



Humanitarian Law Center Foundation

HUMANITARIAN LAW CENTER

THE NARRATIVE REPORT JANUARY TO JUNE 2022

I. JUSTICE

1. War crimes trials

Since the beginning of 2022 the HLC has monitored all **14 war crimes** proceedings that are currently being conducted before Serbian courts. A total of **1,470 victims** in **five proceedings** are represented by an HLC attorney.

The HLC has continued its practice of maintaining regular contacts with victims' family members, and of attending war crimes anniversaries. In collaboration with the "Women Power" NGO based in Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the HLC has assisted one victim of sexual violence, who was represented by the HLC in earlier proceedings, in acquiring a status of a special category of a civilian victim of war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In cooperation with the same NGO, the HLC has made arrangements for the arrival of a female witness having a status of a specially vulnerable witness to give evidence before a domestic court.

Following each trial, the HLC posted daily reports from the trials on its website. Information on these trials was also disseminated to the public via HLC's official accounts on Facebook and Twitter. In the reporting period, the HLC continued obtaining all the documentation pertaining to the proceedings – documents from the investigations, transcripts from the trials, expert witness findings, indictments and judgments. The entire documentation was scanned and archived.

In early May 2022 the HLC **presented to the public its "Report on the War Crimes Trials in Serbia during 2021"**, which includes an analysis of 26 current cases before Serbian courts and





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the socio-political context in which the trials are taking place. For the first time in seven years, one of the speakers at the presentation of the HLC report was a representative of the European Union Delegation to Serbia, i.e. the deputy head of the EU Delegation.

Also attending this presentation were representatives of the media, domestic and foreign organizations and foreign embassies to Serbia.

2. Reparations

During the reporting period, the HLC continued representing victims of war crimes in reparation proceedings not only before domestic courts, but also before the European Court of Human Rights. **The HLC is representing victims in 28 cases that include 103 victims** in total. It is certain that all of these 28 proceedings will end with judgments that will enable the victims to exercise their respective right to reparation. The only exception to this are two lawsuits that have been brought to test the case law in Serbia as both of them refer to glorification of war criminals in public.

Six judgments in total were handed down in this period – two for war crimes committed in Kosovo and four for the crime committed in Ovčara, Croatia. One new lawsuit was brought. Four enforcement procedures are underway – three for the crime committed in Ovčara and one for the crime perpetrated in Kosovo.

Seven applications in total were filed with the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. **For the first time in 10 years, the HLC, acting on behalf of a family member of a civilian victim of war, has succeeded in obtaining for its client the status of a civilian victim before an administrative authority in Serbia.** If this administrative decision remains in force, it practically means that family members of murdered victims in Sjeverin and Štrpci would also be able to acquire the status of civilian victims of war.





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3. The Dossiers and search for perpetrators of war crimes

During the reporting period, the HLC continued its research for **two Dossiers** that are due to be published by late January 2023. The first Dossier pertains to the role of the Serbian Volunteer Guard in the wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina and their links to the top leadership of Serbia. The second Dossier focuses on the role of Svetozar Andrić and the brigade he had commanded during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and particularly his role in the Srebrenica genocide. The idea to investigate the role of Svetozar Andrić stemmed from the fact that he is still politically active in Serbia. He had been the deputy president of the municipality of New Belgrade for many years, as well as a member of the Serbian Parliament.

During the reporting period, a new member has joined the team doing the research for these dossiers, so now there are two researchers whose work is solely focused on this type of research.

II. Memory

Since the beginning of 2022, a (third in a row) **digital collection** "[Crimes in Sandžak in the 1990s](#)" has been published on the "Zone of NON responsibility" web platform. The collection comprises five parts covering various crimes, and contains archive material both from the court archives and the HLC database.

The sixth digital narrative "The 549th Motorized Brigade of the Yugoslav Army" was published in June 2022.

Two podcast episodes have been published on the "Memory Cultures in Dialogue" website: [one](#) episode on the topic of the erased in Slovenia, featuring Professor Jelka Zorn, and [the other](#) titled "We Remember Prijedor", featuring Zoran Vučković.





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Three new blogs have also been published on the "Memory Cultures" website on the topics of [war heroes](#), [state commemorations](#) of the beginning of the NATO bombing (taken from the "Peščanik" web portal), and [the erased in Slovenia](#).

Activities have continued on designing a database on state commemorations of anniversaries, whereas the segment on commemorations of Operation "Storm" has been completed. Three articles by HLC authors on the topics of remembrance policy: "[Predizborna kampanja i povratak u budućnost](#)" [Election campaign and back to the future], "[Žrtve NATO bombardovanja: između laži i patetike](#)" [The victims of NATO bombing: Between lies and pathos], and "[Prijedor, 360 kilometara od Beograda](#)" [Prijedor, 360 kilometres away from Belgrade] were published on the "Peščanik" web portal.

The HLC has responded to several events by issuing press releases; in addition to our standard practice of issuing press releases in response to the anniversaries of the crimes in Štrpci and Hrtkovci, in which we point to inadequate action by the institutions and ethnocentric remembrance policy, we have also issued press releases over increasingly frequent [expressions of national hatred](#) in the public square and [the appearance of \[Serbian Interior\] Minister Aleksandar Vulin](#) in the company of convicted war criminals.

III. Documenting and knowledge transfer

1. Knowledge transfer

The HLC is currently participating in **nine projects** within the Consortium. HLC's activities within four projects (Guinea, Colombia, Sudan and South Sudan) are mainly focused on transferring the knowledge and experience the HLC had gained in relation to databases, in terms of their proposed structure, physical and digital data security and data storage, trainings on database work, and other activities related to documenting and data gathering.

The HLC has been offered to participate in the forthcoming period in the development of databases in some other contexts as well, such as those in Bangladesh and Iraq.





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As for the project "Supporting CSOs in Digital Archiving: Phase II", the HLC, as the lead partner, is coordinating activities on the development of a handbook on digital archiving, and is also administering small projects of four documenting organizations.

In addition to the above projects focusing on documenting and databases, the HLC is also participating in activities related to other areas of transitional justice. The HLC is a lead partner on the project "Victim centered approach", and is also participating in the following projects: "Commemorative Cultures", "Media and TJ Academy", and "Youth and Atrocity Prevention", whose activities include a large number of participants from across the globe, journalists, victims' families and young academics, etc.

In April and May 2022 the HLC also drafted a **Policy Brief on digital archives in the context of violence prevention**, which will be published on the Consortium website.

In June this year the HLC team will launch a series of meetings aimed at designing new project proposals, which will be put to vote at the annual meeting of the partners in September 2022.

2. Digitalization

During the reporting period, the HLC continued digitalizing the archive material. To that effect, video documentation (DT) from the archive fonds, containing TV features and TV shows, documentary and feature films, footage from conferences, forums, meetings and oral history interviews - **490 videos in total - were digitalized.**

In the same period, also **digitalized were 1,719 documents** and they were included in the information system of the following archive fonds: the Trial of Albanians (SA), Forced Mobilization (PM), and Reparations (RP).





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3. Outreach

The HLC continued its regular outreach activities on its official Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts. In the reporting period, the HLC website had **13,692 visits**. In the same period, the "Zone of NON responsibility" web platform had **10,102 visits**. We had 5,244 followers on Facebook, 4,382 followers on Twitter and 594 followers on Instagram.

In the reporting period, the HLC issued **12 press releases** in total, i.e. two press releases per month on average.

