

2021.

NEWSLETTER



Introduction

The year behind us was challenging for the work of the Youth Initiative for Human Rights, never mind it being the second year of the pandemic, first and foremost because of the shrinking space for action and our efforts to remove the symbols of hatred and war crimes denial – Ratko Mladić mural, and thus keep face of Belgrade and Serbia.

During last year, we tried to encourage the dialogue between Serbian and Kosovo societies by organising another 'Miredita, Dobar dan!' festival, this time in Prishtina. With regard to relations between official Belgrade and Prishtina, we were trying to draw attention to the significance, as well as obstacles in locating the missing persons from the Kosovo war and to have this issue finally raised as one of the most urgent issues, for the resolving of which it is necessary that both governments and the international community assume responsibility. Our mission to encourage positive peace in the region was also reflected in our demanding the respecting of law and returnee rights of Dragica Gašić in Kosovo, as well as in continuously reminding that without recognition and adequate memorialisation of Albanian civilians secretly buried in Batajnica, Serbia does not have a European future.

Within the transitional justice programme, we monitored commemorations dedicated to the wars and war crimes of the 1990s in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Montenegro. As a result of this monitoring, at the beginning of this year we published a regional report and handbook dedicated



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yihhr.org

Introduction

to commemorative practices for the period of January-October 2021. We responded to the still growing trend of extremism and glorification of war criminals by the government institutions and political parties, reminding the public in Serbia and in the region of former Yugoslavia that without the universal respect for the victims, there will not be a single crumb, let alone breaking bread between the nations. For this reason, on July 11 we announced the installation of the virtual monument to the victims of the Srebrenica Genocide 'Life is What the Dead Dream of' by the author Mia David.

Within the human rights education programme, we organised four workshops (one online and three live) for young researchers on the topic of 'How to Research and Report on the State of Human Rights?'. Within this programme, we also presented our new informative platform [defende.rs](#), where all relevant facts about the state of human rights could be found based on available reports of local and international organisations. As a practical addendum to the website, [defende.rs](#) offers practical tips how to address independent controlling institutions in Serbia.

As a counterpoint to the daily denial of war crimes and Srebrenica genocide, we produced six panels and an edited collection, with artists, human rights activists and journalists, about the Srebrenica genocide. Also, we carried out two trainings on the topic of 'Commemorative Practice of the Srebrenica Genocide', where we gathered young activists in order to acquaint them with court-established facts with regard to the genocide in Srebrenica.

By opening the exhibition 'Speaking Out' by the War Childhood Museum from Sarajevo at the Endžio hub in Belgrade in October, we launched a Thematic Week dedicated to the fight against war-time sexual violence. In addition to the exhibition, the Thematic Week included panel discussions, book promotions and films screening aimed at reminding the public in Serbia of the problem of war-time sexual violence and the needs of the survivors. Within our global programme, we published an analysis of the role of the media in the war, titled 'The Role of media in war atrocities: Cases of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Rwanda'.

Since its foundation, the Youth Initiative for Human Rights has been fighting for the same values. Regardless of the coming elections or Covid-19 pandemic, we remain on the same course, whereby in 2022 we will try to be even more active in the area of youth education, and innovative with regard to the regional dealing with the past. In spite of the war threats in BiH and discontinued dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo, we are continuing our fight for peace in the region, not only as the absence of war, but as a lasting process which includes the work on preventing violence and permanent cooperation of the countries and people in the region, based on respect and solidarity. The pages before you offer an overview of our activities in the previous year which we would hardly overcome without our activists, comrades-in-arms, and the citizens of Serbia and Former-Yugoslavia regions who criticise, but also support our work.

RECOMMENDED

Online conversation with Jasmila Žbanić, director of the film “Quo vadis, Aida?”

Dealing with the past through art forms.

It is a great honor for us to have the opportunity to host Jasmila Žbanić, the director of the film “Quo Vadis, Aida?”, in our virtual YIHR hub which was nominated for an Oscar in the category for best foreign film, as well as for two Bafta awards.

Motivation for making the film, the shooting process, support for the film in post-Yugoslav countries, the challenges ahead in the promotion of the film, are some of the topics we talked about with the director, Jasmila Žbanić.

- Emotion is the most important thing, for people to feel what it meant to be there in July 1995 and what life without children means. So whenever someone calls for a conflict and a war, they say: wait, I have experience, at least from that woman's film I know what war brings and it never occurs to me to get into something like that. It is illusory to think that war will be prevented because someone watched a movie, but if we sensitized young people in this way to see something like this at school and that no one can ever sell them the story that war is the solution to anything, maybe and we managed to raise generations who do not want to go to war - said Jasmila Žbanić.



Jasmila Žbanić



A scene from the movie “Quo vadis, Aida?”

Exhibition of photographs “Soul of Srebrenica” by Sarajevo photographer Midhat Poturović

Dealing with the past through art forms.

The exhibition of photographs “Soul of Srebrenica” by Sarajevo photographer Midhat Poturović opened on July 3, at the Endžio HAB. The exhibited photographs were taken in the post-war period during many years of work on stories about the genocide in Srebrenica. Photos from the exhibition can be viewed [here](#).

Ivan Đurić from the Youth Initiative for Human Rights, which is the organizer of the exhibition, said that it was needed because Serbia’s attitude towards Srebrenica is deeply wrong. “The attitude towards Srebrenica is a noose around the neck of Serbian society,” Đurić told for Radio Free Europe.

The author of the photographs, Midhat Poturović, belongs to the generation of those who were children during the war in the former Yugoslavia. “We must not be victims of our own mental laziness in the search for truth. “Generations of young people must fight against the bad heritage of their parents, society and the ridiculous political system,” Poturović said.

