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Introduction

Genocide has always been the leading topic of change in all political circles because this issue is periodically based on political and religious killings. Men will do what men have to do to gain power. As Machiavelli stated in *“The Prince,”* “Men acquire who can acquire, they will be praised or not blamed.”¹ In 1995, the displacement of nearly 30,000 women, children, and elderly adults chaperoned by the massacre of 8,373 marked a modern-day genocide within Srebrenica. Throughout this paper, I will be breaking down what led up to the Genocide in Srebrenica, the events that happened, and then constructing Justice post the Genocide.

ICPP Definition Of Genocide

Over time, we have seen dozens of atrocities committed against ethnic groups and religious groups worldwide for generations. The worst of these atrocities are genocides. A Genocide, according to the International Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, defines a “Genocide” as any of the following acts committed with “intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group by; Killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.”² In Response, the Convention declares acts of the same are punishable under criminal laws; “Genocide, conspiracy to commit genocide, direct and

¹ Niccolò Machiavelli and Harvey Claflin Mansfield, *The Prince* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 1.

² “Illuminating the 10 Stages of Genocide through Rywka's Diary,” *Jewish Museum Milwaukee*, accessed February 11, 2022,

<https://jewishmuseummilwaukee.org/10-stages-of-genocide/>, 1.

public incitement to commit genocide, attempt to commit genocide and complicity to commit genocide.”

Srebrenica

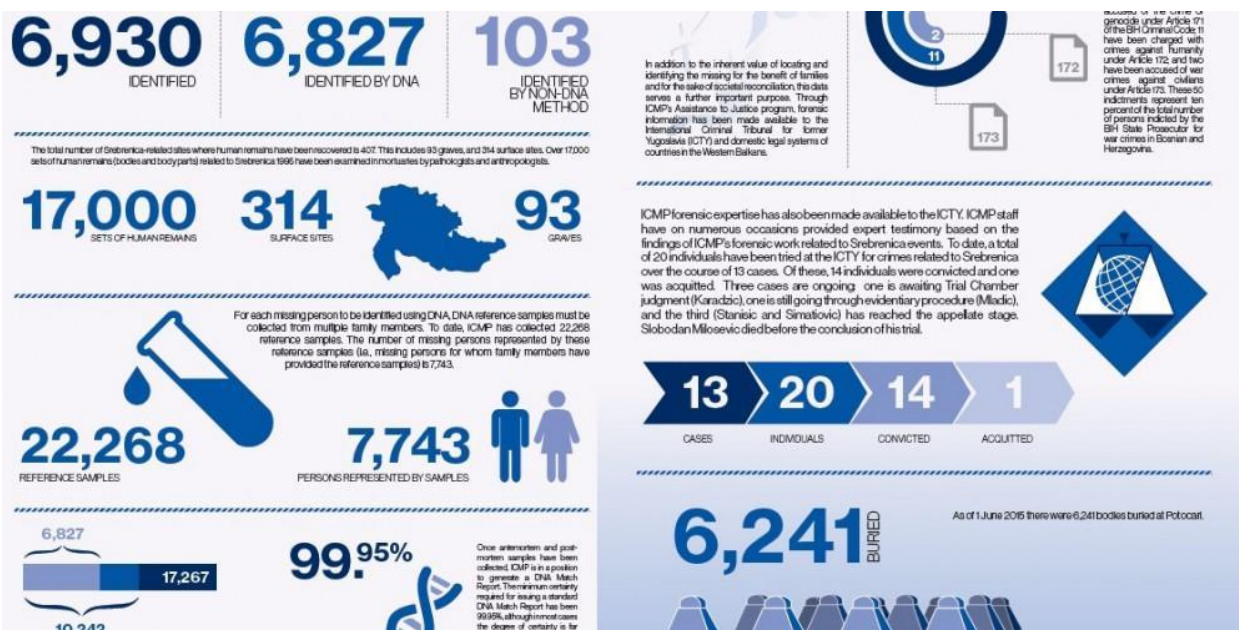
In 1995, with tensions growing to a boiling point within the country of Srebrenica, nearly 30,000 women, children, and elderly adults were displaced from their homes and land because of their religion; this would be chaperoned by the massacre of 8,373 young Muslim boys and men. According to the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals,³ On the 11th of July 1995, the Bosnian Serb Forces started forcing thousands of Bosnian Muslim women and children from Potocari and simultaneously separating the men and boys and detaining them in Bratunac. On July 12th, Ratko Mladic, the Head Commander of the Bosnian Serb Army, announced the arrival of 30 buses would arrive to relocate the group while simultaneously capturing any families that evacuated the city before the relocation.

