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Fond za humanitarno pravo Kosovo
Humanitarian Law Center Kosovo

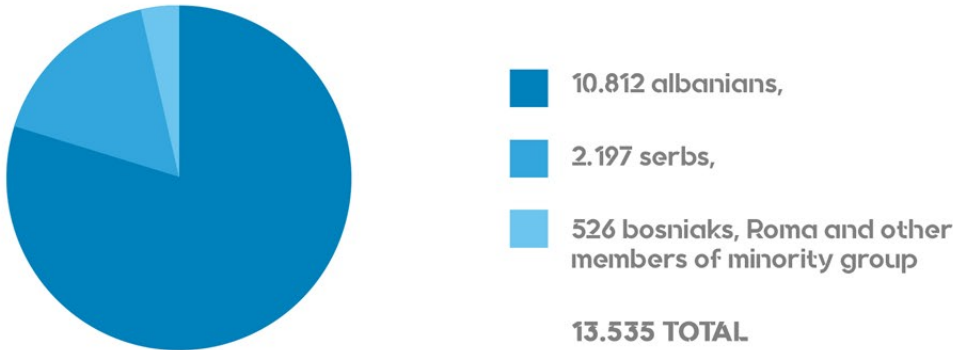
KOSOVO AND SERBIA

MASS GRAVES

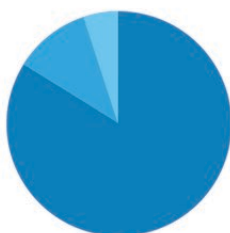
MASS GRAVES

KOSOVO AND SERBIA

In the period January 1998 - December 2000, as a result of the war in Kosovo, 13,535 people lost their lives and/or disappeared forcefully.

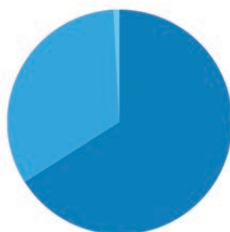


Of this number 10,812 were Albanians (80%), 2,197 were Serbs (16%), and 526 were Bosniaks, Roma and other members of minority groups (4%).



CIVILIANS 10.317

- 84% ■ 8.676 albanians,
- 11% ■ 1.196 serbs,
- 5% ■ 445 bosniaks, roma and other members of minority groups



MEMBERS OF ARMED GROUPS 3.218

- 66% ■ 2.131 Kosovo Liberation Army
- 33% ■ 1.084 Serban Military, Paramilitary and police forces
- 1% ■ 3 NATO forces/KFOR

Of this number, 10,317 were civilian victims (of whom 8,676 were Albanians, 1,196 Serbs and 445 Roma and others). Regarding the victims from the armed groups - 2,131 were members of the Kosovo Liberation Army; 1,084 were members of the Serbian military, paramilitary and police forces and 3 members of the NATO Forces in Kosovo - KFOR. In the period 1998-2000, 1133 children were killed and/or forcibly disappeared and 109 of them are still missing. After June 1999, there were about 6057 missing persons in Kosovo as a result of the war and from this number, the fate of 1620 people is still unresolved.

Immediately after the end of the war, a number of missing persons were found in various prisons in Serbia and most of them were discovered in mass graves inside and outside Kosovo.

