

Kali Sara – Roma Information Centre

# Justice Through Truth, 30 Years of Silence

Report on the Suffering of Roma  
in the Podrinje Region and  
Northern Bosnia, 1992–1995





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## ABBREVIATIONS

- ARBiH/Army of RBiH - Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- BiH - Bosnia and Herzegovina
- CC - Criminal Code
- CPC - Criminal Procedure Code
- DNA - Deoxyribonucleic Acid (used in the context of the forensic identification of human remains)
- EU - European Union
- FBiH - Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- FNRJ - Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia
- HVO - Croatian Defence Council
- INTERPOL - International Criminal Police Organization
- ICTY - International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
- JNA - Yugoslav People's Army
- KM - Convertible Mark
- LC - Local community
- MPI BiH - Missing Persons Institute of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- MUP - Ministry of the Interior
- NN - *Nomen nescio* (designation used for unidentified bodies recovered from mass graves)
- OSCE - Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
- PAM - Anti-Aircraft Machine Gun
- PTSD - Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- RBiH - Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- RS - Republika Srpska
- SFRJ - Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
- SIPA - State Investigation and Protection Agency
- SNSD - Alliance of Independent Social Democrats
- SUP - Secretariat of Internal Affairs
- UN - United Nations
- UNPROFOR - United Nations Protection Force (mentioned in the context of rescue operations and helicopter evacuations)
- USA - United States of America
- VRS - Army of Republika Srpska

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report represents the first comprehensive attempt to document and map the historically invisible suffering of the Roma community in the Podrinje region and northern Bosnia during the 1992–1995 war. Through in-depth field research, analysis of court judgments and the collection of testimonies, this document breaks decades of silence, unequivocally confirming that Roma were not merely incidental witnesses to wartime destruction, but were systematically persecuted and destroyed as part of the campaign of ethnic cleansing and genocide.

The research mapped 26 municipalities and towns and more than 50 micro-locations across the Podrinje region, north-eastern Bosnia, Posavina and Krajina, including: **Foča** (the town, Šukovac and Miljevina), **Goražde** (Zupčići), **Srebrenica** (Kazani, Trubari, Sase and Skelani), **Bratunac** (Pirići and Orlo/Orlica), **Vlasenica** (Barice, Drum and Piskavice), **Milići** (Nova Kasaba – Ciganluk), **Zvornik** (the town, Ciganluk, Skočić and Drinjača), **Bijeljina** (the town, Čopor, Divlji Zapad, Tombak, Janja and Batković camp), **Kalesija** (Olanovica and Vukovije-Kosa), **Sapna** (Vrla Strana, Biberovići and Donji Zaseok), **Teočak** (Jasenje), **Ugljevik** (Janjari), **Brčko** (Suljagić Sokak, Ciganluk and Luka camp), **Gračanica** (Donja Orahovica), **Lukavac**, **Banovići**, **Tuzla**, **Modriča** (the town and Straževac), **Vukosavlje** (Modrički Lug and Jakeš), **Bosanski Brod** (Sijekovac), **Doboj** (the town, the “4 July” barracks, Bare and the bunkers), **Petrovo** (Sočkovac), **Derventa**, **Prnjavor**, **Banja Luka** and **Prijedor** (Volarić and Hambarine).

The suffering of Roma took the form of horrific patterns of mass and individual killings, rape, torture, unlawful confinement in camps, forced labour, and the complete destruction of their homes and property. Field mapping precisely reconstructs the geography of this violence. In Foča, in settlements such as Šukovac and Miljevina, Roma homes were razed to the ground, while men were taken away and killed, their bodies later discovered in mass graves. Particularly shocking examples of brutality were recorded in Prijedor, in the settlement of Volarić, where nine Roma civilians were forced at gunpoint to dig a mass grave for murdered Bosniaks, only to be executed by automatic gunfire after completing the forced labour. In Srebrenica and Bratunac, Roma actively participated in the defence of Bosnia and Herzegovina as members of the Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, defending settlements such as the village of Pirići. However, following the fall of the Srebrenica enclave in July 1995, Roma men and boys shared the fate of their Bosniak neighbours: they were captured, tortured in schools in Bratunac, and subsequently systematically executed at killing sites such as Branjevo, Pilica and Kozluk, before being buried in primary and secondary mass graves.

A particularly brutal chapter of wartime horror occurred on 12 July 1992 in the village of Skočić near Zvornik, where members of the paramilitary formation known as Simo’s Chetniks murdered 27 Roma in a particularly brutal manner, including children between the ages of two and thirteen, as well as pregnant women. Girls between the ages of 10 and 16 were separated from the group, taken into sexual slavery, and subjected to continuous rape and abuse over a period of months.

Concentration camps such as Batković near Bijeljina, the Luka camp in Brčko, and detention facilities in Doboj and Jakeš were places where Roma, together with other non-Serb detainees, endured unimaginable torture, starvation and systematic humiliation. In the Jakeš camp near Modriča, as well as in Doboj and other detention facilities, Roma women and underage girls were victims of systematic and mass rape, often committed in front of their fathers, mothers, brothers, husbands and neighbours.

In this report, Roma women are recognised as double victims – as women subjected to gender-based violence and as members of a marginalised ethnic community. Rape and sexual abuse were used as weapons of war in Bijeljina, Zvornik, Doboj, Modriča, Miljevina and many other locations.

After the war, confronted with deeply entrenched patriarchal norms, fear of rejection and retaliation, poverty and distrust of institutions, these women were forced to live within a space of “double silence” – the silence of war and the silence of post-war neglect. Many of them continue to live in the immediate vicinity of their abusers, without adequate psychological, legal or material support.

The consequences of this systematic violence have been catastrophic. Demographic data testify to the near-complete erasure of Roma from the Podrinje region; between the 1991 and 2013 population censuses, their number declined by more than 78 per cent. Settlements and neighbourhoods known as “Ciganluks” in Jasenje (Municipality of Teočak), Derventa, Prijedor and Banja Luka were physically erased from the landscape. Infrastructure was destroyed, houses in Zvornik and Nova Kasaba were devastated or demolished, and return was further obstructed through the unlawful appropriation of Roma property.

This report clearly demonstrates that transitional justice, memorialisation processes and post-war reconstruction in Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot be complete without the recognition of Roma victims. Through this Report, we call for urgent institutional action: the creation of comprehensive databases and digital maps documenting the suffering of Roma; the inclusion of their experiences in educational curricula and museum exhibitions; the provision of access to reparations for survivors and victims of sexual violence; and the reconstruction of destroyed and devastated homes.

The ultimate objective of this research is to remedy a historical injustice by ensuring that the suffering of Roma is permanently and indelibly inscribed not on the margins, but at the very centre of the historical truth about the aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina, the war crimes committed, and the genocide perpetrated against its citizens.

**Part I:  
Report on the  
Suffering of Roma,  
1992–1995**

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# 1. Context, Objectives, Methodology and Normative Framework

This research aims to document patterns of war crimes and serious human rights violations committed against members of the Roma population in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the period 1992-1995, and to analyse these patterns in light of international humanitarian law, international criminal law, and applicable international human rights protection standards. The fundamental intention of this approach is to deconstruct decades of historical amnesia and reject the thesis according to which the suffering of Roma constituted merely “collateral damage” of the armed conflict.

This report represents **a continuation of the research and documentation activities** initiated by Kali Sara – Roma Information Centre through its earlier report, Report on the Suffering of Roma in the Podrinje Region during the Period 1992-1995, prepared in cooperation with the Srebrenica Memorial Centre and BIRN BiH. That report constituted **the first systematic attempt to document war crimes against Roma in Bosnia and Herzegovina**, with a focus on the Podrinje region, and emerged from the need to recognise and record the suffering of the Roma community, which had long remained outside the scope of institutional attention, research and public remembrance.

Building on that pioneering research, the new report expands the analytical framework and continues the process of collecting facts, mapping locations of suffering, and documenting the experiences of Roma victims throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. In doing so, it builds upon the previous work of Kali Sara and its partner organisations, which have already emphasised the need to recognise Roma victims, include them in transitional justice processes, and develop memorialisation policies.

In this way, the present report does not constitute an isolated initiative, but rather **a continuation of a broader process of research and public advocacy** encompassing the locations and crimes documented in both the first and second phases of the research. Its objective is to end the long-standing institutional and social invisibility of Roma war victims and to ensure that their suffering is included in comprehensive narratives concerning the war, transitional justice and the culture of remembrance in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Accordingly, this report covers the locations and crimes documented in both the first and second phases. The report is divided into two parts:

- **Analysis**, which includes data and findings categorised according to the typology of crimes, and
- **Mapping**, in which crimes are presented according to the locations where they were committed.

The research employs a highly structured qualitative documentation approach based on:

- the collection of individual testimonies from marginalised survivors,
- the analysis of final judgments of domestic courts and tribunals,
- secondary sources, media archives and records from the non-governmental sector,
- the triangulation and forensic verification of collected data.

The methodology was developed in strict accordance with the standards for documenting serious human rights violations applied by international courts and independent investigative missions, while incorporating the jurisprudence and definitions of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). Through this approach, human suffering and the raw testimonies of victims are translated into the formal, universal language of international criminal law, thereby creating an irrefutable legal foundation for transitional justice mechanisms.

The research is based on semi-structured interviews and official records documenting the direct experiences of several dozen Roma civilians, including:

- survivors who were direct victims of sexual violence, torture and detention in camps,
- family members of those who were killed, disappeared, or whose mortal remains were exhumed,
- eyewitnesses to executions and armed attacks on Roma settlements,
- former detainees of concentration camps and improvised bunkers,
- officials, doctors, investigators and activists possessing direct institutional knowledge of the events.

The process of mapping and collecting interviews was conducted continuously from August 2025 to February 2026 under the project Enhancing Roma Participation in Transitional Justice in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Interviews were conducted in different parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina (including Bijeljina, Brčko, Doboј, Prijedor, Prnjavor, Modriča, Kalesija, Tuzla...), as well as with survivors currently living in the diaspora. In total, more than 160 extensive interviews were conducted with survivors, family members of victims and direct witnesses to the events. The interviews were carried out in several regions across the country, including the north-eastern, northern, western and Podrinje regions, as well as, in certain cases, within the diaspora. This regional dispersion enabled a comparative insight into patterns of violence and persecution, as well as into the specific characteristics of local contexts.

The mapping of the suffering of Roma in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the 1992–1995 war demonstrates that crimes against Roma were geographically widespread and systematically present in many local communities. According to the collected data, the suffering of Roma was recorded in at least 26 towns and municipalities across Bosnia and Herzegovina, including the Podrinje region, north-eastern Bosnia, Posavina and Krajina. Within these local communities, at least 50 specific locations of suffering were identified, including villages, settlements, urban neighbourhoods, camps and individual sites of civilian killings.

The documented cases include the killing of civilians, disappearances, imprisonment, suffering in camps, and the destruction of Roma settlements, confirming that Roma were subjected to various forms of wartime violence. Of particular significance is the fact that, in several locations, no reconstruction of Roma homes took place, and no return of the Roma population was recorded, indicating the long-term consequences of the war and the permanent displacement of this community.

These data clearly demonstrate that the suffering of Roma was not a series of isolated incidents, but rather a widespread phenomenon that requires systematic research, documentation and public recognition, thereby further confirming the relevance of and need for the preparation of a comprehensive report on the wartime suffering of Roma in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**Verification and triangulation** Given the time span of more than three decades and the fragility of human memory under the burden of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), particular attention was devoted to the rigorous verification of claims. The subjective recollections of survivors were subjected to objectification through cross-referencing with available legal and institutional sources.

Information obtained through interviews was primarily:

- compared with judicially established facts, including judgments of the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina (e.g. Case No. S1 1 K 024092 17 Kri against Boro Miloјica et al., in which the execution of Roma civilians in Prijedor was proven),
- compared with available documentation concerning concentration camps and detention facilities (the Luka camp in Brčko, Batković in Bijeljina, Omarska, Keraterm, and improvised bunkers in Doboј),
- verified in cooperation with official institutions, such as the Missing Persons Institute of Bosnia and Herzegovina (MPI BiH), by matching survivors' testimonies with data on the exhumation of mass graves (the cases of Skočić, Sijekovac and Prnjavor) and DNA identifications,
- analysed through the consistency of multiple independent, indirect and direct testimonies provided by eyewitnesses and members of local communities.

Claims made by survivors that could not be corroborated through at least two independent sources or through documentary evidence were clearly identified as subjective witness statements, thereby preserving the academic integrity of the research. Accordingly, this document establishes a clear epistemological distinction between:

- judicially established facts (*res judicata*) based on international and domestic law,
- repeatedly corroborated patterns of criminal conduct established through cross-referenced victim testimonies,
- individual testimonies concerning specific, isolated incidents.

### Analytical and Legal Framework

To ensure the usefulness of this research for future criminal proceedings and advocacy initiatives, the data were deconstructed and analysed at three levels:

1. **Factual level** – The precise and objective documentation of individual events, with a focus on establishing the identity of victims, the location, the exact time of the suffering, and the identification of known or alleged perpetrators.
2. **Patterns of conduct (*modus operandi*)** – The identification of systematic, recurring elements of violence applied exclusively against Roma. This includes establishing patterns such as: the destruction of Roma settlements and the usurpation of land (“urbicide” in Kalesija, Bratunac and Prijedor), the extreme mutilation of children and infants (Doboj/Modriča), the gang rape of women in the presence of male family members (Bijeljina, Doboj/Modriča), and the indiscriminate forcing of Roma detainees to perform labour on front lines while using their bodies as “human shields”.
3. **Legal qualification** – The final level entails the subsumption of the identified acts of commission (*actus reus*) and intent (*mens rea*) under the norms of international criminal law. An assessment was made as to whether these incidents fulfil the legal elements set out in the ICTY Statute:
  - Murder and wilful killing (Articles 5(a) and 2(a) of the ICTY Statute),
  - Rape and sexual violence (Article 5(g)),
  - Torture and inhumane acts / wilfully causing great suffering (Articles 5(f), 5(i) and 2(c)),
  - Unlawful confinement and the use of civilians for labour/human shields (Articles 5(e), 2(g) and 2(e)),
  - Extensive destruction of property and plunder (Articles 2(d), 3(b) and 3(e)),
  - *Persecution on racial, political and religious grounds as a crime against humanity* (Article 5(h)), thereby demonstrating a specific discriminatory intent directed against the Roma minority in Prijedor and the wider region.

This multi-layered analytical framework, based on the standards and jurisprudence of the Hague Tribunal, ensures that the suffering experienced by Roma is accorded legal recognition and integrated into contemporary efforts to achieve full transitional justice.

### Ethics and Witness Protection

The methodological framework of this research is based on the highest ethical principles and specific evidentiary standards adapted to the documentation of serious violations of international humanitarian law. Given the extreme sensitivity of the subject matter and the intersectional vulnerability of survivors, the entire data collection process was conducted in strict accordance with the principles of informed consent, absolute confidentiality and the inalienable right of witnesses to withdraw their testimony at any stage. A particularly high level of attention was devoted to identity protection when documenting the most intimate and devastating forms of trauma, specifically in the case of victims of conflict-related sexual violence and individuals who were minors at the time the crimes were committed. The identities of victims and suspects were retained in their original form only in cases where such information was already publicly available through official court judgments or verified media sources. In all other cases, initials or pseudonyms were used strictly to protect survivors from secondary victimisation, social stigma and potential retaliation by perpetrators.

### **Limitations of the Research**

When conducting the scholarly and legal analysis of the collected narratives, it is necessary to take into account the objective limitations inherent in this type of field research. The passage of more than three decades inevitably results in the natural erosion of memory; however, far more serious barriers are the paralysing fear of retaliation among witnesses and the deeply entrenched systemic invisibility of Roma. Official wartime and post-war state records are characterised by a chronic lack of archival documentation concerning Roma victims, whose suffering has been deliberately marginalised. Nevertheless, from a human rights perspective, these limitations do not constitute an obstacle to establishing the truth; on the contrary, they are carefully and analytically integrated into the process of legal qualification, thereby demonstrating an additional layer of discrimination faced by this community even in death.

### **Standard of Proof**

With regard to the legal nature and assessment of facts, it is of crucial importance to emphasise the epistemological distinction between this report and conventional judicial judgments. This document does not apply the strict criminal law standard of proof “beyond reasonable doubt”, which is reserved exclusively for judicial proceedings. Instead, in line with the practices of international human rights commissions, the analysis is based on the standard of “reasonable grounds to believe”. This approach is aimed at identifying consistent patterns of violence and persecution that have been repeatedly and cross-corroborated. The use of this standard of proof constitutes an essential, internationally recognised mechanism for the documentation of war crimes. It makes it possible to build, from preliminary field assessments, a solid foundation that directly indicates potential international criminal responsibility.

### **International Humanitarian Law**

The armed conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina was governed by the rules of international humanitarian law, including the four Geneva Conventions. Common Article 3 of all Geneva Conventions expressly prohibits, in all circumstances, violence to life and person, in particular murder of all kinds, mutilation, cruel treatment and torture, outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment, and the passing of sentences and the carrying out of executions without previous judgment pronounced by a regularly constituted court.

Article 27 of the Fourth Geneva Convention guarantees the protection of women against attacks on their honour, including rape and enforced prostitution. Article 33 of the Convention prohibits pillage and collective penalties, while Article 49 prohibits forcible transfers and deportation of protected persons. These prohibitions are absolute and constitute fundamental norms of international law.

### **War Crimes**

Serious violations of international humanitarian law constitute war crimes. Standards developed through the jurisprudence of the ICTY have confirmed that war crimes include the wilful killing of civilians, torture, cruel treatment, unlawful confinement, forced labour, pillage, the destruction of property not justified by military necessity, and sexual violence. The key elements of a war crime are: the existence of an armed conflict, a nexus between the act and the conflict, and the status of the victim as a civilian or protected person.

### **Crimes Against Humanity**

Crimes against humanity are defined as certain acts committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against a civilian population, with knowledge of that attack. Pursuant to Article 5 of the ICTY Statute, relevant acts include: murder, extermination, imprisonment, torture, rape, persecution on political, racial or religious grounds, and other inhumane acts. The key elements are: the existence of an attack against a civilian population, its widespread or systematic character, and the perpetrators' awareness of that context. Unlike individual war crimes, crimes against humanity imply a broader pattern of conduct.

### Persecution on Ethnic Grounds

Persecution constitutes a particularly relevant legal qualification in this report. In international criminal law, persecution entails the intentional and severe deprivation of fundamental rights contrary to international law on the ground of membership in a particular group. Discriminatory intent is a key element of this crime.

### Enforced Disappearances

Enforced disappearances constitute a serious violation of international law and are considered as a war crime under Article 5 of the ICTY Statute (the intentional deprivation of liberty followed by the concealment of the person's fate or the refusal to acknowledge such deprivation), a crime against humanity when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against a civilian population (Article 5 of the ICTY Statute).

This practice directly violates **Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions** and constitutes a form of torture and inhuman treatment, as it leaves the families of victims in a state of permanent uncertainty and psychological suffering.

### Sexual Violence

International law today clearly recognises rape and other forms of sexual violence as:

- serious violations of the Geneva Conventions,
- war crimes,
- crimes against humanity,
- a form of torture when they involve the intentional infliction of severe physical or mental suffering.

The prohibition of torture is absolute and is enshrined in Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which provides: "No one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment." Sexual violence against Roma women, where it was systematic or formed part of a broader attack, may also constitute an element of persecution on ethnic and gender grounds.

### International Human Rights Law and the Duty to Investigate

Bosnia and Herzegovina is obliged to ensure an effective investigation and an effective remedy for serious violations of the right to life and the prohibition of torture. Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights protects the right to life, while Article 13 guarantees the right to an effective remedy. The state has a positive obligation to conduct an independent and effective investigation, prosecute perpetrators and ensure access to justice without discrimination. In the context of gender-based and ethnic discrimination, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women is also relevant, as it obliges states to eliminate discrimination against women in all its forms, including in access to justice and reparations.

### The Right to Reparations

International law recognises the right of victims of serious violations to reparations, including compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition. This obligation derives from the general principles of international law and the jurisprudence of international and regional human rights courts.

Reparations must be available, non-discriminatory and proportionate to the gravity of the violation. If Roma victims do not enjoy equal access to these measures, this may constitute an additional breach of the state's international obligations.

## 2. Life of Roma Before the Conflict

The suffering of the Roma civilian population cannot be viewed solely as collateral damage resulting from a broader ethnic conflict. A fundamental analysis of the collected testimonies indicates that the Roma community served as a paradigm of intersectional vulnerability. The pre-war lives of Roma were characterised by a significant economic contribution and an apparent social harmony which, unfortunately, concealed deeply rooted latent prejudices. When the rule of law collapsed, it was precisely this combination – perceived wealth on the one hand and the status of a marginalised minority lacking institutional protection on the other – that made Roma the easiest targets for crimes driven by raw opportunism and looting under the guise of wartime operations.

An analysis of the pre-war context unequivocally demonstrates that the Roma population enjoyed an exceptional level of economic stability, industriousness and independence. Roma families were not passive observers but active builders of local economies. In urban areas, there are recorded examples of remarkable entrepreneurial advancement, where members of the community, through their own labour alone, progressed from basic trades to becoming owners of the first private hospitality establishments and motels. Spouses from such families often held respected positions within state institutions, including social welfare centres.

In rural and suburban areas, Roma households constituted the backbone of agricultural and construction activities. Respondents testify to decades of hard work in large construction companies, supplemented by income earned through music, traditional crafts and seasonal work abroad. The results of such labour were evident: large two-storey houses were built, agricultural machinery was owned, and in some communities Roma families were regarded as the wealthiest residents, possessing property and even private swimming pools in their yards, something others could only dream of. As one witness of non-Roma ethnicity concludes in his records, they were highly respected, wealthy and honest people who did no harm to anyone.

### **Childhood, Education and an Inclusive “Yugoslav” Identity**

This economic integration was also reflected in social life, which survivors today describe with deep nostalgia. The pre-war period is remembered as a harmonious era without institutional segregation. Children regularly attended educational institutions and grew up in a multi-ethnic environment in which a sense of togetherness and a supranational, “Yugoslav” identity were nurtured. Many parents consciously shielded their children from any form of national division, and children grew up without recognising ethnic differences among their peers.

This inclusion was particularly visible in the cultural and religious sphere. Surviving victims testify to carefree days when, as the only members of the Roma minority in their communities, they freely and joyfully visited local places of worship (mosques) and celebrated religious holidays together with neighbours of other ethnic backgrounds. The sense of security was absolute; there existed an unwritten social contract according to which no one harmed anyone else, and neighbours shared everyday life, food and mutual respect.

### **Deconstructing Coexistence**

Nevertheless, an objective human rights analysis requires the deconstruction of this narrative of ideal coexistence. Beneath the surface of good neighbourly relations, a quiet yet powerful racial and ethnic stigma continued to exist. Pre-war integration was, in many respects, conditional.

The moving testimonies of survivors reveal painful childhood memories in which Roma children, despite arriving at school neat, clean and well-mannered, were subjected to biological reductionism and isolation. Witnesses describe through tears how certain neighbours and children pointed fingers at them, using derogatory terms and warning others not to associate with them solely because of their

darker skin colour. This feeling of inherent rejection – the realisation that their skin colour predestined them to a lower social status – constitutes a key finding of this report. It was precisely this prejudice, rooted across generations, and the perception of Roma as second-class citizens that would later serve as the psychological foundation and justification for the complete dehumanisation that followed.

Because of their trust in their neighbours and in the state, the outbreak of armed conflict caused complete psychological paralysis within the Roma community. Unlike other ethnic groups that may have had political or military structures warning them of impending danger, Roma were entirely unprepared. Victims testify to a widespread misconception and the naïve belief that the conflict would last only a few days and that “people would quickly come to their senses”. The absence of any form of systematic protection or information made the Roma population a primary and highly vulnerable target in the first days of the collapse of the system, leaving them in a state of complete shock when armed formations began entering their homes.

The findings of the research unequivocally demonstrate that the most devastating element of the suffering endured by the Roma community was not merely the physical violence itself, but the horrific and deeply personal betrayal that accompanied it. The systematic destruction of Roma settlements and lives was rarely carried out solely by abstract, unknown military forces. The perpetrators were often local police officers, work colleagues and neighbours.

Survivors state with complete disbelief: *“We were not attacked by unknown soldiers, but by people with whom we ate and drank before the war.”* This realisation irreversibly destroyed the social fabric. In detention facilities and camps, victims endured the agony of recognising their tormentors. Cases have been documented in which a brutally beaten victim called a local police officer by name, asking him through tears: *“You ate and drank with me, and now you are treating me like this?”* The war served as a catalyst that exposed the true faces of those with whom Roma had spent years building coexistence.

### 3. Typology of Suffering

This section presents findings derived from qualitative data collected in accordance with the report's methodology: direct and indirect witness statements, field research, and official records documenting the horrific suffering endured by the Roma population. Although, in most cases, these narratives have not yet been subjected to rigorous judicial scrutiny and cross-examination, the significance of this approach is multifaceted, irreplaceable and constitutes a foundation for comprehensive transitional justice.

This approach has enabled affected Roma communities to break a decades-long “code of silence” and, for the first time, freely and with dignity articulate their lived experiences of suffering. The value of this methodology is best reflected in the striking statements of the victims themselves, who emphasise that until now “*no one has approached us to ask about the war*”, and who state: “*this is the first time anyone has ever asked me about the suffering of Roma during the war; I have never spoken about this with anyone before, until speaking with you*”. By providing space for these narratives, victims are restored the subjectivity and human dignity that had been denied to them.

Witness statements, while not constituting judicially established facts, represent essential operational and investigative material that directly informs the work of competent state institutions and the judiciary. A concrete example of this impact is the fact that the collection of these statements resulted in official reports being submitted to the Missing Persons Institute of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The documentation of both indirect and direct witness statements is crucial for advocacy activities, particularly in the context of deep-seated systemic mistrust. Research has shown that “*Roma do not trust the work of institutions*”, which leads many to abandon efforts to seek justice. Given the passage of time and the biological disappearance of survivors (“*there are many people who are dying*”), the urgent recording of these testimonies is the only way to ensure that the horrific suffering of Roma is not consigned to historical oblivion.

