
BOSNIA: 71 SREBRENICA VICTIMS GO ON FINAL JOURNEY

10.07.2017

Anadolu Agency (9 July 2017)

The remains of 71 Srebrenica genocide victims were moved aboard a truck laden with flowers from the Bosnian city of Visoko on Sunday morning for their final journey to a cemetery in eastern Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The victims will be buried in the village of Potocari, just northwest of the city of Srebrenica, on July 11 to mark the 22nd anniversary of the genocide.

A few hundred people had attended a ceremony in the city of Visoko city to bid an emotional farewell to the victims.

The blue truck carrying the coffins was covered with a large flag of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

After passing by a Sarajevo suburb, Vogosca, the truck stopped in front of the Presidency building near a special memorial for children who were killed during the Bosnian War between 1992 and 1995. Around 1,500 children were killed during the 1995 siege of Sarajevo.

A prayer ceremony was followed by numerous officials led by the Bosniak member of the tripartite Presidency of Bosnia Herzegovina, Bakir Izetbegovic.

President of the Council of Ministers Denis Zvizdic, Turkish Ambassador in Sarajevo Haldun Koc and other officials were also present.

Addressing the media Izetbegovic said the Srebrenica genocide is still being denied by some.

Extreme sorrow

"There is a provocation in many quarters such as with [erecting] monuments for those who deny the genocide, [who demand] the release of war criminals, etc. We need to have a positive attitude in order to overcome these issues. There is no other way out for the country in this complex structure," said Izetbegovic.

As the truck passed through the streets of the capital Sarajevo, many people, including women and children, could be seen openly crying. Several also showered the truck with flowers and raised the palms of their hands close to their faces in a sign of prayer or remembrance.

Fatima Besic was among those who came to bid farewell to her cousin who was killed during the genocide.

"He died somewhere in the woods and was just found," Besic said. "His mother died five years ago and did not have chance to bid farewell."

Hussein Ahmetlic, the truck's driver said that he was feeling extremely sorrowful.

"There are 71 coffins in the truck. It's a difficult feeling. I do not fear, whatever has happened, it happened. This should be a warning message to all," said Ahmetlic.

The convoy has arrived at the Potocari Memorial later Sunday.

Despite the fact that 22 years have passed since the Srebrenica genocide, remains of victims are still being discovered and funeral ceremonies still being carried out in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Srebrenica was besieged by Serb forces between 1992 and 1995 during the Bosnian War. Back then, Serb militias were trying to wrest territory from Bosnian Muslims and Croats to form their own state.

The UN Security Council declared Srebrenica a "safe area" in the spring of 1993. However, Serb troops led by General Ratko Mladic – who now faces genocide charges in The Hague – overran the UN zone despite the presence of around 450 Dutch soldiers tasked with acting as UN peacekeepers.

The Dutch troops failed to act as Serb forces occupied the area, killing about 2,000 men and boys on July 11 alone.

Some 15,000 Srebrenica men fled into the surrounding mountains but Serb troops hunted down and slaughtered 6,000 of them in the forests.

By Talha Ozturk

Photo: People mourn around the convoy carrying corpses of the 71 victims of 1995 Srebrenica genocide, after the convoy arrived in Potocari village of Srebrenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina on July 09, 2017. (Samir Yordamoviç - Anadolu Agency)

<http://aa.com.tr/en/europe/bosnia-71-srebrenica-victims-go-on-final-journey/857635>

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