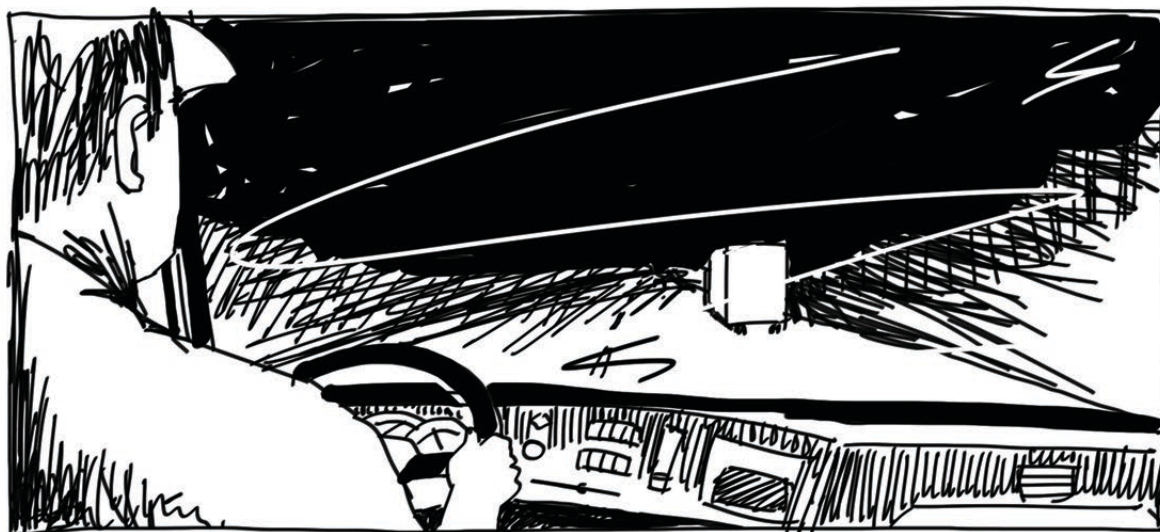


After the start of NATO intervention in Kosovo, the violence of Serbian forces against the civilian population in Kosovo intensified significantly. Thus, to cover up the mass crimes, Serbian authorities launched an organized campaign to relocate the bodies of the victims from the territory of Kosovo to the the territory of Serbia.

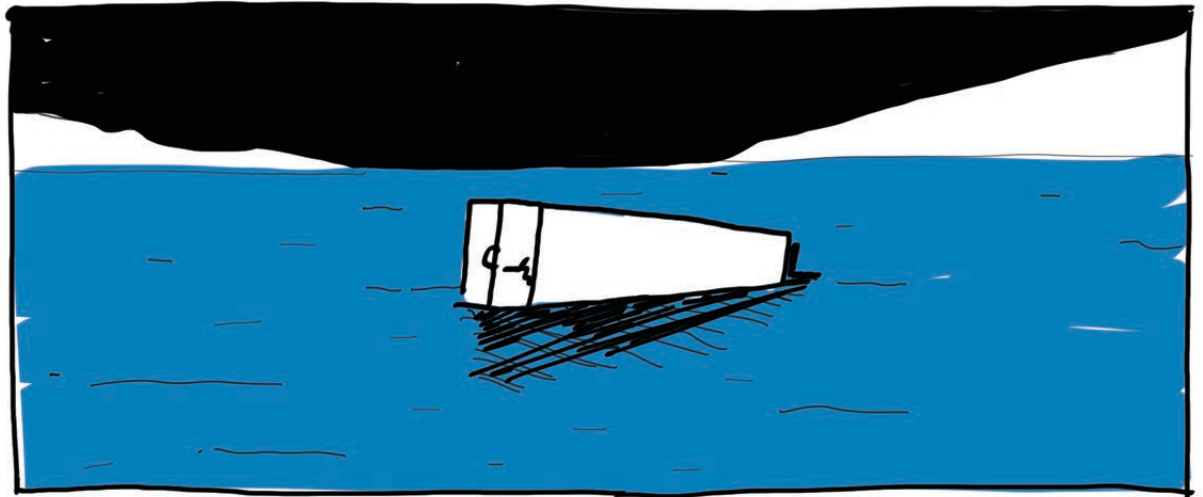
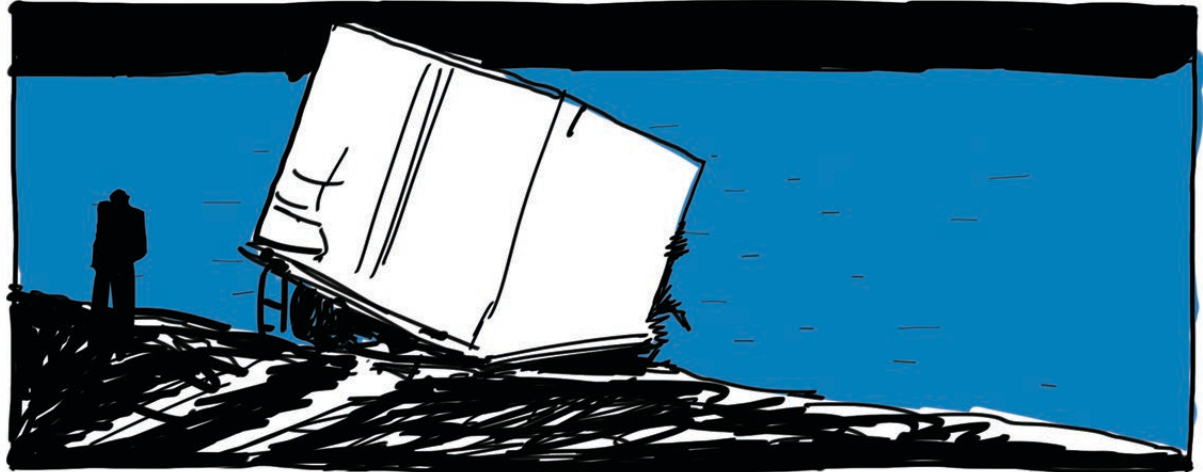
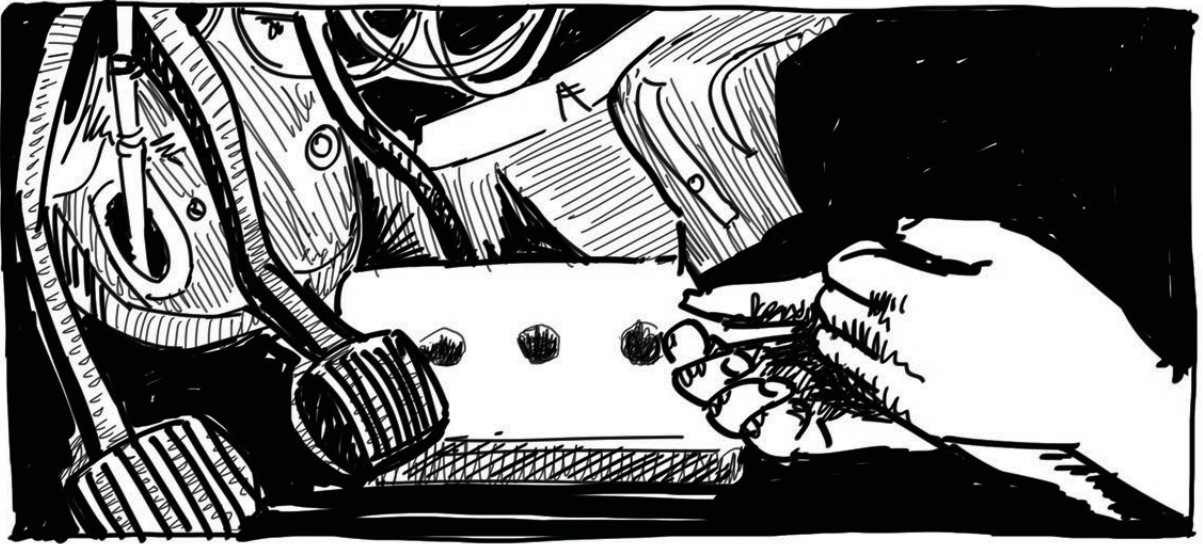
From 2001 until today, 950 bodies of Albanians killed in Kosovo, were found in 5 locations of mass graves within the territory of Serbia. In 2001, 744 bodies were discovered on the outskirts of Belgrade in Batajnica, on a plot that served and continues to serve as a training facility for the Serbian Police Special Counter-Terrorism Unit. Later that year, in Petrovo Selo, Eastern Serbia, 61 bodies were found and another 84 bodies were found in Lake Perućac in Western Serbia. In 2013, another 52 Albanian bodies were found in Rudnica near Raška in southern Serbia near the border with Kosovo. And in the 2020-2021, 9 bodies were found in the Kiževak Quarry in Southern Serbia.