In this section, the data are presented through the application of legal subsumption, whereby qualitative data – derived from in-depth field interviews, official records of Kali Sara – Roma Information Centre, court judgments and media archives – have been deconstructed and subsumed under specific provisions of the Statute of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

Rather than following a chronological or geographical narrative, the underlying acts (*actus reus*) committed against the Roma population have been categorised according to the nature of the violation of international law. Killings and mass executions, such as the massacres of civilians in Skočić, Sijekovac and Volarić, have been classified as crimes against humanity (*murder*) under Article 5(a) and as grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions (*wilful killing*) under Article 2(a) of the ICTY Statute. Crimes of sexual violence and unprecedented physical torture committed against Roma women and Roma children in camps (such as the branding of a prematurely born baby or the breaking of a two-year-old child's spine) have been legally classified under Article 5(g) concerning rape, and Articles 5(f) and 2(c) concerning torture and the wilful causing of great suffering. Unlawful confinement and the use of Roma as “human shields” or slave labour have been addressed under Article 5(e) and Article 2(e). Finally, the destruction of entire Roma settlements and property extortion have been analysed through the prism of Articles 3(b) and 3(e) as wanton destruction and plunder, while the overarching pattern of discrimination, dismissal from employment and violence has been subsumed under the umbrella provision of Article 5(h) – *persecution on political, racial and religious grounds*.

Finally, for advocacy efforts to be successful, they must rest on an indisputable legal foundation. The typologisation of crimes is the first and most important step towards activating the remaining mechanisms of transitional justice because it restores historical subjectivity to the Roma community, making it clear that the suffering they endured constitutes a violation of *jus cogens* norms of international law, which is the fundamental basis for demanding justice, truth and guarantees of non-repetition.

### 3.1. Crimes Against Humanity: Murder / Grave Breaches of the Geneva Conventions: Wilful Killing (Article 5(a) and Article 2(a))

Through Articles 5(a) and 2(a) of its Statute, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) establishes the fundamental legal and civilisational framework for the prosecution of the most serious violations of the right to life. Article 5(a) defines murder as a crime against humanity when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, while Article 2(a) criminalises wilful killing as a grave breach of the norms of the Geneva Conventions aimed at the protection of civilians and other protected persons. From a human rights perspective, these legal provisions do not sanction merely the physical act of taking life but also recognise and condemn in the strongest terms the systemic dehumanisation, the specific genocidal or persecutory intent (*mens rea*), and the pattern of destruction itself (*actus reus*) directed against the civilian population.

The collected testimonies indicate that the right to life of the Roma population was not violated in the context of legitimate military operations, but through extreme forms of sadism, the commercialisation of the human body and ruthless opportunism. What follows is a structured categorisation of these crimes, accompanied by descriptive illustrations of the methods of perpetration (*modus operandi*).

The analysis identified a clear typology of crimes, categorised according to the pattern of perpetration, the motivation of the perpetrators and the degree of dehumanisation inflicted upon the victims. This categorisation has been undertaken to enable a more precise legal and factual assessment of the events in light of the relevant provisions of the Statute of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

#### Mass Executions and the Commercialisation of Human Life

Category I concerns mass executions and the commercialisation of human life. In these cases, the civilian population was treated as a mere object of elimination or a source of profit, representing the highest level of dehumanisation encompassed by Articles 5(a) and 2(a) of the Statute. One documented case from the north of the country concerns armed formations that intercepted convoys carrying Roma civilians, including children without parental care. Following several days of detention, a mass execution was carried out. More than fifty bodies were recovered through exhumation, including many children. Forensic findings indicated the systematic removal of body parts, including the spinal column, which was corroborated by analyses and testimonies suggesting the organised extraction and sale of organs. In this case, the taking of life was motivated solely by profit.

In another documented incident in eastern Bosnia, a strict selection process was carried out among civilians. Women and children were separated, while more than one hundred men were confined in a public building and subsequently executed *en masse*. At the same time, immobile and ill individuals were killed in their homes. The patterns observed indicate a premeditated execution carried out without any military justification.

#### Executions Associated with Forced Labour and Elements of Ritualised Sadism

Category II encompasses executions associated with forced labour and elements of ritualised sadism. In these cases, civilians were first turned into forced labourers and subsequently killed. In one village in north-western Bosnia, nine Roma civilians were forced to dig a mass grave for individuals who had previously been killed. Upon completion of the work, all of them were simultaneously killed by automatic gunfire and thrown into the pit they had dug themselves. In another case, at a detention facility, methods of killing were documented that involved physically fastening a victim to a wall using metal objects driven through the limbs, followed by execution by firearm in front of other detainees. In the same facility, women were publicly humiliated, stripped, bound with wire and thrown from a height into a river. Testimonies confirm that the purpose of these acts was to demonstrate absolute control and instil fear among the remaining detainees.

### **Killings of Vulnerable Persons Motivated by Property-Related Opportunism**

Category III relates to the killings of vulnerable persons motivated by property-related opportunism. In these cases, no military objective existed. The wartime context was used as a framework for the appropriation of property. In one village in north-eastern Bosnia, an elderly Roma woman was killed after refusing to leave her land. Her body was found bound and thrown into a well, indicating an attempt to conceal the crime to secure the permanent appropriation of her property. In eastern Bosnia, a case was documented involving an elderly married couple; the husband was a person with a disability. They were locked inside their own home and burned alive on the assumption that they possessed money. In a larger urban centre, a nineteen-year-old young woman with developmental difficulties was killed in a residential building following an attempted rape and robbery. The attack was carried out with a bladed weapon and involved multiple injuries indicating prolonged and severe abuse.

### **Extrajudicial Executions and Mutilation at Checkpoints**

Category IV encompasses extrajudicial executions and mutilation at checkpoints. These killings served the purpose of establishing psychological terror and demonstrating power over the civilian population. One documented case concerns a civilian stopped at a barricade who, after being killed, was found in a state of severe mutilation, with his head severed. In another case, a civilian was killed on his doorstep in front of his wife without warning. After being ordered to stand up, he was shot at close range in vital parts of the body. Testimonies confirm that no prior screening or formal procedure took place.

The overall typology demonstrates a wide range of methods of perpetration, but also a common element of complete dehumanisation of the victims. Patterns of conduct, the repetition of similar methods across different regions, and the absence of any military justification confirm the systematic nature of these acts and their qualification among the most serious violations of international humanitarian law.

The methods used in the killings described in this report clearly demonstrate that these were not cases of negligent homicide or deaths resulting from crossfire. The use of decapitation, crucifixion-like restraint, the burning of people alive, the throwing of bound women from cliffs, and the systematic removal of organs from children taken from their homes demonstrate the existence of genocidal and sadistic intent (*mens rea*) on the part of the perpetrators.

The Roma civilian population was deliberately targeted because their intersectional vulnerability – the fact that they were poor, marginalised, often living with disabilities and lacking institutional protection – gave perpetrators the illusion of complete impunity, enabling them to subject Roma to the most morbid forms of dehumanisation and profit-driven criminality.

### **Sijekovac (Bosanski Brod)**

The suffering of Roma in Sijekovac near Bosanski Brod appears in certain media reports, publications and witness accounts, but to date it has not been fully investigated or confirmed through systematic research or the identification of victims. During the preparation of this report, it was not possible to locate surviving witnesses from the Roma community who could testify directly about this event, nor are there reliable data regarding the identities of a larger number of victims. The available information originates primarily from newspaper articles, television reports and publications, which often rely on unverified or indirect sources.

Certain media reports, including articles published in *Novosti*, have asserted that a large number of Roma were killed in Sijekovac, including a significant number of children. According to these accounts, up to 250 Roma were killed, including 116 children, while the remains of children were reportedly recovered during exhumations. Similar information has been reported by other media outlets, but without confirmed victim identifications that would unequivocally establish their ethnic affiliation. Some sources also refer to the responsibility of certain members of Croatian forces, including allegations concerning the involvement of Nijaz Čaušević, known as Medo, a member of the HVO, as well as units under the command of Ante Prkačin. According to available information, an indictment was brought against Čaušević but was never concluded by a final judgment, while Ante Prkačin publicly denied

personal responsibility for the killings. The event has also been discussed by certain authors and investigative journalists, including Stevo Grabovac in connection with the book *Poslije zabave* (After the Party), as well as by other non-fiction sources relying on testimonies and secondary sources.

In addition to media sources, certain witness accounts and indirect sources describe the events in Sijekovac as one of the particularly brutal crimes committed during the armed conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to these testimonies, in the spring of 1992 armed military formations intercepted convoys of buses transporting Roma civilians – primarily women and children – who were attempting to leave the country and reach Western Europe from war-affected areas of eastern Bosnia. It is estimated that approximately 200 civilians were travelling on the buses. After the convoy was stopped, the civilians were removed from the vehicles, taken captive and held for several days in a meadow in a state of complete helplessness.

According to the same sources, this was followed by a mass execution accompanied by brutal violence against the victims. In one of the mass graves, 59 bodies were later exhumed, among them the forensic remains of between 13 and 23 children, while the remaining victims were predominantly women. Certain forensic findings and statements by experts from commissions for missing persons indicated severe damage to skeletal remains, including the absence of parts of the spinal column in some bodies. In certain witness accounts, these findings were linked to allegations of brutal mutilation of bodies and the possible removal of organs. Sources from former military structures also made claims in the media regarding possible motives related to organ trafficking, but these allegations were never confirmed through judicial proceedings or official investigative findings.

What is known with relative certainty is that a mass grave containing 59 bodies was exhumed in Sijekovac, but none of those victims has to date been officially identified by name. The fate of the remaining civilians from the intercepted convoys also remains unknown, given that testimonies refer to approximately 200 persons travelling on the buses, while a significantly smaller number of bodies has been recovered. Despite the existence of certain material evidence, testimonies and media reports, this case has never reached a judicial conclusion, nor have all the circumstances of the event been fully clarified.

Due to the lack of confirmed identifications and reliable testimonies, it is currently not possible to establish with certainty either the number or identity of the victims, nor to definitively confirm that they were members of the Roma community. Nevertheless, indirect sources, recurring claims in media and publications, as well as certain testimonies, point to a widespread belief that Roma may have been among the victims, making this location important for further investigation.

In this regard, Sijekovac is included in this report as a location associated with the possible suffering of Roma, with the clear caveat that additional research, victim identification and systematic verification of the available data are required to establish all the facts relating to this event.

### **Volarić, Hambarine and Ravska**

The events documented in the villages of Volarić, Hambarine and Ravska constitute a paradigmatic example of the systematic extermination and brutal persecution of a marginalised minority. These crimes demonstrate how military and police structures exploited the chaos of a widespread and systematic attack against the civilian population not only to carry out ethnic engineering, but also to engage in sadistic abuse and the appropriation of property from the most vulnerable.

According to witness accounts, the acts committed at these locations were characterised by extreme brutality, the exploitation of civilians for forced labour immediately prior to their execution, and public killings designed to instil absolute terror.

One such example concerns a group of nine Roma civilians who were brought at gunpoint to a location in the village of Volarić and forced to dig a mass grave with their own hands. The grave was intended for the burial of twelve previously executed Bosniak civilians. The act culminated when the Roma, exhausted from forced labour, completed the excavation of the grave. At that moment, the soldiers in question opened fire and simultaneously and mercilessly executed all nine Roma civilians, leaving their bodies at the site of the massacre.

Parallel to these mass executions, members of those units (including B. M. and Ž. R.) carried out targeted killings of individuals as part of the “cleansing” of the area. The civilian S. V. was called outside his house by soldiers to show them the direction in which unknown persons had gone. After providing the requested information, when he turned and began walking back towards his family, a soldier (B. M.) shot him in the back, killing him instantly. R. Č., who was sitting outside his house, was confronted by soldiers who had come to steal gold and fuel. After a brief argument, a soldier ordered him to stand up; the moment the civilian rose while holding his wife’s hand and pleading for his children to be spared, the soldier shot him in cold blood. The civilian M. M., who had been tending a flock of sheep, was taken by a soldier towards a nearby forest. A gunshot was heard shortly afterwards, and the soldier returned alone to the checkpoint, driving the stolen sheep ahead of him while cynically remarking that “the shepherd would no longer need the sheep”. The civilian D. B. was forcibly removed from his sister’s house by two soldiers who arrived in a vehicle marked “UN” and was immediately executed with firearms in the immediate vicinity of the house.

These events have been documented and analysed in detail in the judgments of the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Case No. S11 K 024092 17 Kri), thereby breaking decades of silence surrounding these crimes.

It was established that the victims were protected civilians who took no part in hostilities. It is known that the killings in Volarić, Hambarine and Ravska formed part of a widespread and systematic attack carried out by the army and police of the Serb Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina against the non-Serb civilian population of the Prijedor municipality, including Bosniaks, Croats and Roma. The identities of the victims, the time and locations of the executions, and the perpetrators’ *modus operandi* have all been clearly established.

Dehumanisation reached its peak in Volarić, where the victims were treated as free and expendable labour used to conceal the crimes committed by others, only to be discarded into the same grave immediately afterwards. Opportunistic killings carried out in front of family members and executions committed for the purpose of stealing sheep or gold demonstrate the existence of a clear discriminatory intent (*mens rea*). The accused knew that they were attacking a population that was socially and politically disenfranchised, relying on complete impunity in an atmosphere in which the lives of Roma were considered less valuable than wartime loot. The prosecution of these specific patterns of violence remains a lasting imperative of transitional justice, so that mechanisms of marginalisation can never again be used as a licence for extermination.

### **Case of the Forced Usurpation of Property and the Brutal Killing of an Elderly Woman in Municipality Kalesija**

Prior to the killing, the entire Roma settlement in which the victim lived consisted of approximately fifty households. Armed members of local communities and former neighbours began systematically attacking the settlement, firing around houses at night and threatening residents with slaughter and the rape of women if they did not leave their homes. Under this terror, most Roma fled in panic, abandoning or selling their extensive properties for negligible sums (between only 500 and 2,000 BAM). However, an elderly resident, B. B., resolutely refused to leave her house and the property in which she had spent her entire life.

To seize her fertile land, a local neighbour (identified by the initials A. L.J.) devised a fraud. Taking advantage of the fact that the elderly woman was completely illiterate, he presented her with documents transferring ownership of the land, falsely assuring her that she was merely signing papers required to obtain social or humanitarian assistance.

Once the deception had been carried out and the victim nevertheless refused to physically leave her home, a horrific killing followed. The attackers subjected the elderly woman to an act of extreme humiliation and sadism. According to the accounts of eyewitnesses who discovered the body, the perpetrators placed two turnips in her hands and then brutally bound them together. A long rope was subsequently tied around one of her legs. In this helpless and restrained condition, the victim was thrown into a local water well, after which her head was pushed into and covered with snow to ensure that she would not survive.

After family members (her daughter and sons) discovered their mother's mutilated body, local civilian and police structures, upon arriving at the scene, completely ignored the obvious forensic evidence of a violent death. Although the victim's hands were bound and a rope was tied around her leg, the official commission reached the disgraceful and summary conclusion that the elderly woman had simply "frozen to death". Shortly after her death, the same neighbour, A. L.J., fenced off her property, claiming that he had "legally purchased" the land, and the Roma property was permanently usurped.

This case was reconstructed based on the testimony provided by the victim's closest relatives, who were directly involved in locating and burying the body. The victim's son explicitly describes the condition in which he found his mother's body - a rope measuring three to four metres tied to her leg and her hands bound - which, in his view, constitutes absolute proof that her death did not occur naturally or merely as a result of freezing. Witnesses confirm that immediately after the killing, the suspected neighbour physically enclosed the plot surrounding the house and verbally stated that the land was "his", justifying this claim through the previously manipulated documents.

There is evidence suggesting that the competent authorities deliberately disregarded the signs of murder. Furthermore, when the victim's son attempted to seek justice regarding the stolen land, local police officers allegedly took him into a forest, tied him to a tree and brutally beat him, while explicitly threatening to kill him unless he left the area and relinquished any claim to the property.

### 3.2. Crimes Against Humanity: Rape and Other Forms of Sexual Violence (Article 5(g))

Sexual violence committed during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina is internationally recognised as a serious violation of international humanitarian law and criminal law. The jurisprudence of the ICTY established that systematic rape may constitute *a crime against humanity*, torture and sexual enslavement (*the case of Dragoljub Kunarac et al.*). Although the experiences of Bosniak and Croat women have been documented to a greater extent, the testimonies of Roma women have remained almost entirely invisible in public policies, memorialisation processes and reparation programmes.

This invisibility reflects deeply rooted intersectional discrimination: Roma women were targeted for violence on the ground of both their gender and ethnic origin. Systematic and brutal rape, including the rape of underage girls, occurred in camps, houses, bunkers, public spaces and other places of detention.

#### Systematic Attacks

Sexual violence against Roma women and girls during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina constitutes one of the darkest and least researched chapters in the modern history of human rights. Based on the available sources, it is evident that these crimes were not isolated incidents but formed part of a "widespread and systematic attack" directed against the civilian population, with a clear discriminatory intent grounded in national and religious affiliation. From the perspective of human rights and transitional justice, the impact of this violence is devastating because of its intersectional nature - the victims were targeted simultaneously because of their ethnic identity and their gender, resulting in specific forms of dehumanisation and long-term social paralysis.

#### Phenomenology of Violence: Extreme Torture and Public Humiliation

Sources document the brutal and dehumanising *modus operandi* of the perpetrators. The systematic nature of these crimes was reflected in their brutality and the strategic use of public spaces to destroy human dignity. Roma women and underage girls (often 13 to 14 years old) were subjected to repeated gang rapes in camps such as **Jakešnica**, in bunkers beneath the **Žuti most** (Yellow Bridge) in Dobojo, and in private houses and yards in Bijeljina and Miljevina. Sexual violence was frequently combined with physical torture, such as in the case of the wife of S. D. in Miljevina, on whom soldiers extinguished cigarettes. The brutality was also reflected in the scale of the attacks; in the Jakešnica camp, it was recorded that as many as ten soldiers assaulted a single victim.

The specific impact on the Roma community is reflected in the method of **public humiliation**. Sources document cases in which fathers, husbands and children were forced to witness the rape of their closest

family members, forming part of a broader plan to destroy family integrity and the social fabric of the Roma community. N. A. testifies to the horror of her father being forced to watch what the soldiers were doing to her and her fourteen-year-old sister. This extreme form of torture, which often included physical mutilation and abuse (such as extinguishing cigarettes on the bodies of victims), left deep scars that prevented the normal reintegration of survivors into their primary communities. Thus, the objective was not merely the destruction of the victim's personal integrity, but the complete degradation of the family and social fabric of the community.

### **Bijeljina (Čopor and "Divlji Zapad")**

In Bijeljina, sexual violence against Roma women assumed the form of a public spectacle of dehumanisation, in which victims were raped before assembled crowds who were forced to witness the act. In the settlements of Čopor and Salaš, Serb soldiers entered houses where refugee families were accommodated, selecting women based on their physical appearance. One of the most harrowing testimonies concerns the settlement known as *Divlji zapad* (Wild West), where the victim H. was raped in her parents' house by members of the unit known as Simo's Chetniks. Sexual abuse was regularly accompanied by racist rhetoric and dehumanisation; the perpetrators referred to the victims as "Gypsies", "scum" and "ugly creatures", while simultaneously subjecting them to the most severe forms of physical torture. Sources record numerous victims, including R. R., B. R., K. B., P. B. and H.

### **Foča (Miljevina - Karaman's House)**

In the Foča area, specifically in the settlement of Miljevina, extreme sexual torture was documented in the so-called Karaman's House. Victims such as J. R. and the wife of S. D. endured brutal abuse; sources state that the perpetrators even extinguished cigarettes on the body of S. D.'s wife during the torture. These crimes indicate the sadistic nature of the violence, which went beyond the act of rape and served as a means of destroying the victim's dignity.

### **Doboj and Modriča (Systematic Torture in the Jakešnica Camp)**

Sexual violence in the Doboj and Modriča area was not merely a by-product of military operations, but a strategically employed instrument of dehumanisation. Roma women were systematically taken from civilian shelters and private properties to isolated locations, such as the **Bešlagić brdo** cemetery, where they were subjected to repeated gang rapes.

The **Jakešnica** camp (Modriča) is portrayed in the sources as a site of extreme structural torture. Testimonies indicate that entire families were detained in this facility, with women and girls subjected to brutality that went beyond isolated incidents and assumed the dimensions of organised crime:

"At Jakešnica they captured one T. O. and they raped her; they captured her sister; she could no longer endure the pain because it was not one man, it was ten of them on one... she was raped in the camp at age thirteen and a half, she was mutilated."

These accounts precisely document the scale of the assaults (multiple perpetrators attacking a single victim) and the extreme youth of the victims, which, under international legal standards, constitute a grave breach of the Geneva Conventions and a crime against humanity.

### **Specific Detention Sites: Bridges and Bunkers as Places of Dehumanisation**

An analysis of the testimonies of N. A. and other victims identifies two key micro-locations that served as sites of detention and sexual abuse: **Žuti most** (Yellow Bridge) in Jakešnica and **Stari most** (Old Bridge) in Doboj.

**Bunkers beneath the Yellow Bridge:** Victims were held in the basements of private houses and in bunkers under inhumane conditions, often sharing space with livestock (horses, cattle and pigs). This *modus operandi* was intended to achieve the complete degradation of human dignity even before the acts of violence. N. A. testifies that women and girls, mostly from Modrički Lug, were subjected in these facilities to the most severe forms of abuse, while family members, including fathers, were forced to watch.

**The Camp near the Old Bridge in Dobož:** B. A. describes an identical pattern of treatment, in which victims were treated like livestock and sexual violence was carried out publicly. She states: *“They captured us and we were held in a camp near the Old Bridge, a camp with horses and cattle... they raped my daughter in front of everyone, we were forced to watch all of it.”*

Witness testimonies, such as that provided by M. H., confirm that victims were often brought to Dobož from Modriča, indicating inter-municipal coordination among units of the Army of Republika Srpska in carrying out the persecution. He further describes the fate of T. O. and her sister, stating that her sister was only fourteen years old when she was raped.

These sites – the bridges and bunkers – remain in the collective memory of survivors as symbols of the absolute collapse of human rights, where the intersectional position of Roma women (as women and as members of a marginalised ethnic group) was exploited to carry out the most brutal forms of wartime torture.

### Tragic Consequences: Suicide and Transgenerational Trauma

The psychological collapse caused by trauma and social stigma repeatedly led to fatal outcomes. Sources recount the tragic case of R. A., who, after being raped in Janjari near Ugljevik, fled to Austria, where she gave birth to a boy, left him in a hospital, and subsequently took her own life. The destructive impact of the trauma also extended to male family members; F. B., the victim’s father, took his own life after learning that his daughter had been raped.

### Children Born of Rape

Sexual violence left indelible biological and psychological scars on the Roma community. The birth of children as a direct consequence of rape has been documented, meaning that the mothers were forced to live with the trauma for the rest of their lives. Sources confirm the birth of at least three children:

- **B. A.** gave birth to a son in Germany after enduring torture in the camps.
- **H. H.** arrived in Germany pregnant after being raped in Bijeljina and gave birth there to a son who still lives in Germany today.
- **R. A.** gave birth to a son in Austria shortly before taking her own life.

These children, like their mothers, live in the shadow of trauma that is often left unspoken within the community because of a profound sense of shame.

### Barriers to Accessing Justice and the Phenomenon of Enforced Silence

A scholarly analysis of the available sources indicates that Roma women victims have remained trapped in silence for decades due to three key factors: stigmatisation and internalised shame, structural discrimination and distrust of institutions, and fear for their safety.

Within the cultural context of the Roma community, rape is often perceived as a source of family shame. Victims such as A. O. concealed their experiences for decades, even from their spouses. N. A. describes this feeling in the following words: *“I will die because my father had to watch it... I am ashamed whenever I look at them.”* The process of obtaining recognition as a civilian victim of war is administratively violent for Roma women. Procedures are costly, require witnesses and involve repeated travel, which victims of limited financial means are unable to afford. Mockery by institutions, such as the case of the police chief in Dobož who ridiculed a thirteen-year-old rape victim, has created lasting distrust.

Many victims continue to live near the perpetrators. T. F. states that she knows the names of the men who raped her but is afraid to speak because they are “still holding positions of authority”. Fear of retraumatisation and the possibility of renewed conflict blocks any initiative aimed at seeking justice: *“Please don’t, I don’t want to talk about it, I would rather kill myself,”* one woman testified, fearing that raising the issue would *“bring the war back to their doorstep”*.

Based on the available material, it can be concluded that sexual violence against Roma women was used as an effective instrument of ethnic cleansing and dehumanisation. The decades-long silence is not

merely a reflection of cultural specificities, but a direct consequence of ongoing systemic discrimination and the failure of the state to punish perpetrators and provide adequate reparations.

Sexual violence against Roma women in Bosnia and Herzegovina was not an accidental by-product of war, but a systematic instrument of persecution directed at the most vulnerable group within the civilian population. The legal qualification of these acts as crimes against humanity (Article 5 of the ICTY Statute) is fully supported by sources documenting the *modus operandi*: public humiliation, abuse committed in front of family members, and neglect by institutions. The long-term consequence has been the creation of “invisible victims” whose suffering has not been adequately addressed through public policies or reparation measures. The current transitional justice system in Bosnia and Herzegovina demonstrates a serious deficit in recognising the intersectional needs of these women, thereby prolonging their wartime trauma through institutional neglect and social isolation. Without targeted programmes that take into account both the ethnic and gender dimensions of their suffering, these victims will remain trapped in what the sources describe as “their silence”, leaving them in a state of permanent social and legal isolation, while the trauma continues to be transmitted to future generations through social and economic marginalisation.