Killing Sites

On July 13th and 14th, the 30 buses relocated these men and young boys to many cities such as Bratunac, Kravica, with many escaping to Petkovci, Kozluk, Balijkovica, Snagovo, Bisina, Orahovac, and Zvornik with little to no food, water, or essential survival resources. These cities would be finally cited as killing sites and where they would soon find mass graves which are still being exhumed today, as can be noted from the graph below.⁴

³ “Srebrenica: Timeline of Genocide,” *Home*, accessed February 11, 2022, <https://www.irmct.org/specials/srebrenica/timeline/en/>, 2.

⁴ “Bosnia's Srebrenica Massacre 25 Years on - in Pictures,” *BBC News* (BBC, July 10, 2020), last modified July 10, 2020, accessed February 11, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-53346759>, 2.



Some depict these mass slayings as disorganized and confusing, yet, one behind another, these large sites were the last-place countless young men and boys appealed for their lives to be spared to no avail. An article posted by the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals breaking down the timeline of the Genocide gives an account from the 14th of July, it states; “On the afternoon of 14 July, approximately 1,000 detainees from Bratunac arrive by bus or truck at the new school in Petkovci, a short distance away from the headquarters of a battalion of the Zvornik Brigade. As the Bosnian Muslim men and boys get off the trucks, they were demanded to put their hands behind their heads and sing Serb nationalistic songs. Once inside the school, they were made to repeat after a Bosnian Serb soldier: “This is Serbian land and will always remain so” and “Srebrenica has always been Serbian and will continue to be that.” From dusk until around midnight, soldiers call detainees out of the classrooms in groups, and bursts of gunfire are heard. After midnight, the detainees are taken out of the classrooms, boarded onto trucks, and driven to a field next to the Petkovci Dam. They are ordered to get off the trucks, five to ten at a time, find a spot, and form a row. Soldiers wearing black balaclavas start shooting at the detainees’ backs from a distance of seven to ten meters. Those’ shot fell upon those who had

been slaughtered before them. Bosnian Serb Forces execute at least 815 Bosnian Muslim men and boys in Petkovci; some at the school and others in a field near the dam.”⁵

Seven Stages Of Genocide

These actions taken by the Bosnian Serb forces coincide with many of the Seven Stages of Genocide explained within the International Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide Article on Genocide Called “ *The Seven Stages of Genocide*”⁶ by Dr. Gregory H Stanton from the U.S. Department of State. After Breaking down what a Genocide is by definition, the Convention breaks down the Genocidal Process into seven distinct stages. Classification, Symbolization, Dehumanization, Organization, Polarization, Identification, and Extermination. We get the magnitude of a Genocide through these combined, a collective attempt to destroy an entire ethnic or religious group with attempted impunity. From the actions taken by the Bosnian Serb forces, the group used classification and identification to gather all members of the Muslim ethnic group within the country. It used dehumanization and extermination to commit mass atrocities and grave humanitarian events that were thereafter tried to be covered up by authorities within the government. In a personal account from one of the victims who survived one of the sites, Nedžad Avdić tells an accurate, vivid account of the dehumanization and extermination up close in an article published by CBS News⁷ in July of 2015, nearly 20 years later.

⁵ “Srebrenica: Timeline of Genocide,” *Home*, accessed February 11, 2022, <https://www.irmct.org/specials/srebrenica/timeline/en/>, 4.

⁶ Gregory H Stanton, “The Seven Stages of Genocide,” *Yale Center for International and Area Studies*, last modified 1998, accessed February 11, 2022, <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/46570/GS01.pdf>, 5.