The bodies of 950 Kosovo Albanians were transported from the territory of Kosovo to these 5 different locations in Serbia in order to hide the traces of crimes and protect those responsible from criminal liability.

No memorial has yet been erected in none of the 5 locations mentioned above, which would contribute to the marking of these crime sites and their inclusion in the collective memory of the society. Regarding the location of Batajnica, for several years now, there has been an initiative by non-governmental organizations Humanitarian Law Center and Humanitarian Law Center Kosovo which aims to establish a memorial center in the place where the bodies were found, thus contributing to the enrichment of the collective memory related to the events that took place in that location during 1999.



In addition to the practice of transporting bodies from the territory of Kosovo to the territory of Serbia, a large number of mass graves were discovered inside Kosovo. Most of them included Albanian victims such as in Bellacerka/-Bela Crkva (77 bodies), the cemetery in Dragodan (170 bodies), Pastasel/Pusta Selo (106 bodies), Brusnik (28 bodies), Rahovec/Orahovac (47 bodies), Bishtazhin/Bistražin (about 80 bodies), Muslim cemetery in North Mitrovica/-Severna Mitrovica (76 bodies), etc. and a number of them also contained Serb troops such as the one in Voljakë/Volujak (24 troops), Malishevë/Mališevo (13 troops) and Kleqkë/Klecka.