### **3.3. Crimes Against Humanity: Torture and Other Inhumane Acts / Grave Breaches of the Geneva Conventions: Wilfully Causing Great Suffering (Articles 5(f), 5(i) and 2(c))**

Acts of torture, inhumane treatment and the wilful causing of great suffering constitute some of the gravest violations of human dignity, criminalised under Articles 5(f), 5(i) and 2(c) of the ICTY Statute. An analysis of the documented events involving Roma civilians in Bosnia and Herzegovina indicates that these crimes went far beyond the bounds of ordinary wartime violence, descending into the realm of extreme, ritualised sadism and absolute dehumanisation, where victims, because of their ethnic identity and social marginalisation, were treated as objects for pathological abuse.

The darkest manifestation of this sadism was documented in the Doboje and Modriča area, where unprecedented cruelty was inflicted upon the most vulnerable category of victims – infants and young children. The case of the prematurely born baby boy D. O. illustrates the ultimate degree of cruelty. Born in the seventh month of pregnancy in April 1992, the boy was left helpless in a hospital incubator in Doboje as a result of the war and his parents’ flight. Following the establishment of control over the town, local authorities reportedly announced over the radio that there was a “child without parents available as a gift”, treating a human being as abandoned property or as spoils of war. When the child was eventually exchanged through the mediation of international organisations and returned to his parents, horrifying evidence of inhumane treatment was discovered: the two-year-old boy had a severe burn on his arm, and a metal Chetnik cockade was found in a plastic bag beside him, which had been used to brand him like livestock. This act of permanent physical and psychological mutilation had devastating consequences, leaving the victim with a severe disability and living in constant fear of light, crowds and human voices.

Inhumane treatment of children was also used as an instrument of severe psychological torture against their parents. In the detention camps in Doboje, armed soldiers seized a two-year-old boy, H. A., in front of his father and hurled him against a wall with full force, crushing his hips and breaking his spine, thereby condemning him to a lifetime of severe disability. In addition to physical mutilation, survivors testify to morbid psychological practices in which perpetrators placed babies in improvised pools of water and then positioned live explosives around them, taking pleasure in the indescribable terror and screams of parents who were forced to watch. The dehumanisation of adult men at these locations likewise assumed forms reminiscent of medieval torture. One documented case concerns the civilian K. A., who was subjected to ritualised torture by being “crucified like Jesus” to a wall, with screws driven through his hands and feet. While the victim was still showing signs of life and breathing, the perpetrators shot him and then forced the remaining terrified detainees to remove his body from the wall and place it in sacks.

Institutionalised torture and the wilful infliction of severe bodily harm were also systematically carried out within the Batković concentration camp near Bijeljina. Roma detainees were subjected to daily and brutal beatings with rifle butts and other objects by guards, among whom G. B. was identified, as well as by other detainees (kapos), such as Dž. Z., known as *Špajzer*, and F. P., who abused their positions to beat and terrorise other prisoners. The brutality of this camp culminated in cases of severe physical mutilation. Surviving detainee H. Z. (who later changed his name to P. V. out of fear) testified that a Roma detainee from Brčko, known by the nickname Green Beret, had one of his eyes gouged out with a knife during torture. H. Z. himself was spared further abuse solely because his stepfather was a member of Serb paramilitary formations and was able, through his influence, to secure his release.

In the Prnjavor area, serious violations of international law manifested themselves through extreme psychological terror inflicted on Roma families by paramilitary formations with the aim of forcibly displacing them. The unit known as *Vukovi sa Vučijaka* (Wolves from Vučijak) carried out a sudden armed raid on the property of the family of Z. M. Armed soldiers forced the family, which included an infant, to lie on the ground and then began firing above their heads and riddling nearby vehicles with bullets, while continuously shouting insults and threatening to slit their throats. The psychological torture reached its peak when one member of the family managed to escape through a cornfield. A soldier known by the nickname Robija then drew a knife, began cutting the veins in his own arms, and, in front of the terrified family, swore on his own blood that he would slaughter every one of them if the fugitive was not found. The massacre was averted only because neighbours called the regular police, but the family was forced to leave their home permanently as a result of the shock they had endured. In the same town, Roma civilians such as S. Z. and I. S. were subjected to continuous physical abuse, beatings and bomb attacks on their homes, clearly indicating a systematic pattern of intimidation.

### **Torture and Inhumane Treatment of Children**

The boy D. O. was born on 2 April 1992 in Modriča, prematurely in the seventh month of pregnancy. Due to the need for medical care, he was placed in an incubator at the hospital in Doboj. Following the outbreak of armed conflict and attacks on the town, his parents were forced to flee to save their own lives, while the helpless infant remained trapped in the hospital under the control of Serb forces. During his confinement, the child was not treated as a patient but as property – a local radio station advertised him as a “child without parents available as a gift”, thereby subjecting him to complete commercialisation and dispossession. After almost two and a half years, the child was rescued and transported by a UNPROFOR helicopter to Zenica to be reunited with his family. Upon taking custody of the child, his parents discovered a horrifying act of physical mutilation. The boy had a severe burn on his arm, while among his belongings, in a plastic bag, they found a metal badge – a Chetnik cockade (cross). The perpetrators had literally branded the infant with heated metal, leaving a permanent nationalist mark on his body as though he were livestock. The act of branding left devastating and permanent consequences. D. O. is now an adult living with a severe disability and complex psychiatric conditions; he lives in complete isolation, confined to a room, pathologically terrified of light, crowds and human voices, and unable to live independently.

During detention in an improvised camp in Doboj (near the Old Bridge), where Roma civilians were held in inhumane conditions together with livestock, armed soldiers carried out daily acts of terror. In one such incident, soldiers violently seized a two-year-old boy, H. A., from his father’s arms. In front of the terrified family, a soldier took the child and repeatedly hurled him with full force against the corner of a wall. Surviving witnesses describe how the child “cried out in pain like a cat”. As a result of this brutal act, both child’s hips were completely crushed and his spine was broken. Although the boy survived this attempted killing, he was left permanently and severely disabled, condemned to live with the consequences of the destruction of his spinal column.

In addition to direct physical violence, armed individuals in the Doboj camps used children between six months and one year of age as instruments of psychological torture against their parents. According to witness testimonies, soldiers placed infants in improvised pools of water and then positioned live explosives and grenades around them. This perverse “game with death” served solely to inflict unimaginable mental anguish and panic on detained civilians who were forced to watch.

### Crimes Against Adult Men in Camps

Crimes committed against adult men in the camps also extended beyond the use of conventional weaponry, assuming the form of ritualised killings. A detained Roma civilian, K. A., was subjected to one of the most monstrous forms of torture recorded, evoking methods associated with the darkest periods of history. According to eyewitness accounts from the camp, the perpetrators brutally tortured the victim by “crucifying him like Jesus” to a wall. Screws were hammered and twisted through his hands and feet, fixing him to the surface. While the victim, thus crucified, was still showing signs of life and breathing, the perpetrators shot him. The sadism did not end with the killing. Terrified surviving detainees, including members of the victim’s family, were forced to remove his body from the screws with their own hands, stuff it into large cloth sacks (similar to those used for raw coffee), and then dispose of it in a local canal to conceal the evidence.

These examples explicitly demonstrate that the perpetrators did not regard the Roma population as a military threat, but rather as a completely disenfranchised group over whom they could exercise their deepest pathological and sadistic impulses with impunity. The deeply rooted and systemic marginalisation of Roma fostered among the perpetrators a sense of absolute superiority and the illusion that, regardless of the degree of brutality and evil inflicted, they would never be held accountable before a court of law.

### 3.4. Crimes Against Humanity: Imprisonment / Grave Breaches of the Geneva Conventions: Unlawful Confinement and Compelling Civilians to Serve in the Forces of a Hostile Power (Article 5(e))

Article 5(e) criminalises imprisonment as part of a widespread or systematic attack against a civilian population, while Articles 2(g) and 2(e) impose the strictest sanctions for the unlawful deprivation of civilians’ liberty and their exploitation for military operations.

Witness testimonies indicate that the Roma population was not only unlawfully detained for the purpose of isolation, but that camps, bunkers and mortuaries also served as centres of brutal labour exploitation, extortion of property and the transformation of unprotected civilians into “human shields” on front lines.

#### Unlawful Confinement in Inhumane Conditions

Within this category, unlawful deprivation of liberty (Articles 2(g) and 5(e)) was characterised by mass, indiscriminate arrests and the confinement of individuals in facilities wholly unfit for human habitation, with the primary purpose of inflicting severe suffering and humiliation.

**Detention in mortuaries and stables (Northern Bosnia):** In several towns and settlements in the northern part of the country (the areas around Dobož and Modriča), entire Roma families were arbitrarily arrested and confined in underground bunkers and buildings that had previously served as hospital mortuaries and hangars. Detainees were held for months in inhumane conditions, forced to sleep on bare concrete or wooden planks, without access to adequate food, water or sanitation. The ultimate degree of humiliation and dehumanisation is illustrated by the pattern whereby civilians – including women, infants and children – were forced to spend their days in bunkers together with livestock, including pigs, horses and cattle.

Detention in Prijedor constituted a mass, industrialised process aimed at the destruction of the non-Serb civilian population, within which Roma shared the tragic fate of Bosniaks and Croats. Following armed attacks on villages with predominantly non-Serb populations (such as Hambarine, Biščani and Rizvanovići), the entire surviving civilian population was subjected to arrest and deportation. The process of detention began with a strict biological selection, after which civilians were transported to pre-established concentration camps.

Numerous residents of Roma settlements in the Prijedor area were killed in these facilities of mass destruction. Witness testimonies indicate that the Roma man Edin Mašić, from the Prijedor settlement of Urije (“Ciganluk”), was unlawfully deprived of his liberty, taken to the Omarska concentration camp and brutally killed there. The culmination of these crimes against humanity was the massacre in Room 3 of the Keraterm camp, where soldiers, in a single attack, executed and killed at least 190 detained men.

### Forced Labour and Compelling Civilians to Serve in the Forces of a Hostile Power

Captured Roma were routinely transformed into slave labour, and their physical presence was directly exploited to advance the military objectives of armed formations, constituting a flagrant violation of Article 2(e) of the ICTY Statute.

As one of the most extreme forms of violation of international law, the systematic deployment of Roma civilians to front-line positions was documented. Under threat of execution, detainees were removed from camps and taken directly into active combat zones, where they were used as “human shields” to protect attacking troops; it is known that some of these civilians were killed on the front lines or remained permanently trapped there. The brutality of this practice is demonstrated by the fact that even a captured thirteen-year-old Roma girl was taken to the front line as a “human shield”.

The harrowing testimony of the surviving detainee M. H. (captured in May 1992 in Dobož, where he spent eight and a half months in camps) directly substantiates this pattern. Speaking about the daily abuse he endured, M. H. testified:

“I was beaten the entire time. I had to do all kinds of work, such as digging trenches, and when they went looting, we had to go with them to collect and load the stolen goods. [...] I was used as a human shield three times. The third time, two or three men from Grapska were killed and remained up there between the lines.”

Exposed to daily gunfire, without any protective equipment, with their hands tied and often blindfolded so that they would not know where they were, these civilians were literally driven towards certain death.

According to witness testimonies, Roma men were taken daily from detention facilities at gunpoint and forced to perform the most arduous forms of labour. Their exploitation included digging military trenches, cutting timber for military purposes, cleaning military bases, and loading property looted from the homes of displaced non-Serb civilians. In addition, as a form of psychological torture, they were compelled to collect and bury the bodies of murdered neighbours and civilians of other ethnic backgrounds.

### Instrumentalisation of Confinement for the Purpose of Economic Extortion

In these cases, the unlawful deprivation of liberty was not primarily intended to facilitate mass destruction; rather, confinement was used as an institutional tool for ruthless economic extortion (plunder).

The case of the civilian A. A., owner of the first privately owned motel in Banja Luka, is a striking example of this pattern. His motel was repeatedly attacked with explosive devices and anti-tank rocket launchers (*zoljas*) with the aim of intimidating him and forcing him to transfer ownership of the property to local police officers. When intimidation failed to achieve the desired outcome, unlawful confinement was employed.

After his arrest, he was driven around blindfolded and taken to a notorious military prison “Mali logor”. He was held in detention with a clear and targeted purpose: to compel him to sign documents “voluntarily” transferring ownership of his profitable motel to local police officers and, at the same time, to use his detention as grounds for securing the unlawful dismissal of his wife from her position in a state institution. During his imprisonment, this respected civilian was deliberately subjected to public humiliation and forced to pick up cigarette butts from the floor of the camp.

His testimony vividly illustrates the *modus operandi* of the abduction and the humiliation that followed:

“They detained me so that they could dismiss my wife from her job... First, they drove me around in a red van for about four hours. I do not know who the Serbs in that red van were. They were masked, wearing stockings over their faces so that we could not see or recognise them. There were five or six of us in the van, all Roma... In the camp, they forced me to pick up cigarette butts.”

Other Roma were also held in the same prison, including the civilian O. P. (who later died) and an elderly Roma man from the Veseli Brijeg settlement. The detention of A. A. served a clear dual purpose: to force him to “voluntarily” transfer ownership of his motel and to exploit his absence and status as a

detainee to dismiss his wife unlawfully from her position in a state institution (the social welfare centre), thereby facilitating a brutal process of ethnic cleansing within public institutions.

### **Unlawful Confinement and Inhumane Conditions – The Doboj Region**

The arbitrary arrest of Roma families began in May 1992. The processing and confinement of civilians took place in facilities wholly unfit for human habitation – ranging from police stations and military barracks (such as the “4 July” barracks and the “Bare” facility in Doboj) to mortuaries and underground bunkers.

Civilians were deliberately confined in facilities used for keeping livestock, thereby stripping them even of their biological status as human beings. Survivors explicitly testify to these horrific conditions. The surviving civilian N. A., who spent more than a year in detention, recounts the extreme violence:

“In the Jakeš camp near Modriča, during 1992–1993, I spent more than a year. I endured everything that the other detainees endured: daily psychological and physical abuse, beatings on all parts of the body, forced labour and starvation.”

The degree of degradation in the improvised bunkers in the Doboj area is best illustrated by the testimonies of survivors describing months-long confinement alongside animals:

“We were locked up together with cows, horses, goats – we were all confined there together with them.”

The systematic detention of civilians in Brčko was carried out through the notorious “Luka” concentration camp. According to the testimony of Amira Didić, a representative of a former detainees’ association, approximately 3,000 prisoners passed through this camp. Many Roma from Brčko were subjected to torture there, and the mortality rate was extremely high:

“The bodies of those who were killed were buried in a mass grave near the ‘Bimeks’ factory, and some of them were also thrown into the Sava River.”

The surviving detainee A. M., who was captured together with his family in early May 1992 and held in Doboj until July 1993, provides a detailed account of the mechanism of labour exploitation:

“Together with my father [O. M.] and my aunt [R. M.], I was engaged on a daily basis in cutting timber for the army, cleaning the facilities and the grounds used by the military, and performing all other forms of hard labour... Near this military base where we were cleaning, there was also a group of Roma from Modriča, and they were forced to bury the dead, while being subjected to various forms of abuse.”

Detainees were subjected to chronic hunger, while their work assignments frequently included loading property looted from displaced non-Serb civilians, thereby forcing the victims to participate in the process of ethnic cleansing.

The treatment of the Roma population by armed forces and local authorities points to the exploitation of their intersectional vulnerability. They were not detained solely within the broader framework of ethnic cleansing; rather, their historical and social marginalisation (the perception of Roma as “second-class” citizens) made them ideal targets for the most dangerous and degrading tasks. The perpetrators deliberately transformed these individuals into unpaid labour, spoils and protection against enemy fire, knowing that no one would seek accountability or justice for the disappearance or death of a Roma civilian on the front line.

### **3.5. Grave Breaches and Violations of the Laws or Customs of War: Plunder and Extensive Destruction of Property (Article 2(d))**

The facts gathered during the preparation of this report demonstrate that the appropriation and destruction of Roma property did not constitute mere collateral damage of the armed conflict, but rather a specific form of deliberate ethnic and economic cleansing. The motives of the perpetrators were deeply rooted in unrestrained greed and in the knowledge that the disenfranchised Roma minority lacked institutional protection, making their property easy and low-risk prey. The analysis identifies three specific patterns (*modi operandi*) of violations of property rights.

### **Complete Urbicide and the Physical Erasure of Roma Settlements (Article 3(b) of the ICTY Statute)**

In this category, the destruction was aimed at the complete and permanent erasure of all traces of the Roma community from specific geographical areas. The devastation was in no way justified by military necessity but was driven solely by hatred and the desire to appropriate territory.

#### **Erasure of Entire Villages**

Based on the data collected on locations where Roma suffered during the 1992-1995 war, a pattern emerges of the complete disappearance of Roma settlements, namely cases in which villages or Roma neighbourhoods were systematically destroyed and their inhabitants either killed or permanently expelled. This phenomenon may be described as the erasure of entire communities from a territory and represents an extreme form of urbicide and ethnic persecution.

Particularly illustrative are the cases from eastern Bosnia, such as Bratunac (the settlement of Orlo/Orlica) and Teočak (the settlement of Jasenje). According to available testimonies and field data, these Roma villages were destroyed during the war. In the village of Orlo, which before the war consisted of approximately twelve Roma households, the houses were deliberately burned and demolished to their foundations. A similar fate befell the settlement of Jasenje. The destruction was so extensive that today the remains of the former houses are almost unrecognisable and overgrown with forest, while traces of the former settlement are barely visible on the ground. In both cases, the entire Roma population was either killed or expelled, and return has never materialised.

An analysis of the mapped locations indicates that the complete or near-complete destruction of Roma settlements can be linked to at least a dozen sites in eastern Bosnia and the north-eastern part of the country. These include settlements and Roma neighbourhoods in the following local communities:

- Foča (Šukovac, Miljevina),
- Srebrenica (Trubari, Sase, Skelani),
- Bratunac (Pirići, Orlo),
- Vlasenica (Barice),
- Milići (Nova Kasaba – Ciganluk),
- Zvornik (the town – Roma neighbourhoods Ciganluk, Skočić),
- Kalesija (Vukovije – Kosa),
- Teočak (Jasenje),
- Derventa,
- Prijedor (town centre).

In many cases, Roma homes were burned down or razed to the ground, and the Roma population never returned. As a result, former Roma communities have physically disappeared from these areas, while traces of their existence today survive only in the form of occasional foundation remains, the testimonies of survivors and secondary sources.

These findings indicate that the suffering of Roma during the war was not limited to isolated crimes against civilians, but in certain cases resulted in the complete erasure of Roma settlements and the long-term demographic disappearance of the Roma population from certain territories. For this reason, documenting these locations is of crucial importance for understanding the scale of the suffering endured by the Roma community and for preserving the memory of communities that have effectively vanished from the social and geographical landscape of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

#### **Destruction for the Purpose of Land Appropriation**

In a village in the north-east inhabited by 50-60 Roma families, former neighbours began firing around houses and intimidating civilians until they fled. This was followed by systematic plunder and destruction. A case illustrating the extent of the hatred concerns a surviving civilian whose accordion – the instrument through which he supported his family – was found maliciously “crucified” and destroyed by the attackers. Today, the Roma village no longer exists, the properties have been appropriated, and local residents are building holiday homes and other structures on Roma land, including directly adjacent to Roma gravestones.

### Physical Removal of Buildings

In Derventa, the extent of the destruction was such that a prefabricated residential complex (a building known as “Pecana”), inhabited primarily by Roma residents, was demolished and removed from the street. Today, there is no physical trace that a residential building ever stood there. Even house number 5 has disappeared, while numbers 1, 3 and 7 remain visible.

### Economic Extortion and Armed Attacks Against Prominent Entrepreneurs (Article 2(d) of the ICTY Statute)

The perpetrators deliberately targeted Roma who had accumulated significant wealth before the war, exploiting the chaos of the conflict to carry out ruthless extortion and seize legitimate businesses, conduct that constitutes a grave violation of the laws of war through the unlawful appropriation of property through extortion.

Reference has already been made to the case of a prominent Roma entrepreneur (the civilian A. A.), the owner of the first privately owned motel in the town, who became a target of the local police. His motel was repeatedly damaged by planted explosive devices and was even attacked with a shoulder-fired anti-tank rocket launcher (*zolja*) to intimidate him and drive him away. The entrepreneur was abducted and detained in a camp with a clear objective – to force him to legitimise the theft of his property by signing documents “voluntarily” transferring ownership of his motel to a local police officer who sought to take over his profitable business. On that occasion, all his vehicles (a truck, a caravan and a car) were also confiscated and were never returned.

To force Roma families to leave and surrender their property, neighbours threw bombs into the yards and at the houses of Roma households during the night (the cases of the civilians I. S. and M.). The pattern of extortion was straightforward: a bomb would be thrown to create unbearable fear, the family would flee abroad, and the property would then be sold for a fraction of its value or directly appropriated.

### Systemic Plunder and Institutionalised Usurpation of Homes (Article 3(e) of the ICTY Statute)

The plunder of Roma private property went far beyond isolated acts of theft; it was systemic, deeply humiliating, and often carried out with the participation or acquiescence of the institutions. The civilian H. H., who at the time was working abroad, had his lavishly furnished home broken into by members of the State Security Service. Vast quantities of valuables were taken from the house (including more than four kilograms of gold and over one hundred chainsaws intended for commercial use). The most absurd and degrading aspect of the plunder occurred immediately after the war: when the owner attempted to enter his usurped home, the new occupants connected to state institutions demanded that he pay them 5,000 German marks merely to be allowed to “walk through and look at his own house”.

During attacks on Roma settlements, armed formations systematically emptied homes, taking equipment and money without regard for the presence of the occupants. The sadistic nature of the destruction of property is reflected in testimonies by women who stated that soldiers deliberately fired at pots of beans cooking on stoves, with the sole intention of leaving children and survivors to starve in their devastated homes.

In order to preserve their lives in the face of armed attacks by neighbours, Roma were forced to sell large agricultural holdings and houses under extreme duress for negligible sums (for example, three dunums of land for only 500 to 2,000 BAM), constituting a form of legally void, coerced sale that may be characterised as the plunder of property through intimidation.

Witness testimonies indicate that these acts amounted to a *deliberate, wanton and unlawful deprivation and destruction of the material foundations of existence* of an ethnic group. The vulnerability of the Roma community and the absence of political or military power enabled the perpetrators (both soldiers and former neighbours alike) to carry out a large-scale and unpunished redistribution of wealth driven by economic opportunism.

The practice of destroying Roma settlements in eastern Bosnia represents a radical form of ethnic cleansing known as **urbicide**. In these cases, the objective was the permanent erasure of the physical, historical and cultural traces of the Roma community from a particular geographical area. An analysis of

the documented cases of the village of Orlo (Bratunac Municipality) and the village of Jasenje (Teočak Municipality) demonstrates a pattern in which the destruction of property was used as the primary instrument for preventing any possibility of the return of survivors.

The village of Orlo, located near the Bratunac-Skelani road, represents the most extreme example of the spatial erasure of an entire community. Prior to the outbreak of the armed conflict, the settlement consisted of a cohesive Roma community comprising twelve to fifteen family homes. According to collected testimonies, by the end of 1992, following the fall of the surrounding territories, the village was subjected to a brutal attack that resulted in killings and the complete destruction of all residential houses.

The attack on the village of Orlo was marked by the ruthless use of force against the most vulnerable members of the community. An elderly and infirm civilian, Omer Muratović, was brutally killed on the doorstep of his home, while his daughter survived only because she managed to jump through a window and escape at the moment of the execution. His body has never been recovered or properly buried. During the same attack, an elderly Roma woman known by the nickname “Kutija” was forcibly taken away. As she was being abducted, soldiers physically tore a large pearl necklace from her neck and stole it. Her fate remains unknown and she is still listed as a missing person.

Field visits conducted by the researcher’s decades after the war reveal the scale of this **urbicide**. Today, not a single intact house remains in the village of Orlo. The foundations of former homes have become overgrown with dense forest and undergrowth and are barely visible to the naked eye. Evidence suggesting that the destruction of the settlement may conceal darker secrets has also emerged from field observations; adjacent to the foundations of the demolished home of the murdered Omer Muratović researchers identified a suspicious depression in the ground from which several layers of plastic sheeting were protruding, strongly suggesting the possible presence of a concealed primary mass grave or individual grave. The Missing Persons Institute of Bosnia and Herzegovina has been alerted to investigate the site.

The village of Jasenje represents a specific example of a case in which the pre-war economic prosperity of a Roma community was destroyed overnight under the guise of collective retaliation. Before the war, the inhabitants of the village owned substantial agricultural holdings, livestock and two-storey houses. The destruction of Jasenje was carried out during a night time raid by armed individuals. The surviving resident S. B. recalls the horrifying experience of waking in the middle of the night to the sounds of screams and cries as former neighbours systematically set Roma homes ablaze, forcing survivors to flee for their lives under cover of darkness towards Bijeljina. Within the local context, the attack was justified through an overtly discriminatory narrative. Members of the majority non-Roma population claimed that the burning of the village of Jasenje constituted “retaliation” because local Roma had allegedly sided, at the outset of the conflict, with “those who were stronger”, namely Serb military formations. Such collective punishment of civilians and the destruction of their homes on the ground of a perceived political or military affiliation constitutes a flagrant violation of the laws of war.

Aerial drone footage and field photographs confirm that all Roma houses, as well as the local school in the village of Jasenje, were reduced to burned-out ruins. The trauma caused by this **urbicide** has been so profound that survivors continue to reject even the idea of return decades after the war. Witness S. B. explicitly states that she never wishes to go back, that the destroyed property can “remain as it is”, because the memory of the night when everything was burned is simply too painful to bear.

### **3.6. Crimes against Humanity: Persecution on Political, Racial and Religious Grounds (Article 5(h))**

In this section, the analysis is based on Article 5(h) of the ICTY Statute (persecution on political, racial and religious grounds as a crime against humanity). Unlike other crimes against humanity, persecution requires a specific discriminatory intent (*mens rea*) – the intentional and severe deprivation of fundamental rights solely on account of the victim’s membership in a particular group or community.

The evidence collected demonstrates that the Roma population was organically incorporated into the broader, institutionalised apparatus of ethnic cleansing, the ultimate objective of which was the “social, economic and biological death” of the non-Serb population.

