

Balkan Task Force  
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**Document:**

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DCI Interagency Balkan Task Force  
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**Atrocities in Bosnia: A Regional Overview** [REDACTED]

**General Characteristics**

Atrocities have been committed throughout Bosnia over the past four years. Serb forces committed the worst and most numerous offenses at the start of the conflict in 1992, when they attacked and occupied key population centers along Bosnia's northern, eastern, and southern peripheries. The number of atrocities picked up again in 1993 when the Bosnians and Croats began warring among themselves. With the glaring exception of Srebrenica in 1995, the number and severity of reported atrocities has declined markedly since the signing of the Washington Accords in 1994, largely due to the relative stability of territorial holdings. [REDACTED]

Only the Bosnian Serbs exhibited a clearly organized, large-scale campaign of ethnic cleansing. The JNA and, later, the BSA; local Bosnian Serb militias; and Bosnian Serb paramilitary forces would quickly take over a city or town and ethnic Serb civilian leaders set up crisis committees to maintain order and organize ethnic cleansing operations. JNA and BSA units would then move on to the next town while paramilitaries would round up non-Serbs (almost exclusively Muslim) and hastily set up collection points. Local Bosnian Serbs and paramilitaries then looted and burned empty homes. Those who resisted usually were killed. Within a short period, large, permanent detention camps would be established and paramilitaries

would ethnically cleanse outlying towns. Once most non-Serbs had left the area or been killed, Bosnian Serb leaders would shift tactics and expel the remainder directly, without first sending them to camps. [REDACTED]

The bodies of many of the initial victims of Bosnian Serb ethnic cleansing were thrown into nearby rivers or simply left in the open. After authorities erected the large camps, guards often buried bodies in mass graves. Initially near the camps, mass graves were eventually placed in areas [REDACTED] where their nature could be hidden (city dumps, existing cemeteries, etc.). By fall 1992, however, many non-Serbs killed in ethnic cleansing operations reportedly were being cremated. [REDACTED]

The Bosnians and Croats reportedly committed atrocities primarily against each other during the fighting in 1993 and early 1994. Both sides expelled and murdered civilians from specific areas—often in retaliation for similar actions by the other side—although the Bosnians acted on a smaller scale and generally limited detainees to POWs, rather than civilians. The Croat system of detention camps closely resembled the system of camps run by the Bosnian Serbs at the time: conditions were harsh, prisoners were primarily civilians, and the sites were run by the military with the secondary purpose of organizing forced labor gangs. [REDACTED]

There reportedly are no large-scale detention sites currently active in Bosnia. Each side still detains POWs for use in forced labor crews. The Bosnian Serbs reportedly still were holding small groups of non-Serb civilians for forced labor as of early November 1995, and several dozen probably continue to be held for this purpose. Small groups of non-Serbs continue to be expelled from their homes, although this flow has slowed to a trickle since the signing of the Dayton Accords. [REDACTED] have also suggested that the Bosnian Serb leadership has begun to take steps to hide evidence of both older and more recent atrocities. [REDACTED]

The warring parties concentrated ethnic cleansing operations and therefore atrocities in several key areas of Bosnia. Each region has its detention centers, alleged execution sites, and apparent mass graves. [REDACTED]

#### Northwestern Bosnia

The region consisting of Prijedor, Sanski Most, and Banja Luka has been under Bosnian Serb control throughout most of the war. Most of the non-Serb population was either killed or expelled in the first six months of occupation. Bosnian Serb authorities resumed large-scale ethnic cleansing—mainly expulsions to Croatia or central Bosnia—in July 1994, so that now only about two percent of the non-Serb, pre-war population remains, [REDACTED]

The initial collection sites for non-Serb civilian prisoners in this area were usually school buildings, bus stops, and sports arenas. [REDACTED] These smaller sites gave way to four main detention camps by late May 1992: Keraterm, Trnopolje (mostly women), Omarska (mostly men), and Manjaca (mostly men). The former three closed by December 1992, while Manjaca—which adjoins a BSA tank training area—remained the main camp in western

Bosnia until early 1993. The Bosnian Serbs have used the camp intermittantly for civilians, deserters, and POWs since then. [REDACTED]

The area immediately surrounding Banja Luka did not experience the most violent aspects of the initial 1992 ethnic cleansing campaign, but Banja Luka authorities probably were involved in such operations in the region. Banja Luka, a traditional Serb stronghold in an otherwise mixed region, had a large Serb majority, according to the 1991 census, and authorities there did not set up large detention camps. Instead, non-Serb community leaders were, and still are, detained in several police buildings and prisons. [REDACTED]

