

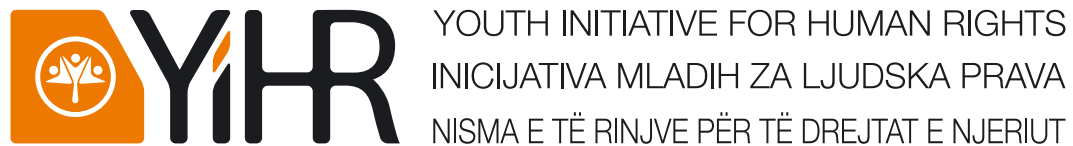


YIHR Serbia Annual Report 2022





Impressum



YOUTH INITIATIVE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
INICIJATIVA MLADIH ZA LJUDSKA PRAVA
NISMA E TË RINJVE PËR TË DREJTAT E NJERIUT

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Contents



Instead of Introduction

The year behind us was marked by the Russian aggression on Ukraine, the continuous escalation of the Kosovo-Serbian conflict, causing tension in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well, and many other troubling events. Some have shaken the world, others have shaken the foundations of the EU, while some have reshaped the dynamics in the Western Balkan region. Last year's events have shed light on challenges that can be resolved only if approached differently.

In such circumstances, the Youth Initiative for Human Rights (YIHR) continued to work with young people in Serbia and across the region, aiming to promote inter-ethnic dialogue and peace, which are crucial nowadays considering the dynamics of Kosovo-Serbia relations in the context of the ongoing war in Ukraine.

Nationalism, shrinking the space for debate on topics essential for the future of Serbia's EU membership and cooperation in the region, is still standing on the way of development of democracy in our country. Last year, we organized the Sixth Podgorica Youth Summit under the slogan 'Don't stay silent,' where we talked with young people from across the region about topics they are usually excluded from as a group, although such topics have a direct impact on their future.

Sofija Todorović, program director



During last year, YIHR focused its efforts on establishing inclusive memory culture which makes it possible to see and recognize one another without stereotypes and prejudices. War crimes denial and glorification of war criminals remain the main obstacles in the reconciliation process, as such irresponsible actions directly violate trust among people in the region.

Together with young people from Serbia, we stood against detrimental practices, discrimination and hate speech in the streets, on the walls, on social networks, and in media. We organized festivals and numerous gatherings for young people from Kosovo and Serbia, which were the examples of responsible action and collaboration, proving that young people are and can be the change we wish for. Europride ban has shown us that fight for human rights and full equality of all citizens never ends and that only together can we fundamentally resist the collapse of democratic institutions and human rights violations.

We used culture and art as another language to help us hear and understand what we sometimes can't even imagine. Solidarity was our force in the fight for the rights of all marginalized groups, helping us overcome all the challenges on the way.

Civil society, activists, and organizations active in the area of dealing with the past continued facing pressure from the state, and far-right groups and political parties. Hate campaigns on social media kept spreading, labelling and targeting individuals in order to discourage them from raising their voices against injustice and impunity.

In this context, YIHR will keep focus on defending freedom and human rights, both by reacting against the glorification of war criminals, and by speaking out about the importance of dialogue between the societies of Serbia and Kosovo.



In Conversation With the Youth

1 How do we truly improve relations between Serbia and Kosovo?

In my humble opinion, the true path to improving Serbia-Kosovo relations is through open, honest, and sincere cooperation. With the recent historical events, it is evident that too much is left on the shoulders of the youth to reconcile and work on a joint future. Luckily, in that sense, the future looks bright for both sides, showing a promising climate among young people who are willing to learn, acknowledge and understand each other. Yet, this does not mean that achieving full integration and harmony is a short-term job. Moreover, we must work on concrete and long-range plans for the two peoples to live harmoniously. With concrete plans, I would not necessarily focus on the political aspects since, in most cases, they are the reasons why people have disputes and disagreements. Shifting the focus of improvement from the political to the social aspects of reconciliation is pivotal for the further development of relations. Under social aspects, the next steps would be aligning expectations – what do we expect from each other? Why do we expect it? And how do we create a beneficial outcome for all sides? A new, assertive networking plan for young people from both countries to get acquainted with each other – socially, culturally, and individually. All in all, the true path to the improvement of relations is understanding that we are in this together, no matter what side of the Ibar River.

Jana Žarković

2 Are you aware of some good examples of cultural regional cooperation programs in post-conflict regions that could be useful for the Western Balkans?

I participated in the MIRAI program, which gathered 23 young people from the Western Balkan region. Within this program, we visited Tokyo and Hiroshima, where we had an opportunity to learn about the peacebuilding and reconciliation processes. Japan, the country of the rising sun, was known for its rigorous militant system that took millions of lives during the Sino-Japanese wars. After WW2 and the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan turned to peace and dealing with the past. We had the opportunity to visit important landmarks such as the Peace Memorial Museum in Hiroshima, where, for a moment, we could feel the impact of the most important catastrophe known to man. Visiting Hiroshima, we saw what a reconciliation-oriented narrative towards the former warring countries looks like compared to an aggravation-oriented one. The attitude as the one Japan's institutions have towards the past is lacking in our region's countries. The program's goal was for the parti-

cipants to return home with gained knowledge and use it by implementing the action plan they worked on during the program. Reconciliation is a process, and the most important message we brought with us was 'Don't hate the enemy; hate war.' The Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO) implemented the program.

Anja Zloporubović

3 Why do you think democratic institutions in Serbia are important (if they still are)?

Unfortunately, it seems that democratic institutions are becoming less important for the citizens of Serbia. Society is becoming accustomed to the consistent political abuse of these institutions, which continuously support the current political elite instead of fulfilling their duty. In the last year, Serbian society has shown that it still can't manage to strengthen its democratic framework. Everyday political pressure on voters, corruption, violence towards nonconformists, control, and media censorship are all deeply rooted problems in Serbia that bring it closer to autocracy and farther

away from its democratic potential. Despite that, democratic institutions remain vital for me and my generation because they give us hope that things in this country can change. Freedom and equality for all can be built through these institutions only if they are stable and independent. In that way, a society of liberty with cultural and political plurality can stop being just a fiction for Serbian society.

