



Content

FOKUS

Croatia: War crimes prosecution in decrease..... 1

Serbia: Local Judiciary Responsible for Prosecutions..... 3

Bosnia and Herzegovina

“What made me come back to Bosnia” 5

Kosovo

Exploring the unexplored: Narratives between fact and fiction 6

Macedonia

As long as we talk to each other, we can clarify our misunderstandings..... 8

Out of the Box

Documenta – Centre for Dealing with the Past 9

News & Events

News in brief 10

Upcoming Public Events..... 11

Staff News

Imprint

WRITE US

Did our newsletter make you think? Or do you have a different opinion regarding some of the topics? We would be delighted to hear from you and would like to invite you to send us your comments, opinions and questions. We will publish a selection of the entries in the next issue.

Write us at fokus.westbalkan@forumzfd.de

FOKUS

Croatia: War crimes prosecution in decrease

Almost a year after Croatian army generals Ante Gotovina and Mladen Markač were acquitted of war crimes charges against Croatian Serbs at International criminal court for former Yugoslavia, ICTY, there are no publicly available informations that Croatian judiciary is investigating crimes for which those two men were indicted, despite state officials promised Croatia would continue to investigate war crimes.



Boris Pavelić, author of the FOKUS-article on Croatia

Ante Gotovina and Mladen Markač were acquitted of all war crimes charges at ICTY on November 16 last year. They were acquitted in an appeal against the ICTY's first sentence against them, said in April 2011, in which Gotovina was sentenced to 24, and Markač to 18 years in prison. In the first

sentence, the two generals were sentenced for partici-

pating in a joint criminal enterprise, together with Croatian president Franjo Tudjman, aimed to expell Croatian Serbs from Krajina region during Croatian military operation Storm, launched on August 4 1995. In an appeal sentence, the ICTY trial chamber presided by ICTY president Theodor Meron, crushed the first level sentence, ruling out that there was no joint criminal enterprise to expell Serbs, nor that Gotovina and Markač were responsible for the crimes the indictment charged them with. The acquittal caused mass enthusiasm in Croatia. Government's airplane transferred the acquitted from The Hague detention to Croatian capital Zagreb immediately after release, and they were greeted as heroes at the main Zagreb square by dozens of thousands. But the highest state officials warned that ICTY didn't rule out that the crimes weren't perpetrated, but only that

Gotovina and Markač weren't guilty in the frame of the ICTY indictment.

"Two men are obviously innocent, but that doesn't mean war wasn't hard and bloody, though just, as Croatia sees it. There were mistakes for which the Croatian state is responsible, not Markač and Gotovina. Croatia will fulfill its' obligation towards justice", Croatian prime minister Zoran Milanović said, commenting the acquittal.

Croatian president Ivo Josipović, who's a university professor of international law, said he was "extremely satisfied" with the acquittal, but added that "we have to know that crimes were perpetrated". "Just acquitting sentences must not draw us from prosecuting all war crimes", Josipović said. But eight months later, there's only one sentence for crimes perpetrated after the military operation "Storm", and that one isn't final yet.

After a decade of prosecution, former Croatian army officer Božo Bačelić, 42, was sentenced to five years and ten months in prison in June this year. Bačelić was sentenced for killing 76-year-old Nikola Damjanić and Milica Damjanić, 74, and burning their bodies on August 11, 1995 in the village of Prokljan in central Dalmatia, after the Storm operation. Bačelić was tried for that crime in 2002, but acquitted. The supreme court annulled the verdict and ordered the new trial, but Bačelić ran away in 2007 and was arrested in Germany in February 2012. The sentence against Bačelić wasn't definite yet, so he has the right to appeal.

There's one more trial going on for the crimes perpetrated against Serbs after the Storm operation. Former Croatian special policemen Frano Drlje and Božidar Krajina are standing trial in Zagreb for war crimes of killing five elderly Serbs committed in Grubori near the town of Knin in Croatia's Krajina region on August 25 and 26, 1995. The

BIRN
BALKAN INVESTIGATIVE
REPORTING NETWORK

murders are among the best-known war crimes perpetrated by Croatian forces during the country's 1991-1995 conflict.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Boris Pavelić

BIRN-Correspondent, Zagreb/Croatia

(boris.pavelic@birn.eu.com)

Links

www.balkaninsight.com

They took place 20 days after Serb rule in the Krajina region was crushed by the Croatian army's 'Operation Storm'. Fighting

had come to an end, but police entered the village, shot dead five civilians, some of them in their beds, and burned the village. Grubori crimes were a part of ICTY indictment against Gotovina and Markač.