### **Institutional Discrimination and the Deprivation of Fundamental Human Rights**

The persecution began with the establishment of an administrative apparatus of hatred. Prior to the onset of physical executions, local authorities and crisis staffs created an environment in which Roma, Bosniaks and Croats were legally and socially erased from society.

Testimonies and court records confirm that non-Serb civilians were dismissed from their jobs on a mass scale. They were deprived of the means to earn a livelihood, while non-Serb children were barred from attending primary and secondary schools. As a method of psychological pressure and of making everyday life increasingly difficult, telephone communications for the non-Serb population were deliberately cut off, while electricity supplies were partially suspended. This created an atmosphere of pervasive terror in which minority communities were effectively cut off from any possibility of seeking assistance.

### **Physical Segregation, Visual Marking and Restrictions on Freedom of Movement**

This phase of persecution represents one of the starkest reminders of the fascist practices of the Second World War, where visual segregation served as a precursor to extermination. Witnesses, including the surviving civilians E. R. and S. S., provide detailed accounts of public radio broadcasts instructing non-Serb residents to demonstrate their “loyalty” to the new authorities by displaying white flags (or white bed sheets) on their homes. When leaving their houses, they were required to wear white armbands, thereby visually marking themselves as legitimate targets for abuse.

Freedom of movement beyond the municipality was completely denied. Movement within towns and villages was strictly controlled through the imposition of curfews and the establishment of a dense network of military checkpoints and roadblocks. At these checkpoints, civilians were routinely stopped, and non-Serb identity alone was sufficient grounds for denial of passage, arrest, or arbitrary execution.

### **Ethnic Cleansing, Arbitrary Killings and Mass Deportations**

The persecution culminated in the use of overt armed force aimed exclusively at the destruction and permanent removal of the targeted population from the territory.

At checkpoints and in the yards of private homes, members of military and police formations (including individuals judicially identified as B. M. and Ž. R.) carried out arbitrary killings of unarmed civilians motivated by ethnic hatred. These killings followed a clear pattern: victims were summoned from their homes or stopped at checkpoints and then cold-bloodedly shot in front of their families and neighbours, sending a message that the non-Serb population enjoyed no protection whatsoever.

Attacks on villages (such as Hambarine, Biščani, Rakovčani and Rizvanovići) were conducted with the use of heavy artillery, after which surviving residents were forced into flight. According to the testimonies of witnesses E. R. and S. S., a brutal process of selection followed; women and children were separated and deported in convoys outside the municipality, while military-age men – including Roma civilians – were detained and transported *en masse* to the notorious concentration camps of Omarska, Keraterm and Trnopolje. There, detainees were subjected to systematic starvation, torture and executions.

The acts committed in Prijedor and its surrounding areas constitute a paradigm of *persecution as a crime against humanity* (Article 5(h) of the ICTY Statute). The systematic dismissal from employment, the marking of houses with white flags, the requirement to wear white armbands, arbitrary killings at checkpoints and deportations to death camps were not acts of “military necessity” or “collateral damage”. Rather, they were highly organised, institutionalised measures of demographic engineering.

For the Roma population, these events represented a multiple tragedy. Due to their primary non-Serb affiliation (as reflected in Bosniak names or adherence to the Islamic faith), Roma were treated as an undesirable element and shared the fate of mass suffering in the camps. In addition, their pre-existing intersectional marginalisation rendered them doubly vulnerable – they were the easiest targets at checkpoints, the most suitable for forced labour, and their suffering remained the longest overlooked in post-conflict transitional justice processes.

## 4. Post-War Invisibility

An analysis of the available sources indicates that the end of the armed conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina did not mark the end of the persecution of the Roma population, but rather its transformation into more subtle, yet equally destructive, forms of **structural and symbolic discrimination**. The post-war period is characterised by the phenomenon of “post-war invisibility”, whereby the trauma of victims is deepened through administrative barriers, institutional apathy and deliberate erasure from collective memory. This process may be defined as the continuation of war by other means, aimed at the pacification and marginalisation of survivors.

### Systemic Barriers to Accessing Justice

The systemic barriers preventing Roma victims of the 1992–1995 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina from obtaining justice are multi-layered and stem from a combination of institutional neglect, social stigmatisation and ongoing security concerns. These obstacles have effectively created a “zone of silence” that continues to marginalise Roma survivors, particularly women, within the framework of transitional justice.

### Failure to Obtain Status: Administrative Violence as a Barrier to Reparations

Obtaining the status of a civilian victim of war has been transformed into an exhausting “administrative struggle” for Roma, particularly for Roma women who survived sexual violence. Procedures have been designed in a manner that systematically excludes the most vulnerable:

- **Procedural complexity:** Requirements involving multiple appearances before authorities and repeated testimony constitute an insurmountable obstacle for persons of limited financial means who cannot afford the costs associated with the process.
- **Discriminatory legal frameworks:** In some entities, legal provisions are structured in such a way that eligibility for status depends on the victim’s place of residence both at the time of the crime and at the time of submitting the application, directly disadvantaging displaced persons and refugees.
- **Outcome:** Faced with administrative harassment and the disregard of their claims, victims often retreat into “their silence”, abandoning rights to which they are legally entitled.

### Fear of Testifying: Proximity of Perpetrators and Distrust

The silence of victims is not the product of cultural indifference, but rather a rational response to an unsafe environment in which perpetrators often continue to occupy positions of power:

- **Perpetrators in positions of authority:** Victims testify that they know the names of those who abused them but are afraid to speak out because those individuals are “still in office”.
- **Retraumatization and fear of retaliation:** There is a deeply rooted fear that raising issues related to the war could “start the war again” or expose their children to danger.
- **Collective suppression:** In some cases, such as the one documented in Brčko, victims concealed the truth even from their closest family members for decades because they did not regard institutional witness-protection mechanisms as trustworthy.

### Absence from Memorialisation: The Symbolic Erasure of Victims

The memorialisation of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina has almost entirely ignored the specific experiences of Roma victims, thereby contributing to a process that humanitarian scholarship has described as a “second killing”:

- **Exclusion from memorials:** Roma who died as members of military formations (e.g. Suvad Čanić in Janja) are often omitted from local memorials dedicated to martyrs or defenders, thereby denying their role in the defence of the state.
- **Identity engineering:** Roma victims are frequently categorised in official reports and commemorative practices under the broader labels of “Muslims” or “Bosniaks”, thereby erasing their ethnic identity and the specific nature of the persecution they endured. One example is the Srebrenica-Potočari Memorial Centre, where Roma victims buried in the memorial cemetery as victims of the Srebrenica genocide are not identified as Roma.
- **Urbicide as the erasure of memory:** The destruction of settlements such as Kosa or the Roma neighbourhoods (“Ciganluks”) of Prijedor and Derventa, and their subsequent conversion into car parks or commercial zones, physically removes traces of a community’s existence and prevents return.

### **Economic Marginalisation and Loss of Identity**

The pursuit of justice has been further impeded by extreme economic deprivation and the erosion of legal identity during the war.

- **Economic disempowerment:** The wholesale looting and destruction of Roma settlements, such as the village of Kosa, the Roma “Ciganluk” neighbourhoods of Prijedor, and the Doline settlement in Prnjavor, deprived the community of the financial resources necessary to pursue lengthy legal proceedings.
- **Erasure of identity:** To survive, many Roma were forced to change their names to Serbian ones to cross borders or gain access to medical assistance. The loss of original documentation has created significant obstacles to proving their wartime identity when applying for victim status.
- **Failure to report missing persons:** Due to a lack of trust in the system, many Roma did not report missing family members to official databases for decades; such reports were made only recently, after specialised Roma-led research projects initiated contact.

### **Institutional Silence: The State as an Accomplice in Forgetting**

The institutional response to the suffering of Roma has been characterised by a passivity that borders on complicity:

- **Ridicule and harassment:** Rather than receiving support, victims have faced ridicule from public officials (as illustrated by the case of A. O. and the police in Doboj), further entrenching their distrust of state institutions.
- **Lack of specialised resources:** Support systems (such as psychological and legal assistance) are rarely tailored to the intersectional needs of Roma women, leaving them on the margins of the non-governmental sector working with war victims.
- **Delayed response:** The fact that some missing persons (such as Nuraga Osmanović) were entered into databases only after private research initiatives had been launched clearly points to decades of neglect by state institutions in documenting Roma victims.

The failure to secure justice for Roma victims is not merely a by-product of general systemic inefficiency; rather, it is an indicator of intersectional exclusion or, more simply, the final stage of their persecution. The combination of administrative barriers, fear stemming from the proximity of unpunished perpetrators, and deeply entrenched cultural stigma has effectively excluded this population from the reparative and judicial mechanisms available to other ethnic groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Their absence from official memory policies renders Roma “invisible victims” whose suffering continues to be treated as marginal. Without a fundamental shift in the institutional approach and recognition of Roma as equal subjects of transitional justice, the process of reconciliation and the building of a legal state will remain inherently deficient and discriminatory.

## 5. Recommendations

The recommendations that follow are the result of a qualitative analysis of multiple sources: testimonies of survivors, the case law of domestic courts and international tribunals, secondary literature on war crimes committed against Roma, and relevant primary and secondary legislation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The analysis has been conducted through the lens of transitional justice as an integrated concept encompassing criminal prosecution, reparations, the right to truth, institutional reform and memorialisation policies.

**The methodological approach is based on three complementary principles.**

**First, the principle of intersectionality.** The analysis proceeds from the premise that Roma, and particularly Roma women who survived sexual violence, were exposed to multiple forms of discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status and, frequently, displacement. This layered vulnerability was not episodic but structural. Accordingly, the recommendations are not formulated as universal solutions applicable to all victims, but rather as targeted responses to specific patterns of exclusion.

**Second, the principle of evidentiary grounding and normative compliance.** Each recommendation is linked to specifically documented patterns of rights violations and to the existing legal obligations of Bosnia and Herzegovina under international humanitarian law, international human rights law and domestic legislation. In this way, the recommendations are positioned not as political aspirations, but as an operationalisation of obligations already assumed by the state.

**Third, the principle of moving from formal to effective rights.** The analysis demonstrates that the formal existence of legal mechanisms (such as civilian victim of war status or the recognition of children born of wartime rape) has not translated into meaningful access to justice for the Roma population. For this reason, the recommendations are directed towards transforming passive and reactive mechanisms into proactive, accessible and culturally sensitive policies.

In this regard, the document identifies the phenomenon of “post-war invisibility” as an operational category: a condition in which the combination of administrative barriers, socio-economic marginalisation, institutional passivity and symbolic erasure from collective memory produces enduring exclusion from transitional justice mechanisms. The recommendations are structured around the four core pillars of transitional justice – criminal justice, reparations, memorialisation and institutions – to ensure coherence and a systemic approach. It is important to emphasise that these recommendations are not premised on the assumption of additional privilege, but rather on the need to establish substantive equality. They constitute a form of affirmative correction of structural inequality which, in the case of the Roma community, has persisted even after the formal end of the armed conflict.

In this sense, the objective of the document is not merely to address individual violations, but to offer a framework for transforming the relationship between the state and Roma victims – from administrative distance towards active protection, recognition and reparation.

### A) Criminal Justice Recommendations

1. **Accelerate the identification of victims in mass graves:** Efforts to identify human remains recovered from mass graves in Sijekovac and Prnjavor, for which there are indications that they may contain the remains of Roma victims, should be intensified. Adequate resources should be allocated for DNA analysis, and surviving family members should be proactively encouraged to provide blood samples.
2. **Investigate specific allegations of crimes against children:** Allegations concerning the killing of Roma children for the purpose of organ trafficking in the Brod area (a case documented in the novel *Poslije zabave* (After the Party)) should be urgently investigated, given that these crimes have never received a judicial resolution.
3. **Remove perpetrators from public office:** Institutions must respond to testimonies indicating that certain perpetrators of rape and torture continue to hold public office, particularly in the Dobož and Modriča regions.

4. **Prosecute gender-based violence as a crime against humanity:** Courts should consistently apply jurisprudence recognising the mass rape of Roma women (such as those committed in the Jakešnica camp) as part of a widespread and systematic attack against the civilian population, while taking into account the intersectional nature of the discrimination involved (violence on the ground of both gender and ethnicity).

## B) Reparations-Related Recommendations

1. **Establish proactive, intersectionality-sensitive reparation programmes:** Rather than relying on passive administrative procedures, public authorities should develop programmes that actively reach out to victims within the communities. These programmes must recognise that Roma women, because of decades of institutional neglect and harassment, often “retreat into their silence” and become fearful at the very mention of administrative procedures. Such programmes should include:
  - **Institutional trust through mediation:** The use of trained Roma mediators and civil society organisations as a bridge between victims and the state, to overcome deeply rooted distrust.
  - **Elimination of secondary victimisation:** Mandatory training for civil servants on gender-based violence in the context of Roma communities, with a view to preventing the documented ridicule, humiliation and dehumanisation of victims during the process.
  - **Proactive approach to evidentiary requirements:** The state should assume responsibility for gathering evidence (extracts from civil registries, military records and previous statements) by making use of existing databases, rather than placing this burden – an insurmountable one for many Roma women – on the victims themselves.

**Fund for Economic Rehabilitation and Property Restitution:** Establish a dedicated fund to provide reparations for destroyed Roma settlements (such as Kosa; the “Ciganluk” neighbourhoods in Zvornik and Nova Kasaba; Barice in Vlasenica; the villages around Srebrenica, including Sase, Skelani and Trubari; Orlo in Bratunac; and settlements in Prijedor and Derventa), where the restitution of property has been rendered impossible through the construction of new buildings or the administrative erasure of ownership.

**Children Born of Wartime Rape:** Although the Law on the Protection of Civilian Victims of War in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina formally recognises children born of rape, the experiences of the Roma population indicate that a legal provision alone is insufficient to overcome deeply entrenched intersectional barriers. Recommendations must therefore evolve from a passive legal framework into proactive, culturally sensitive programmes that directly take into account the specific circumstances of these children within Roma communities and the diaspora.

### 1. Proactive Identification through “Confidential Outreach”

The sources indicate that Roma victims, such as Z. H., concealed for decades **the fact that they had given birth to a child** conceived through rape due to profound shame and social stigma. A standard legal procedure that requires the victim or the child to initiate the process themselves is ineffective, as families often retreat into “their own silence”.



**Recommendation:** The state should establish mobile teams composed of Roma mediators and trauma specialists who, in cooperation with non-governmental organisations, would proactively and discreetly approach identified families to facilitate access to victim status without their public exposing.

### 2. Recognition of Status and Reparations for Children in the Diaspora

A significant number of documented cases involving births following the rape of Roma women occurred abroad (Germany and Austria), where these children continue to live as adults today. Existing administrative requirements often depend on residence or physical presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina, creating an insurmountable obstacle for this population.



**Recommendation:** Enable children born of wartime rape who reside abroad to obtain legal status and associated reparations through consular offices, accepting previous witness statements provided by their mothers and medical documentation from host countries as valid evidence (for example, in the cases of B. A. and H. H.).

### 3. Programmes for Addressing Transgenerational Trauma and Stigma

Children born of rape within Roma communities are often exposed to “double marginalisation” – within their own communities because of the circumstances of their birth, and within wider society because of their ethnic background. In extreme cases, such as that of R. A., stigma resulted in the abandonment of the child and the mother’s suicide.



**Recommendation:** Establish a dedicated fund for the economic empowerment of and educational support for these children (now adults), including reparations for “lost opportunities” resulting from the extreme poverty and isolation imposed upon their families by wartime trauma.

### 4. Institutional Protection of Identity and the Removal of Administrative Evidentiary Burdens

Sources describe the process of proving eligibility for status as an “administrative struggle” that intimidates Roma women, particularly because of the requirement to secure witnesses.



**Recommendation:** The state should assume responsibility for establishing eligibility by drawing upon existing judicial databases (including judgments such as Boro Milojica et al., which documented crimes committed against Roma civilians), so that status may be granted ex officio to children born of those events, thereby eliminating the need for victims and their families to relive their trauma before commissions.

**Conclusion:** For these recommendations to be effective, they must move beyond the sphere of general legal rights and towards concrete implementation measures that recognise that these children and their mothers constitute one of the most hidden and vulnerable groups in BiH society, and that their invisibility is a direct consequence of the failure of the system to provide them with security and dignity.

**Provision of Free Legal Aid and Psychological Support:** Institutions must ensure continuous psychosocial support for victims of torture, tailored to the specific cultural and social barriers faced by Roma women.

#### C) Memorialisation Recommendations

1. **Inclusion of Roma names on public memorials:** Review local memorials to include the names of Roma who were killed while serving in the ranks of the defence forces (such as Suvad Čanić in Janja), as well as civilian victims whose suffering has thus far been overlooked.
2. **Commemoration of sites of suffering and detention:** Install memorial plaques at locations specifically associated with the suffering of Roma, such as the Yellow Bridge in Doboj, the Jakešnica camp, and the Divlji Zapad settlement in Bijeljina.
3. **Protection of Roma cemeteries as historical evidence:** End the practice of usurpation upon Roma cemeteries (such as the cemetery in the village of Kosa, which was returned to Roma use following legal proceedings) and designate them as sites of significance for memory culture.
4. **Institutional support for documentary projects:** Support initiatives aimed at creating exhibitions and documentary films that focus specifically on the Roma experience of the war, to prevent its erasure from the national historical narrative.

#### D) Institutional Reforms

1. **Sensitisation of staff in social welfare and police services:** Introduce mandatory training on human rights and combating antigypsyism for public administration staff, to prevent the ridicule and harassment of survivors of sexual violence in submission of applications.
2. **Establishment of a database on missing Roma persons:** The Missing Persons Institute of Bosnia and Herzegovina should, in cooperation with Roma organisations, create a dedicated database on missing Roma persons, given that many disappearances were never reported to official records until the launch of recent research initiatives.
3. **Reform of housing policies for survivors:** Waive wartime utility debts for surviving victims and resolve property-related disputes concerning land on which Roma homes were destroyed or unlawfully occupied.

**Part II:  
Mapping the  
Suffering of Roma,  
1992–1995**

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A white silhouette of Bosnia and Herzegovina is centered on a black background. Two red downward-pointing triangles mark specific locations. The first triangle is positioned in the northern part of the map, with the word "Prijedor" printed in black text directly below it. The second triangle is located in the eastern part of the map, with the words "BANJA LUKA" printed in black text directly below it. A third red downward-pointing triangle is located in the southern part of the map, above the main title.

Prijedor

BANJA LUKA



# Locations

of Roma Suffering  
in the Podrinje Region  
and Northern Bosnia,  
1992-1995



# 1. INTRODUCTION

This annex supplements the first part of the report, with the aim of further systematising and refining the collected data through the clear identification of geographical locations where relevant events and patterns of violations of international law were recorded. In comparison with the first part of the report, an enhanced methodological approach to data processing is introduced here, whereby the existing findings are supplemented with additional field research, testimonies and secondary sources, and are structured in a manner that facilitates their use in further analyses. Particular emphasis is placed on the identification of locations, thereby providing additional contextualisation to the first part of the report and making it more operational for different types of future interventions.

The clear identification and documentation of locations is of crucial importance for the further prosecution of perpetrators, the realisation of the right to reparations, and initiatives aimed at memorialisation. Precise information on the sites where crimes were committed contributes to strengthening the evidentiary basis in criminal proceedings, enables more effective investigations, and supports the work of judicial institutions. At the same time, such documentation constitutes an important element in ensuring the rights of victims and their families to truth, justice and reparations.

In addition to its judicial dimension, the clear mapping of locations also has broader social significance, particularly in processes of dealing with the past and building a culture of memory. Identified locations may serve as a foundation for memorialisation initiatives, including the marking of sites of suffering, educational activities and the development of policies that contribute to non-repetition. In this way, this annex represents not only a technical upgrade of the report, but also an important tool for advancing a comprehensive approach to justice, reparations and social memory.

## 2. MAPPING OF THE SUFFERING OF ROMA, 1992–1995: THE PODRINJE REGION

### 2.1. The Suffering of Roma in Foča

According to the data collected, Roma lived in two settlements in the Foča municipality: Šukovac and Miljevina.

#### 2.1.1. The Suffering of Roma in the Settlement of Šukovac

The Roma residents of Šukovac, like other members of the non-Serb population, were expelled from the Foča area. One of those expelled describes it as follows:



“We left our house in Foča before the war started, when the rallies began, in 1992, I do not know in which month it was. We had to leave our house in Foča, because all Muslims were expelled from Foča, so no one from the Roma population remained. When we fled, all our property was left behind; we could not take or save anything. We only took our personal belongings. During the war, all the houses were destroyed, everything was levelled, as they say, not even the foundations remained.”

The Roma owned a blacksmith’s workshop near the market in Foča. The son of the workshop owner states: “We owned a blacksmith’s workshop, and it was run by my father. The workshop was near the market in Foča... It is our property and everything is registered in the cadastre and land registry, but I have never gone to claim it. I have not pursued it because I am afraid...”

The collected data indicate that none of the Roma returned to the Foča area after the war, and the property that was completely devastated and destroyed during the war was not rebuilt afterwards. In addition to the destruction of their property, one of the reasons why they did not return to their pre-war place of residence was fear for their own safety and the safety of their families.

#### 2.1.2. The Suffering of Roma in Miljevina

During the research process, it was established that before the war one Roma family lived in Miljevina. They were accommodated in a barrack at a place called Kosa, near the mine. When the war began in 1992, members of the Roma family remained living in Miljevina and did not experience any problems at the very beginning of the war. One respondent recalls that approximately three months after the outbreak of the war, two Serb men arrived at his mother’s barrack in a Lada Niva vehicle and ordered the men to get dressed, prepare themselves and go with them. They took away and killed four men, three of whom, according to the respondent, were Bosniaks, while one, R. R., was Roma. At that time, R. R. was very young and had a wife and a child. Before the war, R. R. and his killers had socialised and collected scrap metal together.

The respondent further stated that seven days after R. R. had been taken away, an excavator was brought to them, and he was told to call S. and M. and accompany them to recover the bodies of those who had been killed and transfer them to the Muslim cemetery.



“They told us to dig the earth, but we were afraid that they would kill us there as well, so we told them to use the excavator to dig the earth, and when we saw a body, we would take it. That is what happened, and we transferred the bodies to the Muslim cemetery. I wrapped R. R. separately in a blanket. After the war, he was transferred to Visoko and is now buried in Vlakovo.”

For the purposes of this research project, an analysis of criminal proceedings concerning crimes committed in the Miljevina area established that the District Public Prosecutor's Office in Trebinje issued the following statement:

Following a conducted investigation, on 19 September 2022 the District Public Prosecutor's Office in Trebinje brought an indictment against Ilija Elez, known as "Ico", for the criminal offence of a war crime against the civilian population under Article 142(1) of the Criminal Code of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, in conjunction with Article 22 of the same Code. The indictment was subsequently confirmed by the District Court in Trebinje.

The indictment charges Elez Ilija with having, together with another individual who has since deceased, on an unspecified date during the period from mid-April to approximately mid-June 1992, at the location of Mitrino Vrelo in the village of Miljevina, Municipality of Foča, while armed with automatic rifles, arrived in a white Lada Niva vehicle in front of a house owned by R. H., after which they searched the house while threatening to kill its occupants. On that occasion, they unlawfully deprived the civilians R. A., born in 1928, M. H., born in 1955, and R. R., born in 1976, of their liberty. They then transported them to a house owned by the civilian H. H., whom they also unlawfully deprived of liberty, and subsequently drove all four victims together to the locality of Mitrino Vrelo, where they deprived them of life shooting them with firearms.<sup>1</sup>

Further analysis of media reporting on the course and substance of the criminal proceedings indicates that the District Prosecutor's Office in Trebinje "charges Ilija Elez with having, together with another individual, in June 1992 in Miljevina, Municipality of Foča, in his capacity as a member of the Army of Republika Srpska, taken away and killed four civilians by shooting them with firearms – Ahmet and Ramo Ramović, Hamdo Muhović and Halil Hrbinić, known as Muriz."<sup>2</sup>

Witnesses state that following these killings, persons of Roma ethnicity were taken from their barrack and held in detention for a period of three months in three or four prefabricated barracks. While they were being held there, according to the respondent: "There was shouting and they were harassing the women... It happened every night, there was swearing... they raped a young girl... she was a 12-year-old girl... I do not know which other women they raped there, but every night there were cries for help, the children were screaming." After three months, they were transported to Goražde together with other Bosniaks in a convoy of approximately 180 people, including women and children.

This family did not return to Miljevina after the war, and a house has since been built on the site where the Roma barrack once stood. The owner of the house is a person of Serb ethnicity.

As the research continued, interviews were conducted with additional witnesses from the area, establishing that A. H. had lived in the Miljevina area, near Karaman's House. He was captured and forced to labour. He reportedly survived the war, but neither his whereabouts nor those of his family are known.

There are also allegations made by a person of Serb ethnicity that some members of the Hrbinić family were killed in Miljevina and buried by the roadside at the turn-off for Kalinovik. The Missing Persons Institute of BiH reportedly organised an excavation at that location, but no bodies were found. The person who provided the original information stated that the excavation had been carried out at the correct location, but that the digging had not gone deep enough for the bodies to be found.

During the interviews, information was collected regarding the sexual abuse of a Roma woman from Foča [identity known to the authors of the report], who was granted the status of a civilian victim of war in the Federation of BiH.

Before the war, there was a Roma family living in Foča whose members were subjected to crimes: the husband was killed, while the wife survived all forms of sexual torture, including having cigarettes extinguished on her body.

During the research, a considerable amount of information was collected about Roma who had lived in these locations before the war, but there is still no information about their fate during the war or after the war.

1 Available at: <https://vsud-rs.pravosudje.ba/vstvfo/S/112/kategorije-vijesti/5292/5301/5303>, accessed on 1 April 2025.

2 Available at: <https://detektor.ba/2023/04/14/elez-ilija-saznanja-o-ubistvima-civila-u-miljevini/>, accessed on 1 April 2025.