Petar Đapić

4 **How do you see the attitude of our society towards the war in Ukraine and does it matter at all to young people?**

First and foremost, creating a space for open dialogue about the conflict and its causes is necessary. The education system, media, and civil society should work together to raise awareness of international solidarity and support peace. This includes providing accurate information, understanding the historical context of the conflict, and supporting initiatives fostering international law and human rights. Another critical aspect of healing the consequences of the war in Ukraine is the pro-

motion of a culture of diversity and tolerance. This includes organizing cultural events, exchanges, and workshops that connect people from Serbia and Ukraine and other countries affected by conflict. These activities can contribute to overcoming stereotypes, creating multicultural understanding, and building bridges between societies/people. Finally, Serbia can play a constructive role in regional and global politics, advocating for peace, stability and respect for international law. Through dialogue with its neighbors, active participation in international organizations, and promotion of diplomatic solutions, Serbia can support the efforts aimed at achieving lasting peace and reconciliation in Ukraine. Healing the consequences of the war in Ukraine demands joint effort of all the actors in society, including the government, civil society organizations, educational institutions, media and citizens. The contribution of every individual and community is important for creating an inclusive and tolerant society, which can actively support and help this process.

David Šujdović

They Said About Us

Olga Manojlović Pintar



Since its founding in 2003, the Youth Initiative for Human Rights stood out as one of the rare clearly defined organizations which have recognized the fight for the truth about the wars as a necessary precondition for the stabilization and regeneration of society.

YIHR has approached addressing economic and social challenges of contemporary society through the critical culture of memory, which it has also recognized as a focal point of its action. In that way, YIHR has established itself as a unique value and generational bridge, and an incubator for new ideas and political alternatives that have undermined the autocratic political culture.

Uncompromisingly fighting for the respect of the principle 'against impunity,' through a whole series of projects, YIHR has been empowering social groups and individuals who had knowledge, skills and courage, but lacked the possibility of broader connections. Supporting and designing projects that preserve the memory of the victims of wars, YIHR has connected academic communities, artists and art collectives and committed activist groups. YIHR has thus created a dense network that unite young people from distant parts of Serbia, but also strengthen new connections between the societies of Serbia, Kosovo, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro.

Pointing to contemporary manifestations of Ur-fascism and openly opposing them, YIHR has persisted in the fight for respect for the conquered, and the expansion and recognition of rights still denied to minority groups. Through numerous public activities, it has affirmed the ideals of social responsibility (ethical and ecological) and solidarity (moral and fighting), made the enemies and negators of human rights and falsifiers of the truth about wars visible, and thus grown into one of the most important civil society organizations in Serbia today.

Olga Manojlović Pintar





In the Spotlight

In 2022, YIHR released three publications, as well as recommendations with regard to commemorations related to the 1990s wars in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Montenegro. At the beginning of the year, YIHR issued a report titled [‘Commemorations of War Crimes in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Montenegro’](#) and [‘Handbook on Commemorative Practices in the Region and Attitudes Towards the 1990s War Crimes.’](#) The Handbook resulted from a need to review the existing commemorative culture in the countries in the region. It included practical recommendations for improving commemorative practices, intended in particular for politicians and representatives of institutions, as well as the decision-makers, with the aim of enhancing the reconciliation processes in the region.

Before the presidential and parliamentary elections in Serbia which took place on 3 April, YIHR analyzed and documented the connections between war criminals and the representatives of political parties. It also exa-

mined the supporting attitude of election candidates and parties towards the war crimes of the 1990s, and the presence of convicted war criminals in the public space. The report has shown that the war in Ukraine fueled public expression of nationalistic ideologies and attitudes. Glorification of convicted war criminals such as Ratko Mladić, Radovan Karadžić, Vladimir Lazarević, Vinko Pandurević and Veselin Šljivančanin marked the last year’s elections in Serbia. At the same time, the denial of war crimes, and of the Srebrenica genocide in particular, were key strategies to attract the voters. The report was released a week before the voting day to make the citizens of Serbia aware of the politics that revolve around denying the past and promoting war crimes and war criminals.

The persistent denial of the Srebrenica genocide moved to the streets when a mural dedicated to Ratko Mladić appeared on the corner of Njegoševa and Aleksa Nenadovića Street, and became a symbol of celebration



of the culture of war crimes. Following the installation of the mural, numerous graffiti and stencils dedicated to Mladić appeared on streets throughout Serbia. In response, YIHR launched a campaign inviting citizens to join in on mapping murals, graffiti, and symbols celebrating Ratko Mladić. During this campaign titled ‘Truths That Shouldn’t be Denied’, YIHR mapped more than 300 graffiti dedicated to Mladić, stressing that symbols, murals, and graffiti that celebrate war criminals should not have a place in the public sphere and that institutions should remove them.

Young activists from Serbia participated in creating the [‘Today is not July 11th’](#) video. The purpose of the action was to provoke a conversation about denied or avoided topics, showing that every day is a good day to find out what had happened in the wartime past, and fighting manipulated versions of history. Young participants talked about why, from their point of view, it was essential to remember the past and not consent to hatred. Peace is a process; youth is the primary bearer of the future in which conflicts are not a threat and war criminals are not heroes.

YIHR marked this year’s International Human Rights Day by symbolically renaming Brane Crnčevića Street in Belgrade, named after the promoter of Slobodan Milošević’s and Vojislav Šešelj’s war politics, into Ru-



žica Markobašić Street, after a citizen of Vukovar and pregnant mother of three who was killed by the forces of the Yugoslav People's Army and Vukovar Territorial Defense during the Ovčara massacre. YIHR submitted an initiative to formally rename this street with the intention to build a society respectful of and remembering war crime victims regardless of their ethnicity, especially women killed in the war.