The trial isn't finished yet.

Several other grave crimes against civilians were prosecuted earlier, but the charged were acquitted. Among those the best-known are the murders in Varivode. On September 28 1995, fifty days after military operation Storm finished, nine old Serbs were killed in village of Varivode near Knin. The oldest victim was 85, and the youngest was sixty. Several former Croatian soldiers were tried for that crime, but they were acquitted due to lack of evidence. Croatian human rights activists are warning that "war crimes perpetrators and responsible commanders, on higher levels especially, would stay unpunished".

"It is becoming harder to prosecute war crimes", Eugen Jakovčić from Croatian human rights NGO Documenta said to author of this article. Jakovčić warns that "the atmosphere in which witnesses would testify against their own nation suspects is still hard to create, and media interest is getting lower". There's still an atmosphere in which "politicians and public figures openly express intolerance towards ethnic minorities, Serbs especially", he says. So the atmosphere of impunity for Croatian soldiers was created in Croatia to a large extent after Gotovina and Markač's acquittal. "We should be afraid of the euphoria which would create the oblivion of the crimes perpetrated in 1995", political analyst Žarko Puhovski said after the general's acquittal.

Almost a year later, impression is that this is exactly what happened.

To the extent that Gotovina and Markač's acquittal caused euphoria in Croatia, to the same extent it caused anger in Serbia. The highest state officials in Serbia gave numerous statements in which they attacked ICTY, em-

phasizing that it is an unjust and "anti Serb court", as Serbian president Tomislav Nikolić put it. But the ICTY release of Serb army and police officers, Momčilo Perišić, Frenki Simatović and Jovica Stanišić, several months later, calmed down those accusations. After a first wave of renewed mutual mistrust between Croatia and Serbia, caused by acquittals of war commanders on both sides, it ebbed to open space for more constructive relations after Serbian authorities directed the country to pro-European direction, starting to normalize the relations with the neighbors, including Croatia. But at the same time, the several ICTY acquittals undermined the human rights activists trust in ICTY.

"Although the ICTY gave immeasurable positive impact to the judiciaries of the region, there were worrisome series of acquittal, starting with lowering the sentence to Serbian general Veselin Šljivančanin for war crimes in Croatian town of Vukovar", Eugen Jakovčić from Documenta claims. "After that, Gotovina, Markač, Kosovo general Ramush Haradinaj and Momcilo Perišić were acquitted, and after them Stanišić and Simatović were acquitted in the first level sentence", Jakovčić recalls. The fact is also that Croatia significantly improved prosecution of war crimes during last several years, while negotiations with EU were in progress. During that period, several major cases were prosecuted, like the war crimes against Serb civilians in Osijek, for which former Croatian general Branimir Glavaš was sentenced, or in Gospić and Medacki dzep, with jailed former Croatian general Mirko Norac. Also, several major trials started during last two years, like the trial against Tomislav Merčep, former political strongman and interior ministry advisor, for war crimes against Serbs in Pakrac, Kutina and Zagreb.

The trial to former Sisak police Chief Djuro Brodarac and his deputy Vladimir Milanković for war crimes against Serb civilians in Sisak also started in Osijek recently.

But there are many more crimes: Croatian prosecutor's office registered the total of 490 war crimes to be prosecuted in Croatia. According to the official sources, until the end of September last year, 316 perpetrators were known and 174 unknown. But only 122 war crimes sentences were delivered in court, which is about a fifth of the total. NGO Documenta says that "there are no investigations for many unprosecuted crimes", while those investigations in process "lasts very long".

