

TRIAL submits six applications against Bosnia and Herzegovina to the European Court of Human Rights

Geneva, 8 October 2008. In late September, the Swiss Association against Impunity (**TRIAL** – Track Impunity Always) lodged six cases before the European Court of Human Rights. The cases concern a massacre that took place on 21 August 1992 at Mount Vlašić, in which around 200 civilians were killed.

Earlier that day, many civilians were evacuated from the Trnopolje concentration camp, in northwest Bosnia and Herzegovina, in order to be released in the Bosniak controlled part of the country.

On the way, more than 200 men were separated from the rest of the convoy, which continued towards its initial destination, and were ordered to get on two buses. The passengers were taken to a place called Korićanske Stijene, on Mount Vlašić, in central Bosnia. After getting off the buses, the captives were commanded to kneel down at the edge of a cliff. Serbian police forces then fired at them. Only twelve persons survived the massacre. The site of the crime was soon after cleared and the bodies of the victims or of potential survivors disappeared, and are still missing to this day.

The families of eight men that disappeared in the aftermath of this tragic event asked the Advocacy Center – TRIAL (ACT) to bring their case to the European Court of Human Rights, the highest European jurisdiction in human rights matters.

Relatives of Edin and Emir Elezović, Fahrudin Mujkanović, Šerif and Zafir Bajrić, Zijad Huskanović, Fahrudin Elezović and Asmir Memić complain that the national and local authorities have not undertaken any serious investigation to locate the bodies of the victims, never informed them of the steps taken to shed light on the massacre, and have not started criminal proceedings against the authors of this terrible crime. The only person that was convicted for these facts is [Darko Mrdja](#), who was prosecuted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, and not by Bosnian authorities.



Edin Elezović

Emir Elezović

Fahrudin
Mujkanović

Šerif Bajrić

Zafir Bajrić

Zijad
Huskanović

Fahrudin
Elezović

Asmir Memić

After arguing their case before the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the families of the victims are convinced that local authorities, especially those of the Republika Srpska, have no intent whatsoever to help them find their missing relatives.

The proceedings were initiated with the assistance of the association Izvor, located in Prijedor, with which the ACT has been working for several months.

Context

The massacre at Mount Vlašić occurred within the framework of an ethnic cleansing campaign led by the armed forces and police of the Republika Srpska, following the dismantling of Yugoslavia.

It is estimated that between 100'000 and 200'000 persons died as a consequence of the conflict. Half of the 25'000 persons reported as missing in the aftermath of the war were found in various mass graves and identified. Approximately 13'000 persons are still missing.

Only one person – Darko Mrdja – was convicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in relation to the massacre of Korićanske Stijene. In May 2008, Bosnian authorities announced that four other persons could be prosecuted by domestic courts for this crime. But to this day, the families of victims still have not received any information about the fate of their relatives.

The ACT

The ACT opened its doors in the autumn of 2007. To this day, the ACT has lodged nine complaints against [Algeria](#) and three against [Libya](#) with the United Nations Human Rights Committee and Committee against Torture.

The six cases that the ACT has just brought before the European Court of Human Rights are the first cases concerning Bosnia and Herzegovina dealt with by the ACT. Other cases are in preparation and should soon be submitted to the Court in Strasbourg.

For more information:

- Philip Grant, director of the ACT, 076 455 21 21
- <http://www.trial-ch.org/en/caj>