16. jun



Belgrade, May 18

Belgrade, May 18 “Stop killing women!”– on the occasion of *May 18 - the Day of Remembrance of Women Victims of Violence*, Women in Black and the Autonomous Women’s Center organized a vigil in mourning and silence in front of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia.

At the protest, the initials of the murdered women, their ages and places of residence were highlighted.

Also, banners with the following messages were displayed:

- *Stop killing women*
- *We are looking for answers*
- *An infograph showing the inadequate behavior of the institutions in the case of the murder of a woman in Pirot*



The protest was obstructed by regime bully Simo Spasić, otherwise the president of the Association of Families of Kidnapped Serbs from Kosovo.

- *Women in black are pre-war, war and post-war profiteers*
- *None of their folks were killed*
- *They get rich on the bones of the dead*
- *I wouldn't regret imprisoning you for five years just to blind you!*
(addressed to Staša Z.)

Twenty-odd (20) female and male activists participated in the protest.

Belgrade, June 7



Belgrade, June 7 – Everything for peace, health and knowledge, nothing for weapons



Women in Black organized an anti-militaristic-feminist action on June 7. The action was organized as part of the International Action Network on Small Arms Week /IANS.

The following banners were displayed at the protest:

- Everything for peace, health and knowledge, nothing for weapons
- Stop the violence
- Stop the weapons
- Women in Black against militarism

About fifteen activists (15) participated in the protest.

Belgrade, July 26 “Stop the war in Ukraine” – an anti-war protest in the center of Belgrade where the following banners were displayed:

- Stop the war in Ukraine - in Serbian, Ukrainian, Russian, English
- 518 days of the war in Ukraine - in Ukrainian and Serbian
- Putin - a war criminal
- Vulin - Putin's agent is chasing Russians around Belgrade!

(Aleksandar Vulin is the head of the Security Information Agency/ BIA of Serbia and is responsible for the repression and persecution of Russian anti-war activists who sought refuge fleeing war and mobilization).

Fifteen (15) people participated in the action.

Beograd, 26. jul





Since the beginning of the protests that take place every Saturday, 'Serbia against violence', we have been participating as citizens. We also participated in the anti-war action on **July 30** organized by the Russian Democratic Society - a protest against the persecution of Russian activists in Belgrade.



DEALING WITH THE PAST / TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE - A FEMINIST APPROACH

This is one of the most important activities of Women in Black. It consists of a multitude of segments: street actions, workshops, lectures, creation of different models of transitional justice from a feminist point of view, cooperation with related organizations in the form of joint actions (campaigns, consultative meetings).

VISITING THE PLACES OF CRIME COMMITTED IN OUR NAME, AS WELL AS OTHER CRIMES AGAINST THE CIVILIAN POPULATION, DURING THE WARS IN THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA:

**May 31 and June 1,
Zvornik**

May 31 and June 1, Zvornik (Bosnia and Hercegovina) – on the occasion of the 31st anniversary of the crimes against civilians in the area of Zvornik: **in the course of May and June 1992, Serbian armed formations committed crimes of ethnic cleansing, robbery, torture and killings**; May 31st several thousand civilians of Bosniak nationality were expelled from 13 villages in the area of the municipality of Zvornik, and around 700 men were then killed in the place called Gerina klanica (Gera's slaughterhouse). Of the **1,573** missing persons in 1992 in the area of the Zvornik municipality, **1,040** exhumed persons were identified, and the search for **533** missing persons is still ongoing.

Women in Black participated in commemorative gatherings, together with the Association of Victims of the Municipality of Zvornik:

May 31

- **Visit to Pilica concentration camp** (former Cultural Center, now a ruin) where **595** men of Bosniak name were killed;
- **Skočić** – visit to the cemetery/cemetery in the village of Skočić, inhabited by the Roma population; On **July 17, 1992**, the

paramilitary formation 'Sima's Chetniks' from Serbia invaded the village, robbed and raped Roma women, who were taken to Serbia as sexual slaves; **27** Roma were killed, including eight members of the Ribić family. Zijo Ribić, the only survivor of this massacre, testified in Skočići.

- **"Klisan Night of Fear and Uncertainty"** - history lesson in the village of Klis about the crime committed on **May 31, 1992**, when the Serbian armed forces rounded up thousands of civilians from 13 villages in the area of the Zvornik municipality. On this occasion, the documentary film "Zvornik" by *Avdo Huseinović* about war crimes in the area of Zvornik was shown.

June 1

- **Peace march along the 'Path of Death'** with families of victims and survivors;
- **Paying tribute to the victims at the Memorial Center in Bijeli Potok** - visit to the memorial in Bijeli Potok, which lists the names of all 675 victims killed, of which 22 people are still being sought, and **442** in the entire Zvornik area;
- **Tribute to the victims at the Memorial Center in Bijeli potok;**
- **"Rama's grave" - visit to the mass grave;** In **1997**, the Commission for the Missing of Bosnia and Herzegovina exhumed **274** persons, who were also identified in 1999 and buried at the Memići Memorial Center in Kalesija;
- **Paying tribute to the victims at the Memorial Center in Bijeli Potok;**
- **"Rama's grave" - visit to the mass grave;** In **1997**, the Commission for the Missing of Bosnia and Herzegovina exhumed **274** persons, who were also identified in 1999 and buried at the Memići Memorial Center in Kalesija;
- **Karakaj - visit to the former concentration camp in the High School Center in Karakaj**, where more than **700** men were deported, including minor children and those over 80 years old, where they were killed;
- **Burial rites at the cemetery in the Memorial Center Memići/Kalesija Gornja**, where the remains of four people were buried.

Srebrenica 7–10 July



Srebrenica 7-10 July "March of peace - the route of death to freedom" – *Nezuk - Potočari/Srebrenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina*. After the occupation of Srebrenica in July 1995 by Serbian armed formations, under the leadership of war criminal Ratko Mladić, Bosniak civilians, fleeing from atrocities, tried to find salvation on the road from Potočari to Nezuk. Unfortunately, most of them were killed, and very few survived. The march, lasting 3 days and over 100 km in length, is primarily a tribute to the victims of genocide, as well as a reminder of mass and horrific crimes. Thousands of people participate in these marches, primarily from Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also from all over the world. Women in Black participate in this



August 3, Lučani

march every year, and this year's Peace March was attended by: *Jelena Jaćimović, Mirko Medenica and Ramiz Berbić.*

July 11, "Solidarity and responsibility" - in accordance with the policy of solidarity and responsibility, Women in Black participated in the commemoration/burial rites in Potočari/Srebrenica, where, together with the families of the victims of the Srebrenica genocide, we attended the burial of **30** remains of the victims. So far, **6,721** victims have been buried in the Memorial Center in Potočari.

Ten (**10**) activists from the Women in Black Network from Serbia (Belgrade, Leskovac, Vlasotince, Kraljevo, Novi Sad) participated in the Memorial Center in Potočari. In the Memorial Center, we also held a commemorative gathering with messages/banners (We will never forget the genocide in Srebrenica, Solidarity, Responsibility, Women in Black - Srebrenica, etc.).

August 3, Lučani "Solidarity with the Milivojević family from Lučani" - as a sign of solidarity and sympathy with the Milivojević family from Lučani (Western Serbia), Women in Black activists from Belgrade attended a commemoration at the cemetery in Lučani on the occasion of the sixth anniversary of the death of Milomir Milivojević. Workers Milomir Milojević and Milojko Ignjatović died in a gunpowder explosion in the factory "Milan Blagojević-Namenska" from Lučani on July 14, 2017. For more than two years now, the Milovanović family has been asking the state authorities to shed light on the circumstances of the tragedy in the factory. Criminal proceedings have been pending before the Basic Court in Ivanjica since October 2019 until May 2023 and WiB activists followed all the hearings.

ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THE CRIMES - THE PATH TO PEACE WITH JUSTICE: MONITORING THE TRIALS AT THE SPECIAL COURT

Kravica War Crime

Eight members of the Special Brigade of the Republika Srpska Army have been charged with war crimes (the murder of 1,313 Bosnians, within the Srebrenica genocide, on July 13th, 1995).

(Let us remind: The Kravica crime indictment was brought at the beginning of 2016. This was the beginning of the most important trial at the High Court in Belgrade / Special Court, the Srebrenica genocide. However, on 14 July 2017, the Court of Appeal ruled to annul the indictment for this crime, which is otherwise not qualified as genocide, since it was raised at the time when the War Crimes Prosecutor's Office did not have a Chief Prosecutor. The trial continued in November 2017, and the hearings are continually being delayed due to non-attendance of witnesses, inaction of the prosecution and the withdrawal of protected witnesses due to the threats they receive).

In this reporting period, only one (**1**) hearing was held, but this hearing also lasted about fifteen minutes.

The trial was postponed because the defendants' lawyers requested it with the following explanation: one defendant (*Milivoj Batinica*) is absent due to a 'bacteriological infection', another (*Aleksandar Dačević*) due to 'traffic problems' and the third (*Jovan Petrović*) due to 'high blood pressure'. The defense attorney of the accused *Jovan Petrović* offered the court panel medical documentation that his client has high blood pressure, etc.

This trial is accompanied by constant obstructions: the hearings are constantly postponed due to the non-appearance of witnesses, the inactivity of the prosecution and the withdrawal of protected witnesses due to the threats they receive. The hearing was also attended by members of associations from Srebrenica and Đulići/BH, as well as four WiB activists. The next hearing is scheduled for September 29.

WOMEN'S COURT – A FEMINIST APPROACH TO JUSTICE

We bring a brief report on the activities of Women in Black regarding the organization of the Women's Court - a feminist approach to justice in this period. Should you be interested in more information, you can find it on our website www.zeneucrnom.org and www.zenskisud.org or contact us by mail: zeneucrnombeograd@gmail.com

The first Women's Court in the territory of Europe was held in Sarajevo, May 7 to May 10, 2015, organized by 10 women's groups from the territory of the former Yugoslavia (Mothers of the Srebrenica and Žepa Enclaves, Cure Foundation, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Center for Women Victims of War, Center for Women's Studies, Zagreb, Croatia, Center for Women and Peace Education Anima, Kotor, Montenegro, Gender Equality Council, Skopje, Macedonia, Women's Lobby, Ljubljana, Slovenia, Center for Women's Studies and Women in Black, Belgrade, Serbia). The Women's Court was attended by more than 500 people from all the countries of the former Yugoslavia, but also from Argentina, Algeria, Palestine, Israel, the United States, Spain, Italy, Sweden, Austria, Belgium, Great Britain, etc.

The final event in Sarajevo was not the end of the process, but on the contrary, an incentive to continue from the feminist perspective towards the creation of new models of justice. It is an obligation first of all to the witnesses, but also the expression of our responsibility towards the enormous burden of the recent past.

In continuation of the Women's Court, Women in Black, Belgrade coordinates the program and other activities, with the support of organizations: Anima, Kotor (Montenegro), Center for Women Victims of War, Zagreb (Croatia), The Foundation CURE, Sarajevo (Bosnia & Herzegovina), and some members of the former Organizing Committee of the Women's Court continue to participate sporadically (Council for Equality, Skopje, Macedonia), while the other members support the process without active participation.

Towards the organization of the Women's Court - the case of Foča
- the following preparatory activities were held:

Tuzla/Bosna i Hercegovina, May 5 and 6



Tuzla/Bosnia and Herzegovina, May 5 and 6 - meeting/operational meeting, and within the continuation of the Women's Court process - feminist approach and preparatory activities towards the organization of the Women's Court on the war crime of rape - the case of Foča.

The meeting was organized by Women in Black, Belgrade in cooperation with the NGO Novi horizonti, Tuzla, and the participants were: *Halida Konjo Uzunović, Ilvana Konjo, Zenija Hajdarević*, Foča/Sarajevo, *Kemalemir Frašto/Frashto* (zoom from USA); *Edina Karić*, Tuzla, witness at the Women's Court, *Mira Vilušić and Merima Skokić*, Horizonti, Tuzla, WiB activists from Belgrade (*Violeta Đikanović and Staša Zajović*) and *Sanja Pavlović* (Autonomous Women's Center/AWC, Belgrade).

Among the activities at this working meeting, we highlight:

- **About the experiences during the process of organizing W'sC**
- **I testify: About the experiences of sexual violence in the war - the case of Foča**

Women from Foča, Tuzla, and a man from Foča, who lives in the USA, testified via Zoom.

- **Feminist workshop and agreements on joint activities in the coming period** - all details of the Women's Court - Foča case (June 26, 2023) were precisely agreed upon.

Online working meetings - held on May 26 and June 3, witnesses, organizers and therapists participated.

Feminist ethics of care - the feminist therapist of the Women's Court, Mira Vilušić from Tuzla/BH, provided continuous support to witnesses and witnesses in the framework of preparations for the Women's Court - Foča case (group and individual work with the witnesses). A dozen meetings were held via Zoom, as well as in Sarajevo on June 8, 2023.

Working with artistic collectives - designing events, making printed materials, logistical preparations, etc.



Communication with the associates of the Women's Court - the case of Foča - during May and June, several working meetings - agreements were held, mostly via Zoom.

Transcript - from the meeting in Tuzla (19 pages).

Belgrade, June 26

Belgrade, June 26, Women's Court: feminist approach to justice – Foča case

Women's Court - a space for women's testimonies on their experiences of injustice suffered during the war and in peace - instead of objects of injustice and violence, women become subjects of justice.

Women's Court – feminist approach to justice – makes visible the continuity of injustice and violence against women, both in war and in peace, both in the private and in the public spheres; discloses the intertwining and interconnectedness of all forms of violence (gender-based violence, ethnic violence, socio-economic, militaristic, political, etc.) and its impact on women; makes visible the continuous resistance of women to war, sexism, militarism, nationalism.

The first Women's Court in Europe was held in Sarajevo from May 7 to 10, 2015, and was organized by 10 women's groups from ex-Yugoslavia.

The final event of the Women's Court - feminist approach to justice held in Sarajevo (May 2015) encouraged the development of new models of justice from a feminist perspective. It is an act of taking responsibility for the huge burden of the recent past, the crimes committed against the civilian population, primarily women. The consequences of those crimes on the everyday life of women are, even after more than thirty years, omnipresent - on an emotional, economic-social, political and cultural level.



Women's Court - Foča case



During the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992-1995), Foča was a place of systematic sexual violence and rape. Thanks to the courage

of women from Foča and from all over BH, the path was paved for women all over the planet in the fight for the punishment of the war crime of rape. Based on Foča case, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia stated that sexual slavery is to be considered a crime against humanity.

Nevertheless, despite this historically significant verdict, some of the sexual crimes against women and men of Foča, unfortunately, have not been disclosed or acknowledged, but have been silenced and forgotten... That is why we want to continue, together with the women and men from Foča, to demand justice for victims of sexual crimes in Foca and beyond.