Documenta emphasizes that "regional co-operation needs strengthening ", because

"many former members of Serbian forces are out of the reach of Croatian judiciary ". There are signals though that regional cooperation is getting better. Since prosecutors of Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina signed bilateral agreements on cooperation in war crimes prosecution during last several years, those documents are starting to deliver first concrete results. But much more is needed to ensure the prosecution of war crimes throughout the region, human rights activist warn. They suggest that all war crimes should be prose-

cuted "efficiently and non-selectively", all missing persons have to be found, and regional fact-finding commission on war crimes, REKOM, should be established. Also, the state authorities should "take the responsibility for the damage done by the state", and compensation and protection mechanisms for civilian victims of war should be established. Until that is done, human rights activist say, the problem of war crimes and victims of war in the Balkans wars of the nineties would stay unsolved.

Serbia: Local Judiciary Responsible for Prosecutions

The latest acquittals of the Hague Tribunal showed that countries of former Yugoslavia need to work on reconciliation and a joint future by themselves, as the courts will not necessarily bring them justice.



Marija Ristić, author of the FOKUS-article on Serbia

Shock and surprise were probably the most common emotions when the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia, ICTY, in November last year decided to acquit two Croatian generals for crimes against civilians during war in Croatia. Mladen Markač

and Ante Gotovina were charged for war crimes committed against Serb civilians during 1995 Croatian military operation Storm and for which they were convicted by the same court in the second instance verdict.

While the acquittal was greeted in Croatia and two generals were welcomed like heroes in their home country, in neighboring Serbia the verdict caused anger, while the court's credibility has been slammed, accusing it for being bias towards Serbs. Politicians on both sides used the momentum for sending national-

istic messages – in Croatia, that the 1995 Operation Storm, when number of Serb civilians died and around 200.000 fled from Croatia, was just, while in Serbia it was heard "that Hague spit in the face of Serbia", arguing that no one has been punished for the war crimes against Serbs during 1990s war. What worries is that most of the media in both countries followed the narrative of politicians, publishing biased, one sided articles, with little or no focus on victims. Moreover, despite big media attention, serious debate about the ruling and its impact within the society didn't take place.

Just three months after, the ICTY acquitted the Yugoslav People's Army general Momčilo Perišić on appeal, quashing his 27-year pris-

on sentence for war crimes during the 1990s conflict. The appeals chamber of the ICTY ruled that Perišić was not responsible for the wartime crimes committed by the Bosnian Serb Army in Sarajevo and Srebrenica because it was not under the command of the Yugoslav Army. The appeals chamber also found him not guilty of failing to punish his subordinates who participated in the shelling of the Croatian capital, Zagreb. Serbian officials praised the acquittal, saying it proved Belgrade was not



the aggressor in the conflicts of the 1990s. In Croatia and Bosnia and

FURTHER INFORMATION

Marija Ristić

BIRN-Correspondent, Belgrade/Serbia

marija.ristic@birn.eu.com

Links

www.balkaninsight.com

Herzegovina, the verdict was met with great dissatisfaction.

Another surprising acquittal followed in May, when the

ICTY ruled that Jovica Stanišić, former head of the Serbian interior ministry's security service, and his right-hand man, Franko Simatović, commander of the ministry's Special Operations Unit, did not take part in a joint criminal enterprise aimed at forcibly removing Bosniaks and Croats from large parts of Bosnia and Croatia from 1991 to 1995.

These three major acquittal verdicts have raised two important issues: (1) that no one has been held responsible for crimes against Serbs during Operation Storm, since both international and local courts in Croatia failed to bring final verdicts in cases against high Croatian army and police officers for war crimes against civilians during 1995 and (2) that Belgrade authorities at the time led by strongmen Slobodan Milošević also have not been sentenced for the mass atrocities against Croat civilians that were committed in Croatia. Therefore, it is reasonable to say that feeling of injustice among victims prevails. Victims associations of all ethnic groups and rights campaigners feel betrayed by the ICTY, as the court in which they believed it will bring convictions, actually allowed leading figures of the 1990s conflict to go back to their countries as free men.

As the ICTY's mandate ends in 2014, it is unlikely that the court will change its course and legal standards set by its appeal chamber, leaving the space for national courts to prosecute those responsible for the war crimes that took place during deadly Balkan war. It is promising that despite the acquittals of the ICTY, the two main prosecutors from Serbia and Croatia vouched that they will continue cooperation and mutual exchange of evidences. Since its establishment in 2003, Serbian War Crimes Prosecutor's Office had the

most successful cooperation with their colleagues from Croatia, which resulted in 111 exchanged cases so far.