⁷ “Victim of Srebrenica Massacre Speaks Out,” *CBS News* (CBS Interactive, July 8, 2015), last modified July 8, 2015, accessed February 24, 2022, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/serbian-survivor-bosnian-genocide-srebrenica-speaks-20th-anniversary-nears/>, 4.

Within the article, Nedžad Avdic speaks about his frightening moments leading throughout this terrible time. The Article states, “Nedžad Avdic felt the blood of the previous victims sticking to his bare feet as he walked with his hands tied behind his back toward the exit of a school to be massacred. While the voices of hundreds of other male Muslim Bosnians from Srebrenica echoed from the classrooms as the soldiers demanded that the prisoners chant, “Srebrenica was and always will be Serb!” as gunfire killed them one by one outside. It was 17-year-old Avdic's turn to become one of the 8,000 men and boys killed after the eastern Bosnian town of Srebrenica fell to Serb forces. As Avdic stepped out of the school and waited for his turn to face the firing squad, he said he saw piles of bodies lying in the heat while he, in his own words, “I just wanted it to be quick.” Suddenly the soldiers changed their minds and loaded him and others onto a truck and took them to another site to be shot. As they were taking the men off in groups of five and lined them up in front of the firing squad, Avdic hid behind other men on the back of the truck “just to live for a few seconds more,” he remembers. It was his turn again. He felt the sharp stones under his feet as he jumped out and lined up. The rattle of gunfire started up again, and he fell face down on the stones but still felt the pain. He was shot. But not dead. Avdic lay motionless among a pile of bodies for hours, listening to killings deep into the night. “I was bleeding and waiting to die,” he said. When another truck left, and it became silent, he lifted his head. Something was moving a few rows of bodies in front of him. The other survivor spotted him too and asked him to come and untie him. Avdic could not walk but rolled himself over, and the two men chewed on each other's ropes to free their hands. Covered by darkness, they sneaked over the bodies into a nearby forest before the next truck arrived. The other survivor, whom Avdic says does not want to be identified, tore his shirt and bandaged Avdic's wounds. In the morning, the two crawled up the hill and took another look down on the killing

field. Backhoes were loading the dead bodies on trucks which then drove away. The two men kept moving for four days and nights, looking for government-held territory. Avdic was crawling, and his companion was moving ahead of him and clearing the path to make it easier. He begged the survivor to leave him to die, but the man begged him back to keep going. The man brought him water in his shoes. On a Serb graveyard, the two found an open bottle of Coca-Cola near a freshly dug grave. They drank it together with the ants in it. When they crossed the front line, the two never noticed, but they eventually reached a Muslim village and emerged from the woods, bloody and exhausted. He passed out again as a bunch of people was giving him water. Nevertheless, he knew: He survived.” This first-hand account of Mr. Avdic is a great source of information to highlight stage Three of the Seven Stages of Genocide; Dehumanization. The Dehumanizing tactics and actions taken by the Bosnian-Serb Forces create a new level of deprivation of emotional and physical basic human rights. This account is only one account out of the 8,000 men and boys killed that day.

Justice Post Genocide

Justice after these events are always the hardest to highlight. While many agents of horror have been indicted for their actions, such as Radovan Karadžić, Ratko Mladić, Vujadin Popović and others, and Radislav Krstić, there is now a growing wave of denial growing within the population within the Balkans.⁸ As a journalist from “Justiceinfo” states in an article about the ever-increasing denial within the Balkans, “The 1995 Srebrenica massacre was ruled a genocide by both the ICTY and the United Nations’ top court the International Court of Justice (ICJ), yet

⁸ By and Asymmetrical Haircuts, “25 Years after Srebrenica, Assessing Justice and Genocide Denial,” *JusticeInfo.net*, last modified July 7, 2020, accessed February 11, 2022, <https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/44827-25-years-after-srebrenica-assessing-justice-and-genocide-denial.html>, 7.

