



Fondi për të Drejtën Humanitare Kosovë
Fond za humanitarno pravo Kosovo
Humanitarian Law Center Kosovo



VUSHTRI
VUÇITRN

THE HOUSE
SNOUT

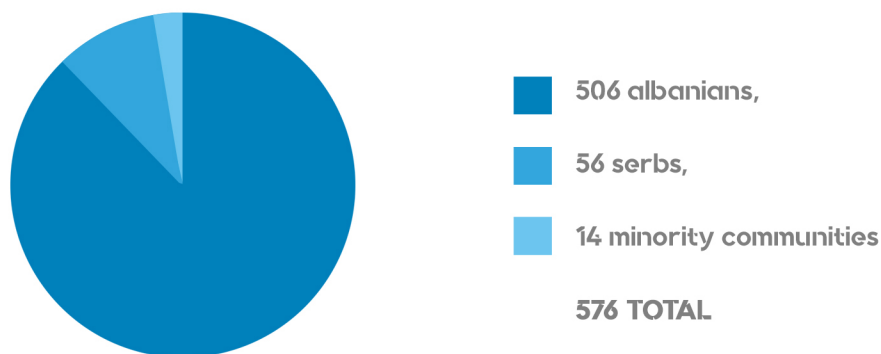
NEAR THE CEMENTERY

THE HOUSE NEAR THE CEMETERY

VUSHTRRI/VUČITRN

Vushtrri/Vučitrn is one of the oldest cities in Kosovo. According to the population census before the war, it had 65,671 inhabitants, with a mixed ethnic structure. About 90% belonged to the Albanian ethnicity. While according to the population census conducted in 2011, the number of inhabitants in the Municipality of Vushtrri/Vučitrn was 69,870.

The NATO Military Operation against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia started on March 24, 1999, whereby a state of war was officially declared in the entire territory of Kosovo. From this date, terrible crimes were committed in the entire territory of Kosovo, and Vushtrri/Vučitrn was no exception, where, among other crimes, sexual violence was also committed.



As a result of the war, 576 people were killed and/or disappeared in Vushtrri/Vučitrn and its surroundings, of them 506 Albanians, 56 Serbs and 14 from minority communities.



On May 22, 1999, after having looted them, the Serbian military, police and paramilitary forces expelled the Albanian civilian population from their homes and gathered them near the city cemetery of Vushtrri/Vučitrn where they forced them to sit on the ground. While the civilians were staying in that position, they were beaten up with wooden sticks, and were hit on the head and in different parts of the body by some members of the police and military forces of Serbia.

Some of the men were then separated from the crowd, forced to board some trucks and were driven away in different directions, some of them towards the Smrekonica/Smrekovnica prison, and others towards the Vushtrri/Vučitrn sports hall. The rest of the civilians that remained there were old men, women and children, and they were lined up and forced to walk towards a two-story house, to be registered and provided with identification cards.



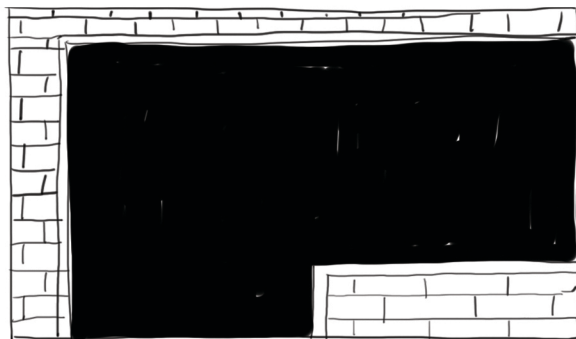
The first floor of that house was all in windows, in a form of a bar, which was used as a pediatric clinic by one of the owners of the house, and the second floor had rooms. On the first floor, there were policemen, soldiers and armed paramilitaries who, called civilians to go inside, hit them with wooden sticks and pushed them into the bar.



In the line of people who were lined up to receive identification cards, there was also a woman (who due to her anonymity, will hereinafter be referred to as the woman), who at that time had been in her third month of pregnancy, expecting twins. She was waiting in line with her mother, sister, mother-in-law and her two daughters, one of whom was 9 months old at the time, which the woman was holding by her arm, while the other was 3 years old.