June 26, 2023

June 26, 2023. – *Organized by:* Women in Black and Autonomous Women's Center, Belgrade in cooperation with Horizonti, Tuzla, and with support of: Center for women and peace education – Anima, Kotor, Center for women victims of war, Zagreb, CURE Foundation, Sarajevo; artistic-activist collectives: Škart, Dah theater, Miljenko Dereta Space, Belgrade and Art clinic, Novi Sad.

Opening of the Women's Court – Foča case

Welcoming words: **Staša Zajović**, Women in Black, Belgrade/Serbia and **Šejla Kamerić**, artist, Sarajevo/Bosnia and Herzegovina

About the exhibition "**We remember the crimes – Foča case**": **Dragan Protić Protá**, Škart and **Goran Lazin**, Women in Black, Belgrade/Serbia

We remember the crimes – Foča case

Testimonies:

Ilvana Konjo, Foča/Sarajevo

Kemalemir Frašto, Foča/USA

Zenija Hajdarević, Foča/Sarajevo

Halida Konjo Uzunović, Foča/Sarajevo

Women's Court associates – context analysis of the testimonies

Sonja Biserko, Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, Belgrade

Edina Bećirović, professor of Security Studies, University of Sarajevo

Marijana Senjak, feminist therapist of Women's Court, Zagreb

Sanja Pavlović, Autonomous Women's Center, Belgrade and

Mina Damnjanović, Women in Black, Belgrade/Berlin

Women's Court – Foča case – ended with a performance – part of the Dah theater play "**Terra**" (directed by Jadranka Anđelić), Belgrade

This event was attended by around **seventy persons** from whole region as well as from European and other countries:

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Sarajevo, Foča, Tuzla, Srebrenica, Zvornik (Đulići, Klisa), Bratunac,

Montenegro: Kotor, Herceg Novi, Pljevlja,

Croatia: Zagreb, Novska, Pakrac,

Serbia: Beograd, Leskovac, Vlasotince, Kruševac, Kraljevo, Pančevo, Prijepolje, Novi Sad,

Austria: Vienna,
Australia: Brisbane,
Germany: Cologne,
Switzerland: Geneva.

PUBLISHING ACTIVITIES

-we prepared and printed the following materials:

Women's court - feminist approach to justice - brief overview of activities

We remember the crimes! Foča case - map (10 pages)

Transcript of the Women's Court - Foča case (36 pages)

FEMINIST ETHICS OF CARE – Active women's holiday in the women's house 'Seka' Brač/Croatia from July 29 to August 14.

Ten **(10)** women – witnesses, W'sC activists from BH, Croatia and Serbia:

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Enesa Mehmedović, Zarfa Suljić and Suvada Selimović, Đulići/Zvornik.

Croatia: Marica Šeatović, Novska; Jovanka Carević and Milica Miladinović, Zagreb

Serbia: Milka Rosić, Leskovac, Snežana Obrenović, Kraljevo, Svetlana Šarić, Vlasotince and Nadežda Kostić, Kruševac.

CONFRONTING THE PAST - JOINT REFLECTION

(meetings, lectures, book promotions; exhibitions; Zoom conferences) organized by WiB and related civil society organizations. In this period, we highlight the following activities:

May 29, Zrenjanin



May 29, Zrenjanin - presentation of book 'Smeh pod vešalima – Sve što niste hteli da znate o Kosovu (Laughter on the gallows – everything you did not want to know about Kosovo)' – author Rade Radovanović, journalist and editor of Danas, anti-war/anti-fascist activist; published by: **Most Art Yugoslavia (2021)**. This book is about war in Kosovo during NATO bombing (1999): about ethnic cleansing of Albanian civic population by Serbian armed forces, as well as the persecution of Serbian civic population in Kosovo. In this reporting period we organized one event:

This event was organized by Women in Black with support of **Zrenjaninski socijalni forum/Zrenjanin Social Forum**.

The speakers were: **Dragan Stojković**, publisher, Association for the culture of connection Most Art Yugoslavia

Fahrudin Kladničanin, Academic community 'Forum 10', Novi Pazar

Branislav Markuš, Zrenjanin Social Forum, Zrenjanin

Lino Veljak, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb



Staća Zajović, *Women in Black*-Belgrade

Rade Radovanović, author of the book, journalist and playwright

Moderator: **Tara Rukeci**, Zrenjanin Social Forum



We highlight the following from the debates:

"I experienced the book from the point of view of a reserve soldier," **Branislav Markuš** from the Zrenjanin Social Forum said at the beginning. "I was mobilized in 1991 for the war in Croatia. All the time I was trying to get away from the memory of myself then - like a clay pigeon". Markuš believes that "much has not changed since then and that "one character in the book (A. Vučić) still decides about us".

The publisher of the book *Laughter under the Gallows*, **Dragan Stojković** from Most Art-Yugoslavia, summarized the publishing scope of the book, which, as he said, has so far had five editions (in Serbia by his publishing house, in Kosovo, in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina), as well as several promotions. "My impression is that we are talking among ourselves about what we already know: the scale of the crime, the actors, those who got away with impunity..." Stojković believes that the book has been "silenced" by the Serbian public: "It has been silenced by intellectuals, historians, the mainstream... The book talks about the crime of denying the crime. And that is the end point that this country has passed. Only we exist. Only our country exists. Only our victims exist. That self-love, and not seeing other people's victims is pure pathology," said Stojković.

The book, which has so far seen four editions: two in Serbia, two in Kosovo, and one each in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, has been ignored because there is no will to confront the past, and without confrontation there can be no healing, said **Lino Veljak**, professor of the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Zagreb. "This book is medicine. For those who want such topics to not reach the agenda. If this book does not become a part of school reading lists, then this country has no chance of survival. The subject matter of this book needs serious discussion. Otherwise, self-destruction will follow", he pointed out.

It will never happen in this country that this book be put on a

mandatory school reading list, said **Fahrudin Kladničanin**, executive director of the Academic Initiative "Forum 10" from Novi Pazar. He emphasized that the information presented in the book is correct, pointing out that by looking at this book, one actually realizes that we do not know what happened.

"The factual truth is that **863,000** Albanians were expelled and the fact is that the crime of transporting the bodies of Kosovo Albanians took place. In theory, punishment by oblivion is the most terrible crime. We are talking about the consequences of state and social oblivion. "Serbian police special forces are still being trained at the sites of Albanian mass graves. Eight mass graves were found in Batajnica between 2003 and 2005. A church was built on that spot and the "builders" were awarded by Patriarch Irinej. Punishment by oblivion is the worst kind of punishment. No one was held responsible for transporting the bodies to Serbia. We demand that a Memorial Center be built on that spot," said **Zajović**.

Explaining the consequences of covering up crimes, especially against children, not only in the territory of Kosovo, but also in the ex-Yugoslav area, **Rade Radovanović**, the author of *Laughter under the Gallows*, connected the massacre in Belgrade with the unconditional condemnation of all the aforementioned crimes: "How was that "school shooting" possible? I don't wonder how, but for how much longer? After Vukovar, Sarajevo, Tuzla, Peć, Podujevo, Suva Reka, Đakovica... One cannot commit crimes with impunity for so long. What happened in the school and two villages (near Mladenovac) cannot be explained only by PTSD and by depression. That's not enough. What was done, what they did since the beginning of the war, from Borovo selo and Plitvice, then in Bosnia and Kosovo... It sounds like a bland phrase that the war has returned home, but it is so..."

At the end, a discussion followed about the personal experiences of people from the audience who stayed in Kosovo for a longer or shorter time. This event was attended by twenty people.

