



*žene u crnom  
beograd*



# Report

**January, February,  
March and April  
2025**

As before, we bring you a brief report on the activities of Women in Black in the mentioned period, and if you are interested in more information, you can find them on our website [www.zeneucrnom.org](http://www.zeneucrnom.org) or contact us by e-mail at: [office@zeneucrnom.org](mailto:office@zeneucrnom.org)

**January,  
February, March  
and April 2025**

## **Report**

As before, we bring a short report on the activities of Women in Black in the specified period, and if you are interested in more detailed information, you can find it on our website [www.zeneucrnornom.org](http://www.zeneucrnornom.org) or contact us by mail: [office@zeneucrnornom.org](mailto:office@zeneucrnornom.org)

We thank you in advance for your understanding.

**Street actions:** In this reporting period, we actively participated in student and civic protests in Belgrade

### **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:**

**February 11, Potočari/Srebrenica** – Visit to the Memorial Center of WiB activists and art collectives Škart and Kiosk from Belgrade. We laid flowers at the monument to the victims of the genocide, then we met with the Mothers of Srebrenica, who hold a prayer/worship ceremony every 11<sup>th</sup> of the month at the cemetery of the Memorial Center.

**Prijepolje, February 27 – Remembrance of the victims of the crime in Štrpci** - in front of the memorial plaque in Prijepolje, the 32<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the crime in Štrpci was marked. Activists of the WiB Network from Prijepolje and Priboj, together with the victims' families, paid tribute to the victims of the crime in Štrpci.

### **COPING WITH THE PAST/TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE – A FEMINIST APPROACH**

Ovo This is one of the most important activities of Women in Black. It consists of many 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).

#### **Women's court - a feminist approach to justice**

We present a brief report on the activities of Women in Black in connection with the organization of the Women's Court – a feminist approach to justice in this period. If you are interested in more detailed information, you can find it on our website [www.zeneucrnornom.org](http://www.zeneucrnornom.org) and [www.zenskisud.org](http://www.zenskisud.org) or contact us by mail: [zeneucrnornombeograd@gmail.com](mailto:zeneucrnornombeograd@gmail.com)





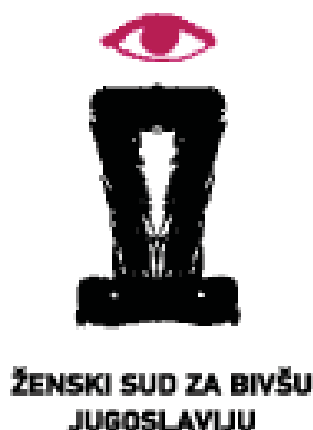
**The first Women's Court on the territory of Europe was held in Sarajevo, from May 7 to 10, 2015,** organized by 10 women's groups from the territory of the former Yugoslavia (Movement of the Mothers of the Srebrenica and Žepa enclaves, Cure Foundation, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Center for Women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

In the continuation of the process of the Women's Court, Women in Black, Belgrade coordinate program and other activities, with the support of organizations: Anima, Kotor (Montenegro), Center for Women Victims of War, Zagreb (Croatia), "CURE" Foundation, Sarajevo).

**Women's court – Foča case – On June 26, 2023,** Women in Black and the Autonomous Women's Center from Belgrade, with the support of feminist groups from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Croatia, organized the Women's Court – Foča case in Belgrade.

The Women's Court – the case of Foča was devoted to sexual crimes because during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992-1995), Foča was a place of systematic sexual violence and rape during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The International Criminal Court for the former Yugoslavia established for the first time in the Foča case that sexual slavery is considered a crime against humanity. Nevertheless, despite this historically significant verdict, some of the sexual crimes against the women and men of Foča, unfortunately, were not disclosed or acknowledged, but were silenced and forgotten... The Women's Court – the case of Foča is a continuation of the fight, together with the women and men of Foča, for justice for the victims of sexual crimes in Foča and beyond. At the *Women's Court - Foča case*, the following testified: *Ilvana Konjo, Zenija Hajdarević, Halida Konjo Uzunović and Kemalemir Frašto*, while W'sC associates interpreted the political context based on the testimony.





In this reporting period, the following activities were organized:

**Women's court – case of Foča – public presentation, Ljubljana, January 24, 2025** – organized by **PLAC** (Participative Ljubljana Autonomous Zone) and Women in Black, Belgrade was held in PLAC premises in the presence of **35** people. *Nela Pamuković*, Center for Women Victims of War, Zagreb and *Staša Zajović*, Women in Black, Belgrade, spoke about the Women's Court, the feminist approach to justice, history, the process of organizing the Women's Courts (Sarajevo, 2015), as well as the Women's Court – Foča.

Then a documentary film was shown: **Women's Court – a feminist approach to justice: the case of Foča** - screening of a documentary film (42 min.) directed by *Marija Arandžević*, produced by Women in Black. The film is about the Women's Court-Case of Foča, held in Belgrade (June 26, 2023)

After the screening of the film, *Kemalimir Frašto* addressed the audience via Zoom, who, among other things, said:

'The testimony did a lot of good and meant a lot to me. I thought I would never speak, that I would take it to the grave with me. I hesitated whether to testify or not. I'm glad I didn't retire. This had to be done. We are building history together. It is up to us whether we will talk about it or not, it is up to humanity whether they will understand the message or not from our testimonies. And the message is unique: we absolutely do not want what happened to us to ever happen to anyone again. We testified for that. Witnessing helped me a lot to put all that in order inside me.

The testimony is for my brother to be present with me, in my soul, to be present in the universe. He was with me. He lives in my heart.

I would like to send a message to the audience, to ask every individual who has seen the film to pass it on to at least one person. The more it is transmitted, the less chance there will be of it happening again. If we pass on these heinous events from generation to generation, I think that we will prevent it from happening again'.

We convey some of the impressions from the exchanges with the audience:

'I was interested in the attention with which you watched the film, your attention and interest. The message about violence against women in peacetime conditions in Serbia is also important. I am happy to be here with you and thank you for establishing these connections' (*Slobodan Sadžakov, Novi Sad*).

'I am very glad that you came. I am grateful to you. Ljubljana is the right address. You are the greatest treasure that the former Yugoslavia has' (*Biljana Žikić, Ljubljana*).

*This part of the conversation was moderated by Marijana Senjak, a feminist therapist at the Women's Court.*

**Feminist ethics of care and responsibility** – visits of WiB activists to female witnesses (W'sC Sarajevo), peace meetings - support for victims:

- **April 26, Bečej** – solidarity visit to *Julia Teleki*, anti-war activist, participant in the process of organizing the W'sC
- **April 27** – Vršac/Vojvodina - visit to *Rosa Jakovljević*, witness at the W'sC, mother of the murdered soldier (October 5, 2004); **4** WiB activists were visiting.

## **PUNISHABILITY OF CRIMES – THE PATH TO A JUST PEACE: MONITORING THE TRIAL IN THE SPECIAL COURT**

In this reporting period, the following trials were held:

### **Trial of Milorad Kotur**

The indicted Milorad Kotur is a member of the reserve police force at the Bosanska Krupa Public Security Station. The indictment accuses M. Kotur of committing the following crimes from July 1992 to September 1992 in the Bosanska Krupa municipality:

**1.** In the second half of July 1992, **44** camp inmates, civilians of Bosniak and Croat nationality who were traveling in a TAM 130 minibus, were taken out of the Omarska camp (Prijedor municipality) for the purpose of an alleged exchange that was supposed to take place in the Bosanska Krupa municipality after which they were tied with wire, and then, holding automatic rifles in their hands, they took them together to the "Lisac" pit, which was located nearby, and shot dead **44** Bosniak and Croat civilians, so that in 2000, during the exhumation in Donji Dubovik, Bosanska Krupa municipality, in the "Lisac" pit, the bodies of the aforementioned civilians were identified.

**2.** At the beginning of August 1992, in the town of Donji Dubovik, Bosanska Krupa municipality, they intercepted **7** civilians of Bosniak nationality, who were moving from Prijedor towards Bihać, namely: BM, BN, BNj, BO, BP, BR and BS, and immediately afterwards shot them dead with firearms. In the course of exhumations in a pit in the town of Donji Dubovik, Bosanska Krupa municipality in 2000 "Lisac", the bodies of the mentioned civilians were found and identified.

In this reporting period, one (**1**) hearing was held:

**March 6** – at this hearing, the witness Ibrahim Hrustić was heard via a video conference connection with the court in Prijedor. This witness said: "I have never heard of this man (the accused). I do not know this man and I have not been in contact with him."

## **The trial of Milenko Živanović**

The Prosecutor's Office for War Crimes of Serbia filed an indictment against the former general and commander of the Drina Corps of the Army of Republika Srpska Milenko Živanović for war crimes against the civilian population in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1992 to 1995.

Živanović is accused of having ordered and participated in the forced relocation of Bosniak civilians from Srebrenica and Žepa in eastern BH. In March 1995, he issued an order to "create conditions of total insecurity, intolerability and hopelessness for the further survival and life of the villagers in Srebrenica and Žepa through daily, planned and designed combat activities."

On July 12, 1995, he ordered the provision of 50 buses for the "evacuation of the civilian population from the Srebrenica enclave". On July 13, 1995, he issued an ultimatum to the Bosniaks that they had to leave, etc.

In this period, one **(1)** hearing was held:

**March 12** - at this hearing, the written evidence was examined.

**Trial for war crimes in Kravica** - Before the War Crimes Chamber/Special Court in Belgrade, eight members of the Special Brigade of the Army of Republika Srpska were accused of war crimes (the murder of **1,313** Bosniaks, as part of the Srebrenica genocide, on July 13, 1995).

*Let us remind:* The indictment for the crime in Kravica was filed in early 2016. That was the beginning of the most significant trial before the High Court in Belgrade/Special Court, because it is about the Srebrenica genocide. However, on July 14, 2017, the Court of Appeals made a decision to cancel the indictment for this crime, which is otherwise not qualified as genocide, because it was filed at a time when the War Crimes Prosecutor's Office did not have a Chief Prosecutor. The trial continued in November 2017, and the hearings are constantly postponed due to the non-appearance of witnesses, inactivity of the prosecution, etc.

In this reporting period, one **(1)** hearing was held:

**April 11** - Court expert, Dr. Vedo Tuco, did not attend this hearing, so instead the written evidence from the case file was examined.

## **NETWORKS, COALITIONS –**

### **MUTUAL SUPPORT AND SOLIDARITY**

Women in Black are initiators or active participants of numerous regional networks, coalitions and alliances, active participants in the activities of related organizations to strengthen mutual support, solidarity, civil society and democracy in Serbia and throughout the region.

In this period, the following activities were carried out, of which we highlight the following:

**The meeting of the Women in Black Network was held on April 4, 5 and 6, 2025 in Radmilovac near Belgrade.** The meeting was attended by **68** people from: *Bosnia and Herzegovina* (Tuzla, Sarajevo, Zvornik); *Montenegro* (Kotor, Pljevlja); *Croatia* (Zagreb); *Kosovo* (Gjakova/Djakovica); *Israel* (Haifa); *Palestine* (Bethlehem); *Poland* (Krakow); *Slovenia* (Ljubljana); *Serbia* (Priboj na Limu, Belgrade, Sarajevo, Kruševac, Zrenjanin, Novi Sad, Sombor, Leskovac, Bajina Bašta, Novi Pazar, Kraljevo, Pančevo, Vlasotince).