Similarly, to those in the territory of Serbia, these locations in Kosovo are not marked and in a way are only part of the memory of the relatives of victims but do not form a part of the broad collective memory. In addition to marking the mass graves, Kosovo also lacks a register of the total number of mass graves, their exact number and the exact number of bodies found in them.

Such a practice of not marking crime scenes contributes to forgetfulness and makes it impossible to create a common collective memory about the past.

MASS GRAVES

WHAT WERE THEY?

Sites that served various functions before the start of the armed conflict in Kosovo were used as mass grave sites to cover up crimes. To list some of them, such as the case of the mass grave in Batajnica in which a training center for the Special Anti-Terrorist Unit of the Serbian police was located; The case of the Kiževak mass grave in which a quarry was located; The case of the mass grave of Dragodan in which a civil cemetery of the municipality of Prishtina was located or the case of the cave in the village Volljakë/Volujake in which a number of bodies were hidden.



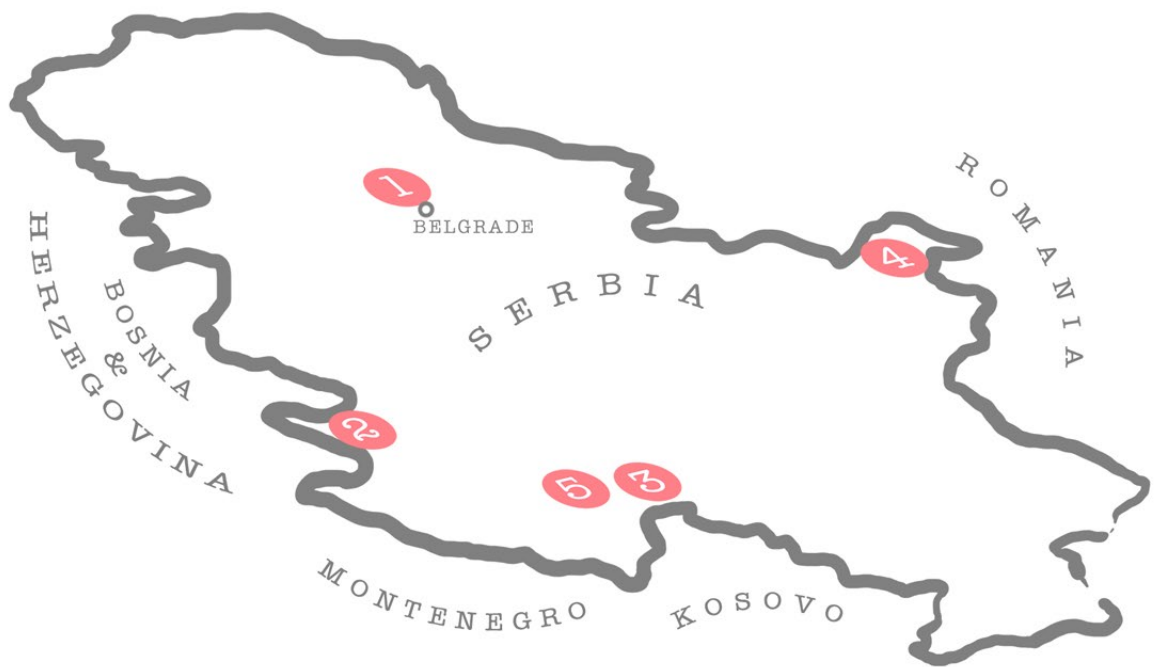


MASS GRAVES

WHAT ARE THEY TODAY?

A number of sites where mass graves were discovered continue to have the same function as the case of the Batajnica Training Center or the Arbëria/Dragodan cemetery. While a number of sites where mass graves were discovered have changed their function such as the case of Kizhevak Quarry which has already been privatized or the case of the Training Camp in Petrovo Selo which belonged to the Serbian Police Special Forces that operated in Kosovo during the war and is now closed. After the exhumation, many locations that contained mass graves, have remained abandoned, without any sign.

For these reasons and because of failure to mark them, mass grave sites will in time fade away even from the collective memory of society.