This cooperation had visible results in spring this year when joint action of two prosecutions resulted in the discovery of a new mass grave in the village of Sotin near the eastern Croatian town of Vukovar, where the remains of 13 bodies have since been exhumed. Previously, the Belgrade prosecution launched an investigation in February against several wartime Serbian fighters for killing 16 Croatian civilians in Sotin between October 1991 and the end of that year, and later arrested two under suspicion for committing this crime. This is just an example how the countries can overcome the burden of the past, but what remains problematic is still politicized judiciary, which up to now failed to bring high ranking officials responsible for war crimes to justice.

Courts are not enough, as the political elites of both sides need to make clear steps towards reconciliation. Serbian president Tomislav Nikolić visited Croatian capital Zagreb this summer, Croatian president Ivo Josipović is expected to visit Belgrade this autumn, encouraging messages were heard on both sides - but words need to be followed by actions.

For example, the two countries still have not yet agreed to drop their mutual lawsuits for genocide. Additionally, issue of property rights is still a large obstacle to better relations. Croatian authorities are still investigating around 1900 Serbs for war crimes. Borders between neighbors are yet to be finally set. Children in both countries are still learning two versions of history. In both countries, only victims from its own ethnicity are honored.

A number of issues still need to be tackled and resolved, but in the course of EU integration, there is a bigger chance that it will move forward. Croatian leaders on several occasions promised that they will be a partner to Serbia when it comes to the Serbia's EU path. In that course Serbia needs to show commitment to the good neighborly relations and acknowledge war crimes and other misdeeds that former leadership did in the 1990s in the name of its citizens.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

“What made me come back to Bosnia”

“What on earth got into you?” This is the question of a now very old Muslim man from Višegrad in Eastern Bosnia to his Serbian neighbor.

During the ethnic cleansing, the old man was evicted from the city and his neighbor made no attempt to protect him and his family. After being evicted, the old man embarked on a long and treacherous journey on foot alone as he had been separated from his family. After



© Johannes Rueger

*Ljubinka Petrović-Ziemer,
head of forumZFD in Sarajevo/Bosnia*

That bothered the old man more deeply than even the eviction itself. When the old man returned to Višegrad many years later, he did so only with the wish to ask his neighbor: “Why didn’t you do anything to protect us from the criminals after so many years of being good neighbors, after we stuck together and supported one another and could trust one another? Why?”

When I am asked why I returned to Sarajevo, it is these people, who set out to understand and never stop seeking answers and explanations regardless of how painful

several months, he reached the besieged city of Sarajevo and found refuge. The old man had counted on his neighbor; had hoped that he would at least try to protect him and his family from the worst.

and disappointing it may be, that come to mind. They are the reason why I returned to Sarajevo after eight years in Germany. *forumZFD*, where I have been Programme Manager since March, offered me the opportunity to share my many years of practical, teaching and research experience in peace work in my country with other peace and human rights activists. After six months in Derventa, *forumZFD* relocated to the capital city of Sarajevo this January. Some of the activities from Derventa are being continued, such as the dialogue between veterans and young people in schools and the events for International Peace Day in September, which will take place this year under the motto of ‘Discover the power of peace!’. *forumZFD* has decided to focus on the work in dealing with the past in its continued commitment in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Together with local partners, our work primarily concentrates on three areas:

Public relations – to support and launch initiatives that explore different approaches how in public to deal with the violent past and to strive for constructive dialogue.

Activities – organize events encouraging an alternative (inclusive) culture of remembrance in the form of exhibitions and artistic workshops.

Cooperation between academic communities and practitioners – the as yet sporadic dialogue between academics and practitioners should in future be reinforced and mutual interests sounded out. One particular challenge entails raising all these activities to a regional level. Regional work groups have been formed to this end, which began their work this June.