#### **Friday, April 4**

**Report on activities in 2024** – distributed to the participants, and then sent by email - the report was submitted by *Staša Zajović*, and then photos from the street actions were shown (*Miloš Urošević*).

#### **Part I: Transitional justice – a feminist approach**

*The continuum of sexual violence – both in war and in peace...*

**“I am not guilty for what happened to me”** – a study on the long-term consequences of war rape in Kosovo – reported by **Mirlinda Sada** and **Dorina Babuni** (via zoom) Medica Gjakova/Medica Đakovica/Kosovo

Moderated by *Sanja Pavlović*,  
*Autonomous Women’s Center, Belgrade.*

Medica Gjakova/Đakovica provides psychosocial support to women who survived wartime sexual violence. He also does advocacy activities aimed at integrating survivors into society.

Below is a summary of the research:

**About the research:** this is the first research in Kosovo, but also outside of Kosovo, which deals with the topic of long-term consequences of wartime sexual violence. It is estimated that during the war in Kosovo (1998-1999) around **20,000** women and men were raped. Rape during the war was not just that, it was strategic. The survivors then remained rejected in society, faced with stigma and silence.

With this research, we wanted to find out, and that’s what we asked them, how war rape affected their lives and their health, what survival mechanisms were the ones that helped them, how the ways in which their family, their community, their society treated them may have changed over time, how they experience social recognition and reparation, and what role maybe the medica Gjakova/Đakovica played in their lives in order to recover, emphasized *Merlinda* and *Dorina*.

*The study is unique* because it is based on feminist principles: principles of equality, equal rights and empowering, encouraging, strengthening women’s voices. Throughout the research process, the

safety of the survivors, as well as their autonomy, were priorities. This research was understood as a kind of call to action.



***The research included 200 questionnaires and 20 interviews:***

women of different ethnic backgrounds were interviewed. There were Albanian women, Roma women, Ashkelians, Egyptian women, Serbian women. Here are some findings:

- **(86%)** experienced some other additional traumatic experiences in addition to rape,
- physical health is still at risk, because most of them described their health as bad or only partially good,
- **91** persons out of these respondents were witnesses of wartime rapes,
- Around **70%** of survivors still face various types of psychosomatic problems.
- **96%** experience a high level of anxiety,
- **95%** meet the criteria of what is called clinical depression,
- Out of **200** respondents we talked to, **124** said that their partners know about that experience and see them as a support,
- **96%** believe that what happened to them had an impact on their family life, especially if there were children,
- **72%** said that they were recognized in a certain way within society,
- **85%** of those who do not talk about their experiences said that it would bring shame to their family, that they would be viewed negatively in the neighborhood or that they would be abandoned by their families (75%),
- For **85%** of them, Medica Đakovica is a place where they can freely talk about what happened to them,

- **80%** of them use Medica services constantly. Each woman used more Medica services (4%).

*Recommendations from the research:*

- continuous support in the form of psychosocial assistance, but also assistance in the form of raising awareness, both of the immediate environment in which the survivors live, and in terms of advocating for a change in the law;
- institutional support for organizations that support, especially in terms of long-term financing. Trauma is long-term, so funding cannot be short-term;
- reparations should be in accordance with the needs of the survivors;
- work at the daily level in order to reverse patriarchal norms;
- provide additional resources to strengthen these services.

**“Kosovo men break their silence”** documentary film about rape in the war (4.48 min.) produced by the BBC in Serbian



## **Part II: Solidarity without borders: on psychosocial support and legal assistance to migrant women- victims of sexual violence in Croatia**

– reported by **Marijana Senjak**, Women’s Room and feminist therapist of the Women’s Court and **Nela Pamuković**, Center for Women Victims of War, Zagreb



*Nela:* The Center for Women Victims of War has been working for the last two years with women from African countries and foreign workers from the Far East. The countries from which both victims of sexual violence and foreign workers come are: Congo, Cameroon, Ghana, Burundi, Ivory Coast, Malawi, Sierra Leone, Nepal and the Philippines. We had **16** such cases in the last two years. We represent seven of them in court.

Then *Nela* presented some concrete experiences of women.

*Marijana* referred to three possible statuses of women:

- 1.) *asylum due to political persecution*,
- 2.) *subsidiary protection* is the status of a refugee, but they are not called refugees but migrants and they are all classified as economic migrants, who came to 'take' our apartments, our jobs, etc.
- 3.) *The Law on International Protection* in Croatia fully equates the rights of international protection seekers, refugees, with Croatian citizens. However, there are major problems in the implementation of that law. The biggest problem is employment. They were allowed, after nine months in Croatia, to look for work, but all the work they ever tried was illegal work.

She also presented concrete experiences of women victims of various types of violence from the following countries: *Iran* (so-called family honor); *Iraq* (attempted honor killing); *Syria* (forced marriage); *Sierra Leone* (so-called rape due to lesbianism); (rape by members of the 'morality police' in Iran) etc.

**If we can, what are we waiting for? Why the party We can! did not introduce a comprehensive sex education in Zagreb schools? –**

reported by *Sanja Cesar*, *CESI* (Center for education, consulting and research), Zagreb



*Sanja emphasized that CESI has been dealing with the issue of sexual education at the beginning of 2000 at the national level.*

*As for the context*, Sanja warned that 'the program of introducing sex education in 2006 in Croatia caused the first wave of anti-gender movement and resistance to the introduction of sex education in schools. That movement grew in the meantime. It is now a powerful combination, well-financed, supported by the right. It is connected, of course, with the great moral authority of the Catholic Church'.

*She also mentioned concrete forms of violence by clerical associations:* against abortion; currently, in front of all hospitals in Croatia, 40 days before Easter, you can again come across posters, people begging, harassing patients and doctors. Right before the elections, next month (May 2025) the March for Life starts, in different cities there are marches against abortion. We have religious education in the church and religious education in school. Through gender stereotypes, all information related to gender violence was removed from the curriculum in the meantime'.

*Unfortunately, expectations fell short when the left-wing party Možemo! (We can!) came to power. in Zagreb:* 'We thought that there was another option in the city of Zagreb, that we could start locally. The curriculum cannot be changed, but a program can be introduced as an extracurricular activity. The question of sexual education is always placed in some ideological context, where both the left and the right

always struggle over it. We were told that there is a political will, but that it is not a political moment, that we need to be patient, but that it will happen... We launched the current campaign because we believed that after the local elections we have a progressive option in power, from whom we expected political courage and the will to implement those things, for which they as a party, *We Can!* they pledge’

Sanja emphasized that CESI will continue with the campaign for the introduction of comprehensive sex education in schools because **‘in Croatia, about 80% of citizens support the introduction of sex education in schools’**



### **9:00 p.m.: Promotion of the book ‘Tega se ne da krishti’**

(That cannot be erased) **by Andraž Rožman**, writer and activist; the book testifies to the ethnic cleansing in Slovenia (1992) of persons of non-Slovenian nationality.

The following spoke about the book: **Andraž Rožman**, Ljubljana, **Tanja Petovar**, lawyer, Belgrade; **Lino Veljak**, philosopher, Zagreb. Moderated by: *Staša Zajović*

**Andraž Rožman** explained the historical context in which the book was created: On 26<sup>th</sup> February 1992, Slovenia deleted 25,671 persons from the register of permanent citizens. It was ethnic cleansing, not with a gun, but with an administrative decision. Some people could not work, some could not be treated, some were deported. I entered the environment of the *Deleted*, observed, talked to people. I became part of that movement. Transgenerational trauma is clearly visible from the testimony of the *Deleted*. About 12,000 or 13,000 still cannot return to Slovenia’

**Tanja Petovar** looked back on her experience with the Deleted: ‘I was in Slovenia in 1993, 1994. People came and told me, and I didn’t believe them. I had the illusion that Slovenia was more civilized, more normal. However, through several fates, I got to know the essence of the whole story. I realized how many people are silent, how many won’t know, how many don’t want to know, they don’t care’

The book was creatively edited by Andraž. From conversations with people, he made ancient sculptures of human endurance, kindness, nobility, loyalty, tolerance.

*It is one of the most beautiful Slovenian books I have read. It’s a beautiful, humane language, it’s the confessions that Andraž aesthetically and literary processed’*, said Tanja about this book.

**Lino Veljak** referred to ethnic cleansing: ‘Slovenia deleted from the composition of its population those who were not eligible from an ethnic point of view and who spoiled the ideal of an ethnically pure Slavic state. In that context, of course, numerous dramas take place. Some of those dramas are tragedies, maybe some of those dramas border on melodrama, but none of those dramas are happy and they are all different from each other. In my opinion, this is exactly what



Andraž showed in this book in a fantastic way. *This book, not only is a more than significant work in the literary sense, it is also in the historical sense, and if you will, in the sociological sense, a significant testimony of the time when various shameful and criminal things happened. Elsewhere in some other ways, and in Slovenia in a perfidious way of bureaucratic cleaning,* concluded Veljak.

**Marijana Senjak** spoke about the experience of working with the Eradicated community in Ljubljana: 'Inspired by Mirjana's experience and participation in the Women's Court, we saw that a very large number of women were in that movement. *This motivated us to start organizing self-help groups together with them. The long-term consequences of trauma were obvious, in the crisis itself, people connect more. We used different methods to go through their experiences together. Those consequences were manifested on family members.*

### Saturday, April 5

**Endless wars...** - Around **60** wars - local, regional - visible, invisible, forgotten, are being waged in the world at the moment, with the participation of a huge number of actors (local, regional, international), with very little, little (or no) solution...

Four sessions were held within this central topic:

**First session, When did war come about ? On the genesis, evolution of war(s) from prehistory to the present day 'new' wars**

– Presentation/PP - *Staša Zajović* and *Fahrudin Kladničanin*

*Power point presentation*

When did the war occur? On the genesis, evolution of war(s) from prehistory to the present days 'new' wars - Presentation/PP – *Staša Zajović* and *Fahrudin Kladničanin*

### The presentation covered the genesis of the wars:

*From the birth of war - from the Neolithic; war and violence in the old age (Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, China), Roman Empire (military empire, by army, era of expansion (construction of cities, roads, canals, aqueducts... until the fall of the Roman Empire in 476: it was divided into the Western and Eastern Empires (Byzantium); war and violence in the Middle Ages - feudalism (5<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> century); early new century (from the 15<sup>th</sup> century) war, violence and birth) military discipline (the era of strengthening of European armies, general military obligation, increasing number of human casualties, growth of military costs, and the goal of European wars – conquest of territories, primarily the conquest of overseas colonies – colonialism.*

Regarding **the modern age and violence – the greatest bloodshed in the history of mankind:** *In the past three centuries - the modern age accounts for 90% of all war victims since the beginning of*



warfare in 3000 BC; *Improving the means of systematic mass killing* – from the guillotine, machine gun to nerve gas and nuclear bombs; *concentration camps, electric chairs, modern technologies of destruction* - these are 'inventions' of the modern age; *The 20<sup>th</sup> century is a cumulative growth of human losses* – 120 million victims of war, colonization, genocide, ethnic cleansing...

**The main goals of most wars in the 20<sup>th</sup> century:** *the expansion of national states* – the expansion of war beyond national borders; *Militaristic indoctrination* – fostering militaristic/military values; *war propaganda* – a powerful tool that can turn peaceful individuals into bloodthirsty murderers and martyrs, usually referring to the propaganda of Goebbels, Hitler, Stalin, Mussolini...; *bureaucratization of coercion* – a strong bureaucratic apparatus – the 'Final Solution' (Holocaust) requires an efficient modern bureaucratic apparatus, science and technology for an ideological goal – the creation of a clean nation and a biologically clean social order, etc.