The woman was pulled from the line by a member of Serbian police forces, who took the little girl who the woman was holding by her arm and slammed her to the ground. At that moment, her mother-in-law reacted, and as a result of her reaction, she was hit on the forehead with the stock/handle of an automatic rifle, causing her bleeding in her head, and then she was pulled and violently pushed into the house in front of which they were standing in line.

He sent the woman to one of the rooms on the second floor, where other women were held who were naked and raped by some Serbian policemen. He knocked the woman to the ground, forcibly took off her clothes and raped her, with the help of another policeman.

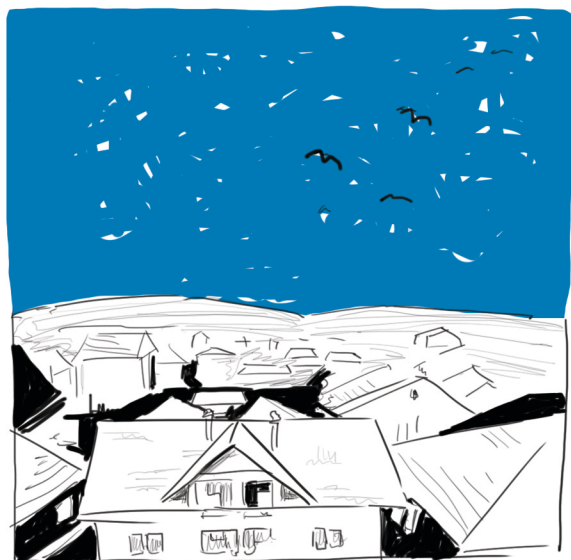


After experiencing pain, the woman turned to the side to vomit. At that moment she was kicked in her back, and as a result the woman lost consciousness. After regaining consciousness, the woman saw herself naked in the room and one of the policemen who was there, grabbed her by the arm and forcibly removed her from there, telling her to "go away".



Such a crime had an extremely negative impact on the woman's life, since she suffered great physical and psychological trauma, and above all, she lost her unborn babies, as a result of an abortion she suffered during the month September that year.

The woman still suffers the consequences of this crime committed against her even today. Despite continuous treatment, she did not manage to overcome her post-traumatic stress disorder.



A judicial process was conducted on this case by the Basic Court in Pristina, whereby the accused Zoran Vukotić, former member of the reserve forces of the Serbian police, was found guilty in 2021 for the criminal offense "War crimes against the civilian population" and was sentenced to a term of 10 years of imprisonment. The judgment has not taken the final form.

A large number of other crimes were committed on the same day, especially in the homes of the Pasoma and Cakaj families, where 72 civilians were massacred, including men, women and children, who were mistreated and killed in a cruel manner. The distance from the house where the rape/s was committed, to the house of the Cakaj family is only 15 meters, while the distance from the house of the Pasoma family is approximately 100 in a straight line.