In August, Serbian society was hit by the news about the rehabilitation of WW2 collaborationist Nikola Kalabić. This is the latest result of the relativization and collapse

of the antifascist heritage, which date back to the breakup of Yugoslavia. Knowing that the past and the picture we build of it influences our present and future, YIHR decided to respond by organizing The Week of ANTIFA Talks and calling young people to take part in a dialogue about collaborationist war crimes in Serbia during WW2, the role of feminism in peacebuilding and memory politics.

Following the developments in Ukraine and notable silence of our state officials regarding Russia's aggression, YIHR felt a need to deepen the public's understanding of the nature and consequences of the war in Ukraine. For this reason, YIHR decided to bring victims' perspective into the public space in Serbia by organizing photo exhibition 'Greetings from Ukraine', showcasing various aspects of the ongoing war. In addition to the exhibition, YIHR organized several events focusing on the safety of journalists in war, media reporting on the war in Ukraine in Serbia, the role of civil society in countering the pro-Russian narrative and stories of the Ukrainian refugees in Serbia.

In March, YIHR welcomed the War Childhood Museum exhibition, which included stories and exhibits from the War Childhood Museum in Sarajevo and is dedicated to children whose childhood was marked by war. The exhibition presented stories from Bosnia and Herze-

govina, Serbia, Croatia, and Kosovo, as well as those from Ukraine collected as part of the Museum's research activities. In Belgrade, the exhibition presented for the first time personal items and short video stories about children's experiences during the NATO bombing. This is the most popular exhibition YIHR organized, with more than thousand visitors in just one week, and is important because of our newfound collaboration with WCM, which YIHR is particularly proud of.

On 11 July, the day dedicated to the remembrance of the victims of the Srebrenica genocide, YIHR presented di-

gital project 'Life is What the Dead Dream Of' by artist and architect Mia David in front of the National Assembly building. The project aimed to conquer the digital space by encouraging artists to research and engage in artistic endeavors in the digital space. The attendees had the opportunity to step into extended reality in which the memory of victims is cherished, a place where no one can hurt them in any way. With the help of the app and filters on Instagram and Facebook, present citizens could see and hear the names and birthdays of the genocide victims presented on the building of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia.

Mia David, digitalno komemorativno
umetničko rešenje





YIHR in Numbers

11 programs

47
TV appearances

746
media mentions

7 street actions & gatherings

3
publications

7
exhibitions held

902
new followers on Instagram

592
new followers on Facebook

690
participants

2000+
Endžio HAB visitors

60
events at which YIHR presented its work

20
public reactions

36
meetings with stakeholders



Raising Our Voice to Advocate for the Future Youth Deserves

During 2022, YIHR demanded that the police, prosecutor's office, and the executive authorities proactively respond to the cases of human rights violations, glorification of war crimes, threats to peace and warmongering, the collapse of anti-fascism, and the trampling of the principles of secularism of the Republic of Serbia.

At the beginning of the year, YIHR fiercely condemned the aggression of the Russian Federation on Ukraine. As a region which passed through so many wars, we are aware of the severe consequences that wars have in society. As young people from the Western Balkans, we stood in solidarity with the people of Ukraine and the peace-demanding people of Russia, offering our support in passing through these difficult times. As an organization working on conflict transformation, accountability and dealing with the past, YIHR warned about the blatant violation of international law norms,

calling upon the immediate cease of all attacks and withdrawal of troops from the territory of Ukraine. YIHR promoted solidarity with the victims of the aggression and directed its advocacy efforts towards the public and the government to condemn the Russian invasion of Ukraine. By supporting anti-war protests in Belgrade and organizing a series of public events, YIHR sought to voice solidarity and present the facts about the war in Ukraine to the public in Serbia.

Fight for public space free of constant relativization of war crimes and glorification of war criminals continued. In that respect, YIHR called on the institutions and condemned their support of war criminals on numerous occasions, including when Dragoljub Ojdanić, convicted for crimes against humanity, promoted his book titled 'Directing a Humanitarian Disaster - Temporary Departure of Albanians from Kosovo and Metohija in

1999' in a public building. When Minister Aleksandar Vulin repeatedly called Albanians 'Shiptars,' thus insulting the dignity of the Albanian minority and Albanian people as a whole. And, of course, through the 'Truths That Shouldn't be Denied' campaign, by demonstrating how the government ignores thousands of murals and graffiti on the streets of Serbia, glorifying war criminal Ratko Mladić.

In February, YIHR filed misdemeanor charges against members of the 'Delije Sever' hooligan group, who were insulting coach and well-known water polo player Mirko Vičević on a national basis during a water polo match. Vičević soon resigned as Crvena Zvezda's coach, while YIHR filed misdemeanor charges for the disturbance of law and order and celebrating war crimes. The applications have not been prosecuted yet and the appeal was filed to the Constitutional Court.

In March, YIHR presented the findings of the 'Attitude towards War Crimes in the Election Campaign' report. YIHR issued 15 recommendations to the institutions in Serbia, including to investigate responsibility for the escape of convicted war criminal Rajko Kozlina. In July, YIHR reminded of the negligence of the City of Belgrade administration and called on new Mayor Šapić to initiate the removal of all hate graffiti and murals, starting with

the Ratko Mladić mural in Njegoševa Street. This call resulted in Mayor's denying the crimes and presenting Mladić as the defender of the Serbian people in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Mayor of Sarajevo Benjamina Karić [responded](#) by sending to her Belgrade counter-part court judgments containing facts about Mladić.