There was talk **about the context of new wars, as well as some features of new wars:** *after the end of the Cold War (from 1945 to 1991)* – in the context of states in disintegration – the collapse of socialist states and ideologies (or real socialism); *economic crisis* – state revenues decrease due to the collapse of the economy, the spread of criminality/organized crime, corruption and inefficiency; *wars within states (civil) are more common than wars between states* – some wars start as civil but often develop into wars between states – the second Congo war (1998-2003) was a conflict between 8 states and a huge number of armed groups); *predatory or parasitic wars in the context of neoliberalism*; *war economy led by warlords* – robbery, extortion, black market, theft and taxation of humanitarian aid, trade in weapons, drugs, precious minerals (diamonds), etc.

**The actors of the 'new' wars are:** *various combat units* – the regular army or its remnants, paramilitary formations (most often established by the authorities), mercenary detachments, regular foreign troops, mostly under international patronage; *new technologically 'advanced' wars* – global capital is changing state borders, power is shifting from nation states to global corporations; *new wars (Western)* – the main goal is to minimize the risk for human losses of its soldiers, and the greatest risk is borne by the "weaker" enemies, the so-called 'rogue states': from the Malvinas War, Afghanistan, Kosovo, Iraq... they rely on technologically sophisticated weapons, which increase the number of so-called Collateral victims among the civilian population; *international actors* – reporters, military advisers, volunteers, international agencies, from NGOs to international institutions (High Commissioner for Refugees/UNHCR, UNICEF, OSCE, etc.

The final part concerned **the gender character of the war(s)** and the *feminist anti-militaristic approach (WiB): patriarchal socialization* – both men and women are trained for gender roles, but in the division of gender roles women are less accessible to functions where

decisions are made about war, the army, the military industry, which means: *women are more peaceful* – because based on their own inequality and all kinds of violence they are exposed to, they more easily perceive and understand the connection between domestic violence and military/war violence— that's why women are more receptive to the culture of peace, etc.

*Some lessons instead of conclusions...*

- *In 99% of unrecorded history there was no war* – people were unwilling to go to war, just as today most people will choose flight from war over the battlefield;
- *War is not a feature of human biology* – it is the result of intensive social development. War and violence are not inevitable and natural conditions, but the product of human action and as such, they can be prevented;
- *War is not a product of either biology or psychology* – war is a social institution that uses military force and coercion for political purposes and rests on two main pillars – social organization and ideology; *the dramatic increase in mass killings* in the last two centuries has nothing to do with 'human nature', but exclusively with the strengthening of the coercive power of modern social organizations: bureaucratic control, sophisticated weaponry, etc.



Lecturer: **Maja Bjeloš**, senior researcher, associate of the Belgrade Center for Security Policy

At the beginning of her lecture, **Maja explained the causes of the war climate:**

**Investments in war, war economy, general militarization, drastic reduction of investments in peace, for civilian purposes:** 'The largest allocation for defense is borne by the USA, followed by China, Germany, Russia, Great Britain, India, Saudi Arabia, France, Japan... *We live in a world of general militarization and war economy* - Europe and other countries have switched to a war economy and redirect all money from other sectors to defense.'

**Allocations for defense and armaments are skyrocketing in EU countries:** **Germany** increased its defense budget for the next couple of years two weeks ago, which is a historical record. For the first time, historically, Germany is breaking its laws and its constitution, because the Bundestag supported this over-indebtedness. They are now spending more than what they have in the coffers.'

In 2030, the EU plans to invest 800 billion euros in armaments, defense, military industry,' Maja warned.

**Great Britain** – 40% of development aid to the world is now diverted to the defense budget, with the aim of increasing this budget by 2027 by almost 3%.



Maja concluded that **Serbia** is also investing more and more in defense.

**Resolution 1325 (Women, Peace, Security) unfulfilled expectations:** 'The resolution was passed (in 2000) to prevent future wars, to recognize that civilians are the most vulnerable, we are living that scenario today, especially when it comes to Palestine, it is the most dangerous and deadliest place in the world today...'

**"New wars": how are they fought and what are the goals of the wars?**

**Maja** responded as follows:

*The Middle East* – wars of extermination are being waged, until absolute military victory is achieved, in order to achieve ethno-nationalist projects. Netanyahu keeps mentioning absolute victory. Their goal is to physically destroy and cleanse the Palestinians from their territory; there is no end to the war in Ukraine; there are wars in Turkey to 'solve' the Kurdish issue, etc.

Maja warned against the absence of **peace negotiations**, but **the so-called post-conflict reconstruction in the function of big capital**: 'At the beginning of the Russian aggression against Ukraine, the Americans and many Europeans discussed the post-conflict reconstruction of Ukraine, in the middle of the war. Various companies went to Ukraine and organized conferences about that renovation. Trump is blackmailing that he will help Ukraine if they give him minerals.'

**Artificial intelligence in the function of war, persecution of dissidents, deportation of refugees:** "In the war of 2021, *the Israelis* already tested the use of artificial intelligence in industrial, mass killing." *The Americans* have currently allowed the government and various companies to use artificial intelligence to screen all social groups, especially students. Most of all, they wanted to crush the pro-Palestinian supporters. *An ideological war is being waged between egomaniacs and techno-fascists, who are in the service of the oligarchs, and against the common man*, Maja emphasized.



As far as *Serbia* is concerned, the use of violent technologies, which the state procures primarily from Israel, is now being used against political dissidents, activists, journalists, students, NGOs, etc. *Serbia exports weapons to Israel, and imports technologies with which it represses and monitors the population* – the case of the sound cannon during mass student and civil protests (March 15, 2025).

*In the following, she spoke about **the various causes of the war**:*

- *colonial imperialist causes of war – natural resources, be it oil, gas, minerals, water;*
- *climate changes-- affect the causes and occurrences of new conflicts, lead to new migrations, etc. When a lake dries up in an African country, fishermen are transformed into soldiers in foreign countries because they have to survive.*
- 

**Marginal position of women** – globally, regionally...

*Statistics show that only 27 countries have women in the positions of Prime Minister or President. Even when they have cabinets, they are not dominant. When they are in the government, they deal with family, social, minority issues, etc.*

*Women at the world level do not negotiate, do not conclude agreements, do not negotiate the end of the war – **13%** are negotiators, **3%** are mediators and **5%** are signatories of peace agreements.*

*A blow to women's rights* – we are dealing with a highly organized and well-connected transnational group for reckoning with rights.

*Abuse of the Security Council through the veto* – everyone clings to the SC, where the role of the veto is extremely important, to block various resolutions for Syria, Ukraine and Palestine', Maja concluded.

### Third session '

#### Reports from the field – testimonies from war zones'

**Sloboda**, a woman from Palestine and **Lily Traubman**, peace activist of Women in Black, solidarity movement against the occupation of Palestine, Israel

Moderated by:

*Miloš Urošević and Staša Zajović*

**Sloboda** talked about the **"Gasification" of the West Bank**:

*'The northern part of the West Bank is in a catastrophic state. The refugee camps in Jenin and Tulkarem have been partially, if not completely, destroyed. Over 40,000 people were displaced from those camps. Israeli soldiers displaced a huge part of the camp in Tulkarem. Families have been torn apart. Older male children and fathers are not with the rest of the family because they are afraid of being arrested.*





*Soldiers patrol the city non-stop. They evict people, at any moment Israeli soldiers can break into the house, evict you, displace you and stay there for who knows how long...'*

The catastrophic humanitarian situation is aggravated by the fact that the **UN Agency for Palestine Refugees has been abolished, and it maintained these camps**. Their goal is to destroy those camps. And to block the return of Palestinian refugees, of whom there are around five million in the world.

**Sloboda described the situation in Bethlehem:** *'There are several illegal (settler) settlements around Bethlehem. Israeli soldiers have set up a camp settlement and are bringing in Jewish settlers. That part of the city will no longer be accessible to Palestinians. They are tightening the nooses more and more; they are suffocating us.*

*Bethlehem is surrounded on three sides by the apartheid wall. Now they are building more and more of those settlements, completely cutting off Bethlehem from Jerusalem. In that small part of the city where I live, everyday life goes on... We don't know what awaits us. We try to live. Commuters spend hours at checkpoints. People who work in Jerusalem do not get permits to go to work,' said Sloboda.*

**Lily:** *I live in a kibbutz, near Haifa, in the north of Israel. I have lived in Israel for 50 years. I came from Chile. My family survived the Holocaust in Czechoslovakia. My father was Allende's chief of aviation, who was killed on the second day of the coup. I went to Israel with my daughter. I've been with WiB since the beginning. We were organized during the First Intifada (at the end of 1987), against the occupation, for peace.*

Lily then reflected on the consequences of the attack on October 7, 2023: *'Nothing can justify that criminal attack by the Israeli army, neither the destruction, nor the killing. Then (October 7, 2023) 1,161 people were kidnapped, 1,600 people were killed by Hamas, of which 1,163 were civilians. Until the end of October, Hamas carried out rocket attacks in the south of Israel, there were also attacks by Hezbollah from Syria and Lebanon and Houthis from Yemen, there were 330,000 displaced people from that zone. They still cannot return to their homes, because they are all destroyed, the Israeli government does not give them any help. It is a state of war. I must say that these human losses caused great trauma. For example, my former neighbor was kidnapped. Activists for peace were kidnapped and killed'.*

Lily spoke about the anti-war resistance in Israel: *'Under these circumstances, the anti-war resistance is delegitimized it; is, as it were, impossible. Those who are against the war are state traitors. They were arrested en masse for their anti-war resistance. They were constantly interrogated by the political police. It was very difficult for us pacifists to organize anti-war resistance. There are many who declared against the war, they were left without a job. In the anti-war protests, ordinary people attacked us, and citizens and policemen stole our banners. What angered them the most was when they saw that we were wearing*



*'Genocide in Gaza.' We wrote 'Israel commits war crimes.'*

*Who led Hamas to do what they did, I asked myself more than once, and what was the goal?*

Lily responded as follows: 'If they thought the Arab world would save them, they are wrong. Israel is a powerful militaristic state that has enormous economic and military power. It is a very strong dehumanized state. The consequences of that attack are: total destruction, dehumanization, strengthening of the fascist right to a scale we could not even imagine.

*Israel's intelligence services have been giving lots of money to Hamas for years. They thought they were buying peace that way. Israelis are conceited, they think that the Mossad intelligence service is the best in the world, and everything was happening before their eyes. The repressive force measured the walls to see if they could demolish Palestinian houses more easily...'*

Hamas had promised to return all hostages, 159 of them, in exchange for the release of all political prisoners. There were now 5,000 Palestinian political prisoners in Israel.