PEACE ENCOUNTERS - JOINT REFLECTION ON THE WAR IN UKRAINE, WOMEN'S PEACE ACTIVISM, DISCUSSION CIRCLES

we single out the following activities, which we transmit chronologically:

May 8 and 9

May 8 and 9 – peace meeting of *Women in Black* and *Grannies against the Right*, Vienna.

The meeting was organized on the occasion of **May 9 – the International Day of Victory over Fascism/Europe Day**.

We discussed the activities of the two groups and the network. *Grannies Against the Right* briefly presented their work: a movement founded in November 2017 in Austria, after a coalition was formed between conservatives and the right. They launched

a platform for women with the aim of connecting elderly women and grandmothers around the world who oppose right-wing and extremist movements, anti-Semitism, racism, misogyny, fascism.



Then we talked about the war in Ukraine.

As part of the debate: *'War in Ukraine - anti-war non-violent resistance and peace activism'*

Around the issue of *sending huge amounts of weapons to Ukraine, as a 'way to end the war'*, quite opposing views crystallized:

Activists of the movement *"Grannies Against the Right"* believe that "it is necessary to send the largest possible amounts of weapons as a precondition for ending the war", and they also expressed their disagreement with the German authors of *"Appeal for Peace"* on the cessation of sending weapons to Ukraine;

WiB activists believe that 'it is better to invest in civilian purposes and not war machinery', with concerns about the serious militarization of public opinion both in the West and in Serbia, where pro-Russian/pro-Putin views prevail; WiB expressed solidarity with the authors of the Appeal for Peace.

As for the (im)possibility of peace talks to stop the war in Ukraine? Who should participate in them?

Grannies Against the Right believe that negotiating with Putin is not an option, which the WiB activists did not agree with because the *"Dayton Peace Agreement"* to end the war in BH was achieved with the participation of representatives of the belligerent parties, etc.

This meeting was attended by **22** people - WiB activists, activists of *Grannies Against the Right*: 1 activist from Germany, 5 activists from Vienna; SOS Balkan Route activists from Vienna, Bihać (BH), anti-war activist from Russia.

June 12-15, Lake Bor

June 12-15, Lake Bor - Working meeting of women's groups from Serbia supported by the Swedish foundation **Kvinna till Kvinna**; Ljiljana Radovanović and Staša Zajović participated on behalf of WiB.

June 21

June 21 'Across the line' – a feminist panel at the Center for Cultural Decontamination organized as part of the festival *'Art and Human Rights - Dah Theater Festival (June 20-24, 2023)*. The panel presented feminist practices of connection, non-violent conflict resolution and cooperation of those who, according to the official narrative, belong to 'opposing communities', with a focus on the cooperation between the art-activist collective *Artpolis* from Pristina/Kosovo and the *Dah Theater* from Belgrade, whose cooperation has been ongoing for 15 years. Also participating were: *Zana Hodža/Kosovo; Ivana Milenović Popović, Dijana Milošević, Ana Miljanić, Staša Zajović/Serbia*.

July 29

July 29 - meeting with Russian anti-war/anti-militarist women activists - a dozen activists, mostly those who found refuge against war and mobilization in Georgia, Armenia, Portugal, Great Britain and two who still live in Russia. The WiB anti-militaristic experiences were presented, and Russian activists talked about the forms of support for deserters, conscientious objectors and do so within their network *Movement of Conscientious Objectors*. They talked about providing legal assistance about difficulties at work - repression, etc. The meeting was held in the WiB premises, with activists of the WiB Network from Belgrade, Leskovac, Kraljevo, Vlasotina, Kruševac.

24.-26. August

24.-26. August, Ljubljana/Slovenia - Festival of electronic music, critical thought and activism (Engrounded Festival 2023) - In the panel 'Circles of Peace' the following activists of the WiB Network participated: *Suvada Selimović, Sabina Talović, Violeta Đikanović, Ljiljana Spasić* and the panel was moderated by *Emina Bužankić*.



SOLIDARITY IS OUR STRENGTH

Solidarity actions – with members of vulnerable and disadvantaged minority communities (social-class, ethnic-racial, sexual), citizens whose human rights (working, educational, cultural) are endangered.

Solidarity with War Refugees: Women in Black addressed this situation in 2013, when solidarity campaigns against racist attacks



were organized that culminated at the end of 2013, and since then, Women in Black has organized a lot of activities, about which you can find information on the WiB website. Solidarity activities are interconnected, at the same time, they include more dimensions - peace, humanitarian, artistic-activist, informative ...



Direct actions - solidarity assistance in the field:

I Solidarity support and assistance to Ukrainian refugees - since the beginning of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, in February 2022, WiB has established contacts with Ukrainian refugees, providing humanitarian support and assistance:

Vranje, July 24 - Solidarity visit to the reception center for refugees in Vranje; activists of the WiB Network from Leskovac and Vlasotince (Milka Rosić and Svetlana Šarić) visited the refugees, humanitarian aid was distributed; there are 59 refugees in this reception center: women (44), children (14) and men (10).

Sports-recreational camp Dojkinci on Stara planina/south-eastern Serbia - it housed children - refugees from Ukraine, who found refuge from the war in Serbia; The camp was held from July 27 to August 2 and during the stay, together with the children from Serbia, various activities were organized (hiking, walks, games on the river, workshops, etc. The camp was organized by the association "Do good" which was started by Ukrainian refugees (September 2022). WiB has been cooperating with this association since the beginning of its work and they jointly helped to maintain the aforementioned children's camp.

II Solidarity support for anti-war activists from Russia - they sought refuge in Belgrade fleeing war or repression in Russia. Solidarity was manifested through humanitarian aid, support and participation in anti-war protests organized by the RUBS initiative (Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians and Serbs together against the war); through involvement in various WiB activities: protests, debates, joint activist-artistic events, gatherings, which were discussed in this report.

III Pljevlja, Montenegro (on the border between Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina) – July 31st - the visit of WiB activist



(Violeta Đikanović) to the open center Bona Fide, consisted of help and support to refugees. Bona Fide activists organized aid for refugees from 2017 and till now several thousand refugees / migrants passed through this center. WiB network activists provided humanitarian aid (food and hygienic products etc.) and WiB used to support solidarity activities to Bona Fide center.

IV Solidarity with women human rights defenders

May 19

May 19, Leskovac 'Solidarity is our strength!' - a working meeting was held in the premises of Women for Peace, attended by eleven (11) activists from Leskovac (*I ja se pitam*), *NENA - group for peace and women rights*, *SOS phone for women and children, victims of violence*, *Vlasotince*, *Women for Peace and Yucom*, *Belgrade*.

The purpose of the meeting was to provide information and provide mutual support, especially in cases of increased violence against female human rights defenders. We highlight the following segments of the meeting:

Repression against human rights defenders - about attacks on activists of Women for Peace, Leskovac, who deal with violence in the family context (SOS phone).

Milena Vasić, lawyer of the Committee of Lawyers for Human Rights/ Yucom, spoke about the importance of documenting violence against women human rights defenders, about initiating joint actions of mutual support and solidarity, exerting pressure, remembering injustices - recording resistance; monitoring the climate in society.

During the discussion, serious difficulties in the work of civil society were pointed out: in addition to attacks by state and non-state actors, the regime criminalizes civil society organizations through financial control, embezzlement, public budget funds are allocated exclusively to the regime's GONGs, and warnings were issued about the support provided to the regime by some of the UN agency (UN Women), which finances GONGs, i.e., NGOs close to the regime, etc.

On the consequences of mass murders in Serbia (**May 3 and 4, 2023**), on measures taken by the state: *on police officers in schools* and handing over weapons - do they increase security or not?