In June, YIHR condemned the event that occurred at the elementary school 'Vasa Stajić' in Novi Sad, where a nationalist and chauvinist song was played during the official end-of-school festivities, indicating the continuation of the trend of instrumentalization of children in the fight for 'the national cause' through school institutions, events and state ceremonies in which children participate. Soon after, the Ministry of Education responded by stating that this type of content should not have a place in schools and that the school in question would be subjected to inspection.

On 11 July, 27 years after the Srebrenica genocide, YIHR demanded that this day be declared a Day of Remembrance of the Srebrenica Genocide.

In September, YIHR stood up against the attacks on EuroPride, and condemned the authorities' decision to ban the EuroPride March which constitutes an unjustified limitation of the freedom of assembly.

From September to December 2022, YIHR called for calming tensions in relations between Serbia and Kosovo, and promoting a culture of dialogue and respect for the rights of national minorities both in Serbia and Kosovo.

In December, YIHR, together with the New Social Initiative, finalized the 'Analysis of obstacles for return of persons displaced during the war in Kosovo between 2017 and 2021' within its engagement in the National Convention on the European Union Working Group for Chapter 35. The analysis sought to identify and clarify primary barriers that prevented persons displaced following the armed conflict in 1998-1999 and the wave of ethnically motivated violence of March 2004 from returning to Kosovo over the past four years. The research addresses the fundamental issues faced by internally displaced persons in the Republic of Serbia due to poor integration, legal framework for the return of displaced persons to Kosovo, and obstacles in terms of security issues and difficulties in restitution. The analysis also contains the findings of international and local governmental and non-governmental organizations regarding the cases of the return of displaced persons to Kosovo, as well as a set of recommendations that can serve as guidelines for the sustainable return of displaced persons to Kosovo.

Throughout the year, with its regional network, YIHR continued to call on governments to create more substantial guarantees for the successful reconciliation process. Through bilateral and regional statements, YIHR stressed the importance of people's right to return to their homes, the establishment of non-repetition guarantees, more efficient prosecution of war crimes, prevention of ethnically motivated violence, and responsible public speech free from hatred. A better present and future can be created based on lessons learned, as well as based on cooperation and mutual respect.





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KURIR
Kajali do

INFORMER
Najveći
udar na
Srbiju!

KRIVOKAPNI I
BEČKI SREMA
UDARILI ŽE
GENOCIDNIH

AIO!
BRUKA
DOVEKA!

AIO!
DEDO SE
U GROBU
PREVICE

INFORMER
Srbija
Krivokapni

Impact Through Programs

Transitional Justice Program

For more than 19 years, YIHR has worked on remembrance and dealing with the past by engaging youth in the peacebuilding process. Remembrance is crucial for us and future generations not to forget war crimes of the past. It provides guarantees for non-recurrence while keeping the memory of victims alive.

Through its Transitional Justice Programs, YIHR creates a safe space for young people to critically understand the wars in Yugoslavia, and how discrimination and hate speech can lead to hate crimes.

Conference ‘Commemorations of the 1990s wars during 2021’

At the end of January 2022, YIHR presented the findings of the regional report and handbook on the commemoration of wars and war crimes in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Montenegro for the period of January – October 2021. These two publications resulted from the monitoring of commemorative practices dedicated to the 1990s wars that were organized by state institutions, victims’ associations and civil society organizations over the period of ten months.

In 2020, a shift in the joint commemoration of victims of the Operation Storm by Croatian and Serbian political leaders seemed to encourage commemorations in other countries in the region to move away from dominant ethnonationalism monopolies and self-victimization. During the presentation, Kaltrina Fejzullahu (YIHR Kosovo) and Marko Milosavljevic (YIHR Serbia) discussed how commemorative practices related to the violent break-up of Yugoslavia and war crimes looked in the previous year in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Montenegro.

Report ‘Attitude Towards War Crimes in the Election Campaign in 2022’

At the end of March 2022, YIHR published the report titled ‘Attitude Towards War Crimes in the Election Campaign in 2022.’ It has been noted in the Report that four war criminals were involved in political campaigning ahead of Serbia’s parliamentary and presidential elections of 3 April. Specifically, Vladimir Lazarević, Veselin Šljivančanin, and Nikola Šainović supported candidates from the Serbian Progressive Party or the Socialist Party of Serbia, the major parties in the governing coalition, while Serbian Radical Party leader Vojislav Šešelj stood for parliament himself, but also publicly supported Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić’s run for the second term in office.

Vladimir Lazarević, a retired general, commanded the Pristina Corps of the Yugoslav Army during the 1998-1999 Kosovo war and was sentenced to 14 years in prison by the Hague Tribunal for the murders, deportations and inhumane treatment of Kosovo Albanians. Veselin Šljivančanin, a former Yugoslav People’s Army officer, was sentenced by the Hague Tribunal to ten years in prison for aiding and abetting the torture of prisoners and for complicity in the murder of some 260 captives during the Croatian war. Nikola Šainović, the Yugoslav Deputy Prime Minister during the Kosovo war, was sen-

tenced to 18 years in prison for the murders, deportations and inhumane treatment of Kosovo Albanians in 1999. Vojislav Šešelj was sentenced to ten years for inciting war crimes against ethnic Croats in the village of Hrtkovci in Vojvodina in 1992.

According to the report, two other men convicted of war crimes, Dragan Vasiljković, alias Captain Dragan, and Vinko Pandurević, were also interviewed by mainstream media about the elections and criticized opposition presidential candidate Zdravko Ponoš, who was considered to be Vučić's most serious rival.

You can read the recommendations, as well as the main findings of the Report [here](#) in BHS.

Breaking the Chains of Patriarchy

On 12 October, YIHR opened the 'Breaking Free' exhibition at the Endžio HAB. The exhibition's original and most powerful idea is to make the audience aware of the existence of children who are a direct consequence of the war in the former Yugoslavia. These children include children born as a consequence of wartime rape, children of UN peacekeepers, and children of humanitarian workers with missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the war and post-war period. The exhibition is produced by the Forgotten



Children of War Association from Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Around 100 people attended the opening, including guests from the Women in Black network, participants of YIHR's workshops on sexual and gender-based violence, representatives of civil society organizations, embassies, and national human rights institutions.