*The Israeli government does not want any end to the war. The Israeli government want all the hostages dead, not a single one alive. If someone comes back alive, they will tell what happened to them. Dozens of hostages were killed by Israeli weapons. Netanyahu must not lose, because he is going to prison. If the war ends, he loses power and it's over,' emphasized Lily.*

### **Questions, comments...**

When asked if she was afraid to talk, Lily replied: *'I'm not afraid of any police. I say everything everywhere. What hurts me a lot is the fascism of my country and my countrymen.'*

The different situations in which people live in Israel and in occupied Palestine led to opposing views:

**Sloboda:** *Lily knows very well that there are no civilians in Israel. Every human being in Israel serves in the army, both men and women.*

**Lily:** *There are civilians on both sides. I believe in a solution among civilians. If we believe that civilians don't exist, I don't know how we are going to solve this? I hope this is the end of the Israeli state. Many civilians have no connection to the military. I have no connection with the army. I think that the situation of Palestinian civilians is different, who are deprived of all rights, while Palestinian citizens of Israel enjoy some rights.*

About forms of anti-war resistance:

*'A large number of men will not join the Israeli army. There is a conscientious objection and it has various nuances. Conscientious*

objection of gray color means that you go to the doctor to get a certificate of release from the army. *Conscientious objection to military service is becoming more and more accepted among the population.*

Many people on the public stage increasingly believe that the continuation of the war is a condition for Netanyahu's survival and that the war should end. In Haaretz (Israeli progressive newspaper) letters appear every day from soldiers who say they will not serve in the Israeli armed forces.

There are great contradictions in Israeli society itself. *There is no one Israel. There are many Israels. There is also a slightly different Israel...*

**Sloboda:** But he is slowly disappearing. This genocide proved that Israel is at its root a racist Zionist colonial project.

**Lily:** I agree, I'm not denying it.

**Sloboda:** That so-called liberal part is not heard.

**Lily:** There are protests in various places against the war, not just for the return of the hostages. I don't want to believe that there is only one solution. That's what Hamas and Netanyahu think. I think there are more solutions. *Military solutions are always in favor of Israel. Nothing can be achieved by armed means. We (WiB Israel) were founded in 1988. We never stopped going to the West Bank and that was an important activity for us. If we start from the fact that we are all the same in Israel, then who will we talk to?*

**Sloboda** believes that the Palestinian people will not agree to displacement: *'Most people do not give up the idea that this is their home and that they will not agree to displacement. A large number of Palestinian Christian families have left, because the living conditions are desperate. What Israel is doing now with all possible forces is to pressurize the Palestinian people to be displaced voluntarily.'*

**Regarding the lack of reaction from the international community,** Sloboda said: *"Since the beginning of March, no humanitarian aid has entered Gaza." Hunger is used as a weapon to force displacement. People will stay. In Gaza, people are determined to stay. As long as the US sends weapons to Israel, the genocide will not stop. Palestinians are losing faith that the international community and the Arab Muslim world will do anything. The main political factors are not responding, and people are losing hope."*

**Lily:** *Maybe the only way would be for us Israelis to throw ourselves in front of the army trucks. We should work together. I want to hope that the Palestinians will work together with us against the war and for an agreement.*

## **Session Four: Dynamic Exercises:**

### **Where do we stand now?**

**Are we on the verge of World War III?** – a short summary of the deliberation:

*Moderated by: Gordana Radosavljević and  
Staša Zajović, WiB Belgrade*

### **Some of the participants believe that we are already in the Third World War:**

"We are currently in the Third World War, which started with the corona virus. We are now in the second phase' (*Slavica, Kruševac*); "World War III is the future that has already begun." The world capitalist elite began to control the majority of people through impoverishment and diseases' (*Snežana, Kraljevo*); 70% of the world's citizens say that we are on the threshold of the Third World War. Wars happen' (*Fahrudin*).

### **The largest number of participants believe that accelerated armament and increasing allocations for the so-called Defense is the biggest threat to peace:**

"Europe is spending huge amounts of money on armaments, which means there will be war" (*Andrijana, Kruševac*);

"We have massive armaments. Individual states are massively arming themselves' (*Lejla, Sarajevo*); "Most countries are increasing their defense budgets" (*Snežana, Belgrade*).

### **Various forms of war are already being waged around the world...**

**The war of the rich against the poor; structural violence; war at the community level; export of wars to the Third World:** "We will have a war between the stronger and the weaker" (*Sead, Novi Pazar*); "Perhaps a declaration of war will not happen, but organized structural violence will explode much more at some point" (*Nađa, Belgrade/Kruševac*); 'Wars are exported to Third World countries. The danger of a world war has decreased' (*Tanja, Belgrade*); The war is already at the community level (*Zorica, Novi Sad*); "The powerful are more suited to local hotspots than a world war because it would reach them" (*Radmila, Sarajevo*); "The question is whether we will wage war against the structures of the rich or whether we will once again wage war among ourselves" (*Nikola, Belgrade*); "We don't know whether the war will be between nations or between classes. It may be a war of oligarchs against all of us. For the first time, we have a digital war like in Yugoslavia' (*Andrijana, Kruševac*).

**War for resources – war against nature:** ‘We have less and less resources, less and less food and water’ (*Sead*); “There are no more rich countries, there are rich individuals. It was caused by the looting of natural resources’ (*Snežana, Kruševac*); ‘The great powers have not yet plundered themselves of natural resources. They produce fears’ (*Svetlana, Vlasotince*).

**Threatening signs of war: the right is strengthening at all levels; spin dictators (egomaniacs, psychopaths, sociopaths...) possess unlimited power; the international order is rapidly collapsing:** ‘The right wing is in power, whose logic is the production of weapons and profit, and with that comes manipulation’ (*Nela, Zagreb*); “I don’t know if there has been such a large number of crazy people in the world who make decisions about us and our lives, who are powerful and unpredictable. Unpredictability is dangerous’ (*Mima, Priboj*); “The choice of politicians is disastrous, people with changed behavior” (*Slavica*); “We have no order. I don’t know that the world order has ever changed without war. The UN is not functioning’ (*Leyla*); “There is no world order that protects some things” (*Nadja*).

#### **Are we afraid of nuclear war? – second exercise**

The history of the nuclear war (Hiroshima, Nagasaki, 1945) was discussed below; Cuban Missile Crisis (1962), Nuclear Powers Today - Threats of Nuclear War Today, etc.

The answers can be summarized as follows: ‘*We all expect a nuclear war to start*’;

‘*Nuclear bombs come at the end of wars*’ etc.

(Transcript: *Miloš*; editing: *Staća*)

### **ABOUT THE EFFECTS, SUCCESSES, ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE STUDENT PROTESTS:**

#### **Discussion corner: “Where to and what to do next”**

**Rebel Serbia – student, civil, educational, agricultural, ecological: protests, blockades, marches...**

*The following actors in contemporary events spoke:*

**Nikola Trajković**, student of the Faculty of Philosophy, Belgrade/ Zaječar

**Dušan Kokot**, President of the Independent Union of Educational Workers of Serbia

**Slobodan Sadžakov**, Professor at the University of Novi Sad

**Radivoje Jovović**, Faculty of Law and Business Studies ‘Lazar Vrkatić’, Novi Sad, Provincial representative of the Movement of Free Citizens



**Vladimir Jevtić**, Professor of history, activist of the WiB Network, president of the Executive Board of the municipal organization of the Party of Justice and Freedom, Bajina Bašta

*Moderated by: Ljiljana Spasić, Civic Action Group, Pančevo, WiB Network and Nikola Krstić, freelance journalist, Belgrade*



### **About the effects, successes, achievements of the student protests:**

- *Process of direct democracy - plenums have autonomy - process of joint learning;*
- *The student movement has acquired the skills of technical organization - now we have a huge number of people organizing, which we have never had before, that is the most important thing.*
- *Organizing at the level of local communities - we all agreed that it is important to go to our local communities, ie. that the students, who are not from the university centers, return to their cities, that we make actions there; visibility of changes - only by organizing locally, I was able to see the real effect of these protests and that distinguishes this situation from previous rebellions (Nikola, Zaječar/Belgrade)*
- *The process of education, learning for democracy: from the phase of accelerated transformation, we are moving from a pre-political society to a political society - our citizens are now understanding, maturing rapidly what is all that they do not know, and what they need to learn (Radivoje, Novi Sad);*
- *Perseverance: students have been holding protests for three months and it was unexpected that they would make such massive protests - Novi Sad, Kragujevac, Niš, Belgrade. That's why they are so popular. In January, the students appeared and then the protests became massive. We now have about 2,000 people. That is about 15% of the population. (Vladimir, Bajina Bašta)*





- *Interethnic solidarity: 'for the first time, students did what no one else did - connecting with Novi Pazar. The local (Bosniak) people finally feel like a part of this state, which committed great injustices against its population (Nikola Krstić, Belgrade); This mutual recognition at the national level of the minority as an equal factor, the recognition of the minority of this country as our own, that is very important to us (Sead, Novi Pazar)*
- *The emotional and moral value of the student movement: 'Students have returned faith, love, hope, joy and tears to us. I have not experienced that until now. It is my right to have emotion, enthusiasm and love for students. Educators are a great support for students. In my town, the first in line are teachers (Marta, Priboj na Limu).*
- *Solidarity: 'We came to the squares thanks to the high school graduates. They took us out to 'We were joined by men and women' (Snežana, Kraljevo).*



### **About the uprisings of educational workers – scope, problems...**

#### **Dušan Kokot:**

- *As a trade union organization on January 20, when the threats began, since that January 20 and until now, the struggle has continued relentlessly. Educators have suffered the pressure a little longer, a little more fiercely for the last ten years: every critical thought in this kind of society tries to kill itself, and that is what led to a mass revolt among educators.*
- *Educators have taken back their dignity in recent months - after many years and many sufferings of disparagement from a part of society, where we were constantly targeted as those who immediately bend their spines, who immediately retreat, immediately run away, showed that this is not true.*
- *The regime is also against knowledge and education - educators will continue their fight - by political articulation again to bring the goal back into focus and that educators will continue where they left off. The state is absolutely not interested in*





whether the school works or not, whether the students will acquire some knowledge or not.

- *The lack of wider social support for educators* - both then and now there is a lack of wider support and that is completely clear and obvious. Educators began to feel like gladiators in the arena, applauded for their fight.
- *Society has changed irreversibly, it has made a serious step forward, and the participation of citizens is certainly of key importance.* When we talk about the rebellion of educators, we are actually talking about the rebellion of citizens.

### **About civic protests (citizens' assemblies) – achievements:**

*Zaječar:* A week ago there was the first gathering with 400 people; we immediately organized working groups, the most important of which is environmental protection.



*Novi Sad:* Assemblies are a great thing from the point of view of increasing civic participation, developing civic awareness, but now people are finally starting to understand how difficult it is to manage a community.

*Bajina Bašta :* 'We are now organizing a citizens' assembly, so we will see in which direction it will go' (Vladimir)

*Priboj na Limu:* 'It is the women who organize all the citizens' assemblies. In my town, the first in line are female teachers. I live in a brutal radical government' (Marta).

### **Limitations, objections, critical review of student protests...**

- *Deification of new actors* - students are the new god - they are fantastic, they are wonderful and they brought us love and solidarity, but we cannot see them as a unison category (Radivoje).
- *Limitations of direct democracy* - it has not worked for 2,500 years, except in a number of micro-societies and on a micro level. Direct democracy can be a fantastic corrective factor within the institutions of representative democracy (Radivoje).
- *Mythologizing of students, a kind of new single-mindedness of the student movement and narrowing of the possibility to discuss freely and openly* - maybe in the form of a round table, but to hear each other more. It is important that we no longer agree to this voluntary infantilization and that we try to look at things honestly, openly - professors also succumbed to infantilization. The aestheticization of the protest, not the politicization of the March 15 protest in Belgrade' (Slobodan, Novi Sad).