Poturović was awarded the “Hrvoje Polan” award for the series of photographs “Soul of Srebrenica”. The award is given by GRAIN magazine, with the support of YIHR Serbia and the German NGO Forum Ziviler Friedensdienst - Serbia.



Never Again, For Anyone

Genocide in Srebrenica and Fight against Oblivion

The promotion of the edited collection

The promotion of the edited collection 'Never Again, For Anyone: Genocide in Srebrenica and Fight against Oblivion' took place at Endžio Hub in Belgrade on July 10. Speakers at the promotion were Ajla Škrbić, editor of the publication, Nemanja Stjepanović, researcher of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, and Veran Matic, president of the Board of Directors of the B92 Fund.

Ajla Škrbić, editor, said that the publication seeks to respond to the almost perpetual denial of the Srebrenica genocide and historical revisionism, coming even from the high officials of the countries of former Yugoslavia, especially from Serbia and parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and that the edited collection is a contribution to preventing the disappearance of facts about the genocide from the public sphere.

IRMCT researcher Nemanja Stjepanović said that it is the government who bears the most responsibility for genocide denial, but also that there are many other structures in Serbia originating in the 1990s which participate in 'cementing' the conspiracy theories and revisionist theories that started 'flourishing' after the assassination of Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić in 2003.



What Young People in Serbia Need Most Is to Stop Being Poisoned with Hatred towards Others

Open letter on the occasion of Youth Day

On the International Youth Day, we are warning that young people are paying the highest price of the war-mongering politics; there is great danger that such price will be much higher if Serbia continues to rush into authoritarianism, aggressive nationalism and conflict with everybody in the region.

Young people in Serbia are far more conservative and reserved than the generation of their parents and grandparents, according to all research and indicators. They are the least vaccinated (less than 15% of those vaccinated), with the least faith in democracy (44% of young people think that democracy is the best form of political governance) (KONS, august 2021) and mostly Eurosceptic (21% of young people have positive attitude towards the EU). A dramatic fact, which must worry everyone, is that only 45% of young people support the idea of lasting peace with Kosovo Albanians (IEA, jun 2021) while 55% does not support this idea or is not sure if they support it.

Somewhere, among these young people, there is a new Vladimir Živković, who will defect the lunatic war and return his tank to the Serbian Parliament, but there are also a new Legija and a new Arkan.

You can read the full statement [here](#).



Festival „Mirëdita, dobar dan!“

Festival 'Mirëdita, dobar dan!' was held for the first time in Prishtina on October 14-16, presenting contemporary art, cultural and social scene of Serbia.

At this year's festival, the citizens of Prishtina had the opportunity to find out about Serbia's cultural scene, musicians, film and literature authors, as well as to see some of the popular films by Serbian authors.

As in the previous years, a part of the festival programme was dedicated to the debates and discussions about the topics of importance for the societies of Kosovo and Serbia, and for their future of relations between.

The Festival was opened by Danijela Štajnfelđ's film 'Hold me right/Zaceli me' at the Kino Armara, telling the story of rape survivors, the perpetrators of sexual violence, and the perilous journey of speaking out on such violence and the healing process. In addition to the premier of Danijela Štajnfelđ's film in Prishtina, on the first day of the festival the audience had the opportunity to see the performance of Loakiin and Rubella Femina, drag queens from Belgrade, accompanied by DJ Jovijah.

Festival „Mirëdita, dobar dan!“

On the second day of the festival, the book 'The Other Serbia' was presented to the Prishtina audience, followed by the debate titled 'Which Serbia Is the Other Serbia?', moderated by Ron Gjinovci, with participants Sofija Todorović, Veran Matić, and Shkëlzen Maliqi

The second festival night ended with the concert 'Pavana and more' by pianists Branka Paralić and Nataša Penezić.

On the final day of the 'Mirëdita, dobar dan!' festival, Vjera Ruljić from forumZFD presented the book 'Behind Seven Camps' by Viktor Ivančić, Hrvoje Polan and Nemanja Stjepanović. The promotion was followed by the debate 'Culture as A Means of Politics', with Milan Antonijević, Maja Stojanović, Jeton Neziraj and Nita Luci as speakers and moderated by Aulona Kadriu.

After the debate, the exhibition under the same title – 'Behind Seven Camps' by photographer Hrvoje Polan was opened, in the presence of the Kosovo Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports Hajrulla Çeku.

The eighth edition of the festival in Prishtina was closed by the film 'The Load' by the Serbian director Ognjen Glavonjić, before a numerous audience.

Unfortunately, the Festival was smeared by threats on social networks aimed at journalist Pero Jovović.



Thematic Week dedicated to fight against war-time sexual violence held in Belgrade

October 2021, Belgrade

By opening the exhibition 'Speaking Out' by the War Childhood Museum from Sarajevo at the Endžio hub in Belgrade on October 2, 2021, the Youth Initiative for Human Rights launched a Thematic Week dedicated to the fight against war-time sexual violence.

In addition to the exhibition, the Thematic Week included panel discussions, book promotions and films screening aimed at reminding the public in Serbia of the problem of war-time sexual violence and the needs of the survivors.

Through personal stories, exhibits and clips from video testimonies, as well as through the works created in the body mapping workshop, the 'Speaking Out' exhibition demonstrates the experiences of women who survived war-time sexual violence and children born of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina.



Tematska nedelja posvećena žrtvama seksualnog nasilja u ratu

On the second day of the Thematic Week, Jasmila Žbanić's film 'For Those Who Can Tell No Tales' was shown. Ljubinka Škodrić's book 'Women in Occupied Serbia (1941-1944)' was presented on October 4. The discussion focused on the position of women in World War II and, in particular, sexual violence they were exposed to.