‘Watch Out, Sniper’ Exhibition

YIHR partnered with several organizations to bring a multimedia exhibition of the Historical Museum from Sarajevo to Belgrade, symbolically marking the 30th anniversary of the beginning of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Author of the exhibition is Paul Lowe, an award-winning Sarajevo-based photographer. He used photography, 3-D models and witness testimonies to explore stories from Sarajevo’s ‘Sniper Alley’ during the 1992-1995 siege of the Bosnian capital.

As part of the exhibition, the artwork ‘Sniper’ by Belgrade-based artist Vladimir Miladinović went on show for the first time. It is based on a document from the Hague Tribunal’s archive on the sniper campaign of death, specifically the ballistics report presented as evidence at the trial against General of the Army of Republika Srpska (VRS) Dragomir Milošević. The report analyses the incidents during the siege of Sarajevo in 1994/1995 and civilian victims of sniper attacks.

Conference ‘Truths That Are Denied’

Through conferences such as ‘Truths That Are Denied’, YIHR created a platform for young people to learn about what happened during the disintegration of Yugoslavia. At the conference, participants discussed the challenges post-conflict societies face, stable peacebuilding,

Conference ‘Truths That Are Denied’



and reconciliation processes in the region. In addition, they discussed memorialization, regional cooperation, and the shrinking space for civil society.

The 'Truths That Are Denied' conference gathered 131 people and had four panels: "Images in our Heads and on the Walls", "Creating the Enemy: every day a new war", "Memorialization in the new social reality", and "Is there a shortcut to peace". Panel discussions focused on the role of media in the (de)construction of nationalistic narratives, civic involvement in building stable peace and democratization, new memorialization practices, and the possibilities of reaching a stable peace in the socio-political situation in which we live. The conference was also attended by 55 young people from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Kosovo.

At the opening, Program Director Sofija Todorović presented the results of the 'Truths that shouldn't be Denied' campaign, which mapped murals and graffiti of the convicted war criminal Ratko Mladić. 'More than 120 citizens sent photos of murals and graffiti with the image of Ratko Mladić. 60% of them are in Belgrade, and about 20% of the murals are on the walls of Serbia's public institutions,' said Todorović.

'Remembering the Srebrenica genocide' Training

Training 'Remembering the genocide in Srebrenica' was organized in mid-April in Srebrenica and gathered 15 young activists. During this training, participants had the opportunity to learn more about the domestic and international court judgments on the Srebrenica genocide and how memorialization practices could be expressed through art. Moreover, participants had the opportunity to visit the Srebrenica Memorial Center and learn more about oral history and storytelling as a tool for dealing with the past, as well as the Srebrenica genocide denial and how to respond to it.

At the Srebrenica Memorial Center, the participants visited the 'Footsteps of Those Who Did (Not) Cross' exhibition with the curator Azir Osmanović, which documents places where the refugees from the Srebrenica Safe Area attempted to hide or cross to the free territory, the majority of whom failed. Furthermore, the participants had the opportunity to talk with the photographer and founder of the Gallery 11/07/95, Tarik Samarah, about the role of art in remembrance.

Commemoration of Srebrenica Genocide

Every year, YIHR commemorates the victims of the Srebrenica genocide, and advocates that 11 July be declared a Day of Remembrance of the Srebrenica Genocide.

Considering that under the existing legal framework in Serbia it is not possible to build a monument dedicated to the victims of the Srebrenica genocide, YIHR decided to launch an open call for artists and encourage them think about creative ideas for the Srebrenica genocide commemoration. The winner was an architect, Mia David, with the idea to create a digital artwork named 'Life is What the Dead Dream Of'.

The day started in front of the National Assembly building, where Mia David's digital project was presented. The attendees had the opportunity to step into an extended reality in which the memory of the victims is cherished and a place where they are protected. This digital artwork represents a unique digital response to trends such as the denial of war crimes. The creative online solution directly contributes to preserving the truth about the Srebrenica genocide, placing this truth in a space where it cannot be denied or undermined by far-right and nationalistic forces. Further, it keeps the memory of the victims of the Srebrenica genocide while creating a new space to promote counter-narratives. The teaming of artists, the tech community and activists proved that there could be new ways to confront the growing trend of denial of war crimes and ethnic discrimination of victims.

YIHR continued the commemoration with the debate 'Recognition of Genocide and Official Marking of 11 July as a Pledge for Peace', where the attendees talked about irrefutable judicial facts, memory culture, the role of media in the promotion of denial, the importance of genocide recognition and critical review of the Serbian policy towards past events. The debate was moderated by the Founder of Humanitarian Law Center, Nataša Kandić, while the speakers were prominent lawyers, activists and researchers from Serbia.

Finally, the citizens of Belgrade were lighting candles in front of the Serbian Presidency Building thus paying respect to all the victims of the 1995 genocide.

Workshops on Wartime Sexual Violence

During a series of workshops on wartime sexual violence, YIHR hosted around 80 young people from different towns in Serbia. Throughout the workshops, the participants discussed the concepts of sex and gender, gender roles, violence, and, specifically, the definition of sexual violence in the wars of the '90s, the Foča case, the cases prosecuted before the Hague Tribunal, and how different countries in the region legally recognize this category of victims.

Drina Summer School

The Drina Summer School gathered 28 young activi-

sts from 13 different towns in Serbia who had little to no knowledge about dealing with the past and transitional justice processes. They were offered practical knowledge and space to understand the wars in Yugoslavia from a critical point of view. The program started from understanding the basics and a lecture on discrimination and 'others.' It continued with various lectures on transitional justice, how the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina started, ICTY judgments, and the role of media in denying the Srebrenica genocide. Furthermore, the Drina Summer School offered participants critical information on transitional justice, focusing on the Srebrenica genocide and its implications on the dealing with the past process in Serbia.