- *Risk of absenteeism and fear of political articulation by the student movement:* 'Student demands will not be met by this group. The first step is a change of government' (Vladimir, Kokot, Radivoje...); 'Why is every mention in the public space of the political articulation of the student rebellion, we always come to the point that it must not be mentioned. There is a fear of political articulation. I had some conflict with some students from Novi Pazar' (Fahrudin. Novi Pazar);
- *Reservations about political parties, NGOs and other social actors:* 'I am angry with students for their separation from parties. This goes hand in hand with the stigmatization, ostracism and discrimination of the parties' (Snežana, Belgrade); "Members of political parties are very often targeted by the regime in Serbia." We feel like pariahs, because we don't get support' (Vladimir); "The student movement, by separating itself from political parties, shows a kind of moral purity, but even that has its limit" (Kokot):



- *Nationalist iconography of student protests:* 'I am a member of the collective *Female Street Drummers*. We played at the invitation of a plenum. We were approached by students at Slavija, ordering songs, and that part of the carnivalization is fine with me. They ordered the *March on the Drina*, but we agreed not to play it. What should we do with the flags? There is the *No surrender* flag (i.e.: Kosovo is part of Serbia), students say that it is not ideological, so it is allowed. What do you think, in what way can we influence that there are no such flags, and how can we create a space so that the rainbow flag can be carried without us being afraid?' (Nađa, Belgrade); "Vlada Arsenijević was thrown out because he has the Palestinian and Ukrainian flags, and some flag bearer is walking around with a sajkach and a cockade" (Snežana, Belgrade);

### **Concrete proposals – synergy, crossing of various types of combat...**



- *Mutual support is necessary against the satanization of the political opposition and trade unions to stand by each other, to overcome all differences* (Radivoje); We have to combine different solutions and different types of struggles. (Staša).
- *Round table or expert government for change of government and building of institutions:* 'If there is such agreement, then perhaps a general strike will succeed. (Radivoje, Kokot, Slobodan...).
- *Gathering around the lowest common denominator:* 'There will have to be a round table of the entire rebel society, where demands will be made, say for a transitional, temporary government. It is



realistic and possible. It is the lowest common denominator around which we can all gather' (*Vladimir*), etc.

**"Exiles"** - promotion of the poetry collection by **Ramiz Berbić**, poet, singer, peace activist, internationalist...

*Presenters: Lino Veljak, Dragan Protić/Prota, Fahrudin Kladničanin, Jadranka Milićević, Ramiz Berbić*



**Sunday, April 6**

**Let us remember: the beginning of the siege of Sarajevo - the killing of the city, people... (4/6/1992)**

*Miloš Urošević, WiB, Belgrade*

**International news - internationalist newsletter –**

*Staša Zajović and Tanja Marković*

**Agreements on joint activities in the following period**

(sent to the participants immediately after the Network meeting)

**Evaluation**



**Emotional closeness, moral principles, a safe, secure space:**

'Our closeness can be felt. It was so good' (*Rada, Sarajevo*); You are balm for my soul. I would not have had the knowledge, nor the courage, I would not have been taught to appear in this way and to oppose myself with such ferocity. It's thanks to you. You are my support. I have no other support. We all believe in pride and freedom. For that you need to tighten the loop. I don't paint' (*Ramiz, Donja Obodnica/Tuzla*); "These meetings are something magical for me. The situation in the world is terrifying, it is getting worse and worse. Here the determination is maintained to oppose it at all costs. There is some strength in this weakness of ours. That's what keeps me going' (*Boris,*



*Zagreb*); 'There is a safe place. That safe place is hope. It is important that we all build these safe places' (*Ljupka, Kotor*); WiB asisomething special to me. I became part of the community after a year. My life changed. It's great for me. In Ljubljana, I can't find people like this to feel like one of my own. I've found my human political group' (*Andraž, Ljubljana*); 'When I'm here, we breathe as one. We feel safe, secure. This is our environment where we can be ourselves and be free. I can only be who I am here' (*Nadežda, Kruševac*);

"For me, this is one of the most colorful, emotional, friendly meetings. Everything is phenomenal for me. I can't single out anything, everything is superb. Integrated, compact. The topics are difficult and important. We are all here together and that is important to me' (*Manda, Sombor*); 'We are turning into a therapy group. In them, women know how to say that they had a good time. A good group is like a fairy tale. Stories are told with her. Our hearts were warm. A good group accepts us as we are' (*Marijana, Zagreb*).



**Excellently designed program, joint learning, confrontation of opinions-critical reflection, internationalism:** "All the knowledge I heard here is precious" (*Sylvester, Novi Sad*); "You really learned here, and that's something that's different than at other gatherings" (*Katja, Ljubljana*); "Everything went smoothly, it was not burdensome, although there was a lot of content" (*Nela, Zagreb*); 'That educational part is important. I learn and get useful information' (*Slobodan, Novi Sad*); 'It is important for me to say that the meeting was vibrant. It was masterfully done. The educational line of the meeting has been preserved. Virtually fit into the context and let what happens outside, and that did not shake the tradition of the learning model' (*Zorica, Novi Sad*); 'This is actually a school of activism. This is one school for me. I was just waiting to hear who was going to say what. We learn from each other through both knowledge and experience. It is important that we hear each other. We continue. It's an ongoing battle' (*Prota, Belgrade*); 'The program was well thought out. We had a lot to learn' (*Nadežda*).



Of the topics at this meeting of the Network, the topics related to **Palestine, the student movement, sexual violence in Kosovo, book promotions, international news, etc.** aroused the most interest.

*(The integral report from the Network Meeting (40 pages) can be found on the WiB website)*

## **EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS, PEACE MEETINGS**

- in addition to those already mentioned, in this reporting period, the following programs were implemented within the Network (women's peace activism, peace meetings, feminist discussion circles, etc.). We list them chronologically:

### **January 25, Ljubljana – Friendly meeting**

Organized by WiB, Belgrade and PLAC, Ljubljana. The event was attended by **35** people from Slovenia (Ljubljana, Maribor, Sežana, Ptuj); Croatia (Zagreb) from Serbia (Belgrade, Novi Sad, Novi Pazar).

*In the first part of the meeting, there was a discussion **about the Student Rebellion in Serbia**, moderated by: Fahrudin Kladničanin, Academic Initiative 'Forum 10' and Staša Zajović, Women in Black, Belgrade*

In the debate in which: Slobodan Sadžakov, philosopher, Novi Sad, Lino Veljak, Belgrade/Zagreb, as well as numerous activists from Serbia, Slovenia, Croatia participated, various aspects of student protests (meaning, scale, impact, challenges, relationship to other social actors (citizens, political parties... etc.) were discussed.

*In the second part of the meeting, a discussion was held about **the (In) visible SFR Yugoslavia**. In the dynamic exercise on associations with the SFRY, the participants mostly referred to the positive socialist experience: *socio-economic achievements* (infrastructure, factories, education, healthcare, workers' resorts, workers' rights, workers' councils, women's rights, abortion...); *togetherness/multi-ethnicity* (home-homeland, identity, brotherhood and unity, youth work actions, belonging...); *freedom of movement - peace* (security, peace of mind, freedom...); cultural policy (Southern rock music, cultural centers...), and on the international political level, the lack of firmness, the reputation of the SRFJ ('red passport') is emphasized. Repression and discrimination against the Albanian community in Kosovo were mentioned as negative associations.*

*In the continuation of the discussion, there were exchanges about cultural, political connections and alternatives outside the institutional framework (Praxis, the Korčula summer school, the first women's autonomous initiatives - the Yugoslav Feminist Network, anti-militarism initiatives...) which were discussed by: Lino Veljak, Nela Pamuković, Staša Zajović, Andraž Rožman.*

*Part Three: Celebrating and Honoring the Anti-Fascist Legacy from the NLM, Affirming the Values of Anti-Fascism and Internationalist Solidarity - Screenings of the Women in Black Video Activism Group documentaries on anti-fascism. The meeting ended with a joint dinner and socializing at PLAC.*

### **Women's Peace Meeting, February 11, 2025 – Potočare/Srebrenica**

Organized by Women in Black, on February 11, 2025, a visit by activists *Ljiljana Radovanović, Melanija Aleksić* and *Violeta Đikanović* to **the Bosnian House** - Home for the elderly 'Hatidža Đida Mehmedović', where live women whose male relatives (sons, husbands, brothers, fathers...) were killed during the genocide in Srebrenica. We were accompanied by artists: Ana Adamović, Branislava Stefanović and Milica Pekić, from the art collective *Kiosk Team* and Dragan Protiv Protu/Škart.

The meeting consisted of several segments:

**Potočara Memorial Center** – at the cemetery/cemetery, flowers were laid at the monument to the victims of genocide. Every 11th of the month, the mothers of Srebrenica hold a ritual of prayer/worship at the cemetery of the Memorial Center. At the end of this act, we said goodbye to the women from Srebrenica, and the artists from the Kiosk team got to know them and we kept talking with them.

**Bosnian house** – meeting with women in the common 'living room' There were about twenty (20) of us, and then a doctor and a nurse joined us and stayed with us until the end of the visit.

**After the introduction, the publication 'Ženska posla' (Women's affairs) was presented** - Ana, Branislava and Milica presented their booklet '*Women's affairs*' - stories created as a result of meetings with women in cities and villages throughout Serbia, in which women testified about their experiences and ways of survival. Branislava read parts of those testimonies and thereby inspired the women in the Bosnian House to talk about their experiences of survival from childhood and the period in which they started their families. The women were very active and each one talked about what she had done in her life (tilled the land, looked after cattle, cooked, grew tobacco, raised children...). They said that their work was neither recognized nor paid for. Safija said that "all women in the world have the same jobs..."

**Joint installation of a photo exhibition** – *Violeta, Protu, Milica Brana* and *Ana* prepared an exhibition of photos from the action on December 6 - International Day Against Femicide (Belgrade, December 6, 2024). Violeta explained why the whole world celebrates that day: in memory of the four brave Mirabal sisters from the Dominican Republic who were killed in 1960 by the dictatorial regime in that country, after which the dictatorial regime was overthrown by a mass popular uprising. At the suggestion of feminists from all over Latin America, the United Nations officially confirmed November 25 in

1999 - the world women's movement commemorates them as part of the *manifestation '16 days of activism against violence against women'* (November 25 - December 10). As part of that day, the **International Day against Femicide** (the killing of women) is also celebrated - Women in Black, in cooperation with the Autonomous Women's Center from Belgrade and, like the women's association 'Anima' from Đulić (BH), actively participated in the action on Republic Square. Participants of the regional meeting of the Women's Court: Feminist Approach to Justice from Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as activists of the Women in Black Network, took part in the action.

**Birthday celebration** - for Nura and Refia's birthday. Prota recited and sang two songs: *Snadi se/Make shift* and *Svaki dan/Every day* (dedicated to March 8). Prota sent the lyrics of the songs with the following text: 'Meeting with friends from Srebrenica was a joint story about the experiences of women on the social margins. The women in the old people's home, themselves displaced from family communities, told us about their lives and together with us, read about the practices of other women from the WOMEN'S AFFAIRS booklet. The song EVERY DAY, performed together with all the women present, as a song of empowerment and joint struggle for human rights.'

**Visit to the association "Mother Enclave Movement of Žepa and Srebrenica"** – there we spent two hours in a very pleasant meeting with Munira Subašić and other members of the Movement. It should be noted that the WiB association has been in contact with this association since 1996 - an unbroken thread of friendship, mutual support, and cooperation.