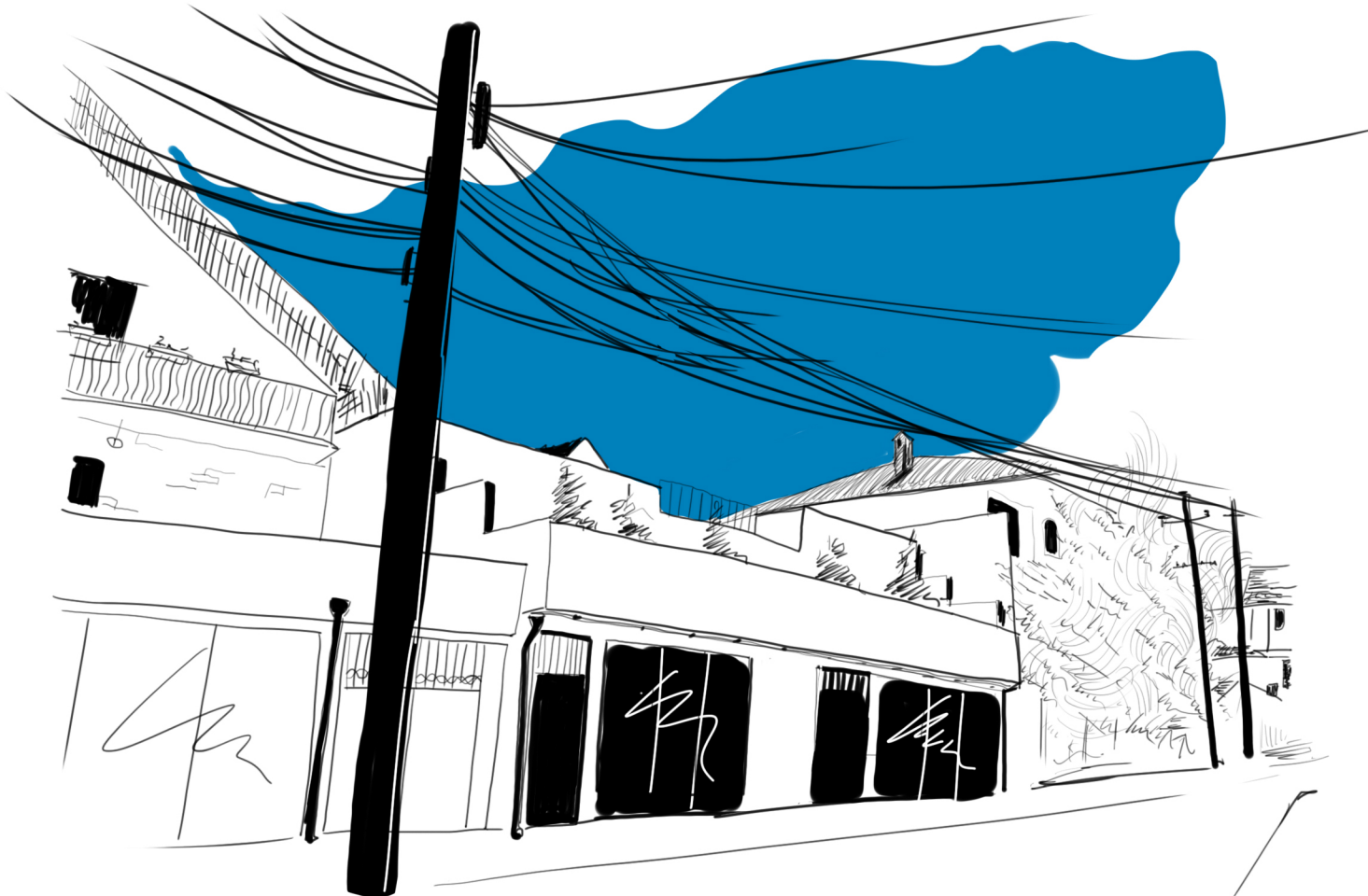
THE HOUSE NEAR THE CEMETERY

WHAT WAS IT?

The house in which the incident took place was the home of two Albanian civilian brothers, which was built in 1981/1982. It was a house divided into two entrances, for both brothers and their families, with two floors and an attic. The first floor of the house had a clinic that belonged to one of the brothers, who was a pediatrician by profession and used the first floor of as an work space. The clinic was directly connected to the interior of the house, from where they could move freely, from the first floor to the second. Next to this house there were 4 other houses, all belonging to their relatives, in which around 81 people were sheltered during the war.

During the critical day of May 22, the brothers' house was used by the police, army and Serbian paramilitaries, and a large number of crimes were committed inside it.

This house together with 3 other houses of their relatives and many adjacent neighbors, were completely burned on the same day of May 22, 1999.