**Roma Cemetery,  
Zupčiči Settlement,  
Goražde Municipality**

## **2.2. The Suffering of Roma in Goražde**

In Goražde, Roma lived in the suburban settlement of Zubčiči. The settlement is located approximately five kilometres from the town centre, on the R448 road connecting Goražde and Čajniče.

According to the available data, prior to the outbreak of hostilities in Goražde, Roma mainly fled in the direction of Sarajevo. As a result, there is no information on Roma casualties during the war in the Goražde area. However, there is information regarding Roma victims originating from Goražde who were living in Butmir, Municipality of Ilidža, Sarajevo, during the war. According to a person of Roma ethnicity interviewed during the research, a Roma woman was killed by shrapnel from an anti-aircraft machine gun round, which passed through her abdomen while she was pregnant.

All property in Zubčiči was destroyed, and no person of Roma ethnicity returned to the settlement after the war. This was confirmed by one of the respondents during the research: “At present, no Roma live in Zubčiči; they live in Podhranjen, Municipality of Goražde. The only remnant of the Roma population that remains in Zubčiči today is the cemetery.”

## **2.3. The Suffering of Roma in Bratunac**

Bratunac is highly specific regarding its Roma population. According to statements made by certain respondents who participated in this research project, a significant number of Roma live in the Bratunac area, but do not wish to identify themselves as members of the Roma population and instead generally identify as Bosniaks because they are adherents of the Islamic faith. In the Bratunac area, there are entire villages which some respondents stated are inhabited by persons of Roma ethnicity. However, during interviews, residents of those villages stated that they do not identify as Roma, but rather as Bosniaks. The specific nature of the situation lies in the fact that, in this case, what matters is not how individuals identify themselves, but rather the perception of the perpetrators during the war. Namely, although the population in question does not identify as Roma, there are indications that they were targeted during the war because the perpetrators perceived them as Roma, and that crimes were therefore committed against them. This is, of course, only a hypothesis that requires further research.

During the implementation of the project, it was established that Roma lived in the village of Pirići in the Bratunac area and that they were victims of wartime suffering.

### 2.3.1. The Suffering of Roma in the Village of Pirići

The Roma from Pirići were members of the Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and some of them gave their lives in its defence, as evidenced by relevant documentation. The memorial in Pirići bears the names of all those killed from the area, including Roma:

- Fadil (Šaban) Musić, born in 1960, killed in 1993;
- Azem (Fadil) Musić, born in 1977, killed in 1993. Fadil and Azem were father and son and were killed together by a tank shell;
- Čamil (Hakija) Musić, born in 1958, killed in June 1992;
- Ragib (Hakija) Musić, born in 1967, killed in 1995 and buried at the Potočari Memorial Centre;
- Džemal (Sabrija) Ferhatović, known as Zoran, born in 1975, killed in 1995 and buried at the Potočari Memorial Centre;
- Miralem (Belija) Ferhatović, born in 1911, remained in Srebrenica in 1995 and has been missing ever since; civilian victim of war.

During interviews conducted as part of the project, the following was stated:



“The civilians fled to Srebrenica when this area fell into the hands of the VRS on 6 April 1993. The Roma houses were destroyed, and the ruins have become overgrown, so the village practically no longer exists. Not a single Roma family from Pirići has come to visit the site of their pre-war homes, because the place represents a severe trauma for them. Consequently, none of them submitted claims for the reconstruction of their houses after the war. Many of them are now dispersed across the world, although some live in Sapna and Tuzla.”

The data indicate that persecution did not spare children. One of the respondents interviewed as part of the project was an infant at the time the crimes were committed, when members of his immediate family suffered harm. In his testimony, he stated:



“Before the war, we lived in the village of Pirići, Municipality of Bratunac, where we remained until 1992. During the war, we were expelled and moved to Srebrenica, where we stayed until 1995, when Srebrenica fell under the control of the Army of Republika Srpska. My father, Ragib Musić, son of Hakija, was killed following the fall of Srebrenica in 1995. His remains were found in a mass grave in Kamenica in 2007, after which he was identified through DNA analysis with the participation of family members. The remains of my uncle, Džemal Ferhatović, were found in 2018. He left Srebrenica together with my father as part of the column. My grandfather, Miralem Ferhatović, was also killed, and his remains have not been found or identified to this day, even though the family provided blood samples for identification purposes. My father and my uncle are buried at the Potočari Memorial Centre.”

One respondent, a Roma woman, testified about her own experiences and the suffering of her family members during the war:



“Before the war, I lived in Pirići, Municipality of Bratunac. During the war, I lost my father and my brother. My father’s name was Fadil, and my brother’s name was Azem. Both were members of the Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Approximately 20 Roma families lived in Pirići, including the Musić, Ferhatović and Omerović families. My father and brother were killed by a shell explosion which killed them on the spot. My mother recovered their bodies. As I was a child at the time, my memories are fragmented, but I remember that the bodies were carried on stretchers to the school building. My brother was still conscious despite his severe injuries and died at the school. After the burial, the following day, another part of my father’s body – an arm – was found, which my mother recognised by the watch he was wearing. During the war, we were expelled from Pirići to Srebrenica, and after its fall we

were deported together with the rest of the population by buses and lorries to Tuzla. During the war, we faced severe food shortages, while the men were immediately mobilised. I also remember the transport from Potočari to Tuzla after the fall of Srebrenica: a large number of people were waiting to board the buses. As they boarded, the men were separated and taken out of the vehicles, while the women remained. The men were systematically singled out. I witnessed scenes of violence and killings, including brutal executions.”

The Roma houses in the village of Pirići were destroyed during the war.

### 2.3.2. The Suffering of Roma in the Village of Orlo

During the research, information was collected regarding the suffering of the Roma community in the village of Orlo, located above the village of Orlica in the Municipality of Bratunac. According to the available data, approximately eight Roma families lived in this village before the war. Today, there are



Orlo Roma Settlement, Bratunac Municipality

no permanent residents at this location, and the residential buildings have been destroyed – burned and demolished. According to the information collected, Omer Muratović, an elderly and ill man, was killed following the fall of Srebrenica in 1995. Omer was reportedly killed in his home, while his daughter managed to escape by jumping through a window and reaching safety. According to the respondents, his remains have not been found to this day. A woman was also killed that same year.

On 31 January 2026, a field visit to this area was conducted. Access to the village of Orlo is difficult, and most of the route must be covered on foot. No intact buildings were found at the site; only the remains of houses are visible, namely foundations and sections of walls, which are largely overgrown with vegetation and difficult to discern.

## 2.4. The Suffering of Roma in Srebrenica

As part of the project, several important locations where Roma suffered were mapped, including the town of Srebrenica, Skelani, Trubari and Sase. Roma were also expelled from the settlements of Pišonje and Posulice, where there were several Roma houses and family households.

### 2.4.1. The Suffering of Roma in the Town of Srebrenica

Before the war, the Roma community in the town of Srebrenica lived in good relations with the rest of the population. They were mainly settled in the Kazani neighbourhood. One respondent of Roma ethnicity interviewed as part of this research project stated:



“Before the war, no one paid attention to who was who or what anyone was, so I did not feel any humiliation in any respect, especially not because I was Roma. Nobody knew, nor did I know, who was Serb, Bosniak or Croat. We all attended each other’s celebrations and farewells. I remember that we gathered at the Kiseljak – Mali Guber locality in Kiselica, where we met regularly. I did not experience any discrimination, either before the war or during the war.”

However, this respondent points out that he was subjected to threats and abuse by Serb military formations from the very beginning of the war:



“At the beginning of the war in 1992, Arkan’s men came, knowing that Roma lived there, and demanded weapons. As a child, I watched what was happening, and then one of them called me over. He asked me whether I possessed any weapons. They lined up me, my uncles, my cousins and our Bosniak neighbours – there were about 15 of us. Among them were Nurdin Hakić (Hajro’s son), Fahrudin Hakić, Vejsil Hakić, Nurdin Hakić (Hamdija’s son), Pele Lelić, Fikret Bajrić and others. Almost none of them survived the genocide of 1995; only Pele survived.”

The respondent further expressed his belief that the Roma population had been targeted: “I believe that the aim was to exterminate the Roma, just as it was the Bosniaks.” When asked about his own status, he stated clearly: “Yes, I was a victim of the genocide committed in Srebrenica in July 1995.”

Data collected during the research also indicate that members of the Roma community actively participated in the defence of Srebrenica as members of the Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. One respondent stated: “I was a member of the Army of RBiH from the very beginning until the end of the war and took part in the defence of the country throughout the period.”

Further analysis confirms that persons of Roma ethnicity, together with Bosniaks, were victims of the genocide committed in and around Srebrenica in July 1995, including killings, mass executions and enforced disappearances. Their remains were later recovered from mass graves.

Confirmation of these allegations can also be found in a witness interview record of the War Crimes Investigation Centre of the State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA), which states:



“I remember that it was evening and, together with Zlatan, I transported a certain number of people, but I cannot recall their names. I did not bring anyone from my battalion because they had gone towards Sućeska. On the first day, I recognised several Roma from Srebrenica, while I did not know the others. I asked one of them who had built the small power plant in front of my house. He replied that he did not know because he had not been there at the time. I told him that I did not know what his fate would be. I also saw his son, who was deaf and mute; his brother had died in Tuzla the previous year.”

The above statement relates to events that took place in July 1995, when Bosniak and Roma men were detained in Bratunac, at the Vuk Karadžić Primary School (today named Branko Radičević), where numerous killings were carried out. The detainees were subsequently transported to locations in the Zvornik area, including Branjevo, Pilica, the Petkovci Dam, Orahovac and Kozluk, where they were systematically executed and buried in mass graves. The remains were later relocated from primary to secondary gravesites across north-eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina.

During the research process, information was collected on Roma genocide victims from the Srebrenica area, namely:

- Vejsil (Ramiz) Hakić, killed in the genocide in 1995, recovered from a mass grave and buried at the Potočari Memorial Centre. Recorded in the Missing Persons Institute of BiH database; born on 11 December 1955 in Srebrenica; identified through DNA analysis; disappeared on 11 July 1995;

- Elvir (Vejsil) Hakić, killed in the genocide in 1995, recovered from a mass grave and buried at the Potočari Memorial Centre. Recorded in the Missing Persons Institute of BiH database; born on 11 August 1975 in Zvornik; identified through DNA analysis; disappeared on 11 July 1995;
- Nurdin (Hamdija) Hakić, born on 1 January 1975 in Srebrenica, killed in the genocide in 1995, recovered from a mass grave and buried at the Potočari Memorial Centre. Recorded in the Missing Persons Institute of BiH database; identified through DNA analysis; disappeared on 11 July 1995;
- Fahrudin (Hamdija) Hakić, born on 1 February 1969 in Bratunac, killed in the genocide in 1995, recovered from a mass grave and buried at the Potočari Memorial Centre. Recorded in the Missing Persons Institute of BiH database; identified through DNA analysis; disappeared on 11 July 1995;
- Almir (Hamdija) Hakić, born on 8 August 1979 in Srebrenica, killed in the genocide in 1995, recovered from a mass grave and buried at the Potočari Memorial Centre;
- Hajro Hakić, born on 1 March 1955 in Srebrenica, killed in the genocide in 1995, recovered from a mass grave and buried at the Potočari Memorial Centre. Recorded in the Missing Persons Institute of BiH database; identified through DNA analysis; disappeared on 11 July 1995;
- Nurdin (Hajro) Hakić, born on 22 February 1965, killed in the genocide in 1995, recovered from a mass grave and buried at the Potočari Memorial Centre;
- Sejad (Ramiz) Hakić, born on 1 January 1961 in Srebrenica, killed in the genocide in 1995, recovered from a mass grave and buried at the Potočari Memorial Centre. Recorded in the Missing Persons Institute of BiH database; identified through DNA analysis; disappeared on 11 July 1995;
- Senad Hakić, born on 28 January 1965 in Srebrenica, killed in the genocide in 1995, recovered from a mass grave and buried at the Potočari Memorial Centre. Recorded in the Missing Persons Institute of BiH database; identified through DNA analysis; disappeared on 11 July 1995;
- Medo (Ramiz) Hakić, Hakić, born on 16 June 1962 in Srebrenica, killed in the genocide in 1995. Recorded in the Missing Persons Institute of BiH database; his remains have not yet been recovered.

Ramiz (Ramo) Hakić, born on 14 June 1922 in Srebrenica, is also still being sought. In 1992, he went to stay with his sister Zulfa in Ljubovija, where he remained until 1993, when he attempted to cross the Drina River. He was reportedly killed on or near the Ljubovija Bridge. He is recorded in the Missing Persons Institute of BiH database, has not been identified, and was reported missing on 1 May 1993 in Ljubovija.

Roma were also detained in camps. A man with the initials H. N. was detained for six months in the Batković camp, Municipality of Bijeljina, during 1995.

In addition to the loss of life, killings and enforced disappearances, suffering was also reflected in the destruction of movable and immovable property. Immovable property (houses, garages, business premises, barns and similar) was completely looted and subsequently destroyed. Movable property was likewise looted and appropriated; for example, an FAP 13 lorry was taken from H. N., while a Fiat 850 van was taken from H. F.

Following the end of the war, Roma received a certain form of assistance. One respondent stated: "I received support from Roma associations, namely Kali Sara, Euro Rom and Romalen from Kakanj..." One Roma association, known as Romska suza (Roma Tear), was registered in Srebrenica and remains active to this day.

No psychological support was provided to returning Roma after the war, even though the war left lasting effects on this population, as evidenced, among other things, by the following statement: "Of course, the war affected my relationship with my family, and that is still felt today. The trauma and stress are still there. Sometimes you cannot sleep; images return of those you once had and those you no longer have, of everything that was endured, and then you cannot sleep."

### 2.4.2. The Suffering of Roma in Kazani

During the research, information was confirmed regarding Roma families who lived in Kazani, Municipality of Srebrenica. Before the war, there were approximately 20 Roma families and as many houses belonging to Roma in the village of Kazani. The village was shelled, as were other villages around Srebrenica. As a result of the shelling, several Roma were wounded.

Following the fall of Srebrenica on 11 July 1995, Roma men, together with other Bosniak men, set out on foot from Srebrenica towards Tuzla. During that journey, Hakić Medo was killed (his remains have still not been found), at the same location where other Roma were killed, as documented during the first phase of the research. According to the witness, this was the locality “where the beech tree fell, before Lolići”.

The events surrounding Srebrenica in July 1995 were survived by N. H., a Roma minor, who was interviewed as part of the research. He stated that he had been captured, beaten and subjected to abuse. He still bears a scar on his chin from being kicked by a soldier wearing military boots. He was first taken to a school.



“There they started provoking us again. There was a Bosniak with them who was wearing a black T-shirt. One by one, they beat us while shouting ‘Allahu Akbar’! He cursed my Gypsy mother. Next to me was an elderly man who later died in Batković because they had beaten him so badly. His teeth had been broken by the beating.”

He further stated:



“On one occasion, they ordered us to take off our clothes, and because I was the youngest, I had to carry the clothes upstairs. I remember that the room was covered in blood, so I thought they were going to slit my throat there, but they did not touch me. When I was coming back down, they forced me to go down the stairs in a crouched position, hopping. Since I had already been beaten and was exhausted, I tumbled down the stairs.”

After this school, N. H. was taken to Batković, a camp where more than 200 people were being held captive. There, the abuse of detainees continued:



“They would take all of us out and beat us, including me. I was subjected to physical and psychological abuse, and they said that I had been a saboteur, a sniper and, in the end, a courier. Once, they told me that they had captured my father and that he was being held in another hangar, but they were lying. They took us out to perform labour and we had to work while hungry. Once, they took me out to wash a car and ordered me to enter a place where wheat was stored, and they buried me with shovels. When it became impossible to endure, they would strike me with the shovel. I remember that once I was sent out for forced labour and had hidden two or three potatoes the size of marbles in my footwear. When they searched me, they found the potatoes and then beat me for two hours afterwards” ... “Among those 200 detainees there were five or six Roma, and the only one I remember was a man from Srebrenica known by the nickname Fuco. I can say that I was one of the most severely abused detainees in the camp” ... “I was exchanged in September or October 1996 at Šatorovići, and in total I spent around two to three months in the camp. The exchange was for soldiers from Lisača; there were 140 of us and 11 of them. I have a Red Cross card documenting my detention in the camp.”

During the research, information was also collected regarding Roma who were killed on the front line, as well as Roma who were killed as civilians. It was established that Jasmin (Hasan) Bajrić was killed as a soldier. Hamdija Hakić was also killed at “Kapija” in Tuzla, while his three sons, Fahrudin, Almir and Nurudin, were killed in Srebrenica.



**Kazani Roma Settlement, Srebrenica Municipality**



**Devastated Roma House, Skelani Settlement, Srebrenica Municipality**

Several Roma from Srebrenica were killed in the territory of other municipalities. Thus, Ramiz Hakić and his son were killed in Karakaj, Municipality of Zvornik, during 1992. Despite the efforts of the Missing Persons Institute of Bosnia and Herzegovina, they have still not been found. Their remains were reportedly transferred to secondary graves at another location.

The President of the Women's Association Jadar from Konjević Polje stated that Džafer Suljić was killed in the Srebrenica enclave. At the time of his killing, he was over 60 years old. According to her statement, he was killed by a unit of the Army of RBiH whose members were from Glogova, Municipality of Bratunac. Before the war, Džafer lived in Nova Kasaba and was reportedly killed so that the perpetrators could take his money. He also had a daughter with a disability who, following Džafer's killing, was taken away by members of UNPROFOR, and nothing further is known about her fate. The President further states that a Roma man named Ohran Suljić remained in the town after the fall of Srebrenica and, since he never left the town, it is presumed that he was killed.

#### **2.4.3. The Suffering of Roma in Skelani**

The Roma of Skelani were victims both at the beginning of the war in 1992 and during the genocide in 1995. During the project, researchers encountered individuals who were considered to be Roma, although they did not identify themselves as such. For that reason, it is important to include them in this report as victims of crimes in Skelani, bearing in mind that the perpetrators regarded them as Roma and that they likely suffered persecution for that reason.

The research established that the following individuals were killed in Skelani at the beginning of the war, specifically on 8 May 1992:

- Nedžad (Šerif) Čokerović, born in 1968;
- Muharem (Uzeir) Mehić, born in 1958;
- Hasib (Uzeir) Mehić, known as Mrki, born in 1963;
- Safet (Uzeir) Mehić, born in 1964;
- Feho (Fadil) Mehić, born in 1963;
- Hasib Mehić, a person with mental disabilities;
- Bekir (Alija) Mustafić, born on 21 March 1961, married to Sadeta, née Mehić, with whom he had two children. Recorded in the Missing Persons Institute of BiH database and identified through DNA analysis.

In the same incident, their relatives from Srebrenica were also killed. They had fled to Skelani after the occupation of Srebrenica on 18 April 1992:

- Mujo (Rahman) Beharić, born in 1952;
- Haso (Rahman) Beharić, born in 1957;
- Mustafa (Ahmet) Beharić, born in 1957.

The remains of all the above individuals were exhumed in Skelani in 2006 and buried at the Donja Kalesija Memorial Centre.

In the following period, no later than the end of May 1992, Ševko (Meho) Mitić, born in 1946, was killed at an unknown location. He was reportedly searching for his family in the forests when he was killed in the vicinity of Bjelovac, Municipality of Bratunac. His remains were exhumed from one of the secondary mass graves, most likely in Blječeva, and he was buried at the Veljaci Memorial Centre in Bratunac.

During the genocide in and around Srebrenica in July 1995, the following individuals were killed:

- Ohran (Sumbul) Alić, born in 1941;
- Hasib (Ohran) Alić, born in 1965;
- Suad (Ševko) Mitić, born in 1967;
- Senad (Ševko) Mitić, born in 1976;
- Šukrija (Mehmed) Mitić, born in 1954.

One resident of Skelani stated during an interview:



“I am aware that before the war Roma families lived in the Skelani area. They lived in four houses located in the street on the left-hand side of the road when travelling from Rešagići towards Skelani. I know that some members of those families were killed by the Serb army at the beginning of the war... I also know that none of those families returned to the Skelani area and that their houses were destroyed during the war... As far as I know, all those neighbours were found in a mass grave, and their bodies were buried at the Memorial Centre in Kalesija.”

The fact that Bosniaks and Roma lived in Skelani before the outbreak of the war and that they were victims of crimes is also confirmed by the factual basis of the indictment against Slavko Milovanović, whom the Prosecutor’s Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina charged with crimes committed in the area during 1992, as follows:

“Count II(8) of the indictment charges the accused, Slavko Milovanović, with having committed the criminal offence of crimes against humanity by, in his capacity as a member of the reserve composition of the Sarajevo Security Services Centre, the Skelani Public Security Station, Ministry of the Interior of the Republika Srpska, persecuting the Bosniak and Roma population of Rešagići and Skelani on political, national, ethnic, cultural and religious grounds, through deportation or forcible transfer of the population from the territory in which they were lawfully residing, as well as through other inhumane acts of a similar nature committed with the intent to inflict great suffering or serious physical or mental injury or impairment of health.”<sup>3</sup>

By a final judgment of the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slavko Milovanović was acquitted of the charges brought against him in the indictment issued by the Prosecutor’s Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

#### 2.4.4. The Suffering of Roma in Trubari

The research conducted as part of the project established that persons of Roma ethnicity bearing the surnames Halilović and Salkić lived in the village of Trubari. In total, there were twelve Roma houses built around the dry lake. Today, it is very difficult in this area to find any Roma who lived in Trubari before the war.

<sup>3</sup> Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Case S11 K 023868 19 Kžk – Slavko Milovanović, available at: <https://www.sudbih.gov.ba/Court/Case/1097>, accessed on 21 March 2025.



**Burned Roma House in Trubari Settlement, Srebrenica Municipality**

The information gathered indicates that “they lived by travelling extensively. In the spring, they would board up their windows, lock their houses and leave for Serbia. They would return on 4 July, when the large fair was held. Then they would leave again and return in the autumn.”

Among the Roma from Trubari who disappeared during the war was Vejsil, reportedly killed, most likely bearing the surname Halilović. His remains were recovered, but it was not possible to obtain more specific information regarding the location where they were found, his identification, place of burial, or other details.

After the war, during demining and clearance operations, the Roma houses that had been burned during the conflict were levelled, so that today there is no trace that anyone ever lived there. Only Safet returned from Denmark and converted one corner of his brother’s house into a single room.

It should be noted that there were three settlements in this locality where Roma lived: Jezero, Ljutovo (where the Muratović family lived) and Ljubovoda. Roma also lived in two houses in the settlement of Posulice, and there were Roma households near the village of Tihíci, in the hamlet of Pišonje.

#### **2.4.5. The Suffering of Roma in Sase**

In the settlement of Kolonija, Sase Local Community, Municipality of Srebrenica, in May 1992, the Roma civilians Alaga Halilović and Mejra Halilović were killed. According to the description of the criminal act, Saša Cvetković, dressed in camouflage uniform and armed with an automatic rifle, brought Zoran Halilović, the son of Alaga and grandson of Mejra Halilović, and ordered him to go to the village of Lasovac, Sase Local Community, and tell the Bosniaks living there to surrender their weapons and surrender themselves. He gave him a written note containing this demand. He ordered him to carry out the task by that evening, otherwise he would kill his father Alaga and his grandmother Mejra Halilović, an elderly woman with mobility impairments who lived with them in the family home. After Zoran Halilović failed to return within the specified time, Saša Cvetković, accompanied by soldiers of the Army of Republika Srpska known to him, came to the house of Alaga and Mejra Halilović. After Alaga approached the gate, Saša Cvetković fired an automatic rifle, causing Alaga to fall dead. He then entered the yard and fired bursts from the rifle at Mejra Halilović, who was sitting on the terrace. Mejra was killed and remained slumped against the house railing.<sup>4</sup>

4 See: Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, First-instance Judgment, No. S11 K 023242 17 Krl of 22 March 2019, available at: <https://www.sudbih.gov.ba/Court/Case/1125>, accessed on 6 April 2025.

According to witness testimony given during the court proceedings, their bodies were taken to the “Rudnik” locality and have never been found. They are still listed as missing persons.<sup>5</sup> The judgment further states:

“During his testimony at the main trial, the accused Saša Cvetković stated that he knew the injured parties, Mejra and Alaga, explaining that they were mother and son and that they lived together with Alaga’s son near his flat in Sase. In his closing statement, he said that they were poor and helpless, that is, ill, immobile and incapable.”<sup>6</sup>

The judgment of the Court of BiH states that Alaga was born on 10 March 1926 and Mejra on 12 September 1900, meaning that at the time of the criminal act Mejra was 92 years old and Alaga 66 years old.<sup>7</sup>

For these killings, among other criminal offences, the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina delivered its judgment on 22 March 2019 in case No. S1 1 K 023242 17 Kri, finding Saša Cvetković guilty of the criminal offence of a war crime against the civilian population under Article 142(1) of the Criminal Code of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and sentencing him to twelve years’ imprisonment. The Appellate Division of the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina upheld the first-instance judgment.<sup>8</sup> An appeal was subsequently lodged with the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which, sitting in the Grand Chamber in case No. AP-45/20,<sup>9</sup> adopted a Decision on Admissibility and Merits dismissing the appeal as unfounded.

Following the information contained in the judgment of the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina that Alaga and Mejra Halilović had still not been found and that the search for their remains was ongoing, a search was conducted of the Missing Persons Database maintained by the Missing Persons Institute of BiH, confirming that they have still not been found or identified.

Zoran Halilović, the son of Alaga from Sase, Municipality of Srebrenica, whom Saša Cvetković had ordered to deliver the note to the Bosniaks demanding that they surrender themselves and hand over their weapons, later became a victim of the Srebrenica genocide in July 1995. The Missing Persons Institute of BiH database records Zoran Halilović, son of Alaga, born on 16 April 1961 in Sase, as having disappeared on 11 July 1995 in Potočari, Municipality of Srebrenica. He was identified through DNA analysis.