After the Drina Summer School, participants were engaged in a mentorship program with journalists Dinko Gruhonjić and Divna Prusac from the Independent Journalists Association of Vojvodina (IJAV). The articles that resulted from this process include [“Anti-war movements and anti-war actions during the dissolution of Yugoslavia”](#) by Bojana Radojević and [„Sexual Violence and rape during the war“](#) by Jelisaveta Perišić.

War Childhood Museum in Belgrade

In April, YIHR hosted the exhibition of the War Childhood Museum (WCM) from Sarajevo, which has been rese-



arching, educating and exhibiting personal stories and belongings of the people whose childhood and upbringing were or are still affected by an armed conflict.

Before the exhibition, YIHR and WCM invited people from Serbia whose childhood had been marked or affected by the war following the breakup of Yugoslavia, WW2 or any other armed conflict to share their memories and donate their personal items to be included in the WCM's collection of more than 5000 personal items and stories.

The exhibition was opened for the first time in Belgrade, at Endžio HAB, and it presented stories from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia, and Kosovo, as well as those from Ukraine that WCM collected as part of its research activities. Furthermore, for the first time, the exhibition presented items and short video stories about the experiences of children during the NATO bombing.

Ninth Edition of 'Mirëdita, dobar dan!' Festival

For the ninth edition of 'Mirëdita, dobar dan!', YIHR, Integra and Civic Initiatives brought together artists, cultural workers, and professionals from Kosovo, as well as young people from Kosovo and Serbia (including the Serb minority from Kosovo and the Albanian minority from Serbia). With its unique and uncompromising program, the festival once again conveyed the message that education and art are central to the continuous development and normalization of relations and therefore to the further development of democratic societies.

The 'Mirëdita, dobar dan!' festival's pre-opening event, a photo exhibition 'All Our Tears,' took place on 25 May in memory of the victims of wars in Yugoslavia, particularly ethnic Serbs, Albanians, and Macedonians. For the first time in Serbia, more than 170 people attended an event that brought together victims of both Serbian and Albanian ethnicity. Serbian daily newspaper 'Politka,' known

for its nationalistic stance, published a positive report about this event. With its non-divisive approach, the exhibition contributed to advancing mutual understanding at the collective and individual levels aiming to increase social development and cohesion. This exhibition was created in cooperation with associations of families of the missing and deceased from Serbia and Kosovo.

The festival's rich program consisted of 10 events, including the exhibition, a theatre play, a concert, debates, a book presentation, a discussion about memorialization and a DJ performance. More than 1000 people visited the festival. One of the most visible events at the festival was the screening of the highly acclaimed movie 'Hive,' which was held in the crowded Yugoslav Film Archive, making it the first time in five years that one of the festival's events was held in a public institution.

Two right-wing parties, 'Zavetnici' and the nationalist NADA coalition, urged the authorities to ban the festival, but the authorities remained silent. These messages are a clear sign that the promotion of inter-ethnic dialogue is more necessary today than ever before, particularly considering the dynamic of Kosovo-Serbia relations in the context of the ongoing war in Ukraine. The pre-opening exhibition and official opening ceremony at the Center for Cultural Decontamination were briefly

interrupted by a fake bomb report that came via email.

‘Mirëdita, dobar dan!’ brought together young people active in music, contemporary art, theatre, film, documentary, actors and actresses, young journalists, civil society activists, and other relevant actors in dialogue on contemporary issues faced by the region, promoting culture as a way of cooperation and learning about each other.

Public Call for Srebrenica Monument Initiatives – ‘Emptiness’

At the beginning of November, YIHR launched a public call for artists and cultural workers to apply with their ideas for the monument dedicated to the memory of the Srebrenica genocide in Serbia. The idea behind the call was to engage the art community in collective thinking about and examination of how monuments dedicated to the victims of the Srebrenica genocide can be erected in the country where such monuments are outlawed.

The selection committee chose four creative solutions, and the winner was a collaborative project ‘Forest.’ The idea of the call was to emphasize the need for memory that is not based on victims’ ethnicity, at the same time not neglecting the important aspect of political and legal responsibility. YIHR organized a public event where the winners had the opportunity to present their concepts to the audience.

Street Action Human Rights Day



Democratization Program

The Democratization Program seeks to empower young people to actively participate in social and political processes related to democracy building, while creating new spaces for developing progressive ideas, critical thinking, and media literacy.

YIHR finds the involvement of new generations and presence of their voices vital for enhancing democracy in Serbia. Employing different methods, this program seeks to contribute to building new generations aware of the importance of promoting non-violent culture and anti-fascist principles.

The program is created to strengthen institutions, increase the transparency and responsibility of their work, and introduce young people to the rule of law. Further, it promotes anti-fascism, multi perspective, and a culture of dialogue through the exchange of knowledge and experiences on a local, regional, and international level.

Escaping the Loop of Nationalism and Populism

YIHR, in partnership with the Crossborder Factory and International European Center from Nice (CIFE), with the support of the Franco-German Youth Office (OFAJ), organized the youth exchange program for young people from Western Balkans, Germany, and France. The exchange program ‘Escaping the Loop of Nationalism and Populism’ started in 2022 and lasted for one year. It consisted of three phases, in which participants from Europe and Western Balkans had the opportunity to discuss and reflect on the concepts of nationalism and populism in Serbia, Germany and France.

In Serbia, the participants visited the National Assembly, the Museum of Yugoslavia, and Insajder TV. During these visits and interactive workshops and lectures, they had the opportunity to discuss and reflect on the sociopolitical situation in Serbia. In Germany, the participants took part in a series of debates and discussions and explored the links between the street culture and politics in Berlin. They visited the ARD German TV studios, the Stasi Museum and the German Bundestag. They once again had the opportunity to break the logic of nationalism and populism, and question the state of free speech in the past and present.

