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AdvocacyNet  
News Bulletin 119

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## SREBRENICA MEMORIAL QUILT UNITES MASSACRE SURVIVORS IN BOSNIA AND AMERICA, JULY 10, 2007

July 10, 2007, St. Louis, United States: Survivors of the 1995 Srebrenica massacre in Bosnia and the United States have joined forces to launch a large, hand-woven quilt in memory of more than 8,000 men and boys who were killed in the massacre.

The quilt was unveiled in public for the first time on Sunday at a religious ceremony in St. Louis, which is home to more than 45,000 Bosnian refugees, including around 5,000 former inhabitants of Srebrenica. Men, women and children paused in silence at the quilt, and many laid flowers.

The quilt measures around two square meters and comprises 20 panels, each carrying the name of a massacre victim. The panels were hand-woven by five women weavers from Bosfam, a women's organization in Bosnia that brings together women who lost relatives in the massacre. One weaver, Nura Suljic, lost her brother, brother-in-law, father-in-law and cousin in the massacre. Her husband is also missing.

The Bosfam weavers are using the quilt to reach out to the large, Bosnian diaspora in the US, in the hope of keeping the message of Srebrenica alive. They have also offered to make new panels for any Bosnian family that lost a relative in the massacre. This way, they hope that the quilt can move around diaspora communities outside Bosnia, growing in size and generating publicity.

"It's a great idea," said Rusmin Topalovic, vice president of the Association for the Survivors of Genocide in Srebrenica, a community group in St. Louis. "I'm sure plenty of relatives will want to commission panels."

The quilt was brought to St. Louis on behalf of Bosfam by The Advocacy Project (AP), which has supported Bosfam's advocacy since 2002. Alison Morse, a graduate student at Tufts University is volunteering with Bosfam this summer as an AP Peace Fellow and is helping Bosfam to manage the quilt.

Meanwhile, in Bosnia itself, thousands of Srebrenica relatives and survivors will gather tomorrow at the site of the massacre to mark the 12th anniversary and reburial of around 460 massacre victims who have been identified during the past year. Among those attending will be the Bosfam weavers and several families from St. Louis who lost relatives.

Srebrenica is the largest mass killing to have taken place on European soil since the end of World War II. 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. The women and children were bussed to territory held by Bosnian Muslims.

Memories of Srebrenica remain vivid for many of the survivors in St. Louis. Nihad Sinanovic was 11 when he escaped the town in 1993, at the height of the Bosnian siege. His father, Resid, was among thousands 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 successful 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."

Also on Sunday, at a reception in St. Louis, 210 Bosnian refugees signed a new petition calling for the arrest of Radovan Karadzic and General Ratko Mladic, the two former Bosnian Serb leaders held most responsible for the massacre. Both men have been indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal in The Hague, but remain at large.

The arrest petition has been drawn up by the Center for Balkan Development, and co-signed by The Advocacy Project, Physicians for Human Rights, the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, and the Congress of North American Bosniaks, which lobbies from Washington on behalf of grassroots advocates like the St. Louis survivors.

Nihad Sinanovic was one of those who appealed for signatures on Sunday in St. Louis. "Help us 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," he said, to loud applause.

- Read [media coverage](#) of the quilt launch in St. Louis.
- See [background on the quilt project](#), including a map of those commemorated and profiles of the weavers.
- Read [Alison Morse's blog](#).