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Fond za humanitarno pravo Kosovo  
Humanitarian Law Center Kosovo



GRADICË/GRADICA

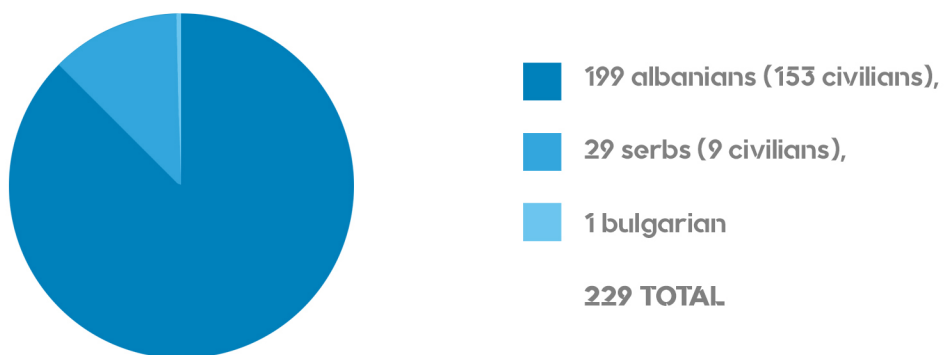
UNFINISHED WELL



## UNFINISHED WELL

### GRADICË/GRADICA

The war in Kosovo officially started in the Municipality of Glogoc/Glogovac, following the February 28, 1998 attacks in the villages of Likoshan/Likošane and Qirez/Ćirez of Skënderaj/Srbica municipality, where 29 people lost their lives. Given that the Drenica region was considered as the home of the Kosovo Liberation Army, the beginning of March 1998 continued to be characterized by fighting and numerous casualties amongst civilians and armed forces.



In the municipality of Glogoc/Glogovac, during 1998, 229 people were killed and/or disappeared forcefully as a result of the war. That year alone, 199 Albanians (153 of whom civilians), 29 Serbs (9 of whom civilians) and 1 Bulgarian, as a member of the Serbian armed forces, lost their lives.

Since April 1998, Serbian police forces started to station around the mountain of Çiçavicë/Čičavica - a mountainous area between Vushtrri/Vučitrn, Glllogoc/Glogovac, Skënderaj/Srbica and Obiliq/Obilić, where the presence of the KLA was suspected. From 22 to 27 September 1998, the Yugoslav army was also supporting the police when the operation known as "Çiçavica" began. This military operation initially included the villages of Vushtrri, continuing to those of Glllogoc/Glogovac and Skënderaj/Srbica.

The situation in municipalities of Glllogoc/Glogovac, Skënderaj/Srbica, Vushtrri/Vučitrn and Obiliq/Obilić was getting worse, citizens were being forced out and many houses were burned.

On September 23, 1998, the Serbian forces started the attack on the mountain of Çiçavica/Čičavica where hundreds of residents found shelter, while the next day in the early morning hours the army entered the mountain.



The Hoti family was also sheltered in the mountain of Çiçavicë /Čičavica. They were from the village of Marinë/Marina of Skënderaj/Srbica municipality, but they had left their homes in June 1998. Until September 23, 1998, they had stayed with their relatives, the Saliuka family, in Gradicë/Gradica village. Due to escalation of situation, they were forced to leave their homes and head for the Çiçavicë/Čičavica mountain, where they settled in a tent. While in refuge in the mountains, some of the men separated from their families and hid in a pit/well and stayed there hidden all day. Late at night they went to the tent for food and rest, and in the early hours of the morning they returned to the pit.



The pit had been dug to build a well, but it was unfinished. There was no water and it was difficult to access because it was covered by bushes. As a location, it was around 150 meters away from the tent where the other family members were located.



That morning, on September 24, 1998, the 6 men were in the well when Serbian forces approached, forcibly dragging them out, lined them up, and started to beat them up. The youngest, who was only 12 at the time, was beaten and told to leave while the other 5 men were brutally killed.

The other members of the family who were in the mountain, women and children, heard the shots and then the Serbian forces reached their location as well, asking them some questions, burning their personal belongings and forcing them to leave.