Despite the many open questions and major challenges that arise during a new beginning, I am currently personally carried by the sense of joy at once again being able to live and work in Sarajevo.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Ljubinka Petrović-Ziemer

Programmanager | *forumZFD* Bosnia-Herzegovina

(petrovic-ziemer@forumzfd.de)

Kosovo

Exploring the unexplored: Narratives between fact and fiction

When artists and sociologists turn to archives of underrepresented periods of recent history, for making artistic/academic projects that would initiate discussions about those periods, how much of the material used and produced corresponds to facts, and how much of it is fictionalized in the process? What is it that actually happens in the space between fact and fiction, when we deal with the past through arts and culture?

'Recollecting the Past: Cultural Memory between Facts and Fiction' is the title of the art-based action research, that the project 'Alternatives' of forumZFD/Kosovo is



© Ljubiša Milovanović

Minister for European Integration, Ms. Vlora Citaku, viewing the video 'Silent Protest' by Astrit Ismaili

implementing throughout 2013 through artistic ateliers, which are designed to offer space for exploration through artistic and/or academic approach. For this purpose, archive materials that are relevant to the process of dealing with the past in Kosovo are being used. Through these ateliers, the researchers want to pose critical questions and attempt to give various answers to questions concerning representation, citation and reference to the past.

The aim is for the participants and atelier leaders to discuss the potential of archives and their role in dealing with the past. How can we employ the narratives deriving from archives in a constructive debate about dealing with the past? When we're using archive material for

creating artistic projects in order to bring these narratives from the archive to today's audiences, what remains a fact and what gets fictionalized? And, most important, what happens in the 'space' created between fact and fiction?

These and other relevant questions are the foundation of four artistic ateliers which have been realized in Pristina, since March 2013. A total of 25 participants, under the guidance of different professionals or academics, took part in the ateliers so far. One last atelier is due to take place in September 2013, closing the circle of ateliers. The research kicked off with the atelier on monuments of socialist Yugoslavia in Kosovo, under the guidance of Marko Krojač (author of the 'MONUMENTI' photo exhibition), and continued with the second atelier which was focused on analyzing the symbolism and the aesthetics of the protests of the women's movements during the 90s in Kosovo.

The second atelier was led by Linda Gusia, professor of sociology at the University of Pristina, and Shelbatra Jashari, a conceptual artist from Kosovo, working and living in Brussels. "I think that the action research practice of these ateliers is a possibility for artists to understand their role in the society.

Developing ideas based on problems is a contemporary approach to place memory in the present. During

my work in the atelier, my focus was in the process of the work, while the artistic project was developing gradually, highlighting from a personal perspective the importance of the present as an actual space of my artistic project", says Dardan Zhegrova, one of the participants.

The third atelier was conceptualized as a documentary theater atelier, hosted by Elizabeth Hess, a playwright, actor and director from New York. Ms. Hess and a group of seven young kosovarian women from different fields, jointly explored archives of reports written on war rape in Kosovo, and turned the testimonies of war rape survivors into a theater performance which premiered during 'polip' international literature festival.

© Ljubiša Milovanović



Exhibition of the second atelier at Stacion Center for Contemporary Art, Pristina

The fourth atelier was led by Flaka Haliti, a visual artist of Kosovo origin, living and working in Germany. It focused on critical analysis of victim representation in the art work of kosovarian and international artists. Each atelier concluded with an open exhibition where the visitors could get an insight into the projects of atelier participants.

Some projects were chosen to be continued during the upcoming months, if they required more time and archive material.

The projects which were supported will continue after the termination of the atelier, and will be showcased in an

FURTHER INFORMATION

Doruntina Basha

forumZFD Kosovo

(basha@forumzfd.de)

Links

<http://betweenfactsandfiction.wordpress.com/>

event that will gather all projects together in December 2013, when the findings of the 'Recollecting the Past in Kosovo: Cultural memory between Facts and Fiction' will become available in a publication.

Macedonia

As long as we talk to each other, we can clarify our misunderstandings...

Dr. Todor Cepreganov, the former Director of the Institute of National History in Macedonia concluded his speech with these words.

This was not just any speech, but rather the welcome address at the first conference held jointly with colleagues from the Institute for Cultural and Spiritual Heritage of Albanians that took place in Skopje in spring 2012.

For many, this may sound obvious. However, those even vaguely familiar with the situation in Macedonia will know that it is nothing short of a minor sensation when Albanian and Macedonian historians appear together in public.

All too often, different interpretations of history are used to fuel tensions between the ethnic groups and to make political capital.