On the fourth day of the Thematic Week (October 5), a discussion, 'The War Has Continued with Different Means – Where is Anti-War Resistance Today?', was held, with participation of Staša Zajović, Women in Black, Gizela Štanjo Tot, journalist of 'Magyar Szó' from Novi Sad, Ljiljana Spasić, Civic Action from Pančevo, and Anđelija Vučurević, peace activist from Novi Sad. The participants talked about the transitional justice process in Serbia, obstacles in achieving it, unattained goals, and the responsibility of civil society.

The following debate held on October 7 titled 'The Problem of War-Time Sexual Violence in Serbia from the Perspective of Institutions and Public' was preceded by the screening of 'Do You Remember Me in Slavery?/ Sjećaš li se mene u ropstvu?', a film by Ana Manojlović (Radio Television of Serbia). Besides Ana Manojlović, Divna Prusac, a journalist from the Independent Journalists' Association of Vojvodina, also participated in the panel, and together they offered the answers to the questions as to how media can influence the culture of memory and responsibility, along with a more just attitude of society towards war-time sexual violence. Ivana Žanić, Executive Director of the Humanitarian Law Centre, talked about criminal proceedings for these crimes before national institutions and particularly stressed the issues of misogyny, nationalism, and lack of understanding of the trauma of sexual violence within these proceedings. The discussion was moderated by Sanja Pavlović of the Autonomous Women's Centre.

On the last day of the Thematic Week, October 8, the activists of the Youth Initiative for Human Rights and Autonomous Women's Centre organised the Women in Black 30th anniversary celebration by showing short videos about the actions dedicated to the problem of war-time rape. The celebration was also attended by activists and women who survived war crimes in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Montenegro.

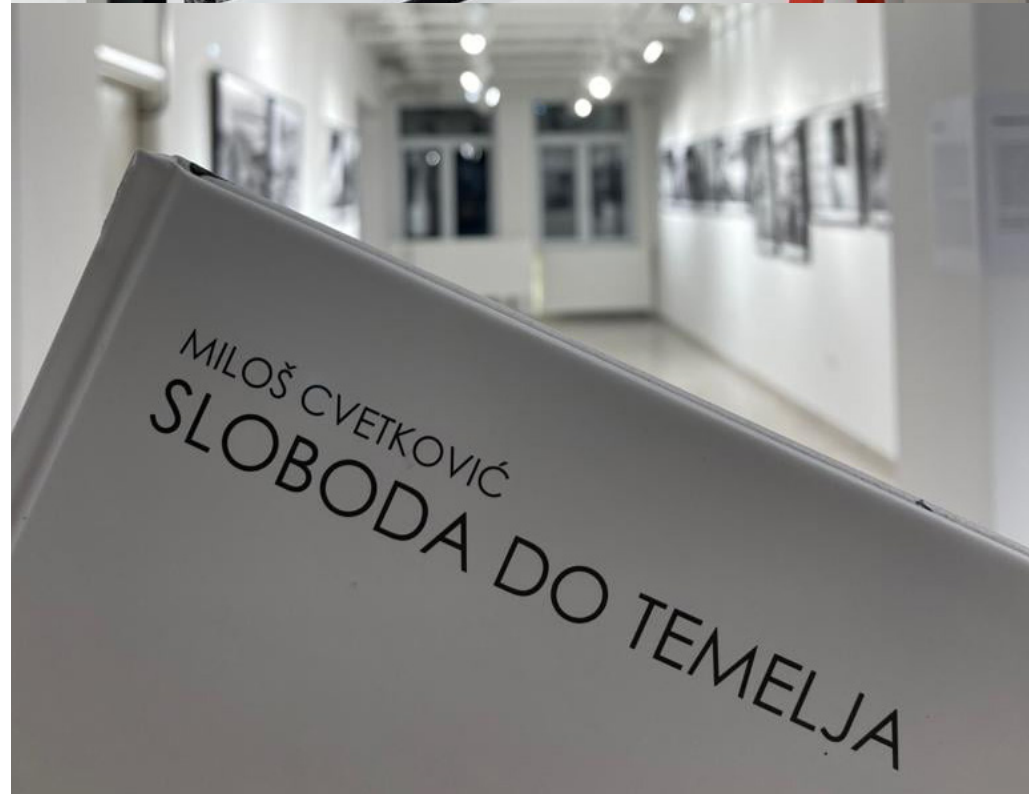
Exhibition of photographs by Miloš Cvetković “Freedom to the foundation”

An exhibition of photographs by Miloš Cvetković “Freedom to the Foundations”, which document the war in the city of Vukovar in 1991, was opened at the “Engio HAB” on February 16, 2021.

The exhibition presents a selection of Cvetković’s photographs published in the photomonography of the same name “Freedom to the Foundation” (2021).

“After 30 years, I am reliving the drama. I wanted to show that war is fear, pain, death, sadness. And that we should not rejoice at the cries: ` Let’s go to battle, `” said Cvetković.

The photos document destroyed buildings in the city, corpses in the streets and among the ruins, members of the JNA and territorials during the fighting, columns of civilians, as well as Croatian prisoners after the JNA fully entered the city on the Danube on November 18, 1991.



Conference “How to stop the denial of genocide in Srebrenica?”

Participants in the conference “How to stop the denial of genocide in Srebrenica?”, which was held on December 9, 2021, in Belgrade, agreed that countries in the Western Balkans denying the Srebrenica genocide could not become members of the European Union.