## 2.5. The Suffering of Roma in Vlasenica

As a people, the Roma were victims of the war and armed conflict in the Vlasenica area primarily through the loss of property. The reason for this is that the Roma left Vlasenica several months before the outbreak of the war. Only Akif Hamidović remained in his house. The only information available regarding his fate is that he was found dead at the beginning of the war. He reportedly died of natural causes.

According to available information, approximately 2,000 Roma lived in the Vlasenica area before the war, many of them in large families with numerous children. One Roma respondent from the area stated:



“Roma lived in three villages: Barice, Toplik and Drum, and now no one lives there; only our property remains there, and no one wants to return. We would all return, but refugees came and now refugees live in our houses. These are mostly Serb refugees from Sarajevo. The Serbs who settled in the Roma houses do not allow Roma to approach their houses at all... In those villages, no Roma live there anymore, and some houses were looted and

5 Ibid., paragraph 19.

6 Ibid., paragraph 124.

7 Ibid., paragraph 125.

8 Available at: <https://www.sudbih.gov.ba/Court/Case/1125>, accessed on 6 April 2025.

9 Available at: <https://www.ustavisud.ba/bs/odluke?tp=AP-45%2F20&sp=DatumDesc&#>, accessed on 6 April 2025.



Barice Roma Settlement, Vlasenica Municipality



Devastated Roma Settlement, Nova Kasaba, Milići Municipality

burned during the war, while others were demolished... In Barice, almost all the houses have been destroyed. They took blocks and building materials from my house in Barice... Only the foundations remain now... The houses in the town of Vlasenica that were owned by Roma were not demolished, and refugees live in them... In Vlasenica there are around 30 to 40 houses, and a Serb has been living in my house in the town of Vlasenica for the past 25 years and says that there is no chance that I will be able to remove him from my house. He is from Vlasenica, but he never had a house of his own.”

The respondent states that life in Vlasenica before the war was excellent, that everyone lived together and like brothers, and that no distinction was made between who was a Serb, who was a Bosniak, and who was a “Gypsy”. He recalls that the following families lived there: Osmanović, Sejdić, Čizmić, Hrustić, Sejđović, Hamidović and Omerović.

After the war, the Roma Association “BARICE – DRUM” was established in Vlasenica in 2004 or 2005, but according to available information it is no longer registered. The research did not yield information as to whether Roma received assistance for the reconstruction of their destroyed houses. At present, there are no Roma returnees in Vlasenica.

## 2.6. Municipality of Milići

Milići is a town in eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the time of the 1991 population census, the settlement of Milići formed part of the Municipality of Vlasenica. It regained its municipal status in 1992, having lost it in 1962. In the Municipality of Milići, Roma primarily lived in the settlement of Nova Kasaba.

### 2.6.1. The Suffering of Roma in Nova Kasaba

In Nova Kasaba there was a hamlet known as Ciganluk, situated alongside the Jadar River, where Roma families lived. At the beginning of the war, in the spring of 1992, Roma families, like Bosniak families, were expelled from their homes. A Roma respondent who had lived in Nova Kasaba before the war stated:



“Around 80 members of the Roma population lived in Nova Kasaba. I know that the Suljić and Tursunović families lived there, while the families bearing the surnames Cibralić and Đekić did not identify as Roma but as Muslims. Like some of my relatives and neighbours, I worked at the bauxite mine in Gunjaci, and life was good. All Roma families in Nova Kasaba had their own houses. I know that eight or nine Roma were killed during the war.”

There is a memorial in Nova Kasaba dedicated to those who were killed, including persons of Roma ethnicity:

- Salko (Šaban) Tursunović, 1918–1993;
- Šerifa (Zerif) Tursunović, 1928–1993;
- Hasan (Emin) Tursunović, 1945–1992;
- Hanija (Džulaga) Tursunović, 1930–1992;
- Ohran (Suljo) Suljić, 1942–1995;
- Džafer (Hašim) Suljić, 1921–1995;
- Safeta (Zuhdija) Suljić, 1942–1992;
- Ševala (Džafer) Suljić, 1972–1995.

The expulsion of the population was followed by the devastation, looting and destruction of both movable and immovable property. After the end of the war, none of the Roma returned to Nova Kasaba, and the houses remain in a state of ruin.

## 2.7. The Suffering of Roma in Zvornik

The suffering of Roma in the city of Zvornik and in the village of Skočić represents a particularly stark example of the brutality of crimes committed against Roma.

### 2.7.1. The Suffering of Roma in the City of Zvornik

Before the war, Roma in Zvornik mainly lived in a neighbourhood called Misirbašča, which was also known as the “Cigansko naselje” (Gypsy Settlement). Today, there are no Roma living in that neighbourhood, as no one returned after the war; the houses were demolished and nothing was rebuilt.

The suffering of Roma in Zvornik was recorded from the very beginning of the war in 1992. Mevludin Adilović was taken from his home on 9 April 1992 and killed at Branjevo. His brothers, Rahman and Izet Adilović, were also taken away and killed that same year at Kula. One person provided the following statement:



“Serbs in civilian clothes came at the beginning of the war in 1992... and told Mevludin to take his identity card with him and go with them for interrogation. Others were also taken away, including his brother Izet, who was taken to Srpska Varoš... There they beat and stomped on them.”



**Devastated Roma Settlement  
of Ciganluk, City of Zvornik**

The body of Mevludin Adilović was recovered from the Kazanbašča mass grave. One of his brothers, Rahman, was found with him, while the other brother, Izet, was found at Crni Vrh. According to the witness:



“From Kazanbašča, they used machinery to collect bodies from the mass grave and transport them to Crni Vrh. Besides Crni Vrh, bodies were also transferred from Kazanbašča to Ramin Grob. One evening, I went to Serbia with my children to rest for a while, and from the window I watched an excavator digging up bodies, loading them onto a lorry and transporting them elsewhere. I watched this from the settlement in Mali Zvornik. Mevludin was identified through DNA analysis and buried at the Kula cemetery.”

The information gathered also points to the killings of other persons of Roma ethnicity from the city of Zvornik. One respondent stated:



“I know that a man known as Balo, Ibro’s son, was killed, although I cannot remember his surname. Ibro Đekić, Đelil’s brother, was also killed. The Kamerićs were killed too, namely Meho and Tokio. Beriz and Fehmo were also killed. Fehmo has a daughter in Hajvazi, but I cannot remember their surname. All of this happened in 1992. Beriz was killed right at the beginning of the street leading from the department store by the pastry shop... As for Mirza’s wife, Ilhana Zlatić, she remained here with four children and was pregnant... In the street leading uphill from the department store, Satka, who dealt in gold, was killed in her house. Zejfa was killed, and further uphill Ramiza and her husband, whose name I do not know, were also killed. Their daughters are married in Kozluk but live abroad. They were all Roma, or ‘White Gypsies’... Ramo Rahman was also killed at the very beginning of the war. I heard that his wife had her ear cut off; she was not killed.”

In the area of Karakaj, a suburban settlement of the city of Zvornik, two men from Srebrenica who happened to be in Zvornik when the war began disappeared in early 1992: Jusuf Hakić and Nermin (Jusuf) Hakić. Their remains have still not been recovered, and they are listed as missing persons in the database of the Missing Persons Institute of BiH.

The Cantonal Prosecutor’s Office of Tuzla Canton brought an indictment against Dušan Spasojević, Ratko Todorović and Radomir Škiljević, who were ultimately sentenced to lengthy terms of imprisonment by final judgment. The proceedings concerned a war crime committed in the administrative building of the company Novi Izvor in Zvornik, where a detention camp had been established. Among the victims was a Roma person, B. M., who was subjected to physical and sexual abuse in the camp.

### 2.7.2. The Suffering of Roma in Skočić

One of the most horrific crimes of the previous war in Bosnia and Herzegovina was committed in Skočić. One of the survivors of this crime is Zijo Ribić, who was interviewed for the purposes of this project.<sup>10</sup> In his testimony, Zijo states that everything:



“began in the village of Skočić, while the killings were carried out in the village of Malešić, Municipality of Zvornik... I remember that Simo’s Chetniks, a paramilitary unit from Serbia, came to the village of Skočić on 12 July 1992, at around six o’clock in the evening, in military lorries. They passed by the house where we had gathered, which belonged to Hamdija Ribić. Simo’s Chetniks went to the mosque and we heard an explosion, but we did not know what was happening. They then returned to the house where we were and began hitting and beating us. Rapes were also committed there. They then took us out of the house and

<sup>10</sup> A documentary film featuring Zijo Ribić was also produced as part of the project, jointly by Zijo Ribić, the Potočari–Srebrenica Memorial Centre, Kali Sara – Roma Information Centre, and the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN).

separated the men from the women and again began beating us. They forced us onto the lorries, with men and women separated. The abuse in Skočić lasted about an hour. They drove us away, and I saw that we turned off at the mosque in Kozluk. They stopped there and separated three girls, my cousins; I would rather not mention their names... They were used as sexual slaves and were subsequently raped. They took us to Malešić, both men and women. I started crying then. There they began beating us again, and I remember that there were rapes as well. They took people behind the lorries, and cries and gunshots could be heard. After a short time, a girl named Dragana Džekić, who was with Simo's Chetniks and later with the Yellow Wasps (*Žute ose*), took me by the hand, told me not to cry and said she would take me to my mother. Dragana led me in front of the lorry, and I heard a gunshot and felt a knife stab to my neck, and I fell. They thought I was dead, but the bullet had hit me in the arm. At that moment, gunshots could be heard, and they had been heard even before that. They picked me up and threw me into a pit where there were bodies. I could feel the bodies there, so I climbed over them and came out on the other side of the pit. I could still hear gunshots and screams."

Zijo continues:



"I made my way through the forest and came to a house that had been destroyed. There was a box there in which I spent the night. The next morning, I came out of the house; I was covered in blood, and my slightly longer hair was also soaked in blood. I saw some smoke and came to a house where I saw a woman. I addressed her by saying 'Ma'am', but she ran into the house. Soldiers in green uniforms came out. They asked me what had happened, but I remained silent. I think it was some greater force, God's grace, that kept me alive. They gave me water to wash and something to eat. They took me with them, and we passed through the same forest. There I saw scattered bracelets worn by Roma women. I pointed this out to one of the soldiers, and he went to take a look. He probably saw what had happened because he returned very quickly. He spoke to the others about something, and I could sense that he was frightened. We arrived at the clinic in Kozluk, and there were the same soldiers from Simo's Chetniks who had been in our village the previous night and who had killed us. I saw Dragana and some of the soldiers. I grabbed one soldier by the leg and begged him to help me, and he went to their commander, Simo Bogdanović – Simo the Chetnik. At the clinic in Kozluk, I was treated by Dragana, the same person who had separated me in Malešić. The soldiers from Simo's Chetniks demanded that the soldiers hand me over to them, saying that they would take care of me. In the end, those soldiers managed to obtain an ambulance and took me to the hospital in Zvornik. There they handed me over to UN soldiers wearing blue helmets, while Serb police officers in blue camouflage uniforms were present. One police officer took me to the children's ward of the hospital, where there were other children: four Bosniak children, one Roma child, and me with them. I remained there until November 1994."

Zijo states that in the village of Skočić:



"27 persons of Roma ethnicity were killed, all of them in the village of Malešić. In Skočić they only beat us, abused us and raped the women. There were rapes as well, although I do not know exactly how many, both in Skočić and in Malešić. The houses in the village of Skočić were looted; there were around 30 houses. No one from the Roma community has returned, while among the Bosniak population only a few families have returned. The Roma who were killed from Skočić were found in the mass grave at Crni Vrh, Municipality of Zvornik. I was informed about my father and mother in 2007, and about my sisters in 2016 and 2017."



**Roma Cemetery in Skočić,  
City of Zvornik**

In addition to Zijo's testimony, the accounts of Roma women from Skočić who endured various forms of sexual violence are particularly traumatic. One such account was documented as part of this project. One of the survivors stated that she remembered the soldiers separating the women and ordering them to stand by a fence. There were 10 to 12 young women and girls in the group. She recalls that Zijo Ribić's sisters were among them, aged between ten and fourteen. While they were standing together, a soldier approached her and ordered her to go into a room in a house, where he raped her. Afterwards, he led her out of the house, and shortly thereafter all the residents of Skočić were forced to board the lorry in which the soldiers had arrived in the village. She remembers that she was the last person to climb onto the lorry before it drove away.

She further stated that after some time the lorry stopped and three of them – S., I., and the survivor who was interviewed – were taken off the vehicle, while the lorry continued. That night, the witness was raped by several soldiers, the first of whom was a man known as "Beli". They raped and humiliated her in various ways, in her words, "they did whatever they wanted". Most of the soldiers were from Serbia, although she recalls that there were also two men from Bosnia and Herzegovina: Rajko from Dubnica and a man named Radenko.

Over the following four months, the soldiers kept her in captivity, where she was forced to "serve" them and be their "wife". There were around 30 soldiers, and she remembers that they wore insignia in the shape of skulls on their shoulders. She remembers this well because she was forced to sew those insignia onto their uniforms. She was first held captive in Malešić for approximately one and a half months, then in Klisa, followed by the school in Petkovci, and finally in the Drinjača area. Throughout this period, the soldiers forced her to cook, clean and perform other tasks. They also sexually exploited her whenever they wished. Verbal abuse on ethnic grounds, including curses referring to her "Gypsy mother", was also a daily occurrence.

While being held in captivity in Malešić, she recalls that two girls, M. and D., were also brought there and exploited in the same manner as she was. She remembers that D. was killed there in Malešić, while M. was taken to Serbia by one of the soldiers and is now known as V. According to her testimony, she was taken from Drinjača by Zoran Trcko Stojanović, with whom she was forced to live for the next fifteen and a half years. It was only in 2007 that she managed to cross into Bosnia and Herzegovina illegally and apply for an identity card. After some time, and after obtaining her identity card, she left Zoran and returned to the Zvornik area.

The crimes committed in Skočić ultimately received judicial resolution in Belgrade. Naime, The War Crimes Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Serbia filed an indictment<sup>11</sup> before the Higher Court in Belgrade against Simo Bogdanović, Damir Bogdanović, Zoran Stojanović, Tomislav Gavrić and Đorđe Šević. The Prosecutor's Office charged them with the criminal offence of war crimes against the civilian population under Article 142(1) of the Criminal Code of the SFRY in conjunction with Article 22 of the Criminal Code of the SFRY. On 23 February 2011, an indictment was also brought against Zoran Alić,<sup>12</sup> and on 22 December 2011 against Zoran Đurđević and Dragana Đekić<sup>13</sup> for crimes committed, *inter alia*, in Skočić. An amended indictment was submitted to the Higher Court in Belgrade on 4 December 2012.<sup>14</sup>

The names of those killed from the village of Skočić<sup>15</sup> are listed below in accordance with the amended indictment:

- Mehmed Aganović, 1921-1992;
- Bisera Aganović, 1920-1992;
- Esed Aganović, 1961-1992;
- Zekira Aganović, known as Muradija, 1961-1992;
- Beriz Aganović, 1979-1992;
- Šerifa Aganović, 1951-1992;
- Ešefa Aganović, 1941-1992;
- Mirzet Aganović, known as Šaban, 1980-1992;
- Džemila Bajrić, 1928-1992;
- Zumra Bajrić;
- Muška Ferhatović, known as Bisera, 1941-1992;
- Ziba Nuhanović, 1935-1992;
- Hadžira Nuhanović, 1905-1992;
- Ismet Ribić, 1959-1992;
- Sarajka Ribić, 1931-1992;
- Mehmed Ribić, 1934-1992;
- Rahima Ribić, 1934-1992;
- Šemsudin Ribić, known as Šemso;
- Biber Ribić, 1930-1992;
- Ševka Ribić, who was in an advanced stage of pregnancy at the time, 1963-1992;
- Sabrija Ribić, 1990-1992;
- Zlatija Ribić, who was raped before being killed, 1979-1992;
- Ismeta Ribić, 1989-1992;
- Zlata Ribić, 1992-1992;
- Suada Ribić, 1987-1992;
- Zijada Ribić, 1988-1992;
- Almasa Ribić, 1988-1992.<sup>16</sup>

11 Source: <http://www.hlc-rdc.org/Transkripti/skocici.html>, accessed on 11 April 2025.

12 See: [http://www.hlc-rdc.org/images/stories/pdf/sudjenje\\_za\\_ratne\\_zlocine/SKOCIC%20-%20za%20veb%20sajt/Optuznica%20protiv%20Zorana%20Alica%20-%202023.02.2011..pdf](http://www.hlc-rdc.org/images/stories/pdf/sudjenje_za_ratne_zlocine/SKOCIC%20-%20za%20veb%20sajt/Optuznica%20protiv%20Zorana%20Alica%20-%202023.02.2011..pdf), accessed on 11 April 2025.

13 See: <http://www.hlc-rdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Optuznica-protiv-Dragane-Djekic-i-Zorana-Djurdjevica.pdf>, accessed on 11 April 2025.

14 See: <http://www.hlc-rdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Izmenjena-Optuznica-Skocici1736.pdf>, accessed on 11 April 2025.

15 For the purposes of this report, the years of birth and death were taken from the memorial in Skočić.

16 See: <http://www.hlc-rdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Izmenjena-Optuznica-Skocici1736.pdf>, accessed on 11 April 2025.

It should be noted that the Cantonal Prosecutor's Office of Tuzla Canton possesses information about and investigated the killing of 34 persons of Roma ethnicity in the village of Skočić, Municipality of Zvornik, on 26 June 1992.<sup>17</sup> Upon reviewing this list and the list of names on the memorial, it is evident that there are additional individuals whose names appear on the memorial but do not appear on the list contained in the proceedings before the Higher Court in Belgrade. These are:

- Ilijaz (Ismet) Ribić, 1976–1992;
- Arif (Aljo) Nuhanović, 1934–1992;
- Šaban (Ramo) Bajrić, 1932–1992;
- Šemsudin (Muharem) Ahmetović, 1968–1992;
- Alija (Hasan) Alić, 1939–1992;
- Avdija (Avdija) Dedović, 1960–1992;
- Mehmed (Ilijaz) Jamaković, 1949–1992;
- Halil (Nedim) Junuzović, 1969–1992;
- Šaćir (Džemil) Mehmedović, 1952–1992;
- Ahmet (Derviš) Tahirbegović, 1911–1992;
- Džemajlija (Ćazim) Vehapi, 1962–1992;
- Dževad (Ćazim) Vehapi, 1972–1992.

The indictment was amended again on 1 September 2014.<sup>18</sup> On 15 June 2015, in the retrial proceedings, the Higher Court in Belgrade delivered a first-instance judgment in the criminal case against the accused Damir Bogdanović and others, acquitting the defendants of the charges.<sup>19</sup> The Belgrade Court of Appeal – War Crimes Department, in its judgment of 28 March 2018, partially upheld the appeal lodged by the War Crimes Prosecutor's Office.<sup>20</sup> By its third-instance judgment, the court amended the decision regarding the severity of the criminal sanctions and sentenced:

- the defendant Tomislav Gavrić to 8 (eight) years' imprisonment;
- the defendant Zoran Alić to 5 (five) years' imprisonment;
- the defendant Zoran Đurđević to 8 (eight) years' imprisonment.<sup>21</sup>

In addition to the Higher Court in Belgrade – War Crimes Department, the crime committed in Skočić was also investigated by the judicial and law enforcement authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, specifically the Cantonal Prosecutor's Office of Tuzla Canton, the Prosecutor's Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA).

### 2.7.3. The Suffering of Roma in Drinjača – Đevanje

During the research into the suffering of Roma in the Zvornik area, an interview was conducted with J. K., who stated that neither he nor the residents of this part of the village of Đevanje, Municipality of Zvornik, consider themselves Roma, as they neither speak nor understand the Romani language. However, he noted that their Serb and Bosniak neighbours refer to them as “White Gypsies”. J. K. also received a donation for the reconstruction of his house from an international organisation that aided Roma returnees.

17 See below in this report.

18 See: [http://www.hlc-rdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Izmenjena\\_optuznica\\_01.09.2014..pdf](http://www.hlc-rdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Izmenjena_optuznica_01.09.2014..pdf), accessed on 11 April 2025.

19 See: [http://www.hlc-rdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Prvostepena\\_presuda\\_u\\_ponovljenom\\_postupku\\_16.06.2015..pdf](http://www.hlc-rdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Prvostepena_presuda_u_ponovljenom_postupku_16.06.2015..pdf), accessed on 11 April 2025.

20 See: [http://www.hlc-rdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Drugostepena\\_presuda\\_u\\_ponovljenom\\_postupku\\_28.03.2018..pdf](http://www.hlc-rdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Drugostepena_presuda_u_ponovljenom_postupku_28.03.2018..pdf), accessed on 11 April 2025.

21 See: [http://www.hlc-rdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Trecestepena\\_presuda\\_13.02.2019..pdf](http://www.hlc-rdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Trecestepena_presuda_13.02.2019..pdf), accessed on 11 April 2025.

In one part of the village of Đevanje, there were around ten Roma families living in some ten houses. At the very beginning of the war, the Serb army attacked the non-Serb villages in the area and captured the entire non-Serb population, including women and children. J. K. was twelve years old at the time and, after being captured, was taken with the others to the Community Centre in Drinjača. They remained there for some time, after which the women and children were removed from the Community Centre and transported to territory controlled by Bosniaks, while the men remained in the building and were all executed. More than 100 detained men were killed.

Among those killed were men whom their neighbours referred to as “White Gypsies”, namely:

- Mustafa Karić,
- Redžo Osmanović,
- Muhamed (Redžo) Osmanović,
- Aljo Muratović,
- Ramo Osmanović,
- Džemal Osmanović.

During the attack on the village, Smajo Osmanović, who was immobile, remained in his house and was killed there.

The women who were captured and held for a period in the Community Centre together with the men included Z. M., who had three sons and one daughter, as well as N. K. and M. O. Some women, including F. O., M. K. and H. K., were captured and held at Vidikovac. F. O. was later exchanged.

The entire non-Serb population of Đevanje was expelled. Upon their return, they found none of their property remaining.

Two brothers from Đevanje, Halil Karić and Hašim Karić, were killed while attempting to make their way from Srebrenica to Tuzla in July 1995. Most of Hašim’s remains were recovered and he was buried at the Borić cemetery, whereas only a small portion of Halil’s remains was found and he has still not been buried.

In addition to these persons of Roma ethnicity, the research established that a Roma man, Jasmin (Muharem) Karić from Zvornik, disappeared in Ruma, Republic of Serbia. His body was later found in Erdut, Republic of Croatia.

## 2.8. The Suffering of Roma in Sapna

The Municipality of Sapna is in north-eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina. It forms part of Tuzla Canton and was created through the division of the Municipality of Zvornik into two parts: the Municipality of Zvornik in Republika Srpska and the Municipality of Sapna in the Federation of BiH.<sup>22</sup>

### 2.8.1. The Suffering of Roma in Vrla Strana, Biberovići and Donji Zaseok

In the Sapna area, Roma lived in the settlements of Vrla Strana, Biberovići and Donji Zaseok.

One Roma respondent stated:



“As a people, Roma live very difficult lives and make a living in various ways, including begging, collecting scrap metal and doing other jobs. Before the war, we lived in the village of Vrla Strana, then in the Municipality of Zvornik and now in the Municipality of Sapna. At that time, there were twelve Roma houses in the village. When the war began, the residents of Vrla Strana were expelled from their homes and later became refugees. They were forced to leave their houses when the Serb army launched an attack. They first fled into the forest, where they spent six nights, and then moved on to Zukići.”

A Roma man from the hamlet of Biberovići, identified by the initials B. M., was captured during the war and held in detention in Zvornik. The following information regarding his captivity was gathered during the research: “He was struck on the head with a rifle and received medical assistance in Petkovci... Later he was detained in Karakaj, and when the Red Cross came looking for him, he was transferred to the former prison. While in captivity, he was beaten and suffered four broken ribs as a result. He was tied to a radiator and beaten...” An analysis of the documentation of the Cantonal Prosecutor’s Office of Tuzla Canton and the judgments of the Cantonal Court in Tuzla obtained during the project established that B. M. holds the status of a Category VII war invalid with a 50% disability.

After the war, Roma were able to obtain donations and rebuild their houses in Vrla Strana.

In early May 1992, the Serb army attacked the Sapna area, including the settlements of Donji Zaseok – Vrla Strana. During the attack, several residents of these settlements were killed, while women and children were captured and held in detention in the mosque in Đulići before being exchanged on 10 July 1992. According to the information collected, these individuals do not identify as Roma, although there are academic publications that describe them as persons of Roma ethnicity.

## 2.9. The Suffering of Roma in Bijeljina, in the Settlements of Divlji Zapad, Čopor and Salaš

In the Bijeljina area, Roma were subjected to wartime persecution, beatings and forced mobilisation into the army. The following testimony of a Roma woman best illustrates the conditions in which they lived:



“I lived in Bijeljina throughout the war. The only difference is that I did not live where I live now, because I had a house on Ćirilo and Metodije Street. During the war, life could not have been worse. You waited for someone to bring you a piece of bread, and only then could you eat; if no one brought anything, you went hungry or searched for a piece of bread in rubbish bins... In my estimation, around two thousand Roma lived in Bijeljina. Perhaps a thousand Roma remained during the war... The Roma who remained were forced into the army; I know this from my husband’s experience. He ran away and slept in pits. One night, after seven days, my husband came home to spend the night, and they immediately came to the door and seized him. They beat him there and threw him into a van like a dog. For three months they did not allow him to come home, nor did we know where he was.”

Information gathered during the research indicates that members of the Roma community also suffered in the area of Mitrovica, Republic of Serbia. According to available information, at the beginning of the war in 1992, Šefik (Ešef) Beganović was forcibly separated from his family, after which his fate became unknown. According to witness accounts, he was prevented from boarding a bus, while his wife and two daughters were allowed to do so. The persons who carried out the separation were wearing military uniforms. A man named Sadik, whose surname has not been established, was with Šefik Beganović at the time. According to available information, Sadik’s remains were recovered after the war in the Kozluk area, and his identity was confirmed through DNA analysis with the participation of family members.