THE HOUSE NEAR THE CEMETERY

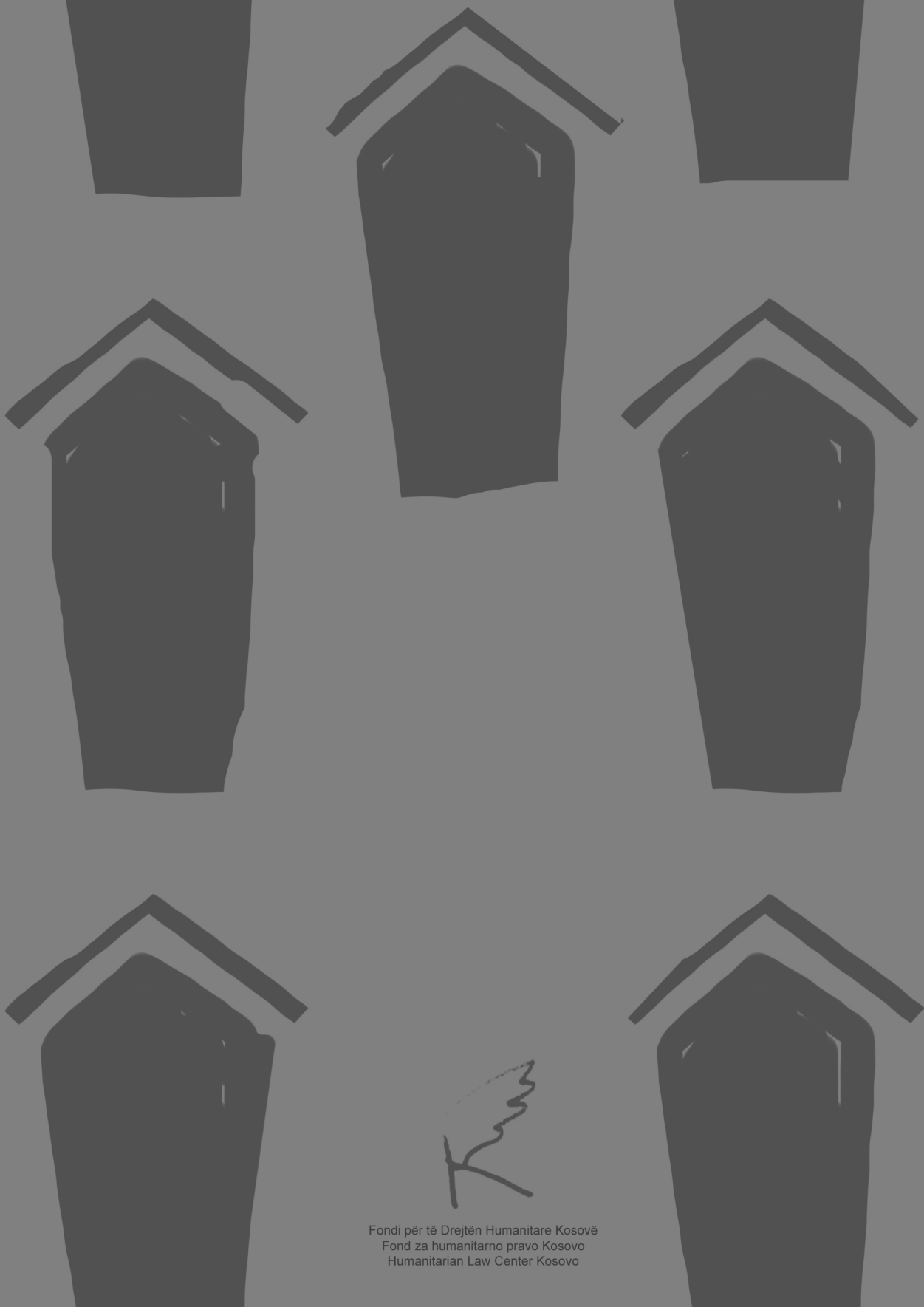
WHAT IS IT CURRENTLY USED FOR?

About two years after the end of the war, the house was rebuilt by the owners and brought back to the same shape as it was before, where they lived until 2013. The house was then bought by another owner, who completely restructured it and currently lives there.

Despite the fact that serious war crimes were committed in this house, no memorial or plaque was erected that would mark this house as the place where crimes were committed.

THE HOUSE NEAR THE CEMETERY MAP





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