Ivana Zanic, executive director of the Belgrade Humanitarian Law Center, Tea Gorjanc Prelevic, director of the Human Rights Action in Podgorica, Sabina Cudic, a Bosnian politician, and Ajla Skrbic, a professor of international law, spoke at the panel “Criminal Responsibility for Denying Srebrenica Genocide”.

Murat Celikan, co-director of Hafiza Merkezi from Turkey, Nedim Jahic from the Srebrenica Memorial Center, Zeljko Stanetic, director of the Vojvodina Civic Center, and Sladjana Lazic from the HLC spoke at the panel “Opposing Practices of Remembrance”.

The conference was organized by the Youth Initiative for Human Rights, the forumZFD organization in Serbia and the Independent Association of Journalists of Vojvodina, with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany. The conference is part of the project “Advocacy, Activism, Education - There is No Place for Denying the Srebrenica Genocide”.

The conference was held in memory of the day when in 1948 it adopted the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.





Marko Milosavljević for AJB: Stop the Spiral of Denying Crimes Committed

Although in minority, Serbia that has not reconciled with crimes still exists, says Marko Milosavljević, programme coordinator of the Youth Initiative for Human Rights in Serbia. In an interview for the Al Jazeera Balkans portal in late November 2021, Marko Milosavljević talked about civic resistance to the mural dedicated to Ratko Mladić, readiness and lack of readiness of young people and of the Serbian state institutions to face the recent past, as well as about the options for stopping the spiral of crimes denial.

Read more



CONVERSATIONS

Srebrenica conversations

During 2021, we organised six panels with artists, human rights activists and journalists on the topic of the Srebrenica genocide.

In February, Nemanja Stjepanović delivered a lecture titled 'Srebrenica Genocide Through Intercepted Conversations'. He presented the participants with intercepted conversations between the highest military and political officials of Republika Srpska in July 1995, which were used as evidence at the trials before the ICTY.

In March, we had a conversation with Jasminko Halilović, founder and director of the War Childhood Museum in Sarajevo. He talked about the reasons behind founding the Museum, how the process of collecting the artefacts underwent, the visitors' reactions and the level of support in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the region. Another topic discussed was how art can influence the reconciliation processes, as well as the #ChildrenAndGenocide campaign, which entailed collecting children's memories of the Srebrenica genocide.



Srebrenica conversations

We also talked with Ajna Jusić, president of the 'Forgotten Children of War' association, about children born as a consequence of war, the consequences of patriarchy on the societies we live in, the dealing with the past process in BiH, and the position of women during and after the 1990s wars.

In 2021, the topic of the Srebrenica genocide gained momentum in the region, in particular in Montenegro. For this reason, in April, we invited journalist Andrej Nikolaidis, with whom we talked about the current political situation in Montenegro with special emphasis on Srebrenica genocide denial from the highest governmental officials.

In May, we had Almasa Salihović from the Srebrenica Memorial Centre, Branka Vierda from the Youth Initiative for Human Rights in Croatia, and Marijana Stojčić from the Centre for Applied History involved in the discussion titled 'Conversation about Remembrance Culture and Memorialisation of the 1990s Wars'. The focus was on commemorative practices, Srebrenica genocide denial, as well as how the growing nationalism affects the remembrance culture in the countries in the region.

The last event in the series of Srebrenica Conversations was titled 'Who Is a Bosnian Girl?'. With Šejla Kamerić, an artist from Bosnia and Herzegovina, we talked about the role of art in the processes of dealing with the past, whether activism can contribute to the peace building in the future and whether art is the language through which we can understand each other even if our mother tongues differ.



Photo: Art House Channel

Conversations about phenomenon of shrinking space for civil activism

The project 'Bring Back Our Civil Space' aims to address the trends of democratic regression and shrinking civil space that have been observed in recent years, in particular in the countries of Central and Southeastern Europe. Such trends threaten the underlying principles and values of the European Union, pointing to inadequate response of institutions and organisations. We talked with local civil societies in Serbia about this phenomenon, the challenges it brings, and how to overcome them.

We talked with Slobodan Martinović, founder and director of the Center for Policy Research "Argument", about the successes and challenges they face in their work, as well as about ways to strengthen and expand civic space.

We talked with Radmila Nesic, the founder and director of the Ternipe Citizens' Association, about the successes and challenges they face in their work, as well as about ways to strengthen and expand the civic space.

We talked with Zibija Šarenkapić, the founder and director of the DamaD cultural center, about the successes and challenges they face in their work, as well as about ways to strengthen and expand civic space.

What does Srebrenica mean to you?

This year, ahead of July 11, the 26th anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide, we decided to ask young people and prominent activists across the region about what Srebrenica means to them.

Young people

Sarajevo

Banja Luka

Čačak

Zagreb

Beograd

Ljubljana

Activists

Anita Mitić

Sonja Biserko

Katarina Milićević

WYMD Talks

World Youth Movement for Democracy

Within the global project 'World Youth Movement for Democracy', a number of online workshops were held and several episodes of the podcast were recorded. We also wanted to bring topics from this region closer to young people worldwide, thus underlining their importance, as well as similarities with developments in other countries in Europe, Africa, Asia, and America, which is where those interested in the World Youth Movement for Democracy and its activities actually come from.

Thus, in September 2021, we talked with Hasan Hasanović. During the Srebrenica Genocide in July 1995, Hasan was 19 years old. Today he works at the Srebrenica Memorial Centre and is the author of 'How to Survive Srebrenica Genocide' and 'Voices from Srebrenica'. In the podcast that can be listened to on the [Anchor platform](#), Hasan talks about his childhood and adventures he had with his brother, the beginning of the war, the genocide and the years that followed. Although the last time he saw his brother alive was in July 1995, he stresses that his story is not against anyone, but that it is for everyone – to be remembered and to be learned from.