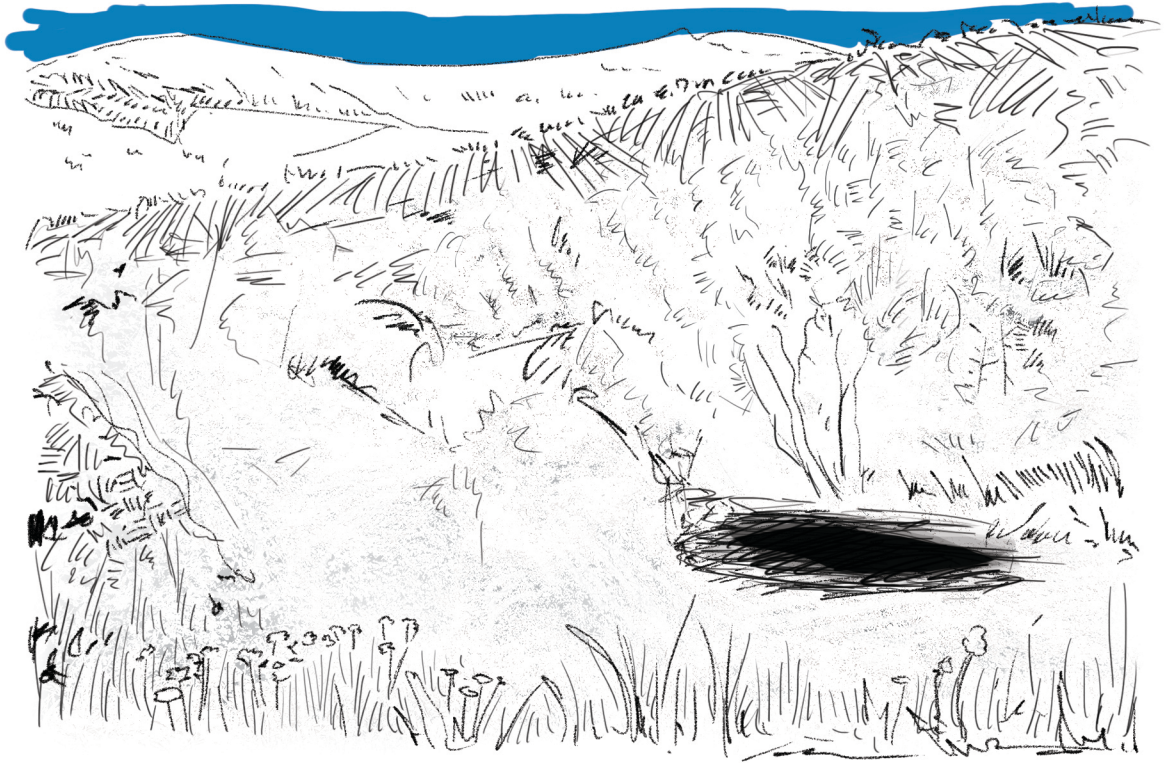
The next day, the family members heard that several men had been killed in the mountains of Çiçavicë/Čičavica. Near the well, where the men were hiding, they found the massacred bodies of Sefer, Rrustem, Enver and Naim Hoti as well as Mehmet Saliukaj, who were initially buried in the Gradicë/Gradica cemetery.



## UNFINISHED WELL IN GRADICĚ/GRADICA

### WHAT WAS IT?

This pit in Gradicë/Gradica near the mountains of Çiçavicë/Čičavica, where the tragic event of the Hoti and Saliuka families took place, was opened before the war for the purpose of constructing a well. Being unfinished and surrounded by bushes, this place was considered as a safe place to hide in a state of danger.