Increasing the number of police officers in schools is a "catastrophic measure, a demonstration of power, abuse of tragedy for militaristic-populist purposes, it does not reduce violence, a greater number of police officers is even more disturbing, increases repression and fear among children and parents because "police officers are the most common perpetrators of domestic violence; instead of policemen in schools, what is needed are considerably larger numbers of psychologists and pedagogues.

The participants assessed *the campaign for handing over weapons* as a regime farce, it is not about real disarmament (control of legal and illegal weapons), because it is about the selective application of the mentioned measure, it is throwing dust in the eyes, it will increase the black market etc.

It was concluded that 'neither the army nor the police increase, but threaten human security' and that the mentioned measures only serve to increase the political rating of the regime and the ruling Serbian Progressive Party.

IN ADDITION TO THE ABOVE MENTIONED, IN THIS PERIOD WE MONITORED THE FOLLOWING TRIALS:

I Trial of Miroslav Mika Aleksić for rape and sexual abuse

January 2021

January 2021 - several former students of the "Matter of the Heart" acting school made accusations of rape and sexual abuse against their former acting teacher Miroslav Aleksić.

April 21, 2021

April 21, 2021 - an indictment was filed against Miroslav Mika Aleksić. He was arrested and spent eight months in detention, when he was released to defend himself.

February 2022

February 2022 - the court proceedings against Aleksić began after several delays and final preparatory hearings.

In this reporting period, two **(2)** hearings were held:

May 12 – At this session, the hearing of witness Ivana Velinović, as injured party, continued, who testified about sexual violence and psychological terror by M. Aleksić: "I was terrified. I was sick of everything I knew, but I denied it in order to survive. (...) He raped me twice, but abused me in every class from November 2018 to May 2019 (...) I reported the case so that no other girl would experience this. I felt humiliated and defeated that this was happening to me and that I wasn't able to speak out. I suppressed it so much that I looked at it as if it was happening to someone else, not to me. I constantly felt guilty that this was happening to me. I was terribly ashamed of that enormous amount of powerlessness in me."

The witness was interrogated by the defendant's defense attorney, Zoran Jakovljević, who humiliated and discredited the witness, accusing her of inventing and lying, but the judge did not react to all of this.

16. jun - *Maša Đorđević* testified about the sexual violence she experienced in May 2015: "I entered the Stvar srca/Matter of the Heart school at the age of 15, and I was there for four years." I didn't learn anything about acting at that school; he (M. Aleksić) taught us to choose a partner who will be rude to us, he taught us that all women are whores. He instilled us with fear; I walked out of there believing I was stupid. He crushed my confidence. I survived peer violence and he took advantage of it. Attending his classes was agonizing for me, I had terrible stomach pains and squinting tics. I was in spasms because I was forcing myself to go to class. The victim then testified about the criminal act of sexual violence that she survived. The lawyer of the accused, as in the previous hearing, insulted and discredited the witness. The judge did not react this time either.

In November 2020, Milena Radulović called me to tell me that she and some other girls were going to report Mika Aleksić for sexual abuse.

I didn't have the strength for it then. Today I mustered the courage to speak as a victim of sexual violence. I couldn't possibly have done it alone. I didn't even tell my parents because I was concerned about their health" etc.

(Integral reports from the mentioned trials can be found on the WiB website)

DISCUSSION GROUPS, LECTURES, DEBATES IN THE PREMISES OF WOMEN IN BLACK – “WEDNESDAYS AT WIB”

The practice of regular discussion groups, lectures and joint reflections on important social and political issues in the country and the world continued in this reporting period, in which eleven (11) lectures, debates, book presentations, and film screenings were organized with the participation of 160 people.



May 3

May 3 - Workshop on nonviolence – discussion on dilemmas and controversies of nonviolence and antimilitarism

Moderator *Stasha Zajović*, offered fifteen definitions of nonviolence as a template for the conversation about nonviolence and antimilitarism, using different sources. The participants, divided into three groups, could individually choose three of the offered definitions. Then it was ascertained whether, in each of the groups, there were “overlaps” in the selection, and in the “plenary” the reasons for the individual selections were discussed.

The most matching - overlapping in the answers was in the definitions under numbers four and fifteen: *Nonviolence is active struggle and resistance that excludes the use of force and Nonviolence means changing oneself and changing society.*

However, there was also a debate regarding other definitions, especially those in which non-violence is not seen as opposed to the right to armed response to an attacker (*Non-violence is the use of force in necessary self-defense, but without causing injury and endangering the lives of others*). As the latest example of that, resistance to Russia's aggression in Ukraine was mentioned. The non-violent resistance of



the Albanians in Kosovo during the 90s, the non-violent resistance to the regime of **Slobodan Milošević** (citizens' demonstrations, opposition and student protests, etc.) was also mentioned. And as a form of resistance through culture and artistic forms, the *Sarajevo War Theater* was mentioned, as well as the performance of theater pieces in the underground railway in Ukraine. The question was posed - as a dilemma: is non-violence, as a rule, the weapon of the weak and poor, and violence the weapon of the rich and powerful? Is non-violence a "weak, utopian idea"? On the contrary, the workshop participants agreed that non-violence is a powerful weapon both for convincing the majority that the minority are right, and for self-transformation, etc. Fourteen (14) people participated in this workshop.

May 10

May 10 "How did we experience and how are we surviving the tragedy of mass murders - and what should be done?"

May 3, 2023 – in the elementary school "Vladislav Ribnikar" in Belgrade, a thirteen-year-old boy killed eight students and a school guard, and injured six children and a teacher; Another girl later succumbed to her injuries. **May 4, 2023** - a twenty-one-year-old man killed eight people and injured 14 in the vicinity of Mladenovac. The recent massacres have revealed the tragic consequences of the pervasive decades-long violence in Serbia:

The majority of those present believe that the recent massacres have revealed the tragic consequences of omnipresent decades-long violence, glorification of war and war criminals, and of course, accumulated traumas:

"I wasn't that surprised because similar crimes, including the crime of femicide, often happen in Croatia and not only in Serbia." However, I did not expect that it would happen in a school and that the perpetrator would be 13 years old' (Lino).

"I wasn't surprised because the violence here has been going on for 30 years. It was to be expected, but not that a child would commit it..." (Violeta)

"The school-the scene of the crime also bore some symbolism-it was in the "heart of darkness", in the area where Ratko Mladić was being celebrated on a mural" (Tamara).

The impression of the majority of participants in this conversation was that "the war has returned home", that the decades of militarization of society and failure to confront the participation of Serbia and the FRY in the wars of the 1990s, left great consequences that "take their toll" even on the generations that had only just been born during the war years, but also the youngest ones. Fourteen (14) people participated in this workshop, which was moderated by *Gordana Radosavljević*.

May 17

May 17 'How did we experience and how are we surviving the tragedy of mass murders - and what should be done?' In the continuation of the conversation, there was talk about whether state measures (handing over illegal weapons and increasing the number

of police officers in schools) contribute to reducing violence?

The majority of those present believe that the regime is introducing populist measures of additional militarization, especially by increasing the number of police officers in schools:

"In terms of the number of firearms per capita (civilians), Serbia is in fifth place in the world, none of the planned measures related to the control of weapons refer to the control of the black market of trade in arms and ammunition. Increasing the number of police officers in schools is only a way to intimidate children and parents..." (Staša)

"These measures are hypocritical and are a prelude to increasing state pressure on citizens. *These are merely cosmetic measures. The regime's rally on May 26 is a showdown with Belgrade*" (Dževida, Zinaida, Goran)

A discussion followed about possible alternatives: 'What to do?':

Demilitarization at the state and societal level:

"Instead of investing in weapons - investing in health and education - especially in education about non-violence.