The following month we had a conversation with Branka Vierda, programme coordinator of the Youth Initiative for Human Rights in Croatia. With her, we talked about transitional justice, dealing with the past and activism, and youth cooperation with special emphasis on Serbia and Croatia. For more about current political situation in Croatia, experiences from the previous projects and ongoing activities of YIHR Croatia, listen to the [Anchor podcast](#).



Photo: MC Srebrenica



The role of the media in war and peace cases of BiH & Rwanda

Discussion on the occasion of the promotion of the publication

Within the project 'Youth and Atrocity Prevention', implemented in co-operation with the Global Initiative for Justice, Truth and Reconciliation, YIHR has published the analysis titled 'The Role of media in war atrocities: Cases of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Rwanda'.

The analysis discusses the devastating consequences propaganda can have on society by giving the examples of the events in Prijedor in 1992 and the 1994 Rwandan genocide. It is focused on the impact that 'Radio Prijedor' and 'Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines', as well as the newspapers 'Kozarski vijesnik' and 'Kangura', had on the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Rwanda and on the course of their respective wars. In conclusion, the analysis also provides an overview of the epilogues seen in the number of murdered, displaced and tortured people, but also judicial proceedings. The analysis is available in English [here](#).

A public debate titled 'The Role of Media in War and peace' was organised to promote the analysis. There, Branko Čečen, Director of the Centre for Investigative Journalism of Serbia (CINS), Azra Berbić, activist, journalist and project coordinator at the Post-Conflict Research Center (PCRC), and Milica Stojanović, journalist at the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) discussed the role of media, both during the past wars and in the present context, as well as how we see Others and talk about them. The debate can be watched [v](#).

Online conference 'Dear Future Volunteers'

November 16-17 via Zoom

In two panels and an interactive workshop, we tried to answer the following questions: What democratic mechanisms can support volunteering as a tool for building more inclusive societies and enabling access to rights? What are the challenges and who bears responsibility in today's volunteering trends? What are the stories of global volunteers? In what actions did they participate? What changes and challenges has volunteering brought to the lives of people?

In the first panel titled 'Volunteering for Inclusiveness', we invited Mirela Rajković (SEEYN) and Marija Perić (Youth Researchers of Serbia), and talked about how to empower young people to volunteer in their local communities, the volunteering legislation in the Western Balkan countries, and what the institutions could do to encourage young people from marginalised groups to get more involved in the volunteering process.

In the second panel titled 'There is no I in volunteer', we talked with Aleksandra Anđelić and Miloš Stanković about their volunteering experience, where to find information about volunteering opportunities, what volunteering means to them and what possibilities it provided them with for their future careers.

On the second day of the conference, together with partners from the Ljubljana Pride, we presented citizens recommendations about inclusive volunteering gathered through the surveys conducted in the period between August and October 2021.

WE REMEMBER

The Youth Initiative for Human Rights in Serbia demanded once again in 2021 the recognition and respect for the victims of the 1990s wars, in particular war crimes victims, through a series of joint press releases and actions, as well as through videos and campaigns on social networks. Although year 2021 was also marked by the sluggish judicial proceedings for war crimes in Serbia, the denial of war crimes, and especially of the Srebrenica genocide and the glorification of war criminal Ratko Mladić, we were trying to remind the public of the fact that nourishing the joint culture of memory of the victims regardless of their ethnicity is in the core of reconciliation on the territory of former Yugoslavia.

In February, in a joint statement with the YIHR Kosovo, we reminded the citizens of the victims of the bombing attack on the Niš Express bus in 2001, in which 12 Serbian civilians were killed and ten wounded, making it one of the gravest unprosecuted crimes after the arrival of international missions to Kosovo. In the same months, in a joint statement with YIHR Montenegro, we paid respect to the victims of the Štrpci abduction and called on the institutions of Serbia and Montenegro to reveal those who had ordered this crime and speed up the trial for this crime in Serbia.

In early April, we reminded the public of the anniversary of the 1425-long siege of Sarajevo, in which more than 11,500 citizens of the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina were killed. On the former SFRY Youth Day, May 25, in a joint statement with YIHR Bosnia and Herzegovina, we called to mind the victims of the crimes in Bradina and Tuzla, and demanded that the judicial authorities of Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina fairly and efficiently complete court proceedings, and that political institutions stop the practice of hiding and glorifying war criminals such as Novak Đukić.

We Remember

On July 11, in the park near the Presidency of Serbia, we lit up the candles for the victims of the Srebrenica genocide, in peace and quiet, in spite of the disturbances by the hooligan groups. As an alternative to the official narrative of denial and disrespect of the Srebrenica victims, we announced that a virtual monument to the victims of the Srebrenica genocide would soon be installed. The conceptual solution of the virtual monument 'Life is What the Dead Dream of' by Mia David won at the artistic competition 'Never Again for Anyone'. We marked the White Ribbon Day on May 31, as well as August 6, the day when the Omarska prison camp was dismantled, thus paying respect to Bosniak and Croat civilians from Prijedor who were killed, tortured and expelled from this BiH town. We also reminded the public of the victims of the Korićani Cliffs massacre, where more than 200 men, non-Serb civilians from the Prijedor municipality, were put on two busses on August 21, 1992, and instead of being exchanged, were taken to the Korićani Cliffs, where they were killed and thrown down the cliff near Vlašić mountain.