A Roma respondent testified about sexual violence committed during the war:



“I know women who were raped, including my sister-in-law, who had only recently given birth at the time. When the soldiers came to our village, they ordered me to undress. When they saw that I was extremely thin, they changed their minds and let me go. However, they raped my sister-in-law and another woman. The perpetrators were wearing masks, so it was not possible to identify them.”

The information collected also indicates widespread incidents of property looting in the Bijeljina area. One witness stated:



“During the war, soldiers came to our settlement and took household appliances, televisions, gold and money. They held us at gunpoint, so we did not dare react out of fear for our own lives and the lives of our children. On one occasion, they tried to take our stove as well. In desperation, I pulled the pin from a hand grenade, prepared to harm both myself and them. When they realised I was serious, they gave up and left the stove behind. Due to the lack of fuel, we burned old shoes during the winter to keep warm. In some cases, they even removed roof tiles from houses.”

This respondent also testified about physical violence against men:



“Towards the end of the war, during the night, the police came and took all the men who were in the house outside. They tied them to trees and beat them. On that occasion, my husband sustained serious injuries, including broken ribs.”

Witness E. S., a Roma woman born in 1986, stated that she does not remember much about the wartime events themselves, but recalls hearing from older people that one evening at the beginning of the war many Roma women in the settlement of Čopor were raped. She remembers being told that her mother was raped, as were F. R., K. B., P. B. and many other Roma women. Following these events, her father arranged for the family to relocate to Belgrade. They were also subjected to mistreatment in Belgrade. When the war subsided, they returned to Bijeljina, where they found their house destroyed.

M. S., a Roma woman from Salaš in Bijeljina who was pregnant at the beginning of the war, stated in an interview that Serb soldiers began by forcibly mobilising Roma men and then came to houses to harass women and children. As she explained:



“Misery and sorrow, everyone thinks we have it easy. Many men were taken away - my husband, my brother, my neighbours P.,M. and many others. They came at the beginning of the war during the night, woke us up and lined us all up - children, women and men. They said the men had to go with them. There was a green lorry with a canvas cover. The men kept silent and did not resist because they were afraid that all of us would be killed. Then they started stripping the women, touching their breasts, looking to see who had bigger buttocks, and raping them. We all watched. I cannot say who was raped because I am afraid; the husbands of those women would come after us. After raping the women, they took the men away with them. The men were with them for about three months before they returned.”

She further stated that they were often left without food, electricity and other necessities, and that they had to perform labour to survive. They received some assistance from the Red Cross. Their house was destroyed, with the windows and roof removed and taken away. They continue to live in difficult conditions to this day.

Roma woman H. B., who lived with her parents and child in the Divlji Zapad (Wild West) settlement in Bijeljina, also survived sexual abuse by soldiers from the unit known as Simo’s Chetniks. In her interview, she stated, *inter alia*:



“My father did not want to leave our home or abandon his property. He decided that we would remain in Bijeljina, and so we stayed until the end of the war. We hid at our neighbour Hajra’s house; she had a cellar where we would all take shelter. They demanded that we perform compulsory labour. We went whenever we were required to work. I distributed food and washed dishes. My sister cleaned the facility, while my father had to go with them; he transported dead bodies of all nationalities and buried them. ... I remember one occasion

when Simo's Chetniks came. There was a tall dark-haired man – I will never forget him – and he started beating our neighbours D. and F. I ran over to defend them, and then he beat me, took me to my parents' house and raped me. After that he wanted to rape a young girl and a woman struck him and knocked him to the ground. The girl was maybe ten years old, maybe even younger. What we went through was horrific. After the war, my father became severely depressed and took sedatives. My mother became ill after that and died shortly thereafter. Following her death in 1996, my father took his own life when he learned that I had been raped; our neighbour told him. They took all our gold, money, valuables and furniture. They used to say that we Gypsies were the worst people and that Hitler should have killed us..."

Witness A. S., a Roma man who lived with his family in the Salaš settlement in Bijeljina and was the father of six children, stated that during the war he served in the Army of Republika Srpska on the front lines in Majeвица. While he was deployed, his wife, who was pregnant at the time, was raped on multiple occasions. In his interview, he stated:



"I went voluntarily because I saw them beating and mistreating other men. It was not easy to get onto that lorry – you leave without knowing what will happen to your wife and children. There were many Roma. There was V. B.; he buried the dead. A. M. did all sorts of things – I cannot talk about it. R. H. went to Germany after the war and started a new life there. While I was at the front, Arkan's soldiers came and raped my wife. They raped her several times even though she was almost due to give birth. My sisters told me about it; my wife did not want to tell me herself because she did not want to upset me..."

During the war, the family was looted, and their house was also damaged, as soldiers frequently fired at it.

Witness H. A., a Roma woman born in Tuzla who married and moved to Bijeljina before the war, stated that her family remained in Bijeljina throughout the war and that her husband was mobilised into the Army of Republika Srpska. Although she was not subjected to sexual violence, she described the difficult situation faced by Roma in Bijeljina during the war. She lived with her husband and children in the Tombak settlement. At the very beginning of the war, her husband was taken away, mobilised, and did not return home for four or five months. During that period, she was not personally mistreated, but she had to perform various jobs to feed her children. In addition to her husband, her father-in-law, brother-in-law and other Roma men were also mobilised. She stated that her husband and father-in-law remained on the front lines until the end of the war. After the war, her husband obtained veteran status and, on that basis, receives an allowance of BAM 40, although this is insufficient even to cover the cost of essential medication. During the war, her father-in-law transported the dead and distributed food.



"In Brčko he collected the dead; that was where the largest number of bodies were, in a stream. ... It was difficult for Roma during the war because they were a national minority. When they came to our houses, they cursed our Gypsy mothers and called us Gypsy scum. I was constantly standing by the window, keeping watch because I was afraid that someone might throw something through the window and kill my children. I had a daughter, and my fear that she might be raped led me to cut her hair short like a boy's and dress her in boys' clothes so that she would appear to be a boy."

During work on this project, an interview was conducted with S. B., a Roma woman who, before the war, lived with her father, mother, brothers and sister in their family home in Bijeljina. The family owned livestock, land and agricultural machinery. Other Roma neighbours also lived in the same settlement, including I. B., T. B., M., B., S. B. and others. During the war, relatives from other parts of Bijeljina also stayed with them.

During the war, Roma in Bijeljina were subjected to all forms of violence. They were forcibly mobilised into the army and were physically and verbally abused:



“At the beginning of the war, many soldiers arrived. It was early, before dawn. As far as I remember, it was Arkan’s forces, and they forced the men to go to war and carry rifles. My father refused because we Roma do not like war or any kind of conflict. They kicked him, threw him to the ground and beat him, striking him in the head and ribs. My brother jumped in to defend him, and they beat him as well. Then they loaded them onto a lorry and took them away in an unknown direction. For two months we had no information about them.”

One witness described the case of Medo Beganović from Jasenje: “Medo had mental health problems. He wandered from one front line to another, and the Serbs captured him and skinned him like a lamb. Bosniaks recognised him and told them not to harm him because he was not mentally well.”

Particularly cruel were the acts of sexual violence and rape. One witness stated:



“They lined up us children and the younger women and groped us, choosing which women they would rape, and which might be able to work. Then they took everything of value from our house – gold, money, televisions, clothes, food, everything they could carry away. They even fired into a pot full of beans just so that we would not be able to eat. When the children cried, we covered their mouths so that the soldiers would not become irritated and kill them. There were many members of my father’s family from Salaš staying in our house, a settlement near ours in Bijeljina: my grandmother, my aunt by marriage, my aunt and their children. We were all together because our house had a cellar and was large. F. was raped many times. She was very beautiful. No model could compare to her. We watched everything. She could not run away because they came every day to rape her. I wanted to stab one of them with a knife, but he took it from me, threw me to the floor and beat me, saying ‘not you, you’re ugly, you black Gypsy’. All of this happened in our house, and afterwards they set our house on fire. From then on, we lived in other people’s homes... After the war, my father died. He had been healthy before the war. He died from the beatings, and forty days later my mother died as well. The six of us children were left alone, with no home, no food, nothing. Our grandmother took us to her devastated house. Then we had to work, digging and doing manual labour to earn money, and the children worked too – my brothers and my sister, who was born in 1991. The war was extremely difficult for us and left deep scars. We will never recover from it.”

An interviewed witness stated that H. H., a deaf Roma woman, was raped in Bijeljina. At the time, she was a young, unmarried woman. She later reported the rape in Germany and, as a result of the rape, gave birth to a son.

In the interview, the witness stated: “The Serbs raped Roma women here while people sat inside and watched them being raped. There is a woman who lives not far from here who was raped while people watched, and she is still here [name known to the authors]. There were also some other girls who were there, and they were raped as well”... “I also heard that another woman was raped [name known to the authors], who is now an older woman living in Bijeljina. A. G. used to talk about it; he has since died...”

At the very beginning of the war in Bijeljina, a Serb man killed a Roma man, Vokan (Ibrahim) Hašimović, known as Voko. He was approximately 35 years old at the time of his death, was married and had three children. He was killed in the street now known as Baja Pivljanina Street, which before the war was called Filipa Višnjića Street. He was buried near the Ministry of the Interior building in Bijeljina. His wife lives in Germany with their children.

In addition, Mujo Fehratović, a Roma man originally from Bijeljina, was never found, nor was Azemina Suljić. Witnesses stated that they had heard that both were taken to Bratunac in early 1993 and never returned.

Only a small number of Roma families remained in Bijeljina during the war, primarily those of more modest means. Among them were S. H. and his two sons, H. H. and H. M. Others who remained included Š. B. and his two sons, O. A., the S. family, A. M. and A. M. The Roma who remained in Bijeljina were subjected to harassment, and there were also cases of rape.

Soldiers regularly looted Roma families, entering their homes and taking televisions and other belongings, while the Roma were unable to resist. On one occasion, they were forced to carry their own television set to the house of a Serb man who had ordered them to do so. The army occupied Roma houses, and in 1992 the State Security Service moved into one of them. After the war, when the Roma owner returned for the first time, they, as one witness stated, “threw him out like a dog”. This incident occurred several months after the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement. After the war, the house was occupied by the Ministry for Refugees and Displaced Persons of the Republika Srpska and by the SNSD political party, both of which regularly paid rent. The owner of the house stated that 4.5 kilograms of gold had been stolen from him, along with 170 chainsaws and an entire room full of coffee and sugar, which he had intended to use to start a private business upon returning from Austria.

Life was not easy for Roma returnees to Bijeljina even after the war. One respondent recounted her tragic experience:



“When things calmed down, I returned, first to Tuzla and later to Bijeljina. I remember one occasion when we came to Bijeljina, although I do not know exactly when it was. I was with my child, and he went to the toilet. Some people followed him and beat him. The child later died from those injuries. It was my son, B. Š. At the time, we did not dare go to a doctor, and I did not see who had beaten him. He said that he had been beaten but did not know by whom. Later I took him to a doctor, and the doctor said that he needed a referral to Banja Luka. He died shortly afterwards.”

### 2.9.1. Batković Camp

It should be noted that the Batković camp was in the Municipality of Bijeljina and that many detainees passed through it, including persons of Roma ethnicity. As part of the research, an interview was conducted with H. N., a Roma man from Srebrenica, who was detained in Batković camp for six months during 1995. The content of that interview is presented in the section of this report relating to Srebrenica.

A Roma man, S.J. who now lives in Australia, was also held in Batković camp. Before the war, he worked at the Dubrave Airport. When the war began, the Yugoslav Army moved to Bijeljina and took him with them. He was transported to Batković as a detainee. S. spent two to three years in the camp and was eventually released in an exchange. Afterwards, he first went to Germany and later settled in Australia. Following his release, he stated that he had been beaten, like other detainees, and that it was very difficult in the camp. His father still lives in Bosnia and Herzegovina; he is elderly, around 85 years old, and immobile.

### 2.9.2. The Suffering of Roma in Janja

Janja is a settlement in the Municipality of Bijeljina which, before the war, was inhabited predominantly by Muslims, although several Roma families also lived there. During the project, interviews were conducted with Roma witnesses and victims from the area, who described the various forms of abuse they experienced in Janja during the war. Roma men were mobilised into the Army of Republika Srpska (VRS), and some of them were killed, including Suvad Čanić. Out of fear of abuse, Roma left Janja in various ways, while a man known as Vojkan organised departures from Janja and charged BAM 100 per person. Suvad was killed while serving in the Serb army in 1993. He was 23 years old and unmarried when he was killed on the battlefield in Brčko. He identified himself as a Muslim because he feared the consequences of saying that he was Roma, as Roma in Janja had been subjected to discrimination even before the war. Following Suvad's death, his family became entitled to an allowance granted in respect of a fallen soldier.

## 3. MAPPING OF THE SUFFERING OF ROMA, 1992–1995: NORTH BOSNIA

### 3.1. The Suffering of Roma in Jasenje – Teočak

In the village of Jasenje – which before the war was part of the Municipality of Bijeljina and now belongs to the Municipality of Teočak – there were several Roma families living in their own houses. Among them were the families of Š. B. and I. B. At the very beginning of the war, Roma houses in Jasenje were burned down and the Roma fled to Bijeljina. The houses were most likely burned in retaliation, as the Roma from Jasenje had gone to Bijeljina and joined the Army of Republika Srpska.

According to the testimony of a Roma woman from Jasenje, the men were mobilised into the Army of Republika Srpska immediately upon their arrival in Bijeljina. During the war, some of them lived in the settlement of Čopor, where they were frequently harassed by soldiers unknown to them, who took their belongings, beat them and took them to the front lines. In Jasenje, everything was burned and destroyed to the ground, and no Roma have returned there.

As part of the scientific research project Enhancing Roma Participation in Transitional Justice in Bosnia and Herzegovina, photographs and drone footage were taken in the Municipality of Teočak, specifically in the village of Jasenje, to document the condition of the buildings in the village, which is a consequence of the wartime events in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

One witness stated:



“I remember them forcing my father to go and fight and beating him. They brought his sisters, Z. and H., and some men raped them in front of him because he would not go with them. All of this happened at the beginning of the war. My mother was raped as well; I heard that from relatives. I did not know about it at the time; she was raped by a neighbour. That is why we fled, so that they would not burn us alive and rape my sisters. Everything there was burned and destroyed. We never went back. My father died and never wanted to return there. I do not know what happened to our land; it may have become overgrown by now. When my father arrived in Bijeljina, at the home of H., his cousin, in Divlji Zapad, he had to go to the front line on Majevisa with the Second Brigade under Major.”



**Devastated Roma House in  
Jasenje Settlement, Teočak  
Municipality**



**Roma Cemetery in Jasenje,  
Teočak Municipality**

### **3.2. The Suffering of Roma in Janjari - Ugljevik**

The researcher working on the project obtained information regarding an incident in Janjari near Bijeljina involving the rape of a Roma woman, R. B. According to the available information, she was raped during the war and, as a result of the rape, became pregnant and gave birth to a son in Austria. She left the child at the hospital and, a few days later, took her own life. There are testimonies indicating that she was raped by a Bosniak neighbour whose name and background are known to the authors. Her husband left her because he did not want to have anything to do with her after the rape.

### **3.3. The Suffering of Roma in Tuzla**

During her interview, H. A. also wished to share information about the fate of her sister A. A. was a young woman with developmental difficulties, but she attended school and continued to do so during the war. H. A. stated:



“My sister completed vocational training and was nineteen years old when she was killed by Bosniaks. She was allocated a flat in Brčanska Malta in Tuzla because it was closer to her workplace, and she lived there alone. Some people followed her to find out where she lived. She came home from work, took a bath and went to bed, and then she heard someone knocking. She lived on the third floor. She was afraid to open the door, but they forced it open and she saw three men. She fought them and managed to escape to the sixth floor. They caught her on the sixth floor. One of them stabbed her three times with a knife, and another struck her with a screwdriver. They wanted to rape her but were unable to do so, so they killed her. I learned this from my mother, who has since passed away. The neighbours from the building, who had seen and heard everything, told my mother what had happened. Afterwards, the police informed my mother that her daughter had been killed. This happened during the war, in 1992, at the beginning of the conflict. The first time she was injured was when she was shot in the leg on her way to work. She spent several months in hospital, recovered, and then all of this happened after her recovery. My mother wanted to avenge her child and buy a gun, but one of the perpetrators was killed, while the other two disappeared.”

Hamdija Hakić was killed at the “Kapija” in Tuzla in 1995.

### 3.4. The Suffering of Roma in Vukovije - Kalesija

In the Municipality of Kalesija, there was a settlement inhabited by Roma known as Vukovije, or Kosa. According to statements provided by residents of the village of Kosa who were interviewed during the research, at the very beginning of the war a military unit of the Croatian Defence Council (HVO), commanded by F. B., arrived in the vicinity of the Roma settlement and sought to intimidate the Roma by all means in order to force them to leave. They removed belongings from their homes and looted their houses. In 1993, when the village was surrounded and the inhabitants were subjected to looting and beatings, many Roma decided to leave. During these events, Z. A. was beaten.



**Roma Cemetery in Vukovija-  
Kosa, Kalesija Municipality**

B. B. remained in the village of Kosa. According to the official account, she died from exposure to the cold, but her sons and relatives believe that she was killed because she refused to leave her house and property. Her relatives were interviewed and stated that they suspect she was thrown into a well and that her hands and feet had been tied. For this reason, they believe that she was murdered. The events in the village of Kosa are also partially described in the book *Svjedočenja pripadnika romske populacije o stradanju u proteklom ratu* (Testimonies of Members of the Roma Population on Their Suffering During the Recent War).

To document the suffering of Roma in the Kalesija area, footage was recorded of the location where the settlement of Kosa once stood. Today, not a single house remains there; only the cemetery in which Roma were buried still exists.

### 3.5. The Suffering of Roma in Prnjavor

During the war, Prnjavor was under the control of the Army of Republika Srpska. Bosniaks were expelled from the town, as were some Roma, while others decided to remain. Throughout the war, they were subjected to constant harassment and threats. Roma who were interviewed confirmed that soldiers entered their homes, fired at their houses, beat and maltreated them. Some Roma who had Muslim names were forced to change their names and surnames to Orthodox Christian ones. After the war, some of them reverted to their pre-war names and surnames, while others did not. Roma property was looted and devastated; some had grenades thrown at their houses, while others were forced to sell their homes for a fraction of their value.

One of the interviewed Roma men was known before the war as H. [Bosniak name known to the authors], but during the war he was given the name P. [Serbian name known to the authors], as this was a condition for his release from Batković camp in Bijeljina. He was detained at the Rača border crossing and taken to Batković camp. There, he endured the same abuse as other detainees. When his stepfather,

who was Serb, learned that he was being held in the camp, he used personal connections to secure his release. However, one of the conditions imposed was that he changes his name. In his interview, he stated that he saw at least five or six other Roma in Batković, although he remembered the name of only one of them, R. S. from Brčko. Roma detainees were subjected to the same forms of abuse as Bosniak detainees.

Another respondent described cases of physical abuse committed against members of the Roma community in the Municipality of Prnjavor during the war. According to his account, soldiers repeatedly beat Roma individuals, including Š. S., who was reportedly tied up and beaten in front of his house, after which he left Prnjavor and emigrated to the United States; B. R., who was likewise tied up and beaten in front of his home and later moved to Sweden; and S., who was beaten, left Prnjavor and relocated to Petrovac, where he later died. The same respondent further stated that Roma men and women were frequently subjected to maltreatment and had goods confiscated from them – clothing and footwear intended for sale at local markets. As an example, he mentioned B. Š., whose goods were repeatedly confiscated. During the war, she hid Bosniaks in her home because they were being harassed and beaten by a neighbour.

### **3.5.1. The Suffering of Roma in Doline**

During the interviews, information was gathered about events that took place in 1993 in the settlement of Doline, Prnjavor, in an area known as Caparik, where approximately ten Roma families lived at the time. According to the respondent, a grenade was thrown at the house of a Roma M. The following families lived in that part of the settlement: R. M., M. M., A. K., and H. and D., whose surnames are not known. According to the person interviewed, a man known in Prnjavor by the nickname Oljača purchased land from A. K., while the remaining land was, according to the account, sold under duress in 1995. The families who had lived in this part of the settlement never returned to their homes but dispersed to various countries. New residential buildings have since been constructed on the land where their houses once stood. Only A. K. succeeded in reclaiming his portion of the land and building a house on it.

### **3.6. The Suffering of Roma in Doboј**

At the very beginning of the war in Doboј, the Army of Republika Srpska (VRS) took control and began committing crimes against the non-Serb population, including Roma. On 4 or 5 May 1992, members of the VRS, specifically Jorga's unit, detained H. M., I. S., I. S. and I. H., all Roma from the same settlement, as well as F. O., a Roma man who worked in burials. During their detention, the captives were abused and shots were fired around them, after which they were taken to the Doboј Police Station. Around twenty Bosniak detainees were already being held there. One of the detained Roma men stated during the interview: "As soon as we opened the door, they started kicking us, regardless of whether someone was Roma or not."

Over the following eight and a half months, the detainees were transferred between various locations: first the police station, then the "4 July" barracks, then Bare, and after some time they were moved back from Bare to the "4 July" barracks and finally returned to the detention facility at the police station. Throughout this period, the detainees were physically abused, beaten and forced to perform various tasks, including digging trenches. Soldiers used the detainees to collect and load goods. All detainees were required to do this work, not only the Roma. They were also forced to eat pork, and if anyone attempted to separate the meat, they were immediately kicked and beaten. The detainees were repeatedly taken to the front lines and used as a so-called "human shield". While being used in this manner, two or three detainees from Grapska were killed and their bodies remained between the opposing lines. At a later stage, O. N. was also detained with them, but he was subsequently taken away and never returned.

One Roma man was taken from his home on 1 January. Soldiers ordered the children to hand over the largest knife in the house. After he was taken away, he was never seen again.

Roma families from Doboј, as well as refugees from Modriča, were arrested on a mass scale and held for months in these inadequate facilities. The process of dehumanisation was carried out by confining women, children and men in underground bunkers together with livestock (cattle, pigs and horses), thereby denying them their human dignity. In the camps at Police Station I, the "4 July" Barracks and Bare, detained men were subjected to daily beatings, starvation and torture. Ritualised forms of killing

were also documented, including the crucifixion of a civilian named Kadir to a wall by driving screws through his limbs. After he was shot and killed, the other detainees were forced to remove his body and place it in sacks.

Women and children were confined in facilities resembling mortuaries and slept on bare concrete without food or water in hangars near the “Bosanka” Hospital and in the surgery ward. An extreme degree of sadism was recorded in a ward of the Doboj hospital, where a prematurely born infant, D. O., was left in an incubator. After being offered as a “gift” over the radio, the baby boy was brutally branded with a heated metal object shaped like a Chetnik cockade, leaving him with permanent disabilities and psychological trauma. The camps were also places where soldiers placed infants in pools of water surrounded by live explosives to terrorise their parents psychologically, and where young children were subjected to severe physical abuse, including spinal injuries (two-year-old H. A. was crushed after being hurled against a wall). Girls aged 13 and 14 (like A. O.) and women were taken from the bunkers to locations such as the Bešlagić Brdo cemetery, where they were repeatedly raped. When the victims reported the rapes at the Doboj Police Station, the chief of police publicly mocked them, summoned the perpetrators to the station and said to a thirteen-year-old girl: *“You should be honoured. Look how handsome they are.”* Afterwards, the victims were returned to detention.

Apart from the events described above, information was obtained at the very beginning of the research indicating that several Roma families had lived near the bridge at the junction leading towards Derventa and Gračanica. Following this lead, the researchers succeeded in gathering information about these families and conducted an interview with A. M., who had lived there. Two large Roma families, whose names are known to the authors, lived in that part of Doboj. They resided in prefabricated housing units erected on state-owned land.

In May 1992, specifically on 2 May 1992, barricades were set up throughout Doboj, and these Roma families became trapped. They were unable to leave the town until 19 July 1993. During their time in Doboj, they were subjected to various forms of abuse. The men were forced to perform manual labour for the Serb army, including daily logging, cleaning military facilities and maintaining military compounds. Physical and psychological abuse was particularly severe when soldiers returned from battlefields where some of their comrades had been killed, as they would vent their anger on those being held. Everyone was subjected to abuse, including women and children. Some were beaten, sworn at and insulted with derogatory names. The interviewed respondent, A. M., stated that he had no knowledge of any women being raped.

A. M. further stated that he had seen a group of Roma from Modriča who had been forced to exhume bodies while being subjected to various forms of abuse. After some time, they were loaded onto a horse-drawn cart and returned to Modriča. He heard that they were being mistreated because they resisted.

According to his testimony, on 17 July 1993 a group of representatives of the Red Cross arrived to ask who wished to register to leave Doboj. Two Roma families registered. A total of 51 people departed by bus from in front of the Employment Bureau building in Doboj, and the Mehić family were the only Roma among them. The family of R. M. left Doboj seven days later. These families did not own houses and lived in prefabricated housing units, so the only property they lost consisted of the few belongings they kept in those units and a small number of chickens they owned.

### **3.7. The Suffering of Roma in Brčko**

While collecting information on the suffering of Roma during the war in the Tuzla area, an interview was conducted with S. H. from Tuzla, who shared information that the Roma men Sinan Milkunić and his son Osman, residents of the Prahulje settlement in the Municipality of Brčko, were killed during the war. They were murdered in a butcher’s shop near the “Madam” café at the very beginning of the war. According to what he had heard, they were brought to the butcher’s shop together with several other non-Serb residents of Brčko, where they were tortured and killed. Reportedly, they were murdered by members of a Serb paramilitary unit. S. H. also heard that Osman Hibeljić, Hašim known as Prša, and several others whose names he could not recall were killed at the same time. According to his information, a number of Roma have since returned to that settlement in Brčko and are likely to possess more detailed information about these events.

