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Bosnia-Herzegovina: The forgotten of Srebrenica - another snub to justice

Each day that the international community fails to actively search for and arrest Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić marks another defeat for justice and prolongs the torture suffered by the families of thousands of “disappeared” from Srebrenica, Amnesty International said today.

“Four years have passed since the fall of Srebrenica and the relatives of the ‘disappeared’ are still suffering,” the organization said.

More than 8,000 Bosniac men and boys went missing in the three days following the fall of Srebrenica on 11 July 1995. Most of them were last seen fleeing the enclave, but this figure also includes more than one thousand who were last seen in Bosnian Serb Army custody at the United Nations Compound at Potočari, just outside Srebrenica. Four years later the fate of more than 6,000 of these men and boys is still unknown.

Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić, have been publicly indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia for grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions, violations of the laws and customs of war, crimes against humanity and genocide committed during and after the fall of Srebrenica. However, four years after the alleged crimes were perpetrated both suspects remain at liberty.

Last December Amnesty International welcomed the arrest and transfer by SFOR of Radislav Krstić to face trial at the Tribunal on charges of conspiracy to commit genocide, and violations of the laws and customs of war committed during and after the fall of Srebrenica.

“Until Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić are brought to justice the fate of the thousands of missing is likely to remain unclear,” Amnesty International maintained.

“The agony faced by those left behind, not knowing what happened to their loved ones and the difficulties in identifying the mortal remains of victims that have been recovered amounts to torture.”

To date only 58 persons who went missing after the fall of the enclave have been positively identified. Thousands of bodies and mortal remains which have been retrieved over the past three years remain unidentified. Amnesty International is calling on the international community to make it a priority to allocate funds to continue with exhumations and identifications.

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