On the anniversary of the Sjeverin abduction in October 2021, we demanded that the institutions of Serbia finally recognise the victims of this crime, locate the remains and fairly compensate victims' families. On the 30th anniversary of the fall of Vukovar, we participated in the Women in Black's action and co-signed the protest letter to the government institutions, demanding the initiation of a statutory ban of glorification and rehabilitation of persons convicted of war crimes in Vukovar and all other places. We demanded, together with other civil society organisations, that the authorities determine the complete truth about the disappeared persons by opening all state archives in order to locate the graves of Croatian victims in Serbia and initiate judicial proceedings against those responsible for establishing camps and killing and torturing Croatian civilians and soldiers in the camps of Stajićevo, Begejci, Sremska Mitrovica, Aleksinac, Niš, and Belgrade.

In late December, we commemorated the anniversary of the war crime in Gornja Jošanica, Foča municipality, with a joint statement with YIHR Bosnia and Herzegovina, in which we expressed our respect for 56 Serb victims killed by the BiH Army members. In this statement, we also condemned the BiH Prosecutor's Office and Court's practice of impunity towards the perpetrators even 29 years after this crime was committed.

KOSOVO

During 2021, with regard to the relations between Serbia and Kosovo, we were calling for the continuation of official dialogue between Prishtina and Belgrade, which must be accompanied by the dialogue within both societies, as well as between societies and individuals. We demanded equality in the treatment of minorities, transparency in official dialogues, and implementation of the agreement, in particular with regard to missing persons, as well as appropriate response of the institutions in Serbia and Kosovo to human rights violations.

In January, we reacted to the censorship of Radio Kosova with regard to an audio drama series dedicated to missing persons in the war in Kosovo. Consequently, Marko Milosavljević of YIHR published an article titled 'Monopoly on the Victim Status' on the website of Mitrovica-based organisation New Social Initiative. In February, within the project 'National Convention on the European Union 2020/2021, Chapter 35, Other Issues – Kosovo', implemented by the InTER organisation, an analysis - 'Efficiency of the Mechanisms of Institutions of Serbia and Kosovo in Finding Missing Persons from the Kosovo War in the period 2016-2020' - was published. The authors are Anđela Savić and Marko Milosavljević of YIHR.

In March, after a series of state commemorations of the beginning of the NATO bombing, we called on state officials to stop bringing up false and incomplete data on victims, as well as glorifying war criminals. In July, following radio silence on the anti-Serb graffiti on the Church of Holly Salvation in Prishtina, setting the flag of Gračanica Monastery on fire, and the lynching of returnee Dragica Gašić in Đakovica, we demanded that the Government of Kosovo and international missions stop the hostility towards the Serb community in Kosovo.

Kosovo

In August, we condemned the statements of Veljko Odalović, president of the Government of Serbia's Missing Persons Commission, and war criminal Vladimir Lazarević, who, after the US troops left Afghanistan, gave several statements that this would happen in Kosovo, too. After negotiators in the official dialogue stated that the agreement had been reached on the exchange of archives about the missing persons, in September, together with YIHR Kosovo, we demanded that the negotiating teams of Belgrade and Prishtina immediately publish, in Serbian and Albanian, the document on the exchange and/or opening of secret archives so that the public, and first and foremost, the missing persons families would be informed about the next steps in searches for missing persons.

Following a series of incidents in September relating to the issue of license plates, along with more than 45 civil society organisations, we signed a joint statement in which we committed, inter alia, to keep encouraging substantial and continuous debate between civil societies in Kosovo and Serbia, timely exchanging information on the problems, circumstances and state of both societies, jointly reacting to burning issues that affect the deterioration of the situation on the field and have adverse effect on relations between communities, and keeping focus on unresolved issues that are marginalised because of the current problems and incidents.

In December, we condemned the intimidation practice of the Serbian intelligence agency BIA towards the Kosovo journalist Adriatik Kelmendi, as well as hate messages sent in the same month of this year to an Albanian family in Bor. On that occasion, we demanded that Serbian Prime Minister Ana Brnabić, and Miroslav Lajčak as the EU representative, clearly condemn these attacks, and that the prosecutor's office and police promptly and efficiently investigate these cases and stop the practice of impunity.

KEEPING FACE OF BELGRADE

The mural with the image of Ratko Mladić appeared on July 23 on the corner of Njegoševa and Alekse Nenadovića Streets in Belgrade. No sooner than July 24, the arm Mladić salutes with was scribbled over in red. After several citizens filed a complaint, the public utility service, 'Beokom Service', stated that the Communal Inspection of the Vračar municipality ordered the removal of the graffiti. Since the inspection and competent public utility companies failed to act in the following three months, we decided, together with the people who live in the building, and the citizens of Belgrade, to remove the Ratko Mladić mural in Belgrade on November 9, the International Day against Antisemitism and Fascism.

Although we timely reported the gathering on November 3, two days later, on November 5, Serbian Interior Ministry rendered an unlawful ban of the assembly. We stated then that the ban of our gathering represents a showdown between the Serbian police and the remains of antifascist and peace tradition of this country, and that the police, instead of protecting freedoms and rights of the citizens of Serbia, protects the image and glorifies the acts of war criminal Ratko Mladić, in concurrence with extremist groups. One day before the scheduled gathering at which the mural should have been removed, we released an open letter, announcing that we were not going to respond to Minister Vulin's threats announcing a gathering with 'bleeding Serbian heads', because the Mladić mural had become a monument of the 'Serbian World' under protection of



Action of Removing Ratko Mladić Mural

the Republic of Serbia. After the shameful arrest of activists Jelena Jaćimović and Aida Ćorović, who threw eggs at the Mladić mural on November 9, we expressed our solidarity and participated in a spontaneous protest at the Nikola Pašić Square that evening.