Settlements such as Suljagića Sokak and Rasadnik, which had previously been vibrant centres of Roma community life, found themselves directly on the confrontation lines and were subjected to the total armed expulsion of their entire populations. During these campaigns of destruction, Roma private property was systematically destroyed and burned to the ground, as illustrated by the case of the survivor M. Š., whose family home in Suljagića Sokak was destroyed by fire at the very beginning of the conflict. In addition to direct persecution, civilians suffered from indiscriminate shelling of urban residential areas. One such incident occurred in the local community of Kolobara, where an elderly Roma woman, Šehima Beganović, was killed. Surviving Roma from the settlements of Prahulje, Prutače and Kolobare were forced to save their lives by fleeing to Kiseljak near Tuzla or by leaving the country. Boys and men who remained in Brčko were compelled to hide in underground shafts to avoid forced mobilisation or detention.

### 3.7.1. The “Madam” Café and the “Bimeks” Mass Grave

As part of the field research, inquiries were conducted in the Brčko area, and the building of the former butcher’s shop near the “Madam” café, where Sinan Milkunić and his son Osman were reportedly killed, was located. An interview was conducted with the owner of the former butcher’s shop, which now operates as the “Džaja” household appliances store. He was unfamiliar with the identities of Sinan Milkunić and his son Osman. The owner appeared deeply distressed and was unwilling to discuss wartime events. However, as the researcher was leaving the premises, the owner remarked that he could return if he had an entire day available, and that he would then explain everything that had happened in the butcher’s shop. He added that his butcher’s shop had been set on fire on 6 May 1992, when all non-Serb residents of that part of the town were expelled from their homes.

Forensic evidence and testimonies of survivors directly confirm that bodies were disposed of in large numbers in the Sava River, while many victims were secretly buried in a primary mass grave located in the immediate vicinity of the local “Bimeks” factory. Many Roma victims from Brčko – including Ahmet Beganović, Mustafa Ćorić and Mehmed Ćorić – have still not been identified, and their remains have not been fully recovered.

### 3.7.2. The Suffering of Roma in Luka Camp

Shortly after the occupation of the town in May 1992, a network of concentration camps was established through which thousands of non-Serb civilians passed, including entire Roma families. According to the official records of the detainees’ association, the Luka camp was established as the primary centre for torture and executions. Approximately 3,000 detainees passed through the camp, and at least one hundred were brutally killed. Roma civilians, arbitrarily taken from their homes, were detained for months in Luka camp, as well as in the detention facility known as “Laser”, where they were held in inhumane conditions, systematically beaten and subjected to torture. The extreme brutality of interrogators and camp guards from Brčko extended to other camps as well. One Roma detainee from Brčko, known by the nickname Zelena beretka (Green Beret), was subjected to horrific torture in Batković camp, where one of his eyes was gouged out with a knife.

During an interview with the president of the Association of Families of Missing, Forcibly Taken and Killed Bosniaks of the Brčko District of BiH, information was collected regarding civilian victims. According to the information obtained, 426 civilians were killed in Brčko, of whom 359 have been buried, while the search for the remaining victims is ongoing. A review of the list of civilian victims produced a list of individuals who may have been of Roma ethnicity:

- Bego (Aljo) Aljić, born on 3 March 1939 in Brčko, residing before the war at 18 Prahulje Street, Brčko; disappeared on 16 June 1992; recovered and buried at the Memorial Centre in Brčko;
- Mevludin (Ibrahim) Avdić, born on 7 September 1951; disappeared during 1993; recovered and buried at the Memorial Centre in Brčko;
- Hanifa (Mehmed) Begić, née Milkunić, born on 3 April 1949 in Brčko; killed on 9 May 1992; buried in Brčko;
- Ahmet (Halid) Beganović, born on 26 November 1974 in Sarajevo; killed on 27 September 1994; buried;

- Šehima (Mustafa) Beganović, née Čelić, born on 20 August 1917 in Brčko; killed during shelling in the local community of Kolobara;
- Mustafa (Muradif) Ćorić, born on 2 August 1940 in Gornji Rahić, residing at 20 Majevičke Brigade Street in Brčko; killed on 4 May 1992; buried at the Memorial Centre in Brčko;
- Mehmed (Mustafa) Ćorić, born on 29 April 1968 in Skopje; killed on 4 May 1992 in Brčko; buried at the Memorial Centre in Brčko.

In the Brčko area, an interview was conducted with a Roma woman who survived sexual violence and other forms of abuse in the Doboj area and who lived, and still lives, in Brčko. A video recording of the interview, in which she gave a detailed account of everything she endured, will be preserved in the archive.

During the research, an interview was also conducted with the president of the association *Suza* (Tear) from the Brčko District of BiH regarding the rape and sexual abuse of Roma women during the wartime period from 1992 to 1995 in the Brčko area and beyond. The interviewee emphasised that these women had often been manipulated and that one Roma woman, who is a member of the association, had succeeded in obtaining certain rights on the basis of the sexual torture she had endured during the war. She highlighted the complexity of the procedure for obtaining such rights, as it requires witnesses and repeated appearances before the relevant authorities to prove what the victims had experienced. Due to a lack of financial resources, many women are unable to sustain this administrative struggle and ultimately withdraw into silence, failing to realise the rights guaranteed to them by law. The Roma woman who was present during the interview is currently undergoing individual therapy with the Association *Vive žene* from Tuzla. Because of the trauma she experienced, she is not yet ready to speak publicly about what happened to her during the war.

The president of the Association *Suza* further stated:



“She is still very unwell, although progress can be seen compared to the beginning of therapy. She lived in very difficult material circumstances, without electricity or a washing machine, and her husband is unemployed. She explained that she is now in her second marriage, and that her first husband did not understand her and even blamed her for everything that had happened to her, claiming that she had brought it upon herself and had deliberately stayed behind so that it would happen. It was precisely for this reason that she did not remain married to her first husband. She also stated that certain people within the administration of the Brčko District of BiH harass her, while some officials are simply inaccessible. Whenever a request is submitted, it usually ends with no one ever responding to it. Because of this, she gave up pursuing her claims and now struggles as best she can together with her husband. She emphasised that her condition has improved considerably compared to how she was before. She and her husband own a popcorn machine and work together, trying to earn some income. She said that she does not encounter problems while doing this work and that they travel to fairs and tournaments, where no one bothers them.”

Regarding the lack of systemic support, she stated:



“Our Association *Suza* has not been included in budgetary funding, even though we were established back in 2016. This is because a law was adopted requiring an association to have existed for ten years before becoming eligible for budget funding. We have good cooperation with the association *Vive žene* from Tuzla, and they support us in marking the anniversary that is commemorated on 19 June each year. Life is difficult for the members of the Association. So far, nine of them have passed away, out of a total membership of forty-four. Five of our members are of Roma ethnicity, although there are other persons from the Brčko District who survived sexual torture but remain silent about their experiences. The women are now growing older and retreating into silence because they have seen that those of us who are members of the Association are stigmatised. Our women receive psychological support, whereas legal support is very limited.”

### 3.8. The Suffering of Roma in Gračanica

In the Municipality of Gračanica, in the immediate vicinity of the inter-entity boundary line, there is a settlement called Orahovica inhabited by Roma. During the research, an interview was conducted with a Roma man, J. M., who stated that, because of the location of their village, they were forced to leave their homes. The women and children were evacuated to safety, while the men remained as members of the armed forces. As their houses were situated on the front line, all of them suffered severe damage; some were burned down, and everything that had been inside them was looted. When they returned after the war, they found only ruins and had to rebuild everything themselves.

The witness further stated:



“Apart from what I myself experienced, I must also mention that my brother, S. M., was killed during the war. The Serbs set up barricades on the road connecting Doboj and Gračanica as early as the spring, although shooting had not yet begun. I believe it was in May 1992 when my brother, who lived with his wife and daughter in the village of Durači, Municipality of Gračanica, was travelling from Durači towards Gračanica. When he came upon that Serb barricade, he was stopped and killed. I do not know exactly how he was killed, but I know that three months later, after the Army of RBiH had driven the Serbs from that area, his body was found at the site of the barricade. We identified him by his clothing and other personal characteristics. What particularly distressed us was that his head was found separated from his body, leading us to assume that he had been tortured before he was killed. My brother’s body was buried in the cemetery in Orahovica, Municipality of Gračanica.”

### 3.9. The Suffering of Roma in Odžak

Before the war, a number of Roma families lived in Odžak. During the research, an interview was conducted with a Roma man, K. H., who had lived in Odžak with his family but fled at the beginning of the war and spent the wartime period in the Netherlands. He now lives in the village of Srnice, Municipality of Gradačac, where he owns a house. During the war, his brother, M. H., was killed, and his brother-in-law R., from Straževac, was killed as a civilian. Several other persons of Roma ethnicity who were civilians were reportedly killed alongside him. Finally, K. H. stated that his house in Odžak was taken from him through the falsification of a property sale contract by the perpetrators.

### 3.10. The Suffering of Roma in Banja Luka

During the collection of information on the suffering of Roma in the Banja Luka area, an interview was conducted with a Roma man, A. A., who had lived with his family in Banja Luka before the war and remained there throughout the entire conflict. He was the owner of a private motel in Banja Luka.

Among other things, A. A. stated:



“My problems began during the war because some people thought that if my motel was shut down, their businesses would do better... The first time, a man planted explosives in the motel, and the second time it was attacked with an anti-tank rocket launcher ... He knew, just like everyone else in Banja Luka, that I was Roma. That is why they wanted to drive me away... I was detained during the war. They held me in a small camp where I was imprisoned for seven days. The camp was in Banja Luka. They did not beat me because I was well known in the city, but I did consider leaving Banja Luka, and I told my wife so. ... First, they drove me around in a red van for about four hours. I do not know who the Serbs in that red van were. They were masked, wearing stockings over their faces so that we could not see or recognise them. There were five or six of us in the van, all Roma. Today there is no one left in Banja Luka who was with me in that van at the time. In the camp, they forced me to pick up cigarette butts. Then a man came by, recognised me and asked what I was doing there. I begged him to inform my wife, and to this day I still do not know who that man was. Besides me, there were other Roma in the camp. There was an elderly man from Veseli Brijeg, who has since died. There

was also Omer Pinjo (deceased) and several others whose names I do not know. Some left, while others have died.”

In addition to the abuse he endured, A. A. also witnessed the killing of a Roma man in a part of Banja Luka known as Buđak.



“I was cycling towards the motel. I saw Rada (now deceased), crossed to the other side of the road and stopped to talk to her. At that moment, a young man named Muratović, Osmanović or Omanović, the son of Mehmed, was also passing by. Just then, a military truck drove past. Someone fired from the truck and killed him. He was between twenty and twenty-five years old. I personally helped load him into an ambulance after he had been shot. He was still showing faint signs of life, but he died before reaching the hospital. I cannot remember which year it was; I only know that it was during the war. From his appearance, it was obvious that he was Roma. He was buried somewhere here in Banja Luka. Before the war, his family had lived in Sutulija. The truck simply continued on with the soldiers and did not stop...”

Specific Roma settlements and micro-locations such as Veseli Brijeg, Sutulija and Buđak were sites of arbitrary killings and the permanent deprivation of property. In these neighbourhoods, and particularly in the Veseli Brijeg area, the systematic denial of property rights was carried out through the confiscation of large Roma residential and commercial buildings. The institutional nature of these appropriations is evidenced by the fact that victims managed to regain possession of their unlawfully occupied properties only many years after the end of the conflict through legal proceedings.

In addition, the Roma men A. O., who now lives in Sweden, and N. O., who died in Visoko a year ago, were beaten during the war in Banja Luka.

### **3.11. The Suffering of Roma in Derventa**

Before the war, many Roma lived in the Derventa area, residing in several settlements. In the settlement known as the Third Quarter (*III kvart*), there were around 20 houses inhabited by Roma. Today, not a single house remains in that area. Information was collected about eight large families [names known to the authors], none of whom returned to Derventa.

In the Fourth Quarter (*IV kvart*), also known as Ciganluk, there were likewise many Roma houses, with approximately 50 Roma families living there. During the research, the names of some of these families were collected and are preserved in the archive.

In the settlement of Omeragići, Roma families with the surnames H., A., D., M. and G. lived there. All inhabitants of these Roma settlements were subjected to abuse, even though some of them served in the Army of Republika Srpska. Women experienced sexual violence. In addition, a deliberate process of urbicide was carried out. The prefabricated housing complex “Pecana”, which was primarily inhabited by Roma, was completely erased from the landscape, leaving no trace behind. A similar fate befell the distinct Roma settlements (the so-called “Ciganluks”) in the Third and Fourth Quarters, where dozens of Roma households had been located before the war. The entire infrastructure was destroyed and the population displaced without any possibility of return.

In the settlement of Omeragići (Turski Lužani), systematic sexual abuse of Roma women was recorded, as well as the confiscation of property under threat of death. Roma were ordered to hand over all their gold and money to paramilitary units (“Arkan’s Tigers”). Killings and detentions also took place in the town – the civilian Rizo Kovačević (Aga) was killed by Croatian forces because of his leather jacket and ring. His body was exhumed without a head in the settlement of Mevluci. Roma were also abused and tied to tanks, which dragged them through the town.

Crimes committed against the pre-war inhabitants were systematically concealed. During field research conducted in the Prnjavor area, it was established that a grave had been created near a mosque in Prnjavor during the war. The grave was discovered and exhumed after the war. The bodies of seven men from Derventa were recovered from the grave:

- Suad (Ahmet) Slijepčević;
- Sead (Ahmet) Slijepčević;
- Dževad (Alija) Halilović;
- Enes (Alija) Halilović, known as Fambula;
- Rešid (Šaban) Ahmetović;
- Nedžad (Senahid) Huseinović, known as Coca; and
- Hakija (Atif) Huskić.

Following interviews with members of the Roma community from the area, it was established that only the first two individuals on the list were not Roma.

At the beginning of the war, several Roma were captured in Modriča, some of whom were subsequently killed. The captured Roma were Hasan, son of Safet, possibly bearing the surname Muratović; Huso Ajkić; Senko Selvić, son of Avdija and brother of Hasan, known as Soja; Ramiza Jusanović; and Namik Jusanović, who were captured in the Prnjavor area. Their bodies were exhumed in 1999. According to information obtained through interviews with Roma from Derventa, they were captured, tortured and killed, and were subsequently buried in Prnjavor.

At the very beginning of the war, the Roma man Biljan Dedić was killed, while the Roma men Mirsad (Hasan) Ajkić and a person known by the nickname Prdek were killed by shellfire. It was also established that Roma women were subjected to sexual violence and that the male members of their families were forced to witness it.

### **3.12. The Suffering of Roma in Modriča**

At the very beginning of the war, in May 1992, Serb forces seized the town, and the non-Serb population was taken to a camp established in the “Sutjeska” Primary School in Modriča, located in the immediate vicinity of the Secretariat of Internal Affairs. Approximately 200 people were detained in the camp, including a number of Roma: A. F., who died after the war; A. I. and his wife A. Đ., who later died; A. M.; F. R.; A. N.; and several others who survived the torture in the camp.

Some Roma detainees were also killed in the camp, namely:

- Sabir (Osman) Fehratović, his body was recovered in Odžak and buried in Gradačac;
- Kadir (Čazim) Alimanović, his body was also recovered in Odžak;
- Mesud (Fadil) Aljić, his body has never been found;
- Behadir Aljić;
- Salko (Salkan) Halilović;
- Ramiza (Ramiz) Mustafić, who was approximately 70 years old.

#### **3.12.1. The Suffering of Roma in Straževac**

Roma families lived in the settlement of Straževac. Their members earned a living by trading at markets, collecting secondary raw materials and performing house cleaning work in Modriča and Dobož. At the beginning of May 1992, a Roma man, Nuraga Osmanović, was killed. His remains have never been found, and his disappearance was reported to the Missing Persons Institute of BiH during the implementation of this research project in 2025.

When the war began in 1992, the A. family from the Modriča area was captured in Dobož. They spent approximately nine months in captivity.

After being captured, they were taken from Dobož to Jakešnica, to the site where the Yellow Bridge now stands, and detained in a basement. There were already people in that basement. Some had been hung from walls by screws, beaten and cut, and it was impossible to tell whether they were dead or alive. While they were in Jakeš, a Roma man A.N. was interrogated and beaten to force him to reveal how many people remained in the settlement. Both men and women were beaten.

A Roma woman who was a victim of violence and who was 17 years old at the time [identity known to the authors] stated during her interview that soldiers had captured her and her sister, who was then 14 years old. Her testimony is reproduced in full:



“When they took me away, there was nothing they did not do to me there, and my father had to watch all of it. This was done by soldiers wearing pointed caps and with long beards. One night they took my mother away. They brought me to a place where they were setting up some sort of camp. They had made a camp for themselves out of barracks. They took us inside, one woman or girl at a time. There were Bosniak women and Albanian women from Doboj with us as well. Afterwards, they took us to two houses and locked us inside. There were no windows, and they told us that we were not allowed to raise our heads or look at anything, only to sit. Then they took us down into the basement, and they did all sorts of things to the women and girls. Some of the Roma women who were raped became pregnant, and one of them gave birth to a child of wartime rape, but she keeps this secret. Among the people involved was a woman named Dragana, who worked there and was herself Roma. Women from Modrički Lug, Municipality of Vukosavlje, were also brought to these premises. One of them was named T., and her two sisters were with her. One of the sisters was mute, and they hid her and covered her with a headscarf so that she would not be taken away. From that basement, the detainees were taken to Brčko, to the town centre, where the police station was located. There, they beat my brother and my father and cut my father with a knife on his arms and neck. He fell into a pool of blood among the dead bodies. I thought he had been killed, but he survived. After that, they beat him again with axe handles... The detainees were then taken from Brčko to Bijeljina. In Bijeljina, they brought us to a house and locked us in the basement. There were forty-two adults, not including the children. We were held there for about 45 days. Nearby there were some sheds where livestock was weighed. Some detainees were taken out, after which a gunshot would be heard, and they never returned. Afterwards, we were taken back to Doboj. On the way back, they stopped on the old road from Modriča to Doboj to fill up with water. There, one of the buses separated from the convoy and continued along the old road through the forest. We never saw that bus again. On that bus were Bosniaks and Roma from Tuzla, Doboj, Modriča, Sarajevo and Živinice, all of whom had been captured and detained in Doboj. Back in Doboj, the abuse continued. One day, while we were being held in a bunker beneath the Yellow Bridge, they brought two full truckloads of women, children and men and confined them together with us in facilities housing cows, horses and goats. In the days that followed, I watched soldiers, after first forcing all of us out of the premises and lining us up, kill women by stripping them naked, binding them with barbed wire and throwing them alive into the water. They would strip them naked, tighten the wire around their bodies, and then simply push them down the cliff into the water below. The soldiers abused and tortured us every day. They even struck my brother H. A., who was a child at the time, against the edge of a wall, and he cried out like a cat. He survived the war, but he was left disabled. Many Roma were killed in different ways. We were forced to put the bodies of those who had been killed into sacks and throw them into a canal. We had to take K. down from the screws, because they had driven screws into him; they crucified him like Jesus and then shot him. I could see that he was still breathing, but there was nothing that could be done when you were forced to put him into a large sack. They did all sorts of things to us. I will die because my father had to watch it and my brothers and family. I am ashamed whenever I look at them, it is something I am ashamed of ...”

As is evident from her testimony, she was from the Modriča area but was detained and abused in Doboj.

### **3.12.2. The Suffering of Roma in Modrički Lug**

Several Roma families lived in the settlement of Modrički Lug, Municipality of Modriča, before fleeing to Tuzla at the beginning of the war. During the research, an interview was conducted with a Roma man, M. O., who recounted that in early April 1992 he drove his wife to Modriča to give birth. However, she was sent back home and went into labour during the journey, giving birth in the car. Immediately after

the birth, he took his wife and newborn son to the maternity hospital in Dobož, where the child was kept for treatment while his wife was sent home. Shortly afterwards, the war broke out, and he, his wife and the other residents of Modrički Lug fled to Kiseljak near Tuzla. Because the roads were blocked, he was unable to return to Dobož to collect his son and instead maintained contact with the hospital by telephone. He sought assistance from the Red Cross, and his sister was also being held in detention in Dobož at the time. Eventually, they succeeded in getting the child out. However, the child was left with a disability and a scar on his arm that appeared as though he had been deliberately branded.

### **3.12.3. The Suffering of Roma in Jakeš**

Before the war, around ten Roma families lived in the settlement of Jakeš. At the very beginning of the war, a detention camp was established for all persons who were not of Serb nationality. Eleven Roma men and several Roma women were detained in the camp, all of whom endured the most severe forms of abuse. Former detainee N. A. stated that he spent more than a year in the Jakeš camp – Modriča during 1992–1993, enduring everything that other detainees experienced, including daily psychological and physical abuse, beatings to all parts of the body, forced labour and starvation. He stated that he believed Roma women were raped, particularly girls and young women aged between 14 and 20.

This camp developed into a centre of structural and systematic sexual violence. Roma women and underage girls were brutally and repeatedly raped in front of their bound fathers and husbands. The scale of the assaults was reflected in the fact that as many as ten soldiers would attack a single underage girl, resulting in physical mutilation.

### **3.13. The Suffering of Roma in Sočkovac – Petrovo**

Sočkovac is a settlement that belonged to the Municipality of Gračanica before the war and, after the war, became part of the Municipality of Petrovo. During the war, it was under Serb control. Several Roma families bearing the same surname [known to the authors of the report] lived in this village. At the very beginning of the war, most Roma families managed to flee Sočkovac, while those who remained were subjected to abuse. Interviews were conducted with two victims of war crimes, and a telephone interview was carried out with one Roma man. They confirmed that members of the Army of Republika Srpska (VRS) abused them throughout the war. A. O. and his son were detained in a camp in Kotorsko. After their release, they were attacked and stabbed, sustaining injuries that required hospital treatment. In addition to these repeated physical attacks, members of the VRS subjected them to forced labour. They lived in constant fear, particularly because they feared that the women in their families would be raped. According to witness testimony, M. O. and his son R. O. were also abused. After the war, A. O. brought a lawsuit against Milenko Lazarević and won the case. Lazarević was sentenced to five years' imprisonment and ordered to pay BAM 20,000 in compensation for non-pecuniary damage, but he died shortly after the conclusion of the proceedings. There are no Roma living in Sočkovac after the war.

### **3.14. The Suffering of Roma in Lukavac**

One Roma family lived in the settlement of Poljice, Municipality of Lukavac. At the very beginning of the war, they were forced to leave their home because the village was located near the front lines, and they subsequently settled in Tuzla. An interview was conducted with A. B., who stated that her father was killed while serving as a member of the Army of RBiH, and that her mother was killed. Following these events, A. B. was placed in a children's home and later lived with her grandfather, who abused her, until she married. After the war, A. B. returned to Poljice, where she now lives with her husband and children. She particularly emphasised that she was never able to receive the benefits to which she was entitled as the daughter of a fallen soldier, because her grandfather claimed those benefits for himself while he was alive.

### **3.15. The Suffering of Roma in Prijedor**

Before the war, Roma lived in several parts of the city of Prijedor. Most lived in the settlement near the "Šida" café. This area was known as the city's Ciganluk and was home to blacksmith workshops and tinning workshops owned by Roma. All these buildings have since been demolished and removed,

and the area is now occupied by a car park. None of the Roma who lived there and operated their craft workshops have returned. Today, only older pre-war residents of Prijedor remember that a Roma settlement once existed there.

### **3.15.1. The Suffering of Roma in Urije**

A number of Roma also lived in Urije (an area likewise known as “Ciganluk”), where they were engaged in trade. Residents included S. S., known as Bubo, R. S., and Edin Mušić, who was killed in Omarska. Approximately twenty Roma families lived in this settlement in their own houses. Other residents included Huso, possibly bearing the surname Suljanović, as well as Hajro and Amir, who fled during the war and were born in 1972 and 1973 respectively. Roma houses were either demolished or looted. The site of the former “Ciganluk” is now occupied by a public car park and commercial buildings, while the private houses in Urije are inhabited by others, effectively preventing the physical and legal return of Roma to the area.

### **3.15.2. The Suffering of Roma in Volarić**

A number of Roma families lived in the settlement of Volarić, where nine Roma civilians were killed. At gunpoint, they were brought to the site and forced to dig, with their own hands, a mass grave for twelve Bosniak civilians who had previously been executed. Upon completing this exhausting forced labour, and beside a stationary TAM lorry, members of the Army of Republika Srpska (VRS), Boro Milojica and Pero Đurić, opened simultaneous automatic fire and killed all nine Roma “grave diggers”, leaving their bodies at the execution site. Those killed were:

- Husein Ahmetović,
- Sead Ahmetović,
- Ramo Ferhatović,
- Esad Ferhatović,
- Mustafa Prozor,
- Džemal Sinanović,
- Sadik Sinanović,
- Dermin Sinanović, and
- Ismet Osmanović.

For these killings, Boro Milojica was convicted in case No. A11K024092 17 Kri, by a final judgment of 27 June 2019, “for the persecution of Bosniak, Croat and Roma civilians on the grounds of their national and religious affiliation”.

### **3.16. The Suffering of Roma in Sijekovac – Bosanski Brod**

The discovery of a mass grave in Sijekovac in 2004, from which 59 bodies were exhumed, including 13 children, raised questions regarding the identity of the victims. The exhumation was carried out under the supervision of the Zenica-Doboj Canton Prosecutor’s Office, although the case was subsequently taken over by the District Prosecutor’s Office in Doboj. Many of the bodies were missing parts of their skeletons, particularly sections of the spinal column. Following the exhumation, the remains were transferred to Visoko and buried in a designated section of the municipal cemetery there. A record of the exhumation and accompanying photographic documentation were prepared and submitted to the Cantonal Prosecutor’s Office. Documentation compiled during the examination of the human remains was also included in the prosecutor’s case file.

None of the exhumed individuals has been identified. According to newspaper articles and certain unverified reports, the exhumed victims were Roma adults and children, allegedly from the areas of Skelani and Srebrenica. During this project, however, it was not possible to identify the original source of this information. Interviews were conducted with several members of the exhumation team, as well as with journalists who had written about the case. The identities of the victims have not been established, and the exhumed remains are still kept in Visoko today under the designation “NN” (unidentified person).

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- City of Zvornik,
- Municipality of Sapna,
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