

Families honor the dead of Sebrenica  
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**Silent grief** A woman at her son's coffin, one of 775 buried Sunday in a suburb of Srebrenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in a ceremony for the 15th anniversary of the massacre of thousands of Bosnian men and boys after Serb forces overran the area on July 11, 1995. President Boris Tadic of Serbia was among those at the commemoration. MARKO DROBNJAKOVIC/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS PAGE 3



A Bosnian woman mourned Sunday over the newly dug graves of her two sons before a burial ceremony at the Potocari memorial cemetery near Srebrenica.

## Families honor the dead of Srebrenica

SREBRENICA,  
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

On the 15th anniversary of the massacre, Bosnia lays 775 victims to rest

BY RADUL RADOVANOVIC  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Hoisting hundreds of coffins aloft, a line of weeping relatives honored victims of the Srebrenica massacre on Sunday, the 15th anniversary of the worst atrocity in Europe since World War II.

A whole hillside in the eastern Bosnian town was dug out with graves, waiting for 775 coffins covered in green cloths to be laid to rest at the biggest Srebrenica funeral so far.

Still, that was less than a tenth of the total number of Muslim men and boys executed after Serb forces overran the U.N.-protected town on July 11, 1995, during the 1992-95 Bosnian war.

"I grew up without a father and I don't even remember him," said Hajro Ibrahimovic, who is 16.

When the procession reached the hill, some 60,000 people splintered into rivulets as relatives sought the exact grave for their loved ones. The sound of dirt

pounding against the coffins' wooden lids echoed over the valley, as two announcers, one male and one female, solemnly read out the names of the victims being buried. That took 64 minutes.

On that fateful day in 1995, some 30,000 Bosnian Muslims had flocked to the U.N. military base in the town's suburb of Potocari for refuge. But when Serb forces came, they forced outnumbered Dutch peacekeepers to open the gates.

The Serbs then separated out the Muslim men and boys, putting them on trucks and carting them away, the vast majority never to be seen again. The Dutch peacekeepers lived.

The Srebrenica memorial center now stands across the road from that former U.N. base. Fifteen years later, no one represented the United Nations at the ceremony. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon planned to reaffirm the United Nations' sorrow over what took place in Srebrenica at a commemorative event Monday, a spokesman said.

The youngest victim buried Sunday was 14, the oldest 78, joining nearly 4,000 already buried at the memorial center. All the bodies had been excavated from mass graves and identified through DNA tests. An additional 1,844 victims have been identified, but their skeletons consist only of a few bones and relatives are refusing to bury them before more

fragments are found.

Several months after the massacre, Serb troops excavated the original mass graves with bulldozers and moved victims to other locations in a futile effort to conceal the evidence of war crimes. As the machines plowed up bodies, they ripped them apart and fragments of the same person can be scattered among several sites.

Before the funeral, Muslim prayers and weeping mixed with the speeches of dignitaries condemning the crimes and calling for the perpetrators to be punished — something victims' families noted would not change the suffering they had endured.

Ahmet Cesko, 58, managed to evade being killed at Srebrenica by fleeing to government territory through the woods amid a manhunt by Serb troops. He came to pay his respect to comrades who did not survive the dangerous five-day hike.

Serb ambushes were set mainly next to creeks, he recalled, "like when you hunt animals, you wait next to water holes."

"Some of those I saw lying by the water I now see in coffins," he said.

President Boris Tadic of Serbia was the first dignitary to arrive Sunday, saying he was coming in an "act of reconciliation." Some in the crowd yelled "Bravo, Boris!" while others asked "Where is

Mladic?" — a reference to the former Bosnian Serb military commander, Ratko Mladic, who led the Serb troops into Srebrenica.

"I wish to welcome you, we are receiving you in peace," Kada Hotic, a representative of the Srebrenica widows, told Mr. Tadic while he held her hands.

Mr. Mladic and the former Bosnian Serb president, Radovan Karadzic, were charged with genocide over the Srebrenica massacre by the U.N. war crimes tribunal in 1995. Mr. Karadzic is now on trial at the tribunal in The Hague, while Mr. Mladic is a fugitive.

Mr. Tadic said he "will do everything" to apprehend all war crimes suspects in Serbia.

Other guests included Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey, President Danilo Tuerk of Slovenia and President Filip Vujanovic of Montenegro.

Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner of France and representatives of the European Union also attended. The U.S. ambassador to Bosnia, Charles English, read a message from President Barack Obama urging "governments to redouble their efforts" and arrest those responsible for the crimes at Srebrenica.

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