At the gathering titled 'The Mural Must Fall' on November 13, Ivan Đurić of YIHR said that we should 'build monuments to the victims and not to the criminals', and that the mural under government protection is an indicator of 'the rule of the strongest, and not of the law'. Ever since November 9, Mladić's mural/monument in Njegoševa Street was protected by the police, as well as by various hooligan groups. At the same time, attacks on activists opposing the glorification of war criminals intensified in November and December; thus having the YIHR office scrawled with the graffiti 'Ratko Mladić Serbian Hero' on November 11 and November 16. We responded to the second attack on our office with an installation, and a written addendum that this was what Vučić, Brnabić and Vulin were telling us by their failure to act.

During November and December, although various hooligan groups painted Mladić's image in Belgrade and other towns in Serbia, in spontaneous actions, citizens were destroying them and covering them with stickers with the message that Ratko Mladić is a convicted war criminal. After more than 20 days since the announcement of the gathering, the YIHR activists marked, on November 25, the zone around the Mladić monument in surrounding streets as the zone where the laws of Serbia do not apply.



Action of Removing Ratko Mladić Mural

After the humiliation on the International Day against Fascism, the government brought us even greater humiliation on December 9, the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of Genocide. While impotent institutions had been postponing the removal of the mural in Njegoševa Street for a month, thousands of Mladić's heads appeared on the walls and other public surfaces in Belgrade and Serbia. On December 9, during the night, the Vračar municipality attempted, in a sloppy and neglectful manner, to remove Mladić's monument. Ten minutes after the news appeared in the media that the mural had been painted over, hooligans resurrected the monument of the war criminal in no time by removing the paint easily and quickly, using water and mops.

On the same day, the European Court for Human Rights demanded that the Government of Serbia answer the questions regarding the security threats to the YIHR activists after the Interior Ministry banned the public gathering scheduled for November 9 with the aim of removing the mural of Ratko Mladić.



AGAINST GLORIFICATION OF WAR CRIMINALS

In spite of judgments against Stanišić, Simatović, and Ratko Mladić, and amendments to the Criminal Code of BiH, better known as 'Inzko's Law', sanctioning the negation, denial and glorification of war crimes, Serbia spent 2021 celebrating war criminals. The denial and glorification of the Srebrenica genocide and Ratko Mladić marked almost every month of the last year, while some war criminals, such as Dragan Vasiljković, Veselin Šljivančanin, Vojislav Šešelj, Vladimir Lazarević and Vinko Pandurević, were often present in the public space, enjoying political support of Serbian authorities.

In January, we responded to the information that the 'Shop 011' in Belgrade was selling T-shirts and various clothes items with the symbols glorifying Ratko Mladić and the Srebrenica genocide. We welcomed the timely reaction of the Ministry of Trade, which temporarily suspended the sale and operation of this shop and filed a criminal report against the company behind it. However, we also demanded criminal prosecution for this sort of profiteering from criminal iconography. In the same month, Maja Žilić of YIHR wrote an article 'Radeta, Jojić and Contempt of the Court', where she presented this case chronologically and analytically after the IRMCT once again called on Serbia, on December 8, 2020, to arrest and hand over without delay Serbian Radical Party officials Vjerica Radeta and Petar Jojić, so that they could be tried on contempt



DUKS NOŽ ŽICA

Šifra proizvoda: 4021

1.990,00 RSD

Opis proizvoda

Pamučna dukserica visokog kvaliteta.

Na rukavu i kapuljači su prišivene diskre

Održavanje:

Prati na temperat

Ne iskuvavaj

Peglati sa u

Skupljanje na

Veličina

1

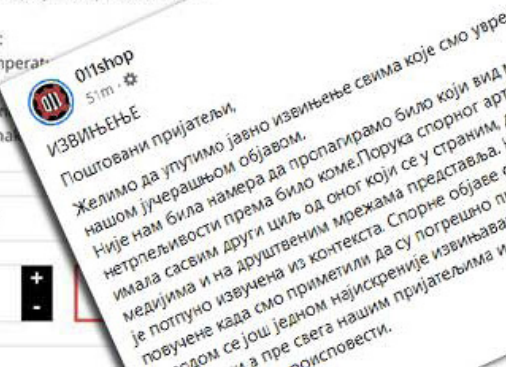


Photo: Peščanik

Against Glorification of War Criminals

charges. It is stated in the indictment that Radeta and Jojić interfered with witnesses by way of threatening, intimidating and offering bribes to them in order to persuade them to change their testimonies or not to testify in the case against Vojislav Šešelj.

In April, together with nine other civil society organisations, we demanded that the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Defence determine who enabled the supply of a large number of copies of the publication 'Srebrenica – Official Lie of an Epoch' to the temporary COVID hospital in the Štark Arena. Civil society organisations reacted after the Vreme weekly published the article 'Vitriolic Literature for the Sick' by Una Sabljaković, in which it was stated that COVID patients in the Arena had three publications published by the Pečat magazine, including 'Srebrenica – Official Lie of an Epoch'.

After Ratko Mladić's final judgment, convicting him to life imprisonment for the Srebrenica genocide and crimes against humanity in several BiH municipalities, in June, we called the government's reaction to the judgment and to the UN Security Council session a shameful attempt to avoid responsibility, incite nationalist hysteria and deepen the distrust between the citizens of Serbia and the rest of the world. In the same statement of June 9, we clearly said that Prime Minister Brnabić's statement that Serbia was 'dedicated to investigating all war crimes, all crimes, as well as arresting the accused, and punishing those responsible for the crimes' was incorrect. Quite the opposite, we called on the authorities to stop making Serbia a safe house for Ratko Mladić and other criminals, such as Novak Đukić.