Civilians should be prohibited from owning weapons, "disarmament" of consciousness, culture, education, so that there are no more war criminals in schools, as recently convicted war criminal Nebojša Pavković, who is in prison in Finland, spoke via Skype in a school in Kač/Vojvodina (Zinaida, Staša).

The 'Serbia Against Violence' protests (started on May 8, 2023): *'I find comfort in the protests. This is a nationwide protest. It has nothing to do with politicians, these protests are our big chance'* (Violeta); *"I met people who have been protesting since 1991." I don't trust the opposition, these protests are a "community of resistance, sadness and pain"* (Staša). Fourteen (14) people participated in the conversation moderated by Gordana Radosavljević.



May 25



May 25 "I believe" - a screening of the documentary film by Hava Huzbiyeva and then a conversation with the author of the film Huzbiyeva and Elena Vilenskaya, via a video link.

The documentary film *"I believe"* by Hava Huzbiyeva (85 minutes) is about the persecution of the **Ingush**, one of the Caucasian peoples. Persecution began with forced relocation in 1944, during the time of totalitarian rule in the USSR, and in the early 1990s, the Ingush people experienced attacks, murders and the erasure of their identity by the Ossetian ethnic community, who spread from their **North Ossetia** to the territories of Ingushetia. Today Huzbiyeva, as she told us, lives in *Saint Petersburg* - because she cannot live and work where she comes from due to the de facto ban on her struggle for the liberation of the Ingush and the prosecution of the crimes committed against them.

The film *"I believe"* is full of documentary material from the decades of repression against the Ingush, in which we recognize some of the most important figures of Soviet and Russian history, some of whom were persecutors (above all Stalin), but there are also those who tried to solve the problems of the Ingush (like Khrushchev, Gorbachev, Gaidar, Yeltsin...), but, apparently, without enough will or determination.

In the film *I believe*, a special place is given to the advocacy for the rights of the Ingush, which was strongly advocated by the scientist and dissident **Andrei Sakharov**, who was imprisoned under Soviet rule and received the Nobel Peace Prize for his resistance in 1975. Activist Elena Vilenskaya from Saint Petersburg also spoke about solidarity with the people of Ingushetia.

When asked if Ingushetia tried to bring up the topic of crimes against her people before the UN, Huzbiyeva answered that it did, that the first president of Ingushetia tried to do so, but that the UN commission found that not enough evidence had been submitted. The screening of the film was attended by **9** people.

June 7

June 7 „reKAPITULACIJA /reCapitulation“ – screening of the film directed by **Filip Markovinović**, Serbia, 2023. (45 min).

ReKAPITULACIJA – documentary film about the artistic-activist collective *Led Art* from Novi Sad - a testimony of artistic anti-war resistance, artistic activism and the utopian idea that art can heal a sick society. After the end of the film, a conversation was held with the author of the film, Filip Markovinović, with the participation of WiB activists, artists and journalists.

During the 1990s, this engaged artistic group, through various artistic forms, pointed to the pernicious state policy of Serbia - the policy of war and nationalism. Led art continued its activity through the 'Art Clinic', 'Shock Cooperative', etc. WiB has been continuously cooperating with this artistic collective for decades in designing the aesthetics of anti-war resistance, etc. Seventeen (**17**) people attended the event.

June 21

June 21 "Foča – a black box of evil" (2h30 min.) - screening of a documentary film directed by **Avdo Huseinović**, which talks about the continuity of the persecution of the Bosniak population in the area of Foča in eastern Bosnia, starting from the Second World War,

when the Chetniks (Serbian Nazi collaborators) killed **5,956** of its Bosniak inhabitants, and **160** families were “destroyed”.

In 1991, **Foča** had about 40,000 inhabitants, of whom 52% were Bosnian Muslims, 45% Serbs and 3% Montenegrins. As of the beginning of 1992, residents of Foča of Serbian nationality were armed by the nationalist party, in cooperation with the JNA, paramilitary formations, etc. Huge crimes were committed during the ethnic cleansing, destruction of the city, torture in concentration camps, killing of the Bosniak population; more than 20,000 Bosniaks were expelled from Foča, over 3,000 persons of Bosniak nationality were killed in Foča, of which every third victim was a woman. Foča is at the very top of the list in terms of the number of women raped during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Before the war, Bosniaks made up more than half of the inhabitants of the municipality of Foča, and according to the evidence of the Prosecutor of the Hague Tribunal/ICTY, at the end of the conflict in the city of Foča, only ten-odd Bosniaks remained.

The film mentions the “great success” of the Hague Tribunal due to the conviction of the “Fočan Troika” for the war crime of rape as a crime against humanity, the first of its kind in the history of international justice. Ten (**10**) people attended the screening of the film and the discussion that followed.

June 28

June 28 “Lolin rat: silovanje bez kazne”/Lola’s War: Rape Without Punishment (promotion and discussion of the book by author **Olivera Simić**, professor of International Law in Brisbane/Australia. Olivera has been dealing with sexual violence against women for twenty years, her doctoral thesis (2014) deals with sexual violence against women during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and also with the Srebrenica genocide. “I am originally a Serbian woman from Banja Luka. During the war, I was a refugee in Serbia, and my brother was mobilized as a member of the RS Army. I received an offer from the **NGO Gender Center from Banja Luka** to do a study on Serbian women who were raped by Croats and Bosniaks during the war. That’s how I met Milica. When I made a book about Milica and her struggle, my Australian publisher demanded that it not mention the real name of the victim. That’s why Milica is called Lola in the book,” said Olivera.

Olivera Simić pointed out that in the entity of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Republic of Srpska) women are not recognized as civilian victims of war, and ‘the problem is also that, said Simić, that women who are Serbs - even though they are victims - are part of the public opinion in Bosnia and Herzegovina (mostly Bosniak-Croatian), and seen as an “extension of Serb bullies” because they are their mothers, sisters, wives...’ The promotion, which was moderated by Miloš Urošević, was attended by 19 people. I received an offer from the NGO Gender Center from Banja Luka to do a study on Serbian women who were raped by Croats and Bosniaks during the war. That’s how I met Milica. When I made a book about Milica and her struggle, my Australian publisher asked that the victim’s real name not be mentioned. That’s why *Milica is called Lola in the book*,” said Olivera.

Lola survived gang rape during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992. At the time, she was in the camp with her young children. Only one of Lola's several perpetrators (a member of the Croatian Defense Council/HVO) was convicted before the Bosnian judiciary, but he never went to prison.

Olivera Simić pointed out that in the entity of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Republic of Srpska) women are not recognized as civilian victims of war, and 'the problem is also that, said Simić, that women who are Serbs - even though they are victims - are seen by part of the public opinion in Bosnia and Herzegovina (mostly Bosniak-Croatian) as an "extension of Serb bullies" because they are their mothers, sisters, wives...' The promotion, which was moderated by *Miloš Urošević*, was attended by **19** people.