It was in fact extremely easy to bring representatives from both institutes together at one table. Plans for a continued cooperation were formed at the very first

meeting organized by *forumZFD*. The new Director of the Institute of National History, Professor Dragi Gjorgiev, was willing to develop the cooperation with his Albanian counterpart, Dr. Shefqet Zekolli, and his staff. It should entail more than just a few fleeting encounters. Hence the two institutes decided to seal their cooperation with a written agreement. The conditions and details of this cooperation were defined with the help of *forumZFD*.

The time to sign the contract finally came at the end of February 2013. The election campaign had since begun in Macedonia – a time in which ethnic tensions are fuelled by the political parties. At the start of May, violent conflicts erupted in Skopje between young Albanians and Macedonians. It was at exactly this time that those involved in the project decided that the agreement should be signed in public. The necessary arrangements were made together with *forumZFD*. Both American ambassador, Paul Wohlers, and German ambassador, Gudrun Steinacker, readily agreed to participate in the signing ceremony. The cooperation agreement was signed on 5 March 2013 in the presence of employees from both institutes. The media interest was intense. Both ambassadors acknowledged the occasion as a sign of hope, calling for the historians' example to be followed and for political dialogue to be engaged in.

Signing of the agreement is merely a formality; its contents must now be brought to life. Indeed, concrete plans have already been made for the coming years.



Participants of the panel (right to left): Paul Wohlers, US-ambassador to Macedonia, Dr. Shefqet Zekolli, institute for the cultural and spiritual heritage of Albanians, Albert Hani, forumZFD, Prof. Dragi Gjorgiev, institute for national history of the St. Kyrill and St. Method University Skopje and Gudrun Steinacker, German ambassador to Macedonia

FURTHER INFORMATION

Silke Maier-Witt

Programmanager | *forumZFD*, Macedonia
(maier-witt@forumzfd.de)

Out of the Box

Documenta – Centre for Dealing with the Past

“It’s a lot harder for me today. During the war, I knew there were two sides and that there was a war going on. The war will end. I’m more concerned about the war that doesn’t end in people’s minds. The sound of war bells can be heard again, it’s always there.” – Amalija Krstanović, Osijek, Croatia

Eighteen years after the war... Have the wounds healed? Have the people reconciled? Is the war really over? Is the truth known? Croatian personal memories of war and detention will give you amazing answers!



Documenta – Center for Dealing with the Past is a civil society organization providing systematic support to processes of dealing with the past in Croatia through documentation of human losses and personal memories of wars, opening and deepening public dialogue on war events and various forms of political violence and systematic work on the improvement of judicial practices and standards.

The key reason for our efforts is the experience of silenced war events and other forms of political violence in the period from 1941 until the present. We believe this fact has significantly influenced recent history of the Western Balkan and it will without a doubt reflect on future generations. At the same time, a tradition of democratic values, especially human rights, has still not been established in such areas. For this reason, we believe that substantial responsibility for a serious and thorough approach to their promotion and protection lies with Croatian society at this very moment in history.

The project Unveiling Personal Memories on War and Detention from 1941 till present - an initiative to create a collection of video-recorded testimonies on a wide range of war experiences in Croatia - proposes the use of oral history as a method to collect and



Documenting individual memories of war

open up individual memories on past traumatic events from a wide range of perspectives, including those of minorities, victims, women, war veterans and others.

Our intention is to affirm personal memories of all interested witnesses of historical events in Croatia and to preserve them from permanent loss. We believe that, through recording and transferring peoples’ subjective experiences it is possible to gain deeper insights into seemingly hidden aspects of political turmoil and conflict. Our aim is to support and strengthen personal and social processes of dealing with the past, which we consider a necessary precondition for building sustainable peace and stability in society.

We recognized oral history as a method that has democratising potential; its personal therapeutic function has also been recognised, the importance of allowing people to tell their stories and to be heard. It is our hope that revealing the suffering of one's neighbour

or people from other parts of the country, especially those of different

ethnic background, might stimulate

FURTHER INFORMATION

Tanja Petrović

Projectmanager Documenta, Zagreb/Croatia

tanja.petrovic@documenta.hr

Links

www.documenta.hr

debate within local communities and contribute to establishing of dialogue between different social groups. Our goal is to contribute to creating a social climate where an awareness of different experiences from the war will encourage greater empathy and solidarity for all victims.