Against Glorification of War Criminals

In July, we condemned the decorating of the former commander of the Gendarmerie of Serbia, Goran Radosavljević, who is suspected of murdering the Bytyqi brothers by the US State Department. On that occasion, Ivan Đurić of YIHR said to the N1 that 'those who gave him the medal did not give it because they thought he was innocent, but because they wanted to justify the politics of achieving the goals of war crimes.' In early August, together with YIHR Kosovo, we condemned war criminal Vladimir Lazarević being declared an honorary citizen of the Niš municipality of Pantelejški in Serbia. This award was supported by the assembly of this municipality, composed in majority of the deputies from the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS).

In September, we demanded that the National Library 'Dositej Novaković' in Negotin refuse to give its public space for the promotion of the book by Veselin Šljivačanin, a convicted war criminal, scheduled for September 9 in the children literature department of this library. We particularly called on the European People's Party (EPP) to state whether they support the fact that the Serbian Progressive Party, in spite of EPP's criticism four years ago, still has a convicted war criminal among its members. The library in Negotin stated publicly that the promotion would not take place on the premises of this institution, while neither EPP nor SNS made statements in this regard.

In late December, we condemned the decision of Milan Mojsilović, Chief of the General Staff of the Serbian Army, to present a commemorative medal for participation in the defence from the NATO aggression to Vinko Pandurević, convicted to the imprisonment of 13 years on the basis of command and individual responsibility for murders, extermination and persecutions in and around Srebrenica in July 1995, legally qualified as crime against humanity and violation of laws or customs of war. In the same month, Marko Milosavljević of YIHR talked in detail about the practices of government support to convicted war criminals in Serbia and the region, in conversation with Jelena Đureinović in the Humanitarian Law Centre's podcast.

During 2021, attacks on and intimidation of activists, civil society organisations, journalists, and media in general intensified. However, what marked the year behind us is the fight for gender equality and against sexual violence initiated by the stepping forward of the courageous women who used their voice in public to speak out about the violence they survived. On both aspects, the Youth Initiative for Human Rights was expressing solidarity with vulnerable citizens, minority groups, as well as those displaying civic courage and acting in public interest.

SOLIDARITY

In January 2021, actresses Milena Radulović and Iva Ilinčić publicly testified about sexual abuse they experienced from the acting coach Miroslav Aleksić. A few months later, their colleague Danijela Štajnfeld also bravely spoke out about being raped by Branislav Lečić.

At the end of January, together with twenty other civil society organisations and media, we demanded that the Administration for the Prevention of Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism issues a statement regarding the findings of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) that, in the 'List/Spisak' case, by examining 57 organisations and individuals from media and civil society, without adequate legal grounds, they overstepped their authority and acted contrary to the recommendations and standards of this international body. In the joint statement, we also demanded that the Administration for the Prevention of Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism should take concrete steps to remediate the damage caused to inappropriately targeted organisations and individuals.

The repression of civil liberties is a trend that has continued in 2021 and thus, through the 'Tri slobode/Three Liberties' platform, we condemned the arrest of the activist Aleksandar Jovanović Čuta after his appearance in the 'Utišak nedelje' talk show in March 2021. We also supported journalists of the Crime and Corruption Reporting Network (KRIK) and colleagues from CRTA, who were targeted by the regime attacks at the National Assembly of Serbia in March 2021.

In October and November, attacks on peace activists also intensified, first when the office of Women in Black was attacked twice, and then when activists Aida Ćorović and Jelena Jaćimović were arrested for throwing eggs at the mural of Ratko Mladić. On this occasion, YIHR issued several statements, organised the removal of the graffiti, and participated in public gatherings, thus expressing support for and solidarity with the attacked activists. In December, we stood in solidarity with activists from Pančevo, Ljiljana and Branislav Spasić, against whom misdemeanor reports were filed for their participation in a peaceful protest.

In the absence of institutions which should protect human rights defenders and journalists, YIHR has provided a communication channel for citizens through which they can report threats they received via social networks for standing against painting murals and graffiti that glorify war criminal Ratko Mladić.

EDUCATION

Four workshops on the topic of 'How to Research and Report on the State of Human Rights?'

During 2021, the Youth Initiative for Human Rights carried out four (one online and three live) workshops for young researchers titled 'How to Research and Report on the State of Human Rights?.'

The workshops offered the participants an opportunity to learn more about the purpose and strength of a single human rights report, the preparations and research methods that are used depending on the manner of data collection, as well as how the report is formed and presented to the public.

The lecturers were renowned experts with many years of experience in civil society, and they shared their knowledge and experience with the participants, in order to prepare them for all the situations they may encounter if they decide to engage in research and reporting.

The participants also had the opportunity to visit the Office of the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection and learn more about the work of this institution.



Srebrenica Genocide Remembrance Practices

During 2021, we delivered two trainings on the topic 'Practices of Remembering the Srebrenica Genocide', in which we gathered young activists with the aim of acquainting them with the basic facts about the Srebrenica genocide.

At the first training, organised online, the participants had the opportunity to talk with the experts specialising in transitional justice and gender equality, as well as with Jasna Đuričić, the leading actress in 'Quo Vadis, Aida?'

The second training was organised as a live event in Srebrenica. In the course of three days, the participants had the opportunity to visit Srebrenica Memorial Center and cemetery in which the victims of the Srebrenica genocide were buried, as well as to listen to the lecture given by the artist Mia David about artistic practices in the service of commemoration of genocide and other war crimes, and the lectures given by the journalist Dinko Gruhonjić about Serbia's attitude towards the Srebrenica genocide and how one should report on the Srebrenica genocide.





Youth Initiative for Human Rights
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