in the Balkans, denial prospers. Now we are dealing with high-class, publicly-funded deniers.”⁹ Hikmet, a genocide studies scholar, wrote for *Balkan Insight* recently about how denial of Bosnian war crimes has moved from the fringes to mainstream discourse. In an article published by *Britannica* depicting the aftermath of the Massacre, the author sheds light on the action taken by the western world following the events. The report states that after the actions taken by the Bosnian-Serb forces to cover up their atrocities, it took “years of analysis by Western scientists using many laborious comparisons of soil and tissue samples, shell casings, pollen, and clothing fragments to piece together exactly where the killings had occurred and how the bodies were moved among an estimated 80 mass grave sites. By early 2010 the International Commission on Missing Persons, a nongovernmental organization established in 1996, had used DNA samples to

⁹ “Srebrenica Massacre | World News,” *The Guardian* (Guardian News and Media, n.d.), accessed February 11, 2022,

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/srebrenica-massacre>, 7.

identify more than 6,400 individual victims from mass grave sites”; like sites shown below.



In a Britannica Article focusing on the Judicial Aftermath of the Genocide in Srebrenica, the article shifts focus to an official report published by the Bosnian Serb Government in 2005. The article states, “In 2005, the Bosnian Serb government stated that 19,473 Bosnian Serbs were involved in the killings, hundreds of whom remained in official government posts. The UN criminal tribunal eventually indicted more than 20 people for their involvement in the killings. In 2001, it convicted Radislav Krstić, the commander of the Bosnian Serb corps responsible for the Srebrenica area killings, and aiding and abetting genocide and the murders. In 2003, Bosnian Serb intelligence officer Momir Nikolić pled guilty to committing crimes against humanity. Both Krstić and Nikolić received lengthy prison terms for their actions and roles in the killings. In 2010, the tribunal convicted two security chiefs for the Bosnian Serb military, Vujadin Popović and Ljubiša Beara, of genocide and sentenced them to life in prison. Also, in 2010, a third Bosnian Serb officer, Drago Nikolić, was given a 35-year sentence for abetting genocide. The

trial of Karadžić, who was located and arrested in 2008, began in 2009. In March 2016, he was found guilty of genocide, as well as nine other war crimes and crimes against humanity, and he was sentenced to 40 years in prison. Mladić remained a fugitive until May 2011, when he was captured in Serbia to be extradited to The Hague for trial. In November 2017, he was found guilty of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity and was sentenced to life in prison.”

Biblical Support

As Biblical Christians, we are anointed to protect God’s children and the children of Israel. As it states in Judges 20:48¹⁰ after the Benjamites were tried for the atrocities they committed against the man’s virgin daughter and concubine, “And the men of Israel turned again upon the children of Benjamin, and smote them with the edge of the sword, as well the men of every city, as the beast, and all that came to hand: also they set on fire all the cities that they came to.” God calls us to defend and abdicate for his chosen people, the people that he has commanded. As the body of Christ, we are called to the same level of duty as the Israelites were called to but through a different passage. God called us to be God’s messengers and spread his message throughout this land. Through grace and determination alone. Joshua 1:9¹¹ states, “Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.” We will all tell an account of our action here on earth, same as the actors of the Srebrenica Genocide. Every agent

¹⁰ King James Bible Online, “King James Bible Online,” *BIBLE VERSES ABOUT GENOCIDE* (King James Bible Online, September 20, 2015), last modified September 20, 2015, accessed February 11, 2022, <https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Bible-Verses-About-Genocide/>, 8.

¹¹ King James Bible Online, “King James Bible Online,” *BIBLE VERSES ABOUT GENOCIDE* (King James Bible Online, September 20, 2015), last modified September 20, 2015, accessed February 11, 2022, <https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Bible-Verses-About-Genocide/>, 8.

will be judged and tried before the highest court in the land—the court which shares no Jurisdiction and holds the ultimate Jurisprudence, the Court of God.

Conclusion

Men acquire who can acquire, they will be praised or not blamed. As God's chosen people, we were called to love one another as ourselves, we were called to not judge one another and love our neighbor but many have failed to live up to that standard. Greed and Self-righteousness have fueled a culture that killing for social stances in disguise as moral stances are ok but yet it defies the echelon of our commandments from God. As Genocides have always been the leading topic of change in all political circles, the advent of Justice after Genocide is becoming a new topic in the International Political conversation field. Justice through God's means.

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