The project aims to combine the chosen method of collecting personal memories, with innovative ICT techniques in order to make these sources accessible and searchable via the Internet for a wide range of audiences, as well as to serve as a basis for different artistic, educational, documentary and research projects.

News & Events

News in brief

Public discussion on memorialisation in Sarajevo

In early June, BIRN-Bosnia hosted a public discussion on the topic of post war memorialisation, in which Ljubinka Petrović-Ziemer, head of the *forumZFD* office in Sarajevo, took part. Amongst the participants was also Amra Custo from the Institute for Protection of Cultural, Historical and Natural Heritage of the Sarajevo canton, Petar Todorov from the National Institute of History from Skopje and Almina Jerkovic from the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The participants discussed problems caused by boom of monument-building, which started after the end of the wars in the respective republics of the former Yugoslavia. Monuments are used by different states and ethnic groups to promote and reinforce their interpretation of the recent past as well as a tool for nation-building, based on ethnic principles. Quite often, this leads to conflicts with other ethnic groups living on the territory of that state. An online gallery with pictures of monuments throughout the Western Balkans can be found on balkaninsight.

Office closing in Struga/Macedonia

The *forumZFD* project office in Struga will close its doors on 4 September after 3.5 years of activity. Since spring 2010, the team has organised countless activities to strengthen the interethnic cooperation between Macedonians and Albanians in the cities of Struga and Kičevo from here. The motivation behind these activities are the violent interethnic clashes that broke out between schoolchildren during the 2009 elections. The project focused on strengthening the interethnic cooperation between children and young people as well as developing the interethnic cooperation structures in the schools. Achievements include the opening of two

interethnic youth centres in cooperation with UNICEF in which children and young people are able to spend their free time beyond ethnic boundaries. Moreover, teachers have been given mediation training and the introduction of school mediation has been supported. One school in Struga has since established a mediation club in which students receive ongoing training as peer mediators. The activities are also having an impact: since the start of the project – No further clashes have broken out – neither during the parliamentary elections in 2011 nor the local elections in 2013. Indeed, during the recent local elections, the schools previously at loggerheads even made a joint appeal for “interethnic peace and tolerance”. This just goes to show: the inter-ethnic cooperation structures have been sustainably strengthened, and the project has achieved its most important goal.

Elections: A litmus test for interethnic relations

In Macedonia, elections on both the local and national levels are time and time again a catalyst for conflicts and, in the past 20 years, unfortunately all too often for violent incidents. At the same time, during elections in Macedonia, it is not only a matter of the party-political power relations between the government and opposition, but also of the question of which ethnic group has the say. For multiethnic communities, elections are therefore a litmus test for the interethnic relations.

At the local elections in March 2013, the community of Kičevo in which *forumZFD* has been active since 2010 was an absolute ‘hotspot’. The territorial reform was implemented here this year and villages were merged, which led to a shift in the majority ratios of Macedonians to Albanians. Kičevo was thus the final municipality in which the 2001 peace agreement on restructuring of the municipalities was implemented. Disputes (violent ones included) were feared.

This was sufficient grounds for *forumZFD* to support the partner organisations of the Center for Community Development – Kičevo and the CIVIL – Center for Freedom in the project “Free and non-violent elections”. The aim was both to record irregularities in the election process such as intimidation, bribery and election rigging, and to curb violence.

As *forumZFD*, we supported the violence prevention measures, providing over 80 election observers from all across Macedonia with mediation training, among other activities. Moreover, we supported the partner organisations from Kičevo in their endeavours to find peaceful solutions to interethnic conflicts before, during and after the elections. A joint appeal for interethnic peace and the intervention of colleagues in the field thus helped to de-escalate the situation when things escalated shortly before the elections and ethnicity-motivated brawls broke out in schools. Initially, the situation between the ethnic groups was also extremely tense in the days that followed the elections. It was once again a joint, public appeal for interethnic peace that helped de-escalate the situation.

