



A reel-to-reel tape, above, contains audio of the "Kill Them All" intercept, a conversation between the Serb General Radislav Krstić and Colonel Milan Obrenović, the chief of staff of the Bosnian Serb army's Zvornik Brigade.

# EVIDENCE OF ATROCITIES: FRAGMENTS OF THE BOSNIAN WAR

BY JORIE HORSTHUIS  
IN THE HAGUE

Judges at an international court in The Hague on Wednesday dismissed all but one of former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić's appeals and sentenced him to life in prison, bringing to a close one of the most high-profile legal cases related to crimes committed during the breakup of former Yugoslavia in the 1990s.

The tribunal upheld the charge of genocide for the wartime president's role in the killing of more than 8,000 Muslim men and boys in the Srebrenica massacre of July 1995. He is among a total of 161

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people indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, a U.N. body established to prosecute the perpetrators of the Yugoslav wars.

The tribunal's decision marks the end of a protracted legal battle. Although he was indicted in 1995, Karadžić had been on the run for 13 years when he was arrested in Belgrade in 2008. He had been living under the name Dragan Dabić and posing as an expert in alternative medicine, with a long, gray beard and oversize glasses. In 2016, he was sentenced to 40 years. Both he and the prosecutor appealed the decision. His case is one of the last to be concluded — two more are still in the appeals process.



## SARAJEVO SIEGE

The Bosnian capital Sarajevo was under siege for 1,425 days between 1992 and 1996. Serbian snipers were positioned in high-rise buildings and in the mountains surrounding the city. For citizens, it was dangerous to walk along the city's streets. The main boulevard became known as "Sniper Alley," and signs reading "Pazi, snajper!" ("Watch out, snipers!") were painted on many walls. In 1994 and 1995, the Bosnian Serb army bombed the Markale marketplace in the city's historic center. The first blast killed 68 civilians and wounded 144. The second cost the lives of 43 people and injured 75 others. The international community replied to the bombings with NATO air strikes against Bosnian Serb forces, which would eventually lead to the Dayton Peace Accords and the end of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Sniper shell casings from Lenjinova Ulica in Grbavica, Sarajevo.





**A VHS tape of Sarajevo correspondent Martin Bell testifying at Ratko Mladić's trial in 2013 that the Bosnian Serb leadership used the city's siege for political gain. "This was the only water pump which was working and civilians were shot while they were waiting to get water," Bell said.**



**MASS GRAVES**

In the hot summer of 1995, the Bosnian Serb army captured the besieged enclave of Srebrenica, which had been declared a "safe area" under protection of the United Nations. Despite the presence of Dutch peacekeepers, Bosnian Serb military units massacred more than 8,000 Bosniak boys and men. The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia ruled in 2004 that the incident constituted genocide. Families are still looking for missing husbands, brothers and sons. Over the years, several mass graves have been located and exhumed in the area. Alongside personal belongings like diaries, glasses, jewelry and cigarette boxes, forensic experts found bullet fragments, ammunition boxes, blindfolds and ligatures. Opening the boxes storing these items, the smell of death is still unmistakable.

**Four watches from the Lazete mass grave. Watches are stopped at various times on July 15, which indicates that the owners all died around the same time - 32 to 48 hours before their timepieces stopped running**



**'KILL THEM ALL'**

The tribunal's translators were shocked when they heard recordings of an intercepted conversation between the Serb General Radislav Krstić and Colonel Milan Obrenović, the chief of staff of the Bosnian Serb army's Zvornik Brigade, that took place several weeks after the capture of Srebrenica. In the taped conversation, Obrenović informs Krstić that a few Muslims from a column trying to break through to the town of Tuzla had been caught. "Kill them all, god damn it!" Krstić orders. "Don't leave a single one alive." To which Obrenović responds: "Everything is going according to plan." The conversation matches the notes taken by Bosnian Muslim soldiers intercepting these conversations from the surrounding hills. Due to a lack of paper during the war, they repurposed children's notebooks.

**Intercept Notebook 103, from a radio operator in the Bosnian army's audio surveillance unit, contains the handwritten transcript of the intercept.**



**DUTCHBAT**

During the capture of Srebrenica, Bosnian Serb soldiers confiscated flak jackets and helmets that belonged to Dutch peacekeepers stationed in the area the U.N. had designated a "safe zone." They used the uniforms to pass as U.N. peacekeepers and lead Bosnian Muslims into an ambush. Later, they repainted the helmets Bosnian Serb army green — but the interior remained U.N. blue. The Srebrenica genocide became a traumatic subject in the Netherlands. In 2002, the government stepped down after a critical report about Dutch peacekeepers' failure to prevent the massacre. Several Bosnian Muslims sued the Dutch government for not protecting their families, and in 2016, veterans of the Dutch battalion also made a formal complaint against the government for "severe negligence and carelessness" regarding the mission.

**A U.N. helmet belonging to the Dutchbat retains its trademark robin's egg blue color on the interior, while the exterior was repainted in Bosnian Serb army green. A flak jacket, far left, needed no such makeover.**