July 5

July 5 "Homage to Dževad Karahasan (1953-2023)" - *Karahasan is best known for his novels and plays: "Eastern Divan" (novel, 1989), "Shahriyar's Ring" (novel, 1994); "Sarah and Serafina" (novel, 1999), "Introduction to Floating" (novel, 2022), ("The King Still Doesn't Like Acting" (drama, 1986) and "Missionaries" (drama, 1989). He also wrote essays and theatrical texts. He won, among other awards, the "Goethe Medal" in 2012 and the Goethe Prize in 2020. His work has been translated into 15 languages, including Chinese and Japanese.*

Azra Šeta Hadžić, who attended Dževad Karahasan's lectures in Sarajevo at the Comparative Literature group, in addition to providing basic biographical and bibliographic data, also shared her personal memories and thoughts about this Bosnian intellectual, writer, pedagogue, academic... An interview with Karahasan (2022) was also shown. Fifteen (15) people attended this event.

July 12

July 12 "View from the outside and view from the inside", conversation with sociological psychologist Brana Pešić-Gontje. She has been living in Switzerland for several decades (where she also received her master's degree in psychology), she spoke with the activists/women of the Women in Black, about the cooperation with which, as she said, she would continue to deal with topics that were important to sociologists, anthropologists and activists **Dr. Zagorka (Pešić) Golubović** (1930-2019) associate of WiB. The immediate reason for this initiative of hers, said Pešić, is that she monitored the public testimony of victims of war rape during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina at the **Women's Court - the case of Foča**, which was organized by WiB in Belgrade (June 26, 2023). She was interested in the way WiB works with victims of crime, which **12** activists spoke about.

July 19

July 19 "This could have been our living room" – promotion of a collection of poetry by Boban Stojanović (published by Rende, 2023), a poet, anti-war and LGBT activist living in Canada.

Stojanović addressed the participants of the promotion with a recorded video. In the video, he talked about the origin of his poetry - a sudden feeling of anxiety in the moment due to a family tragedy,



then he talked about psychotherapy (EMDR) that helped him alleviate the trauma.



Boban was also a WiB activist, which he points out as an important period of his life and of influence on what will follow in it: "Women have marked my life in different ways, including WiB. I couldn't have done anything if it hadn't been for women, the female wisdom of my grandmothers. I wanted to pay tribute to all that knowledge, to "make it eternal"..."

The book was also discussed by *Slađana Novaković*, the editor whose publishing house published it, in the *Kontrabunt* edition of gay and lesbian literature. Other participants in this conversation also talked about Boban, read selected poems from the collection. Thirteen (13) people participated in the promotion.

July 26 – Friendly meeting - gathering of WiB activists, attended by twenty (20) people.

(Integral reports of 'Wednesdays at WiB' can be found on the WiB website)

CAMPAIGNS, APPEALS

In addition to the above-mentioned initiatives in this reporting period, we have also launched or actively participated in numerous campaigns, primarily related to demands for dealing with the past - responsibility for war crimes, violence against women, against repression of political dissidents; over refugees. We transmit some of our statements:

Everything for peace, health and knowledge - nothing for weapons! - in a statement (June 6) on the occasion of the *International Action Network on Small Arms/IANS*, WiB emphasize d: "The recent massacres revealed the tragic consequences of the ubiquitous several decades long violence of in Serbia:

May 3, 2023 – in the elementary school "Vladislav Ribnikar" in

May 3, 2023

Belgrade, a thirteen-year-old boy killed eight students and a school guard, and injured six children and a teacher; Another girl later succumbed to her injuries.

May 4, 2023

May 4, 2023 – a twenty-one-year-old man killed eight people and injured 14 in the vicinity of Mladenovac.

The regime led by A. Vučić relativizes responsibility for this and numerous other tragedies - instead of increasing the level of human security (economic, health, personal, political), it adopts repressive measures that deepen insecurity; instead of demilitarization (reducing the number of members of the armed forces), the regime brings populist measures of additional militarization (by increasing the number of police officers in schools, etc.). More weapons do not mean more security - the more military spending and military spending, the less security...

And on this occasion, we warn that:

We live in a country where war continues by different means - **we live in a society where violence is promoted from the very top of the state:** by collapsing all institutions, not confronting war crimes committed in the name of Serbia during the wars of the 1990s, stockpiling weapons from wars, promoting war criminals as heroes, and criminals into idols, due to the combination of the state and organized crime; demonization and persecution of political dissidents.

Serbia is the first in the region in the number of registered weapons per capita - in the number of firearms per capita (civilian) According to the World population review, Serbia ranks fifth in the world, with an index of **39.1** per **100** people. Serbia is the only European country in the top five rankings in the world.

Femicide in Serbia is reaching utterly dramatic dimensions - at least **18** murders have been committed in Serbia since the beginning of 2023, because there are no official data on this; a third of murders of women is committed with firearms by partners or male family members. Femicide in Serbia is reaching tragic proportions, and the state reaction is blatantly inadequate!"

Stop rape in war! – on the occasion of June 19, civil society organizations from the countries of the former Yugoslavia issued the following appeal:

The devastating impact of sexual violence during the conflicts of the 1990s in our region must not be underestimated. The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia recognized sexual violence as a weapon of war. Women, girls, men and boys became victims of these horrific crimes, which left lasting scars on individuals and society as a whole.

It is estimated that tens of thousands of women suffered sexual violence during this period, but the true numbers are much higher. Unfortunately, the exact number will never be known as some victims have been killed and some have passed away over the past decades. Many survivors are still affected by trauma and social stigma. We are here today, as civil society organizations that have been dealing with this issue for the past 30 years, to acknowledge their strength and advocate for their rights.

As an organization dedicated to the fight against discrimination and violence against women, and with rich experience in combating sexual and gender-based violence, we call for concrete action.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the recognition of victim status (victims of war torture or civilian victims of war) is regulated in three different ways - in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBH) and Republika Srpska (RS), and in the Brčko District of BH - by laws primarily aimed at social protection of victims as one of the vulnerable groups in society. The prosecution of war crimes in BH, including sexual violence committed during the war, takes place before 17 different courts and prosecutor's offices, in accordance with different criminal procedure legislation. The perpetrators of war sexual violence are not adequately prosecuted, with many still at large, and in some parts of BH, convicted war criminals are glorified while the crimes are denied. Although BH has established certain mechanisms for reparations for survivors of war-related sexual violence in recent years in an attempt to address the needs of victims through the adoption of legislative solutions, it still does not provide adequate and comprehensive support to survivors of conflict-related sexual violence in line with international standards. Survivors have long-standing support from non-governmental organizations and feel that they have not received and continue to lack sufficient recognition and support from state representatives.

Twenty-four years after the end of the war, **Kosovo** still struggles to achieve truth and justice regarding the legacy of sexualized war crimes. In our work with survivors of sexualized violence during the war, we have encountered issues that we would like to address to the Parliament and Government of Kosovo. Our aim is to initiate a discussion on amending and supplementing Law no. 04/L-172 and supplementing Law no. 04/L-054, which pertain to the status and rights of martyrs, invalids, veterans, members of the Kosovo Liberation Army, sexual violence victims of the war, civilian victims, and their families.

After the amendment of Law no. 04/L-054, survivors of sexualized violence during the war were recognized as civilian victims, allowing them to apply for recognition of their status as war-related sexualized violence survivors in Kosovo. However, the time limit for applying for this recognition is set at 5 years, which has already expired. Considering

the nature and impact of sexualized violence crimes, the specific trauma experienced by survivors, and the stigma and exclusion they face within their families and communities, we propose that the time limit for recognition applications be removed. War crimes are considered crimes against humanity, and therefore, survivors should not be restricted by time limits to apply for recognition of their status. The current law fails to grant survivors of sexualized war violence in Kosovo the same rights and benefits as other war categories. One essential right and benefit not enjoyed by survivors of sexualized violence during the war is the free provision of healthcare services. We urge the members of the Parliament and the Government of Kosovo to actively amend this law, allowing survivors of sexualized violence to apply for recognition of their status and providing them with free healthcare services.