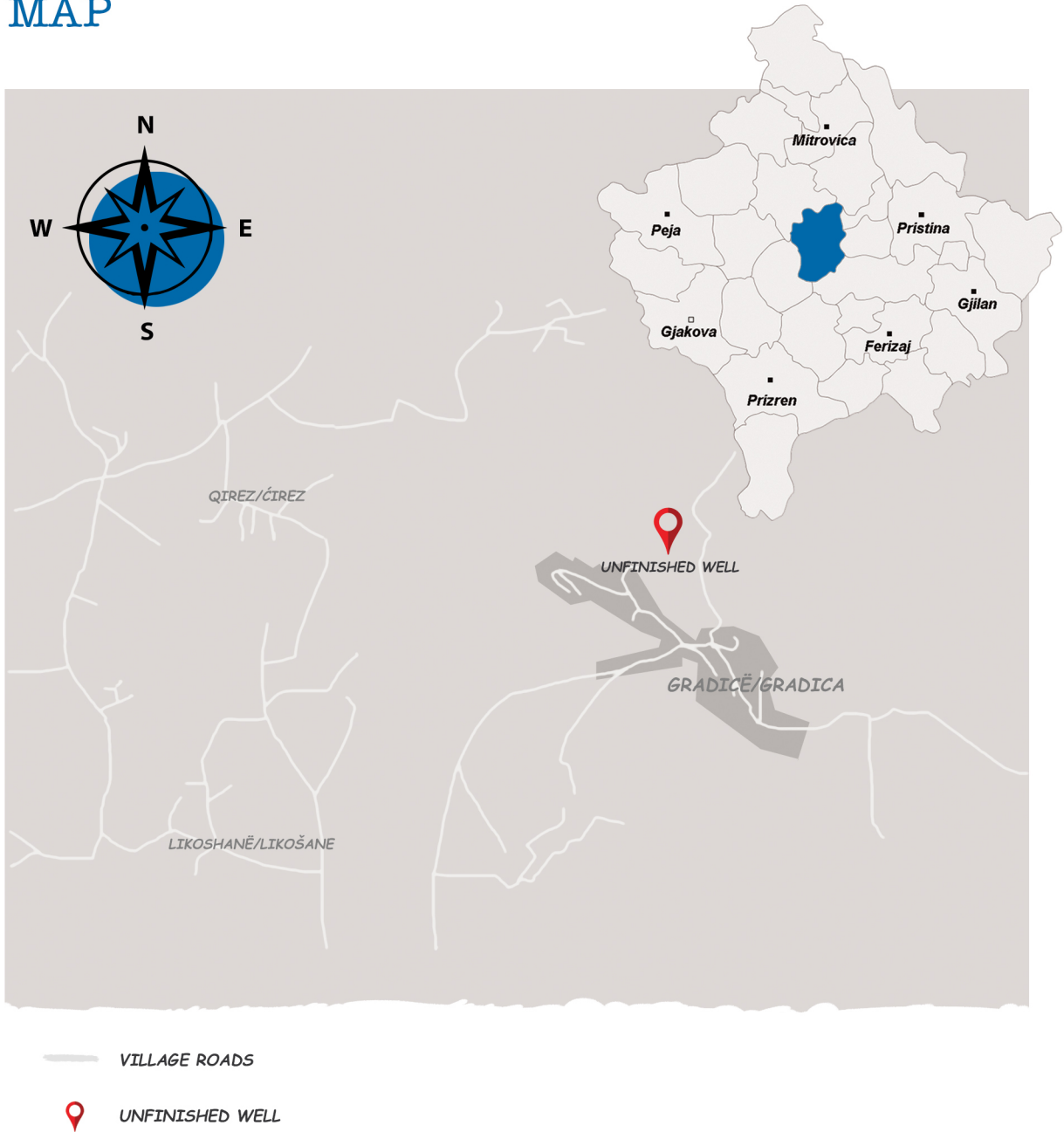


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### WHAT IS IT USED FOR TODAY?

Today this place continues to be in the same shape, it is completely covered by bushes and you cannot see the pit. However, the place is not maintained or marked to indicate the event of 24 September 1998, even though 5 civilians were brutally killed there. Failure to mark the places of crime contributes to collective forgetfulness, making the history and events that occurred as a result of the war in Kosovo fade away.

# UNFINISHED WELL IN GRADICË/GRADICA MAP









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