**We remember the anti-war resistance – peace meeting, ADA/Vojvodina, April 25**



**On April 26, 2025**, was the third death anniversary of Istvan Vebel/ Ištvan Pišta Vebel (1945-2022), our anti-war comrade. Together with his wife **Vera Vebel Tatić** (1943-2020), Ištvan Pišta Vebel initiated

and organized anti-war protests in Ada and in general in Potisje and Vojvodina. Their contribution was enormous in helping the rebels against the war (deserters, conscientious objectors, refugees and all others who refused to participate in the war). Ištvan and Vera established bridges of peace and solidarity between citizens of all ethnic and national affiliations.

Eight **(8)** activists from Pančevo, Trešnjevac, Sombor and Belgrade participated in this peace meeting.

Commemoration at the cemetery - memories of Ištvan and Vera Webel

### **An Uprising Country: Where Are We Going Now?**

- conversation in Galiba Charda restaurant

*During a joint reflection on protests, blockades, marches, walks, civil disobedience - students, high school students, citizens, farmers, educators, trade unions in Serbia, the participants said that the most important values of the rebellion were:*

Perseverance, courage, freedom from fear... However, there was a fear of strengthening repression by the regime, that it is very difficult to launch a general strike, that minority parties (the negative role of the Hungarian SVM party was especially emphasized) are the extended arms of the regime. Although uncertainty was expressed regarding the outcome and results of the uprisings, everyone agreed that it was an irreversible process that would lead to change...

### **Departure to Bečej – solidarity visit to Julia Teleka, an anti-war activist**

#### **Women's peace activism, Đulići, Bosnia and Herzegovina**

The educational program organized by the citizens' association "Anima" from Đulić and Women in Black, Belgrade since the beginning of 2016. Meetings within the framework of *Women's Peace Activism* strengthen trust, mutual support and solidarity, and expand the spaces of female autonomy and self-confidence. And this meeting is a continuation of long-term cooperation, friendship, mutual support and joint work between "Anima" and WiB.

**Đulići, April 28 – 23** women from the following places participated in the thirty-third cycle **(33)** of workshops held in the premises of the Anima association: Đulići, Šetići, Živinice, Kaldrani, Donja Grbava, Dubrava, Grbavci, Glumina, Kučić kula, Dardagani, Jusići, Klisa, Belgrade.

Of the workshops we highlight:

#### **Honestly about myself and others: what qualities do I value most in myself? At others?**

Most women chose the following best qualities: responsibility and honesty, then solidarity, forgiveness, honesty, persistence, tolerance, truthfulness, etc.

As for honesty, the conversation showed that it is a desirable, but very 'risky' trait, because it carries with it serious consequences: resentment towards the family and the community. We talked in honesty towards others, towards ourselves and towards the community, and it turned out that this quality is extremely important, but that it is not practiced in life.

The next topic we discussed was **forgiveness** based on the example of convicted or indicted war criminals: *Radoslav Krstić*, sentenced for the genocide in Srebrenica to 35 years in prison and his apology to the victims of the genocide. Most of the women believe that it was a 'calculated' act in order to reduce his prison sentence. The women believe that 'none of the Srebrenica victims would have forgiven R. Krstić.

Accused for war crimes committed against Bosniak civilians (1992) - at the trials before the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, none of the accused expressed regret or repentance. However, some of the Serbian witnesses expressed 'condolence and we were glad because the crime was recognized and because it shows that he wants to rehabilitate himself and his humanity' (Šaha). Another witness also expressed his regret, 'regardless of the consequences in his community, they will certainly distance themselves from him. He probably did it because his conscience is gnawing at him' (*Zarfa*).

The participants believe that the most significant thing is that the public confession of a crime is an important act because they have been denying the committed crimes for more than 30 years.

It is interesting that in this context some women mentioned forgiveness in a religious context and cited Pope Francis, who recently passed away, as an example of a 'true believer'.

### **About the trials before the Court in Bosnia and Herzegovina:**

How do you perceive the trials? Are you satisfied with the attitude towards you at the Court? Do the testimonies in the Court revive your traumas? Do you have confidence that justice will be served?

The trials began in July 2024 and are held several times a month, dozens of women have already testified before the court. This requires enormous physical effort (they leave their villages for Sarajevo and return home on the same day), and primarily **deep traumas**, which many women spoke about:

"At the trial, everything came alive for me, even though I went through many psychological support workshops. I hope that I will get some satisfaction and that the culprits will be revealed' (*Nusreta*); 'Each new testimony brings back memories of what I survived. It was as if I was falling into an abyss, I thought I was strong, but I was losing the ground under my feet, I felt suffocation. However, the most important thing for me is that the crime is recognized, the length of the sentence is not important to me. If the crime is not tried, there is a danger that the crime will be repeated. It is important to name the crime, to distance the community from which the criminal comes from. Unfortunately,

I don't hope for that, because those criminals are celebrated, and politicians don't get justice' (Šaha); 'I am most offended by the contempt of the accused towards the victims' (*Lutvija*).

**Most participants agree that the most important thing is that court proceedings have been initiated, but that there is no room for the victims at the trial, but primarily for the accused and their lawyers:**

"Just filing an indictment after of 32 years is crucial, but our witnesses to the crime have died." The indicted are real scum, the worst dregs. Even before the trial, they sing the same songs as in 1992, when they committed the crimes. And it shows how little things have changed. I am also concerned about the fact that only the perpetrators of the crime are in court and not the orderers, and this protects the country that organized the crimes - Serbia. The lawyers are driving us crazy: they keep insisting that the perpetrators of the crime are members of some paramilitary forces, while we know that it is the regular army behind which the state of Serbia stands' (*Suvada*).

**All the women expressed their determination to continue going to trials and that they will not stop fighting for justice:** 'We are tireless, we do everything we can, that is our contribution to justice' (*Safeta*).

During the discussion about reparations, some women expressed the belief that symbolic reparations are the most important (memorials, public confessions of crimes, introducing young people to the crimes of the 90s).

**Regarding material reparations, women's opinions are divided** - some would take the compensation and immediately give it to humanitarian purposes, while others are expressly against material reparations ("I would never take it, because they cannot pay for my father's life with money", etc.

**As for the current situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, women believe that a psychological war is at work, that the President of Republika Srpska (M. Dodik) together with the President of Serbia (A. Vučić) are causing instability in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but that they are worried about global instability after the coming to power of the President of the USA (Trump):**

'I feel anxious, I live in fear, I have never felt worse since 1992' (*Ramiza*).

"They intimidate us, they drive us crazy, this is like a kind of silent ethnic cleansing because every time tensions rise, the Bosniak population is terribly afraid, many they go for a while to Sapna (the closest place in the Federation of BH)' (*Alma*).

**All the women expressed their determination to continue going to trials and that they will not stop fighting for justice:** 'We are tireless, we do everything we can, that is our contribution to justice' (*Safeta*).

**During the discussion about reparations, some women consider symbolic reparations to be the most important:**

'They intimidate us, they drive us crazy, this is like some kind of silent ethnic cleansing because every time tensions rise, the Bosniak population gets terribly scared, many go to Sapna (the closest place in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina) for a while' (*Alma*).

**Protests (student, civil) are used by the regime in Republika Srpska and Serbia as a tool of intimidation and special psychological warfare:**

"The regime media of Republika Srpska and Serbia, which we watch, put everything on the student - they accuse them of tensions, they call them hooligans, bullies, and we know that this is a lie, but we are afraid of what can happen to students" (*Ismeta*).

**Solidarity and support with rebellious students in Serbia:** 'What we like most about them is solidarity, togetherness, responsibility' (*Razija*); "Students respect human beings, not nations and religions" (*Lutvia*); "What I liked most was the unity and respect between Serbian and Bosniak students in Novi Pazar" (Fatima); "Students spread brotherhood and unity" (*Enesa*).

In the final session, we agreed very concretely on activities in the coming period.

## **SOLIDARITY IS OUR STRENGTH**

**Solidarity actions – with members of endangered and disenfranchised minority communities** (social-class, ethnic-racial, sexual), citizens whose human rights (labour, education, culture) are threatened.

**Solidarity with war refugees:** Women in Black started in 2013, when solidarity actions were organized against racist attacks that culminated at the end of 2013, and since then, Women in Black have been organizing many activities, which you can find information about on the Women in Black website. Solidarity activities are intertwined, at the same time they include several dimensions - peace, humanitarian, art-activist, informative...

Direct help and support in the field:

**Solidarity support and assistance to Palestinian refugees from GAZA:** WiB has established contacts since March 2024 with refugees who arrived from this war zone:

**February 1, 11 and 27, 2025** – Solidarity visits in Jakovo, near Belgrade, where Palestinian refugees live.

**Solidarity with Russian refugees – Guide for the Russian community in Serbia**

As part of the project, an online survey was conducted through an anonymous questionnaire, and the results were used to create a comprehensive guide intended for the Russian community in Serbia. This guide provides information on rights, useful contacts and practical advice for integration and legal protection.

## Research methodology

The questionnaire consisted of ten questions that represented different situations, and the participants were supposed to indicate each situation in which they found themselves. The research was conducted anonymously, and the questionnaire was distributed through the Telegram group - “Антивоенная Сербия” (Antiwar Serbia), the largest online group that gathers activists and opponents of the war among the Russian community in Serbia, with more than **4,000** members. **569** people filled out the questionnaire.

## Research results:

- 64% of respondents have a lack of knowledge about their rights in Serbia;
- 60% practice some form of self-censorship and do not advertise publicly for fear of their status in Serbia;
- 68% feel afraid of participating in public gatherings of a political nature.

## About the guide

The goal of the guide is to provide support and useful information so that members of the Russian community feel safer and integrate better. Based on the obtained results, a 40-page guide was created and contains:

- A detailed legal guide on the rights of foreigners, asylum, the right to stay, the right to assemble, the rights of LGBT persons, protection in case of apprehension and domestic violence;
- Useful contacts of institutions and organizations that provide support;
- Practical information about administrative procedures and integration into Serbian society.

## Distribution and promotion of the guide

The guide was created by:

- Mirko Medenica – research and writing of legal work,
- Katya and Anya – researching the needs of the Russian community in Serbia, editing the guide and translating it into Russian,
- Skart – guide design.

The promotion of the guide was held on **February 10** in Belgrade. The guide was presented by Katya and Anya, with the participation of Nora, a consultant for the rights and needs of trans people.

**Other trials – in addition to the ones already mentioned, in this period we monitored the following trials:**

I

## **The trial of Miroslav Mika Aleksić for rape and sexual abuse**

**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** – 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** – the court proceedings against Aleksić began after several delays and final preparatory hearings.

In this reporting period, one (1) hearing was held:

**March 26** – the indicted Miroslav Aleksić did not attend this hearing. His lawyer said that he is receiving treatment at home and is unable to attend the trial: “His health is deteriorating. He is no longer able to go to the hospital, but the doctors come to his home. He has stage three cancer pain.”

**Trials of rebellious citizens:** activists of the student movement, as well as various civic initiatives against which the regime campaigns on various levels: regime media (demonization, stigmatization, false accusations...); criminal law (trials for alleged misdemeanor and criminal offenses) with the aim of intimidation and retaliation against all those who lead a just fight against corruption, organized crime, violence...

