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Author: [IWPR](#)
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IWPR article on controversial Serbian security documents generates debate in region.

An article by genocide expert Edina Becirevic on confidential wartime minutes of the Serbian Security Defence Council, SDC, meetings provoked a series of the of reaction in the region and the Bosnian media.

The piece, called *New Light Shed on Belgrade Role in Bosnian War*, considered the minutes which have been kept confidential in spite of claims that they could potentially prove Serbia's direct involvement in the wars in Bosnia and Croatia.

In her article, Becirevic - a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Criminal Justice Sciences in Sarajevo - explored the inconsistency of keeping the minutes secret, when parts have already been published in a book by ex-Montenegrin president Momir Bulatovic.

While Serbia gave these transcripts to the Hague tribunal to be used in the prosecution case against Serbia's former president Slobodan Milosevic, it insisted they had to remain confidential to protect the country's national interests.

The documents were not available to the judges of the International Court of Justice, ICJ, who in February this year ruled that Serbia was not directly responsible for genocide in Bosnia, thus ending Bosnia's genocide lawsuit against this state.

ICJ judges did not ask the Hague tribunal or Serbia to provide them with these documents which some experts believe could have changed the outcome of the lawsuit.

In her piece, Becirevic quoted several of the transcripts published in Bulatovic's book, which seem to suggest that Serbia's involvement in the Bosnian war was greater than the country is ready to admit.

Commenting on IWPR's article, Sonja Biserko from the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, said, "The subject Edina Becirevic touched upon is of crucial importance, because it is focused on the interpretation of what really happened in Bosnia and what Serbia's role in it was.

"Unfortunately, the ICJ ruling did not address this issue properly, but gave the impression that their decision was a political one, especially because it was not based on all available evidence. In her article, Becirevic pointed out the evidence that they might have obtained had they wanted to, because Momir Bulatovic's book - which contains parts of this evidence - was available to all."

The confidential minutes were also the subject of one of our weekly radio programmes.

In a straw poll of Belgrade residents, the majority of people we spoke to said all the SDC transcripts should be revealed to the public.

Our thorough exploration of this subject also prompted the Bosnian media to cover it.

Becirevic was a guest on Federal Television's programme Openly Speaking, in which she discussed the main points from her IWPR article. Project staff were also invited to participate in a TV debate on SDC documents which will be broadcast on a local TV station next month.

This month, the Bosnian weekly magazine Start published another Tribunal project article on the 1992-95 Croatian presidential transcripts in which former president Franjo Tudjman talked openly about his ambition to take half of Bosnia and join it to Croatia.

Editor-in-chief of Start magazine Eldin Karic said that IWPR was an invaluable source of information on war crimes trials.

"What IWPR does is very useful, because it doesn't let the subject of war crimes trials be put aside and forgotten, even though 14 years have passed since the Hague tribunal was set up," he said.

Karic praised IWPR for its balanced and trustworthy editorial output which he said was a vital source of information for local media.

"Apart from the obvious importance of the information provided by IWPR, I want to stress the quality of your work and the way you make your articles interesting," he said.

"It is very important for the local editors who republish IWPR articles to know that you are a very reliable source of information. The issues you choose to write about are always appealing and they allow different media outlets in the region to find a specific subject they are interested in for republication."

Location: Serbia
Croatia
Bosnia and
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Topic: Reporting Impact

Focus: International Criminal Tribunal for the former
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