### Northeastern Bosnia

Ethnic cleansing by Bosnian Serb forces began in the northeastern region of Bosnia and concentrated in Brcko, Bijeljina, Bosanski Samac, and Zvornik. Several Serbian paramilitary groups joined JNA, local militia, and paramilitary forces in April 1992 in taking over these and other towns in the area. Many non-Serb civilians in these towns were killed or expelled by Serb forces, as happened in northwestern Bosnia. [REDACTED] estimates that only a few hundred non-Serbs remain in the region. [REDACTED]

Some of the Serbian and local paramilitaries stayed behind in towns in this region and rounded up Muslims. The camps, with the exception of the Luka camp in Brcko and the Batkovic agricultural compound, were generally smaller, and most remained open longer, than those in northwestern Bosnia, according to refugee reports. Although the Bosnian Serb "interior ministry" ran most of the camps here, as it did in other regions, the BSA and paramilitary groups also ran some of the detention camps for civilians. Larger "rape camps" and detention centers in existing factory buildings were more common here than in other regions. The Batkovic camp continues to hold non-Serb prisoners, often civilians, according to refugee reports from December. The BSA uses these prisoners for work details and to exchange for Bosnian Serb POWs. [REDACTED]

### Central Bosnia

Atrocities committed in Central Bosnia, and the camps often associated with them, are unique in that they can be attributed to all three sides. Most of those committed by the Bosnian Serbs centered around Mostar early in the war and later settled around Sarajevo. Those committed by the Croat military centered around Mostar, Vitez, and the Kiseljak areas. The relatively fewer atrocities reportedly committed by the Bosnian Army centered around Bugojno and Sarajevo. The larger detention sites on all three sides have generally been in either existing prisons or industrial complexes. [REDACTED]

Many of the atrocities in Sarajevo attributed to the Bosnians reportedly were the work of street gangs whom the Bosnian Government employed to help defend the city early in the war. Those attributed to the Bosnian Serbs were carried out by the BSA, which has shelled civilians and "ethnically cleansed" outlying Serb suburbs. Both sides have maintained, and continue to maintain, several detention sites. Both sides have held civilians at these sites, and the Bosnian Serbs probably continue to do so. [REDACTED]

Early in the war, the Bosnian Serbs organized a massive roundup of non-Serbs in Mostar and--when they were forced out--shelled civilian areas indiscriminantly. In early 1993, the HVO began "cleansing" Muslims from the eastern portion of Mostar with the help of several Bosnian Croat crime syndicates. Random atrocities still continue in the Mostar area, primarily because hardline Croat leaders, in refusing to support EU administration of the city, have allowed the crime syndicates to continue expanding their influence. [REDACTED]

### Eastern Bosnia

Although census data shows that the eastern edge of Bosnia held a Muslim majority before the war, almost no Muslims remain in the now Serb-held areas, [REDACTED] Bosnian Serb attacks on Vlasenica and Foca occurred at approximately the same time as the attacks on the other main population centers in Bosnia, but the ethnic cleansing process was executed in a more thorough manner. More local paramilitary units aided in the attacks than in other regions and authority appeared to be more centralized at an earlier time than in other regions. The alleged head of the Susica detention camp near Vlasenica, where hundreds or possibly thousands of Muslims were killed, was the first person indicted by the UN War Crimes Tribunal. Foca is perhaps best known as the site of notorious "rape camps" set up by the Bosnian Serbs. [REDACTED]

There has been very little reporting on forced labor activities or atrocities in this region since late 1993, with the notable exception of the apparent massacres at Srebrenica in July 1995. This may be because very few non-Serbs are left; the BSA was secure in this area (Gorazde excepted) and could concentrate labor in other areas; and many towns and villages were more ethnically homogenous than in most other parts of Bosnia before the war, according to the 1991 census data. [REDACTED]

Instead of using smaller, temporary detention sites before larger ones could be established, Bosnian Serb authorities had ready access to larger facilities (some prepared ahead of time) and used smaller facilities simply as stopover sites or "rape camps." [REDACTED]

### Main Detention Sites in Bosnia

[REDACTED]

#### Northwestern Bosnia

##### Main Camps

Keraterm - Ceramics factory

Trnopolje - Near train station in town

Omarska - Iron ore pit mine

Manjaca - Old JNA Karadordevo military farm. Held up to 5,500 men

##### Smaller/Temporary Camps

In Banja Luka: Mali Logor Prison, Tunjice Civilian Prison. In Omarska: Sports Stadium,

Restaurant. In Kozarac: Elementary School, Agricultural Building. In Ljubija: Iron Mines. In Stari Majdan: Coal Mines. In Tomisica: Mine. In Sanski Most: Krings Iron Works, Betonirka Cement Factory, Sportska Dvorana Narodni Front Sports Auditorium, Hasan Hikić Middle School, Police Station. In Donji Kamengrad: Coal Mine, Kamengrad Home (rape camp). In Kamenica: Elementary School near town. In Ljusci Palanka: Military Prison (rape camp).