Serbia is the only country in the region that still has not conducted extensive research on the prevalence of women who have survived wartime sexual violence, their demographics and needs. At the same time, it is the only country in the region that still does not recognize survivors of sexual violence in wartime as civilian victims of war. Therefore, we urge the state to amend the current *Law on the Rights of Veterans, Military Invalids, Civilian Invalids of War and their Families* in order to explicitly recognize wartime sexual violence survivors as civil victims of war, regardless of their nationality. We also urge the state of Serbia to end impunity for this and all other war crimes and to provide all victims and survivors throughout the region with apologies for crimes committed in its name.

In our pursuit to combat sexual violence in conflict, we recognize the profound significance of regional solidarity. By uniting as organizations from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Serbia, we send a powerful message that we can amplify the voices of the survivors and advocate for meaningful change across our region.

Through our collective efforts, we can create a formidable force for justice, support, and empowerment, ensuring that no survivor of sexual violence is left behind. Regional solidarity is crucial in building a future where the scourge of sexual violence is eradicated and where all individuals can live free from fear, trauma, and discrimination.

Based on the concept of Dealing with the Past Global program *Amplifying Voices* contributes to a culture of recognition and reconciliation in Southeast Europe, by integrating the perspective and needs of women affected by war-related SGBV into national and regional Dealing with the Past initiatives. Program activities focus on the realization of the right of survivors to know the truth, their right to reparation, and their right to justice, aiming to create changes on individual, societal, institutional, and political levels and enable women affected by war-related SGBV to live in dignity and without violence.

Organizations - signatories of the appeal:

- Vive Žene, Tuzla, BH
- Medica Zenica, Zenica, BH
- Medica Gjakova, Gjakova, Kosovo
- Kosovo Rehabilitation Center for Torture Victims, Prishtina, Kosovo
- Autonomous Women's Center, Belgrade, Serbia
- Women in Black, Belgrade, Serbia
- Youth Initiative for Human Rights, Belgrade, Serbia

We will never forget the Srebrenica genocide! – WIB

announcement (July 9) on the occasion of the 28th anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide:

The genocide in Srebrenica is the biggest war crime since World War II in Europe. The regime of S. Milošević is complicit in the genocide by providing enormous political, military and logistical-financial aid to the Army of Republika Srpska. And on this occasion, we remind you that:

- The state of Serbia is the first and so far, the only country in the world that was declared responsible for the violation of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide by the ruling of the International Court of Justice (2007).
- The Hague Tribunal proved, beyond any doubt, the individual criminal responsibility of a large number of members of Serbian armed formations and political institutions that acted in the spirit of realizing the territorial project of Greater Serbia, and the genocide in Srebrenica was part of that project.
- **In Serbia, not only is the continuity of denial at work, but also the state policy of denial of genocide:** the state of Serbia continues to protect war criminals because it is known who is in power: the instigators and followers of the criminal regime led by President A. Vučić. To the shame of this state and society, they are proud of the crimes committed in our name and that is why there is no justice for the victims, the prosecution of war crimes has practically stopped, and the absence of sympathy for the victims of genocide prevails in the public space.
- **The ruling of the Hague Tribunal (May 31, 2023) against the former heads of the State Security Service of Serbia, Jovica Stanišić and Franko Simatović, confirmed the direct participation of the Serbian regime in war crimes in Bosnia and Herzegovina.** By shamefully keeping silent on that verdict, the current regime once again shows a complete lack of responsibility and further insults the victims.

- **Murals celebrating the war criminal Ratko Mladić, convicted of the genocide in Srebrenica, are still found throughout Serbia.** With that, the regime has completely exposed itself - until now it has never condemned war criminals, and now it openly supports and protects them.

On this occasion, we reiterate our requests:

- **That the Srebrenica genocide be recognized,** primarily as respect for the dignity of the victims, and not only as one of the preconditions on Serbia's accession to the European Union.
- **That the President and all other state representatives stop denying the genocide and all other war crimes in Bosnia and Herzegovina and beyond.**
- **That the denial of genocide and all crimes against humanity and war crimes be qualified as a criminal offense.**
- **That July 11 be declared Commemoration Day of the Genocide in Srebrenica.**
- **That the murals that celebrate the war criminal R. Mladić be removed.**
- **That the state of Serbia should abandon the policy of instigating regional instability** by interfering in the internal affairs of neighboring countries, primarily Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Solidarity with the Milivojević family from Lučani - As a sign of solidarity and sympathy with the Milivojević family from Lučan, WiB reminded of the fact that: " On July 14, 2017, workers Milomir Milojević and Miloško Ignjatović died from a gunpowder explosion in the factory 'Milan Blagojević-Namenska' from Lučani. Before the Basic Court in Ivanjica, criminal proceedings were conducted (from October 3, 2019) against the general CEO of the factory "Milan Blagojević-Namenska" from Lučan - Radoš Milovanović and two managers from the same factory (Vladimir Lončarević and Toma Stojić). They were accused of "committing a serious crime against general security" because on July 14, 2017, workers Milomir Milojević and Miloško Ignjatović died after a gunpowder explosion. The first defendant, *Radoš Milovanović*, died on April 21, 2022, which is why the proceedings against him were suspended.

On April 11

On April 11, 2023, the Basic Court in Ivanjica sentenced Vladimir Lončarević and Romi Stojić, managers of the 'MB Namenska' factory in Lučani, to three years in prison each as responsible for the death of workers Milomir Milivojević and Miloško Ignjatović. The Milivojević family, as well as their lawyers, believe that the verdict is "too lenient, miserable and minor". With the pronouncement of the verdict, the first-instance proceedings before the court in Ivanjica ended, and the Higher Court will decide on the further proceedings. The entire course of the trial was diverted, by order of

the regime, by obstructions by the Court and the Prosecutor's Office, and the Milivojević family was exposed to constant humiliation and harassment, even criminalization, just for bravely fighting for justice and the punishment of those responsible for the accidents! Women in Black monitored the trial from the very beginning.

With expressions of the deepest sympathy, we join the pain of the Milivojević family and together with the family members we will pay respect to their murdered son Milomir at the memorial on July 14 at the cemetery in Lučani," *the announcement of July 13 states.*

Stop the terror of Russian intelligence agencies! - as a sign of solidarity with **Peter Nikitin**, a Russian anti-war activist, WiB and the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights issued a public appeal:

"Members of the Security Intelligence Agency (BIA) deprived the Russian and Dutch citizen with a permanent residence in Belgrade, Petar Nikitin, of his freedom at the Belgrade airport, during an attempt to return to Serbia, accusing him of supporting civil protests against violence. He faces deportation. We strongly condemn this gross violation of human rights of a long-term resident of Belgrade, demanding that the competent authorities immediately allow him to enter the country, where his immediate family also live. This action of the members of the BIA is another proof that within this agency, in charge of the protection of the security of Serbia and its citizens, the agents of the Russian Federation, a country that not only excluded itself from the community of democratic countries with its aggression against Ukraine, are not only operating, but also systematically and persistently undermining the security of Serbia and its women and men, pushing our country into an impasse and abyss," states the announcement on July 13, 2023. (It should be noted that thanks to public pressure, P. Nikitin was allowed to enter the country after spending 48 hours at the airport).

Report prepared by: Staša Zajović with the support of: Azra Šeta Hadžić, Ljiljana Spasić, Miloš Urošević, Nastasja Radović, Nataša Milanović, Sanja Pavlović and Zinaida Marjanović.

Women in Black, September 2023