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SREBRENICA MASSACRE MEMORIAL QUILT TO BE LAUNCHED IN ST LOUIS

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St. Louis, July 8, 2007: The Bosnian community in St. Louis will today publicly unveil a hand-woven quilt in memory of more than 8,000 men and boys who were killed in the notorious Srebrenica massacre, on July 11, 1995, in the final stages of the Bosnian war.

The quilt measures around two square meters and comprises 20 panels, each of which carries the name of a massacre victim. The panels were hand-woven by five women relatives of the 20 victims, who work at Bosfam, a women's organization in the Bosnian town of Tuzla.

The quilt will be presented at a religious ceremony on Sunday afternoon at the Bosnian Islamic Center in southern St. Louis, which has the largest population of Bosnians in the United States. The quilt will also be displayed later on Sunday at a reception.

Sunday's events in St Louis are being coordinated by the Association for the Survivors of Genocide in Srebrenica, a group of Bosnian expatriates who were all directly affected by the massacre. Next Wednesday, thousands of Bosnians are expected to gather at the site of the massacre in Bosnia itself, to mark the twelfth anniversary and rebury the bodies of 460 massacre victims who have been identified during the past year. Among those attending will be several residents of St. Louis who themselves lost relatives.

Srebrenica is the largest mass killing to have taken place on European soil since the end of World War 2. The town was besieged by the Bosnian Serbs for three years before finally falling on July 11, 1995. All men and boys over the age of 15 were separated from the women, and taken off to be killed in a series of massacres. The women and children were bussed to territory held by the Bosnian Muslims.

Memories of the massacre are still vivid for the Bosnian community in St Louis, most of whom came to the US as refugees. Nihad Sinanovic was 11 when he managed to leave Srebrenica in 1993, at the height of the Bosnian siege. His father, Resid, was among thousands of Bosnians who set off through the woods in July 1995 in an attempt to reach safety, only to be captured and killed.

"Every year it's the same," said Mr. Sinanovic, who today runs a business in St. Louis. "We meet and ask the same questions. What actually happened? How come the killers are still free? It's impossible to put it to rest and move on."

At the suggestion of the Bosfam weavers in Bosnia, anyone who lost a relative in the massacre will be invited to commission a new panel, to be added to the quilt. The weavers hope that the quilt will grow in size as it moves around Bosnian communities in North America, keeping the memory of the massacre alive and mobilizing support among the diaspora for the reconstruction of Eastern Bosnia.

Survivors of the massacre are also calling for the arrest of Radovan Karadzic and General Ratko Mladic, the two former Bosnian Serb leaders most responsible for the massacre. Both men have been indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal in The Hague, but remain at large – 12 years after the massacre.

A new petition calling for the arrest of Karadzic and Mladic has been drawn up by several nongovernmental organizations, including the Congress of North American Bosniaks which lobbies the US-government in Washington on behalf of grassroots advocates like the St. Louis survivors.

Nihad Sinanovic is one of those who will appeal for signatures on Sunday in St. Louis. He will ask his audience to “Help heal the wounds of the many relatives who lost their loved ones. Help us bring the perpetrators to justice and bring closure to the families.”

- The Memorial Quilt project is being managed in North America on behalf of the Bosfam weavers by the [Advocacy Project](#), a Washington-based organization that recruits graduate students in the US to volunteer with community-based groups around the world. Alison Morse (Tufts University) is currently volunteering with Bosfam and will be attending the Srebrenica memorial ceremony in Bosnia on July 11. Contact: Iain Guest: iain@advocacynet.org.