### Northeastern Bosnia

#### Main Camp

Luka - near Brcko bus station

Batkovic - farm north of Bijeljina. Probably still in use by the BSA to hold non-Serb civilian and military prisoners.

Zvornik - three story Novi Izvor Electric Co. building

#### Smaller/Temporary Camps

In Brcko: Interplet Textile Combine, Posavina Farming Co-op, Bimex Meat-packing Plant, Laser Discotheque, Partizan Sports Center, Hotel Galeb (rape camp), Hotel Westfalia (rape camp). In Loncari: Elementary School.

In Bosanski Samac: Mitar Trifunovic Elementary School Gymnasium, Zasavica, police/Territorial Defense Forces/prison Buildings. In Tuzla: Tusanj Soccer Stadium.

In Zvornik: Bratstvo Sports Center. In Karakaj: Alhos Clothing Factory, Standard(t) Shoe Factory, Ekonomija Agricultural Farm, Glinica Aluminum Refinery (rape camp). In Celopek: KP Dom Culture Building. In Lopare: Farm.

### Central Bosnia

#### Main Camps

Mostar - Heliodrome

Bugojno - Soccer stadium

Sarajevo - Tarcin

Capljina - Dretelj

Konjic - Musala Sports Arena

#### Smaller/Temporary Camps

Sarajevo - central prison, Kula, Lukavica, Ramiz Salcin. Bugojno: Elementary School.

Capljina - Gabela Prison. Mostar: Fourth Elementary School; Helicopter Factory.

Konjic - Petrol Storage Center. Visoko: Prison. Vitez: Dubravica Prison.

Zepce: Elementary School, Agricultural Silos, Sports Arena.

### Eastern Bosnia

#### Main Camps

Foca - KP Dom Prison

Partizan Sports Center (rape camp)

Vlasenica - Susica Camp

#### Smaller/Temporary Camps

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Foca: High School, Solano Salt Warehouse, Karamans House (rape camp), Milevino Hotel (rape camp), Perucica Company Storehouse, Livade Camp (for non-Serb leaders). Foca-Aladza: School. Miljevina: Coal Mine. Brod: School. Rudo: Military Garrison, Cellar of the Movie House. Nova Kasaba: Military Garrison. Bratunac: Stadium.

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## Large Suspected Mass Grave Sites in Bosnia

### Northwestern Bosnia

Manjaca - water reservoir

Vrhopolje - near bridge south of the joining of the Sava and Sanica Rivers. 3,500 buried.

Keraterm - factory grounds.

Kozarac - mosque. 2,000-3,000 buried.

east bank of Lake Rybnjak. 500 buried.

Kurovo - city dump

Ljubija - iron ore mine pits. 400-500 buried.

Omarska - field near the camp. 1,000 buried.

Bears Gate Lake. 2,300 buried. Sludge added to anchor bodies.

Jezero Pit 500-600m south of the camp. Reportedly cemented over.

Prijedor - Sodr Grabe field. 2,300 buried.

Tomasica mine. 350 buried. Some animal corpses buried on top to disguise it.

city dump. 1,140 buried.

Trnopolje - several graves near camp. 1,000 buried.

### Northeastern Bosnia

Brcko - city dump. Some bodies compressed first.

Bimex meat-packing plant.

brick factory 2 km north of town.

Sara Geponija depot. 4,000-4,500 buried.

livestock pen south of Bijeljinska Street.

power plant. 1/2 km from plant. 1,000 buried.

Westfalia Hotel. 50m east and behind hotel.

Potocare - flat area near sparse birch trees.

Brezevo Polje - just outside town. 1,000 buried.

Zvornik - castle ruins. 3,000 buried.

Meterizi cemetery.

Kazambasic cemetery north of Zvornik. 600 buried.

Sahanici - near earthen dam.

### Central Bosnia

Mostar - Balnovic cemetery. 575 buried.

Capljina - Muminovaca Partisan cemetery 1.5 km east of Capljina.

### Eastern Bosnia

Foca - flood plain east of Drina River across from the KP Dom prison.

mosque. 200 buried.

behind hospital.

Miljevina - old mine shaft.  
Sula - mine shaft.  
Vlasenica - hill called Debelo Brdo.  
Nova Kasaba - soccer field.  
Sandici - near road.  
Kravica - just outside village.  
Tartar - at edge of tree line.