One of the participants, Lenka Rabasović, said that the program helped her answer many questions: ‘It was of

utmost importance that we’ve learned not only what the reconciliation process outside our region looks like, but also how young people from EU countries look at the problems we face in the Balkans.’

The third phase of the program is expected to be held in 2023 in Nice, France.

Exhibition ‘Greetings from Ukraine’ and debate program about Russian Aggression

In cooperation with the Embassy of Ukraine to Serbia, YIHR provided space for photo exhibition ‘Greetings from Ukraine’ which is focused on the Russian aggression on Ukraine, that is, people and war events they have been facing since February 2022. In displayed photos, visitors could see, without censorship, how the citizens of Ukraine deal with the consequences of Russian invasion, as well as how their daily lives continue in spite of it.

Around 150 visitors and more than 30 diplomats attended the opening, while more than 500 people saw the exhibition from 24 July to 25 August, including refugees from Russia and Belarus.

In addition to the exhibition, four debates were organized in cooperation with ‘Novi optimizam.’ Panel discussion held in Dorćol Platz on 14 July, in the organization of



the Ukrainian Embassy and YIHR with support of Civic Initiatives, focused on the Russian influence in the media space in Serbia. The participants discussed how the war in Ukraine was presented in the Serbian mainstream media and, in connection with that, political silence of the Serbian authorities regarding the mass violations of human rights in Ukraine. One segment of the exhibition 'Greetings in Ukraine' was presented at the panel.

Panel discussion 'Brotherly Aggression,' organized by YIHR and 'Novi optimizam,' took place at Endžio Hab on 18 August. The discussion, opened by the Ambassador of Ukraine, Volodymyr Tolkach, focused on the war in Ukraine, the support from the civic society, and the ongoing refugee crisis. One of the questions raised was how to encourage Serbian civil society to take action, actively express their support for Ukraine, and push Serbian leadership to change its position. Special video filmed in Novi Sad and Belgrade was screened on this occasion.

The official closing of the exhibition and a fundraising event were held on 24 August, the Independence Day of Ukraine. The fundraising event gave visitors an opportunity not only to make a donation, but also to experience a bit of the Ukrainian culture and tradition. All funds raised were donated to Ukrainian children. Panelists at the closing event were Ukrainian Ambassador Vo-

Iodymyr Tolkach, US Ambassador Christopher Hill, and Nemanja Starović from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. At that time, YIHR was coordinating Europride volunteers and thus YIHR activists, Belgrade Pride participants and volunteers all had the opportunity to take part in a guided tour of the exhibition.

The Week of ANTIFA Talks

In response to the relativization and destruction of the anti-fascist legacy in Serbia, YIHR organized, on 22-26 August, the Week of ANTIFA Talks. The Week of ANTIFA Talks was inspired by the judgment on the rehabilitation of collaborationist Nikola Kalabić, rendered by the Valjevo court in August.

During the Week of ANTIFA talks, around 50 students and young activists had the opportunity to discuss the role of feminism in peacebuilding, anti-war moments, memory culture, historical revisionism and political rehabilitation of the quisling forces in Serbia, through three panels with activist Marija Ratković, and historians Olga Manojlović Pinatar and Jelena Đureinović.

Participants concluded that the Week of ANTIFA Talks was important because it opened up some topics usually not discussed in schools. They also pointed out that, in order to build a stable peace, we must learn

about and remember our anti-fascist values.

Street Actions

Anniversary of the Siege of Sarajevo in Belgrade

On the 30th anniversary of the Sarajevo siege, YIHR activists went out to the streets to talk with people and gather messages of support for the citizens of Sarajevo. These messages show that despite the denial of crimes and propaganda regarding the impossibility of cooperation, an unbreakable bond between Belgrade and Sarajevo is still there.

'I am too young to remember but determined to go to Sarajevo with love and will to listen. Sending love from Belgrade.'

Human Rights Day

YIHR marked this year's International Human Rights Day by symbolically renaming Brane Crnčevića Street in Belgrade, named after the promoter of Slobodan Milošević's and Vojislav Šešelj's war politics, into Ružica Markobašić Street, after a citizen of Vukovar and pregnant mother of three who was killed by the forces of the Yugoslav People's Army and Vukovar Territorial

Defense during the Ovčara massacre. YIHR submitted an initiative to formally rename this street with the intention to build a society respectful of and remembering war crime victims regardless of their ethnicity, especially women killed in the war.

International Day of Democracy

Two days before the EuroPride March in Belgrade, YIHR marked the International Day of Democracy. In light of the tensions before the EuroPride March, YIHR activists talked with people on the street about the everyday problems of the LGBTQ+ population. The action has shown that citizens of Serbia and the LGBTI+ community share struggles and difficulties, regardless of their sexual orientation or diverse sexual identities.

Podgorica Youth Summit

Under the slogan 'Don't stay silent!', the Podgorica Youth Summit, held on 12-14 May, brought together more than 145 pro-democratic young people, and representatives of civil society, regional actors, and international community to promote cooperation and solidarity through the exchange of knowledge and experience. The Summit lasted for three days and included panel discussions, workshops, and events that resulted in policy recommendations and plans for future cooperation. This year's Summit colors were yellow and blue as a symbolic expression of

solidarity with those affected by the war in Ukraine.

The Summit consisted of three panels that aimed at critically discussing the process of accession of the Western Balkan countries to the EU, as well as at examining the existing capacities of civil society, and dominant practices in dealing with the emerging challenges of democracy. The panelists encouraged youth to consider current and prospective role(s) of civil society in their respective countries.

One of the direct outcomes of the Summit was '[Recipe Book - Key Ingredients for Change](#),' a publication resulting from the joint work of youth across the region.