**The trial of Milica Ojdanić**, a student of the Faculty of Dramatic Arts/FDU from Belgrade, who was arrested on November 11, 2024 for participating in a protest against the demolition of the old Sava Bridge’, a symbol of Belgrade, which for decades connects the two parts of the city (new and old). That is why the citizens launched the initiative *The Bridge shall remain* - permanent round-the-clock duty to defend the old bridge. Unfortunately, the regime started removing the Sava bridge.

The court announced that the prosecution withdrew the indictment against Milica Ojdanić, and that was the reason for the suspension of the misdemeanor proceedings. Blockade students and citizens gathered in front of the court in Belgrade to support their colleague.

**Trial for the attack on FDU students, March 26** - The main trial against the defendants: *Milija Koldžić* (SNS official in the municipality of Novi Belgrade), *Milena Aleksić* and *Ivan Stanišić*, who are charged by the prosecution with the attack on students of the Faculty of Dramatic Arts/FDU, committed on November 20, 2024, during the traffic blockade in the Boulevard of the Arts, in front of FDU.

The trial was also attended by representatives of students in the blockade of FDU and their professors, who were supported by the citizens.

## ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS, 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 140 people.

**January 22 “All about love – new visions”** promotion of the book by the American feminist author **Bell Hooks** (published by **Reconstruction-Women’s Fund (RWF)** in 2024, translated by **Jana Lazarević**. The book, divided into thirteen chapters, shows different types of love and analyzes loving relationships in the family while growing up, partner relationships, etc. Hooks writes about the position of women in all these private and “socio-political” relationships.

The book was presented by Jana Lazarević, the translator of the book, and Marjana Stevanović, a journalist, and then the activists commented on the book that was previously handed out. Ten (10) people participated in this promotion.



**January 29 “Come, sit in the shade” – discussion about Bojana Minović’s book**

With the support of *Reconstruction-Women’s Fund (RWF)*, the book by **Bojana Minović** - “*Come, sit in the shade*” (2024), was published, a series of stories about Roma women and her friendship with women from deep social margins. Through 42 documentary notes-stories, the author shed light on the lives of members of a small Roma community immigrated from Kosovo. Bojana Minović spoke about this during a meeting attended by 10 people.

**February 12 “The Importance and Impact of Civic Activism”**

In recent years, presenter **Dejan Atanacković** (writer, art pedagogue, visual artist and activist) has been initiating and actively participating in the defense of Belgrade’s urban and culturally relevant toponyms and buildings that the regime plans to demolish or relocate. Atanacković spoke in detail about the history of the bridge’s existence, the importance of its preservation, a kind of current symbol-catalyst of the latest social uprisings and chances for major social and political changes. Unfortunately, despite the persistent and brave activists who defended the Old Bridge, the regime implemented its criminal and corrupt intention - the demolition of the Old Bridge began at the end of February 2025. There were 19 participants in this discussion.

**February 19 “Life and work of Mihajlo Mihajlov – dissident “number two”** - historian **Ljubinka Škodrić** said in the introduction that Mihajlo Mihajlov (1932-2010) was remembered as the dissident “number two”, after Milovan Đilas, who was the dissident “number one”. Mihailov (of Russian origin) lived in the USSR and wrote reports





about it in Delo magazine. The articles were considered 'hostile' by the SRFJ authorities, the Soviet ambassador complained to **Tito**, and in February 1965 Tito said at a meeting with public prosecutors that it was defamation of the brotherly country and Mikhailov was immediately arrested. Mihailov was sentenced to 13 years, and he spent 7 years in prison for his objectively critical portrayal of the state of affairs in the USSR.



Mihailov is also known for his books: *Homeland is Freedom*, *Underground Records* and a whole series of others, as well as the works *The Grand Inquisitor*, *Nietzsche and the Russian New Idealists*, etc. The Soviet dissident and physicist, *Andrei Sakharov*, recipient of the 1975 Nobel Peace Prize, nominated Mihailov him for the Nobel Peace Prize, in 1976, when was on hunger strike in prison in Sremska Mitrovica, etc. This discussion was attended by **16** people.

**March 5 "Suffrage activists"** – screening of the feature film (2015) directed by Sarah Gavron, with actresses *Meryl Streep*, *Carey Mulligan* and *Helena Bonham Carter*.

Before the screening of the film, *Miloš Urošević* briefly referred to the emergence of suffragettes: the movement for equal voting rights, fighters for the introduction of voting rights for women, mainly in the United Kingdom/UK and the USA. It was a movement for women only. The suffragettes used direct action and civil disobedience: breaking windows, setting fires, tying themselves to the railroad tracks... The suffragettes were therefore imprisoned and exposed to various types of repression in prisons. World War I tore the suffragette movement apart: one group believed that women should continue their struggle, another group believed that the war took priority over the fight for the right to vote. After the First World War, women got the right to vote. The discussion and the screening of the film were attended by **6** women.



**March 19 “About the protest on March 15, 2025.”** – discussion about one of the biggest protests in the history of Serbia (almost half a million people from all over Serbia). At the end of the protest, the regime launched an attack (sound cannon) on the peaceful demonstrations, which caused serious health, psychological and other consequences.

The protest on March 15 was organized by the student movement, and the discussion concerned the following issues:

### **What was most important to us?**

The participants stated the following:

*Massiveness, extraordinary organization, mutual support, solidarity, courage of students and citizens...*

- People showed incredible strength and energy - the most fascinating thing is the mass, despite regime propaganda and preventing people from coming to the meeting (cancellation of train and bus lines, cancellation of public transport in Belgrade, harassment...). People were not afraid.
- The students showed great organization, deftly avoided all the traps of the regime. They are the moral victors.
- Students have moved us civilizationaly. We all become much better together. So many people and yet no blood was shed with all the hogwash planned by the regime.

*The regime no longer has legitimacy, the student movement is the biggest social force, enjoys the highest trust in the country...*

- The students looked after us. People want to listen to students.
- Confidence is the greatest capital that students have. They are not only the strongest political force; they are the only ones who have the enormous trust of the people.
- This is a process that has yet to introduce changes in this society. The energy is out, but we'll see where this goes.
- March 15 is the culmination of a series of civil assemblies, in Novi Sad, Kragujevac, Niš, a huge number of people poured into Belgrade from all parts of Serbia, walking for days, with wounds and scars...

### **Did we expect a terrorist attack by the regime?**

*Chronicle of the announced regime attack – logistical, political, media...*

- In Pionirski Park (in front of the Assembly and the Presidency of Serbia), the regime gathered all the possible scum already at the beginning of March to provoke an incident.
- The regime was preparing an attack, there were sacks full of stones near the Assembly.

- For five days, A. Vučić was on the regime's television channels every day, announcing violence.
- The worst and most insidious move by the authorities is that the JSO (Special Operations Unit of the MoI, convicted for the murder of Prime Minister Z. Đinđić on 12/03/2003 and after that the JSO was banned) was brought to Pionirski Park on the anniversary of the murder of Đinđić (12/03/2025). The emergence of JSO is a true picture of the continuity of the criminal state...

*The reaction of the student movement is an act of extraordinary organization, responsibility, non-violence...*

- The students did a great thing, because of the provocations of the regime hooligans, they moved about 100,000 people to another location (Slavija Square) in front of the National Assembly, where the meeting was scheduled because otherwise there would have been bloodshed.
- The organization of students to surround the Assembly with their bodies, to write their parents' phone numbers and their blood type on their hands is incredible. They sent signal messages with blue smokes etc.

**Are we satisfied with this event in the political sense? Can student protests topple the regime? What worries us the most?**

*Most believe that the meeting had an important political significance:*

- This protest is a contribution to the defeat of Vučić. The student protest as a whole is a great victory. It is a big leap of society in Serbia. Decency is being established. This is an irreversible process.
- It is great that the students did not allow any political party to enter among them. The Serbian opposition is completely disunited without a clear alternative, they have no consensus on basic issues.

*Unfulfilled expectations from the protest – absence of political articulation, distancing of the student movement from other social and political movements...*

- The citizens were expecting a political articulation of what to do next: the citizens are confused and fear that this will subside.
- I expected that the student movement would demand the president's resignation. 300,000 people could have asked for his resignation, but that didn't happen. There was an attack with a sound cannon, it lowered the energy a lot.

- The student movement constantly insist that they have no political ambitions. The student movement is very confident. They gained popularity by distancing themselves from politics. Their ideas must appear on the electoral lists of citizens. The student movement will have to come to terms with losing some of its popularity.
- It is bad that students distance themselves from the opposition. Not all opposition is the same, nor are all students the same. They are bothered by EU and LGBT flags, and Čiča (Draža Mihailović, Chetnik general in World War II, convicted war criminal) is on some students' T-shirts.

*The positions of the international community (especially the EU), the interests of foreign capital are in favor of the regime, not the rebellious citizenry...*

- After this protest, the EU somehow understood what happened. Foreign media reported realistically what happened. Foreign capital has interests here and it is important in the whole process. Nothing can be done from today to tomorrow. We have been failing for years. That process was successful because it showed us in a different light to the whole world. International investors started leaving Serbia.

### **Suggestions for getting out of the crisis?**

The context was described by one of the participants: 'Vučić divides society and incites people against one another. He wants to portray the students and rebellious citizens to his remaining supporters as a reborn elite. He develops selfishness in people, so that everyone cares about their own personal interest. He criticizes conscientious people like us who protest. He declared solidarity a flaw' (Nenad).

*The majority of those present opted for the idea of a round table:*

- Students cannot do it alone and must ask for support.
- A political figure of authority should be appointed and a round table should be organized in which all actors would participate.
- Students with their professors to make a proposal for a government in which people of credibility will enter. It should be the nucleus.
- Round table made up of students and the opposition.
- One of the solutions is internationalization. Progressive forces within the EU should keep us in mind, not to forget us.
- Students should get rid of the so-called mythomania. Serbian world, it is the worst possible idea and the biggest poison. Kosovo is independent and students must understand that.

**18** people participated in this discussion.



**March 16** – Five (5) activists participated in the discussion about the current situation (protests), as the others could not reach us because the Branko bridge was blocked (due to the protest of the educational workers).

**April 2 – “Sudanija” by Božidar Jakšić** (MOST ART-Yugoslavia, 2025), deliberation within the cycle *(In) visible SFR Yugoslavia*.

**Dr. Božidar Jakšić**, sociologist and author of the book *Sudanija* (published by MOST ART-YUGOSLAVIJA, 2025), testifies about the political and judicial persecution to which he was exposed in the period 1972-73. At the time, Jakšić was an assistant at the Faculty of Philosophy in Sarajevo and in the incriminated texts, he criticized the tolerance of nationalist-chauvinistic behavior by the party leadership, which had fatal consequences in the wars of the 90s. The following spoke about it: *Jovica Trkulja, Dragomir Olujić-Oluja, Ivan Srdanović, Dragan Stojković, Lino Veljak*. There were **21** people attending this event.



**April 9 “On the persecution of political dissidents - the regime’s pursuit of NGOs”** - After the decision of the President of the USA, *Donald Trump*, to pass a decree on the suspension of the activities of the USAID organization and other measures, the state authorities in Serbia began to investigate the way in which USAID funds were used in the non-governmental sector, focusing investigative actions on only a few organizations. The largest part of USAID funds is received by state institutions and not by civil organizations. And while in the USA there is a fight against this and other Trump directives and the courts are overturning them, in Serbia a real campaign was going on (and has not yet ended) against several NGOs, mainly those known for criticizing the government and drawing attention to the violation of human rights and freedoms.