The litmus test has successfully been passed and a first step made towards reinforcing the interethnic cooperation in Kičevo. *forumZFD* and its partners will continue to pursue this aim from September. The training of decision-makers in community mediation and the participative processing of an action plan under the title of “Justice for an interethnic Kičevo?” are the next steps.

The exhibition “MONuMENTI. The changing face of remembrance” presented in Liverpool, Sarajevo and Mostar

forumZFD was happy to present its exhibition MONuMENTI during the annual conference on “Memory, Conflict and Space”, hosted by the Archbishop Desmond Tutu Centre for War and Peace Studies at Liverpool Hope University from 10-12 July 2013. As described in the [conference report](#), the exhibition served “as a powerful visual tool to showcase the role of monu-

ments as manifestations of identities in conflict, but also in their ability to transform the ways in which identities are framed after war. Particularly in the case of Liverpool, previously Europe’s major hub of slave trade and scarred by urban conflict, memory plays an important role. Our conference highlighted memory and remembrance as central dimensions through which conflict is channeled, whether this be through representations in literature or arts, the display of monuments in key locations, gendered or digital spaces, the formation of public spaces of commemoration, including urban infrastructures, museums, churches and sport. MONuMENTI, made a most valuable contribution to the conference themes and granted deep access to “the changing face of remembrance” in the Western Balkans.”

Upcoming Public Events

Macedonia

10. – 12. 10. 2013 | Conference on Mediation in Schools | Ohrid, Macedonia

forumZFD, in cooperation with the OSCE Mission to Skopje, organizes a regional conference on mediation in schools. Fifty participants from Macedonia, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia, Kosovo and Slovenia are expected to take part in the conference, which takes place for the second time this year.

Staff News

In May of 2013, **Zlatko Tadić** joined the team in Sarajevo as a financial assistant.

From September of this year on, **Britta Wiemers** will be working in the regional coordination office in Belgrade, as a junior peace consultant.

Imprint

Fokus.Westbalkan – News from the Forum Civil Peace Service

Issue 02-2013 | SEPTEMBER

The Fokus.Westbalkan is published three times yearly – in May, September and December. To subscribe or unsubscribe simply send an e-mail to fokus.westbalkan@forumzfd.de. The contents of the Fokus.Westbalkan reflect the opinion of the *forumZFD* or the authors. While the links to external website mentioned in this issue have been carefully checked, the *forumZFD* cannot be held responsible for any external contents.

Throughout the issue, the male form has been used so as to ensure a better readability of the text. This, of course, encompasses the female form of the words.

Publisher

Forum Ziviler Friedensdienst (*forumZFD*) e.V.
Regional Office Western Balkans
Kralja Milutina 11/9
11000 Belgrade – Serbia
Phone/Fax: +381-11-32-43-258
www.forumzfd.de

Editorial Team

Johannes Rueger | Christian Pfeifer

Contributing Authors

Boris Pavelić | Marija Ristić | Ljubinka Petrović-Ziemer |
Doruntina Basha | Silke Maier-Witt | Tanja Petrović |
Kirsten Schoenefeld | Johannes Rueger

Design & Layout

Johannes Rueger

Financed through the



Forum Ziviler Friedensdienst (*forumZFD*) e.V.

The *forumZFD* is an umbrella organization of 38 member organizations and recognized by the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development as a sending organization. It is committed to develop civil methods for conflict management and for the Civil Peace Service. Peace consultants by *forumZFD* work in projects in the Western Balkans, the Middle East and the Philippines. In its Academy for Conflict Transformation, *forumZFD* trains peace consultants who work worldwide for the prevention of violence and the promotion of peace.



www.forumzfd.de
Westbalkan@forumzfd.de

pax christi im Bistum Aachen

The peace of Christ was a sign of hope for many people in the destroyed Europe at the end of the Second World War. Out of this hope people of formerly hostile nations, mainly Germans, French and Polish, reconciled with each other. This was the beginning of the pax christi movement which by now is active for peace and justice in more than 60 countries. pax christi in the diocese of Aachen is part of the world wide pax christi movement. As founding-member of Forum Ziviler Friedensdienst pax christi Aachen carries out projects of the Civil Peace Service in the Western Balkans in cooperation with *forumZFD*.



www.paxchristi-aachen.de
info@pax-christi-aachen.de