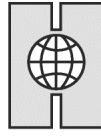


# Forum for International Criminal Justice and Conflict



International Peace Research Institute, Oslo  
Institutt for fredsforskning



DEN NORSKE  
HELINGSFORSKOMITÉ



UNIVERSITY  
OF OSLO

Norwegian Centre for Human Rights

## **Knowing the number of dead and missing persons in armed conflict, with particular emphasis on the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina**

An international seminar organized in the series of the

Forum for International Criminal Justice and Conflict<sup>1</sup>

by the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights (University of Oslo),  
the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO) and the Norwegian Helsinki Committee.

*Monday 2 June 2008 13:15 – 15:30*

*Norwegian Centre for Human Rights, Domus Nova, St. Olavs plass 5, 0165 Oslo, room 571 (5th floor)*

Factual propositions on the number of persons killed or missing in armed conflicts can often play an important role in the political rhetoric of war and peace-making. The ‘numbers’ game’ was played by several actors in the armed conflicts in the former Yugoslavia 1992-95. Numbers were used both to encourage international military intervention in the conflicts and to create an impression that the parties were committing crimes against humanity and war crimes in equal measure. Knowing the number of dead and missing persons became particularly important in Bosnia and Herzegovina where a significant part of the relatives of victims resided – their voice became a factor in Bosnian politics.

The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been the main sponsor of the Research and Documentation Centre of Bosnia and Herzegovina, founded and led by Mirsad Tokača with the overall aim of developing more reliable information on the number of dead and missing persons in the conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The database developed by the Centre has become a main source of factual information on the victimisation caused by the conflicts there in the 1990s.

At the international level the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) has had to deal with propositions on the number of persons victimised by the conflicts in ex-Yugoslavia in many of its cases. The substantial analytical capacity developed by the ICTY Office of the Prosecutor – with more than 50 analysts – includes a specialised unit of demographic and statistical analysis. This expertise was largely built up by Dr. Helge Brunborg of Statistics Norway, assisted among others by Dr. Henrik Urdal of PRIO. They had to create a constructive co-existence between criminal investigators and lawyers concerned with numerical facts as proof of legal requirements linked to charges, on the one hand, and established scientific methodology, on the other.

This seminar will consider different aspects of the problem of the quality of knowledge on the number of dead and missing persons in armed conflicts. What are the limitations in the accuracy and reliability of such knowledge? What are the main problems encountered in constructing such knowledge? How can databases and scientific analysis of the number of dead and missing persons in conflicts assist criminal justice processes? How can the mapping of victimisation caused by armed conflict contribute to transitional justice processes? These are among the questions which will be addressed by the speakers Mirsad Tokača, Dr. Helge Brunborg, Dr. Henrik Urdal, Ilia Utmelidze and Gunnar M. Ekeløve-Slydal.

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<sup>1</sup> A debate forum open to individuals interested in issues concerning international criminal justice and conflict, started and coordinated as an initiative under the ENI Programme of PRIO (by its Senior Researcher Morten Bergsmo, in consultation with PRIO Researcher Nobuo Hayashi and Dr. Jo Stigen, Department of Public and International Law, University of Oslo). The Forum aims to identify and facilitate debate on key issues in international criminal justice and conflict, including accountability-related measures other than criminal justice, and to bring together practitioners, government officials, NGO representatives, academics, students and others with an interest in this emerging field of practice and research. Information about the Forum can be found at [www.prio.no/ficjc/](http://www.prio.no/ficjc/).

## Programme:

- 13:15 *Welcome and introduction*, by Christian Ranheim<sup>2</sup>
- 13:20 *The work of the Research and Documentation Centre of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, by Mirsad Tokača<sup>3</sup>
- 14:00 *The quality of knowledge on dead and missing persons in the fact-finding and -analysis of the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia*, by Dr. Helge Brunborg<sup>4</sup>
- 14:30 *Some remarks on the conduct of academic research on mortality in armed conflict*, by Dr. Henrik Urdal<sup>5</sup>
- 14:40 *The role of documentation and research on criminal victimation – in particular unlawful killings and disappearances – in transitional justice*, by Ilija Utmelidze<sup>6</sup>
- 15:00 *Discussion and concluding remarks*, by Gunnar M. Ekeløve-Slydal<sup>7</sup>

## Registration:

To register, please send an e-mail message to Marit Vik at [marit.vik@nchr.uio.no](mailto:marit.vik@nchr.uio.no) prior to Monday 2 June 2008 at 10:00.

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<sup>2</sup> **Christian Ranheim**, Director of the ICC Legal Tools Programme at the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights (2006-); Legal Adviser at the Indonesia Programme, NCHR (2003-2006); Head of District Office, Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (2002-03); Co-founder and Director of the Judicial System Monitoring Programme in East Timor (2001-02); Protection Officer, UNHCR, Sarajevo (2000).

<sup>3</sup> **Mirsad Tokača** is Founder and President of the Research and Documentation Center, heading the organization from its establishment in 2004. Prior to that, he served for more than a decade as General Secretary of the State Commission for Gathering Facts on War Crimes. He served as an expert witness before the ICTY. As an independent member of the BiH delegation, Mr. Tokača attended the sessions of the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva in 1996 and 1997. He is also a member of the scholars' initiative of Purdue University (USA) which deals with the problem of the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia.

<sup>4</sup> **Dr. Helge Brunborg** holds a Ph.D. in Economics/Demography from the University of Michigan. He is Senior Researcher at Statistics Norway since 1974. He served as special investigative analyst at the ICTY Office of the Prosecutor 1997-8 and later as a Consultant to that Office, serving, *inter alia*, as an expert witness in the Milošević, Krstić and Blagojević trials. He has advised the development of national census systems in Afghanistan and Albania. He chairs a working group on the demography of armed conflict of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population. He has published extensively in the field.

<sup>5</sup> **Dr. Henrik Urdal**, Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Oslo (2007); Senior Researcher at the Centre for the Study of Civil War (CSCW), the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO) (2006- ); Associate Editor of the *Journal of Peace Research*. He has previously worked as Investigations Assistant for the UN International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (1999). Publications in *International Studies Quarterly*, *Journal of Peace Research*, *Political Geography*, *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (forthcoming), and *European Journal of Population*. He was co-editor of a special issue of the *Journal of Peace Research* on 'The Demography of Conflict and Violence' (2005), and of an edited volume on 'The Demography of Armed Conflict' (Springer, 2006). Current main interest: demography and domestic armed conflict.

<sup>6</sup> **Ilija Utmelidze**, Legal Adviser in the Human Rights Department of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, advising on institution-building in areas such as domestic war crimes prosecution mechanisms (including the development of a national strategy for war crimes prosecution), specialised investigative commissions for Srebrenica and Sarajevo, establishment of a single state-level ombudsman institution (2004-); Norwegian Refugee Council, Azerbaijan: capacity building of local NGOs in the field of human rights protection and advocacy; consultant on development of human rights education and peace programs within the educational system of Azerbaijan (2001-04); Norwegian Centre for Human Rights: minority policy and law research project (2000-01).

<sup>7</sup> **Gunnar M. Ekeløve-Slydal** is Deputy Secretary-General of the Norwegian Helsinki Committee. A philosopher by education, he had been a leader of the Norwegian human rights community since the early 1990s. He has extensive international experience and has worked on international criminal justice issues for almost ten years.