'YIHR Alumni Network Reunion – Kosovo and Serbia'

Following a good practice of expanding the coalition of CSOs dealing with Kosovo-Serbia relations through arts, education, and dialogue, YIHR partnered with the Peaceful Change Initiative to bring youth from outside of the capitals of Kosovo and Serbia to attend 'Mirëdita, dobar dan' festival, while participating in a carefully tailored educational program aimed at creating ties and deepening understanding among them. YIHR continued to enhance the existing partnerships and collaborated with other civil society organizations such

as Civic Initiatives, Integra NGO and forumZFD Serbia on several festival events.

Over three working days, participants gained knowledge, and a range of skills and tools for active participation in peacebuilding and reconciliation processes, but also worked on an action plan for the YIHR Alumni Network.

Kosovo-Serbia Youth Program ‘We Matter’

The “We Matter” youth exchange program was carried out in December and consisted of three segments: identity, truths, and peacebuilding. It gave the opportunity to young people from Kosovo and Serbia to learn about basic principles of a democratic society, means of information, reconciliation, conflict prevention, and non-violent communication, all through interactive workshops, lectures, visits, and research, as well as through an honest and open conversation about themselves, society and dominant policies.

In spite of political tensions, disagreements, propaganda, mutual accusations, and the absence of an essential debate on unity and peace which mark relations between Serbia and Kosovo, and although faced with challenges in terms of the blockades in North Kosovo, tensions, and safety issues, YIHR managed to gather 32 participants from Kosovo and Serbia in this program.

Kosovo-Serbia Youth Program ‘We Matter’



Human Rights Program

Through the Human Rights Program, YIHR promotes and advocates respect for the highest human rights standards in Serbia by educating young people, improving protection mechanisms, and supporting vulnerable groups and individuals, while reporting on the violations of human rights and freedoms. The program mainly focuses on human rights protection through case management, including the right to freedom of expression, assembly and association, fair trial, and fight against discrimination and violence.

EuroPride 2022

As an organization that has tirelessly participated in the planning of the Belgrade Pride for last nine years, YIHR proudly stands with the LGBTIQ+ community in Serbia in their fight for equality and love. In 2022, Belgrade hosted the biggest Pride in Europe - EuroPride, which has highlighted challenges faced by the LGBTIQ+ community in traditional and patriarchal Serbian society.

YIHR worked with brave young volunteers through several stages for months before the Pride Week started. Out of the record number of 300 applications, YIHR chose 100 volunteers to work with, including through their education at EuroPride Academy, where they had the opportunity to listen to experts in the fields of human rights, LGBTIQ+ rights, digital security, and violence and learn about history of the LGBTIQ+ movement in Serbia, as well as history of the anti-war movement in Serbia, which is closely linked to the LGBTIQ+ struggle. The aim of educative segment of volunteering was for them to learn more about certain topics and be inspired to get involved in activism and take the initiative for issues and struggles important to them.

Through regular meetings in July, August, and September, YIHR maintained contact, socialized, and di-

vided into teams for the Pride Week and Pride March. The Pride Week officially kicked off on 12 September, and through nearly 100 events over the next seven days, our volunteers and team worked hard to make the whole week go as smoothly as possible.

Although formally banned, the EuroPride march on 17 September occurred thanks to the fight of LGBTIQ+ activists, human rights defenders, and our volunteers. In spite of intensive months-long media and political campaign against the EuroPride and growing physical and verbal violence against the LGBTIQ+ community, solidarity among activists was crucial: 45 civil society organizations from Serbia, at the initiative of YIHR, [signed a letter of support for EuroPride.](#)

The fight for LGBTIQ+ rights, which has been going on for almost 30 years, has never been easy, and the events surrounding the EuroPride once again showed that we could not take our rights for granted. The fight must continue even when facing the most significant challenges.

Minority Rights in Youth Work

YIHR conducted its first Erasmus+ training for activists and trainers on minority rights in youth work. Young people from all over the Western Balkans discussed

about minority rights, and the status of youth workers in their countries and, most importantly, what can be done to support and help minority youth.

The participants had the opportunity to listen to professionals in the field of minority rights, such as Bogdan Banjac from the Office of the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality. Together they discussed the institution's goals, mission, and procedures for supporting minority rights in Serbia. They also had the opportunity to talk about the Office's cooperation with other organizations and the types of discrimination in focus of their work. The participants also had the opportunity to hear Marin Pijuković from the Serbian Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue. He talked about the goals of the Ministry and its actions in promoting minority rights.





THEY HATE
US BECAUSE
WE SMELL LIKE
LOVE





Endzio Hab: The space where we conversation starts

'In the pursuit of truth, art and activism are powerful allies'

—Emily Wilcox

Endzio Hab is at the heart of the Youth Initiative for Human Rights. It serves as an outlet for educating the public and advancing the peaceful coexistence of numerous countries. Holding exhibitions always attract significant attention and leads to active participation from embassies and various CSOs.

Events are held in cooperation with local partners, creating additional space for close collaboration in similar activities for the future.

With more than 3000 visitors in 2022, YIHR's Endzio Hab became fully functional and was recognized as one of the most influential spaces in Belgrade, located in the city center. More than 25 different events (trainings, exhibitions, lectures, workshops, presentations, movie screenings, etc.) took place in Endzio Hab, tackling various questions related to war crimes and war crime trials, discrimination, women's rights, LGBTQ+ rights, anti-war protests in Serbia during the '90s, the role of Serbia in the conflicts, victims' perspective, countering right-wing propaganda and narratives, the role of media, etc. Endzio Hab allowed YIHR more freedom in its work, especially when dealing with complex topics, by hosting events that otherwise could not be organized in Serbia purely due to a lack of venues that would approve of such contents.



Kings & Queens, 2022



- ← Sexual Violence Workshop
- ↔ Exhibition Greeting from Ukraine
- ↓ Dr Orli Fridman book promotion



Belgrade, June 2023