**Dragoslava Barzut** informed us about what this campaign looked like on the example of the *Citizens’ Initiatives* organization. Thirteen (13) people participated in the discussion.

**April 16 “What we don’t talk about” by Slavenka Drakulić**  
(published by Fraktura in Zagreb, 2024).

**Slavenka Drakulić**, author of novels, stories, essays and several non-fiction books, was a well-known journalist for the weekly *Danas* in the 1980s, and later for others, such as the *Feral Tribune*. She was one of the participants in the first feminist conference in the SFRY in 1978, and her first book from 1984 is the nonfiction *“The Mortal Sins of Feminism”*. Her works have been translated into twenty languages, and in Croatia she was declared one of the “witches” in the dark nineties... Today she lives between Zagreb and Stockholm.

Participants in the discussion about this book of stories by **Slavenka Drakulić** *“What we don’t talk about”*, nine activists **(9)** commented on certain stories from the book, analyzing the characters and destinies and comparing them with their own experiences.

**April 23** – Talk about **Ivana Bajić-Hajduković’s book “Can you escape from sadness?”** (Imprimatur edition, 2024). The conversation is part of the thematic cycle *“Feminist ethics of care - controversies, pitfalls, (ab)uses...”*

The author examines “the impact of the mass emigration of young people during the 90s (due to war, mobilization) on family ties and relationships. This research pointed to the specificity of the experience of mothers from research related to the departure of young people under great pressure due to war and mobilization: *“These are traumas in the intimacy of the home. The feeling of pain due to leaving and being forced to leave. As well as the terror of institutions and society that mothers suffered because of it. It is also about the “invisible side of migration” about mothers who suffered different pressures - even the envy of the environment, in addition to the pain of parting. But also, the mark of “traitor’s mothers”*, emphasized the moderator Staša Z. Then the activists spoke about their experience of emigration of their sons and male relatives who fled the war and sought refuge around the world.

The second part of the conversation concerned the attitude of the current student movement - the refusal to emigrate, as previous generations had to, and the chances that their blockades and other actions would create circumstances for that. Thirteen **(13)** people participated in this debate.

## **CAMPAIGNS, APPEALS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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 highlight some of the announcements:

### **Find and punish the SNS beaters of Novi Sad students! -**

Women in Black strongly condemned the beating of a group of students from Novi Sad (on the night of January 27-28), which was planned, organized and carried out by the beating arm of the criminal regime. "The SNS beaters are the heirs of the radical scum, who killed all over the former Yugoslavia. Now, the same people who are still in positions of power in Serbia are defending their positions by dealing with their political dissidents. Such violent acts indicate that the SNS regime is seriously concerned about its mafia/criminal survival in power and will stop at nothing in its defense. Women in Black demand that the competent judicial institutions of the Republic of Serbia urgently find and adequately punish the attackers. Women in Black will continue to provide their full support to the student struggle. The persistence of the student protests shows both the desire for change and the changing of the value system in society," the statement from *January 28 states*.

**Regarding the expulsion of activists from Croatia** – in a statement dated *January 23*, Women in Black and the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights strongly condemned the expulsion of activists from Croatia, which represents an escalation of repression. It is the response of the state apparatus of force, which paranoically recognizes hostile action on all sides. Namely, about fifteen Erste Academy participants who were in Belgrade the previous days were taken by police officers for questioning during the night, and then they were handed a decision to deport them from Serbia within 24 hours and ban them from entering the country for one year. *"We will continue to build bridges of peace, trust, mutual support, cooperation, and solidarity with civil society organizations from Croatia. We are proud that we built peace together, both in the most difficult war years and after the war, in accordance with the principles of respect, autonomy, and responsibility. Together with civil society organizations from Croatia, we have overcome countless nationalist-militaristic obstacles from various regimes - nothing will prevent or impede our trust, friendship, and cooperation!"* it is stated in the announcement.

**Stop the war in Ukraine!** – On February 20, 2014, the Russian Federation attacked Ukraine and annexed the Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea. On February 24, 2022, under the pretext of "special operations", the Russian Federation attacked Ukraine again and since then has been participating in armed aggression against an independent European country.

Women in Black also demand on this occasion (statement of *February 21*):

- **Immediate cessation of all military operations and withdrawal of occupation troops of the Russian Federation from Ukraine.**
- **Investigation before the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice for the crimes of the**

**Russian invasion troops against civilians in Ukraine. We support requests to establish a special UN tribunal for war crimes in Ukraine.**

- **Conducting effective peace negotiations in order to stop all military operations in order to end the suffering of the civilian population, the destruction of cities, the destruction of civil infrastructure. These negotiations cannot and must not take place without Ukraine!**
- **For Serbia to join the EU sanctions against Russia, not only because of the obligation arising from the status of a candidate for EU membership, but also as an act of clear condemnation of Russian aggression.**

**We will never forget the crime in Štrpci!** - in a statement dated February 26, WiB recalled: "On February 27, 1993, at 3:48 p.m., on the Belgrade-Bar railway, in Štrpci, from train number 671, the Serbian paramilitary formation "osvetnici", which operated in the reserve of the Višegrad Brigade, Army of the Republika Srpska, under the command of Milan Lukić, took **19** Bosniak passengers, one Croat passenger and an unidentified person. The prisoners were taken to the gymnasium of the elementary school in the village of Mušići (Višegrad municipality), where they were beaten and robbed, and then they were killed in the yard of the house of Rasim Čehić, in the village of Prelovo (Višegrad municipality). Women in Black immediately supported the families of the victims: since 1993, years ago, every February 27, they marked the anniversary of the kidnapping in Štrpci with protests in mourning and silence. Women in Black provided emotional and political support to the families of the victims during the entire trial against several accused for this crime in the Special Court in Belgrade. The verdict of the same court was shameful - a judicial institution once again mocked both the victims and the families of the victims of this crime. No one was punished for this, as well as for the other crimes, which were committed in Sandzak, against the Bosniak population, before the Hague Tribunal.



Women in Black, on this occasion, also reminded that: "None of the planners, commanders, or instigators of the crime was responsible for this state-organized crime (behind which all the political structures of the FRY stood); that the families are still searching for most of the remains of the victims; that due to the discriminatory provision in the Law on Civilian Victims of War, the same law does not recognize the families of the victims as victims, since the victims were killed outside the territory of the FRY (even though that territory was under the control of the Bosnian Serbs), and that they did not perish from the so-called enemy army (they were killed by members of the Bosnian Serbs)".

### **Stop the persecution of non-governmental organizations!**

- Women in Black strongly condemned the intrusion of armed police officers into the premises of four non-governmental organizations in Belgrade (*February 25*). "By hounding non-governmental organizations, the regime is trying to divert the public's attention from student protests and the great dissatisfaction that is manifested in numerous protests in almost every populated place in the country, and direct it to critical voices. Non-governmental organizations that persistently and consistently advocate for the rule of law, a state of law, and respect for human rights, are once again qualified as treacherous, traitorous, foreign agencies, which work to the detriment of citizens in Serbia and against the state. The regime in Serbia, steeped in crime and corruption, abuses the police for political purposes and uses it to deal with those whose involvement is corrective work in relation to any government. We ask the European institutions, first of all, the European Commission, to respond urgently and provide unequivocal political support to the attacked non-governmental organizations in Serbia, and condemn the political crackdown of the autocratic regime headed by Aleksandar Vučić. Women in Black, who have been exposed to fierce state political persecution since 1991, express their solidarity with all non-governmental organizations which this time are the target of persecution", it was stated in the announcement of *February 26*.

**Free the activists of the Most Remains initiative!** – in a statement dated *March 7*, WiB demanded the immediate release of the arrested activists of the initiative Most ostaje! (The Bridge shall Remain!) Namely, the regime started the removal of the old Sava Bridge (November 2024) - the symbol of Belgrade. It is about the demolition of a bridge that has been connecting two parts of the city (new and old) for decades, and the regime has not offered reasons for removing the old bridge, nor a plan on how to organize traffic without the bridge. That's why the citizens started the initiative *The Bridge shall remain* - permanent round-the-clock duty in the defense of the old bridge, and so far the beginning of the removal of the bridge has been prevented several times. Activists of this initiative tried to enter the Belgrade City Assembly on March 6, 2025, demanding the responsibility of the competent authorities. They were prevented

from doing so and eventually physically attacked by the private security of the Mayor of Belgrade, Aleksandar Šapić.

As activists of the anti-militarism movement, WiB pointed out the dangerous fact of the existence of private security agencies, which pose a threat to public order and peace. A request was sent to punish all members of the private security who beat the gathered citizens; the suspension of misdemeanor and criminal prosecution of the activists of the initiative Most ostaje! Women in Black will continue to support the Mostostaje! initiative and will express their solidarity with all those who are fighting for a better city for all of us, read the announcement.

**Urgently stop the political persecution of activists of the youth group STAV and members of PSG** - on March 14, activist and student Lazar Dinić was arrested in Belgrade, while in Novi Sad members of the Movement of Free Citizens/PSG were arrested: *Lado Jovović, Marija Vasić, Davor Stefanović, Srđan Đurić* and *Mladen Cvijetić*. Yesterday, March 16, the High Court in Novi Sad ordered a 30-day detention for the six arrested, while on March 15, the apartments of activists who are currently not in Serbia were searched. The arrests followed the broadcast of an audio recording that was created by eavesdropping on a meeting attended by members of the Free Citizens Movement as well as activists of the STAV group. The recording was made by the Security Information Agency. The video was made on Wednesday, March 12, ahead of the protest rally scheduled for March 15, with the aim of intimidating citizens to participate in the protest. Countless of the most serious threats, including death and rape threats, have been sent to the members of the STAV group. In the pre-investigation procedure, the group is charged with "undermining the constitutional order". Such a qualification is unacceptable because the group did not undertake any activity in the direction of realizing the mentioned disputed words from the conversation. We appeal to all international organizations and institutions that deal with the protection of citizens to stand up for young activists from Serbia who are currently exposed to the most brutal politically motivated media and court persecution, according to the statement of the group of 25 NGOs, including Women in Black.

**Stop violence against protesters and defenders of human rights!** - in a statement dated March 16, WiB strongly condemned the behavior of members of the Zvezdara police station, who on the night of March 15 to 16, 2025, injured the hand of the lawyer of the Committee of Lawyers for Human Rights, Kristina Todorović. On the same occasion, WiB condemned the 'excessive use of force and the illegal use of a sound cannon, against peaceful demonstrators - the citizens of the entire country, who on March 15, 2025, organized by students in the blockade, gathered to express their dissatisfaction against the corrupt, mafia-like and authoritarian regime of Aleksandar Vučić. The students did everything to make the protest pass peacefully

and in a spirit of non-violence, but the regime, using brutal force, tried to cast a shadow over the student and citizen protests. That's why the WiB demanded from the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Serbia: an urgent investigation against the police officer who injured the lawyer Todorović, conducting misdemeanor proceedings and punishing him - by removing him from service; the immediate initiation of criminal proceedings against all those competent members of the Ministry of Internal Affairs who ordered the use of illegal weapons and thereby committed a terrorist act against their own citizens'.

*Report prepared by: Staša Zajović; in cooperation with:  
Dragan Protić Prota, Miloš Urošević, Mirko Medenica,  
Nastasja Radović, Nataša Milanović,  
Violeta Đikanović, Zinaida Marjanović.*

**August 2025**