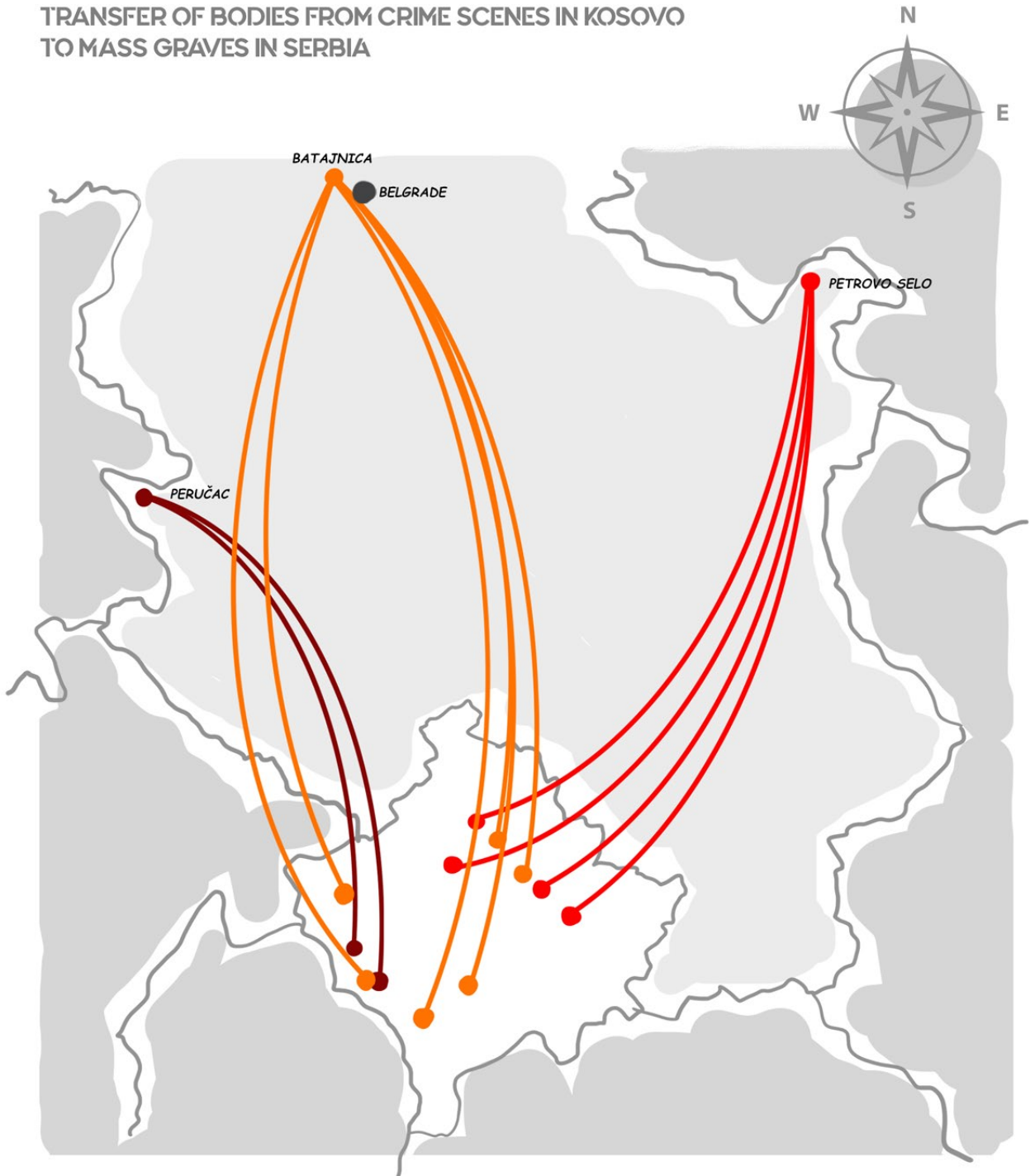


LOCATIONS

Locations of mass graves identified in Serbia

1. Batajnica: Discovered in 2001. 744 bodies of Kosovo Albanians were found in it.
2. Perućac: The bodies of Kosovo Albanians appeared on the surface of the lake in 1999. In 2001, a mass grave with the remains of 84 people was found near the lake.
3. Rudnica: In 2013, the mortal remains of 52 Albanian civilians were found.
4. Petrovo Selo: Discovered in 2001. 61 bodies of Kosovo Albanians were found in it.
5. Kiževak: In 2020-2021, 9 mortal remains were found in the Kizevak quarry.

TRANSFER OF BODIES FROM CRIME SCENES IN KOSOVO TO MASS GRAVES IN SERBIA





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