

# BREAKING BOUNDARIES

A Critical Examination of Post-Conflict  
Bosnia and Herzegovina



**HUMANITY IN  
ACTION**

Sarajevo  
May 26 - June 25, 2017

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## >> ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Humanity in Action Bosnia and Herzegovina  
October 2017



## >> ABOUT HUMANITY IN ACTION

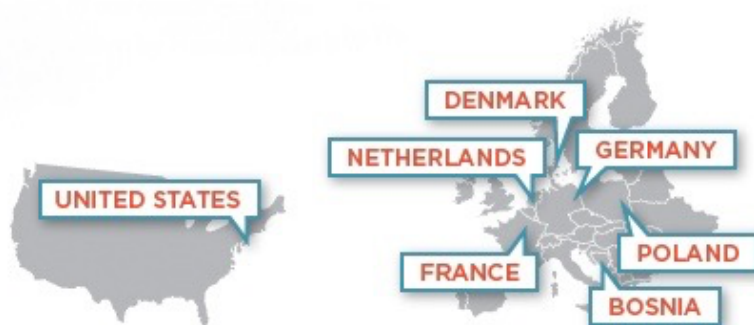
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Humanity in Action is an international organization that educates, inspires and connects a network of university students and young professionals committed to promoting human rights, diversity and active citizenship in their own communities and around the world. Humanity in Action is a non-profit, non-partisan organization with governing and advisory boards in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland and the United States. Humanity in Action's international headquarters is in New York City.

Humanity in Action has educated over 1,500 young leaders who now form a unique international community. The annual Humanity in Action Fellowship brings together more than 150 European and American university students and young professionals each summer in programs in Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, the United States and Bosnia and Herzegovina to discuss, learn and research in international groups. Humanity in Action Fellows meet leading experts and activists to study historical and contemporary cases of institutional violations of human and minority rights.

Humanity in Action supports all Fellows financially for the duration of their programs, allowing for the merit-based selection of diverse applicants. Humanity in Action also provides professional development opportunities. It maintains an international network of students, young professionals, established leaders, experts and partners for which it organizes a range of educational and career opportunities, including seminars, workshops, study trips and fellowship positions at leading civic and political institutions, such as the European Parliament and the United States Congress. These opportunities encourage emerging leaders to develop their professional abilities and introduce established leaders to the ideas of the younger generation.

Humanity in Action's network of leaders is a valuable resource to policy-makers, diplomats, educators, business leaders and civic-minded individuals and organizations. By the end of the decade, Humanity in Action will connect over 2,500 professionals working in all sectors, on a range of critical issues, in countries around the world.



## >> PROGRAM SUMMARY

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The second Humanity in Action Fellowship in Sarajevo took place during a time of extraordinary challenges in post-conflict democratic transition of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The program delved deep into the topics of transitional justice, social, legal and economic transformation, and post-conflict ethnic-based identity politics. It added up diversity to the educational experiences and broadened the HIA program scope beyond Western Europe and the US. Humanity in Action Bosnia and Herzegovina hosted 15 fellows, from 6 different countries (4 from Bosnia and Herzegovina, 6 from the United States, 2 from The Netherlands, 1 from Denmark, 1 from Poland, and 1 from Germany), as well as one intern from Poland. Most of them were staying with local host families. Although the bulk of the program took place in Sarajevo, HIA BiH organized several educational day-trips to Prijedor, Banja Luka, Srebrenica, Mostar, Stolac, and Zenica. HIA's 'on site-based' learning model allowed fellows to perceive connections among issues, people, and places in unanticipated ways.

Inspiring high-ranking diplomats, government officials, scholars and researchers, activists, policy analysts, and journalists, among others, gave lectures and presentations, bringing multiple perspectives to bear on outlined human rights issues. We hosted nearly 50 speakers, including high level guests like HE Khaldoun Sinno, Deputy Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dr. Jasminka Džumhur, Ombudsperson for Human Rights of BiH, Dr. Svetlana Broz, human rights activist and granddaughter of ex-Yugoslav President Josip Broz Tito, Dr. Nicolas Moll, historian, and many others. The Sarajevo program ended with a lecture by Professor Lamija Tanović, Chair of BoD Humanity in Action BiH, who spoke on a number of the challenges she has observed in the Bosnian education system.

During the program, each Fellow had the opportunity to present a human rights-related topic which is personally important to them and relevant to the program, during a segment called Fellows' Talks.

The Humanity in Action BiH Fellowship was designed as a platform for discussing these important issues. Specifically, the program in Sarajevo focused on questions related to human rights, diversity, pluralism, contemporary dynamics, and discourses currently pervading in local multicultural settings within BiH society. Our program, dense and intense from an intellectual and personal perspective, aimed to build trust and a sense of community among the participants foreign and domestic so that they make every effort to remain connected to and active in the HIA network. HIA's 'on site-based' learning model allowed fellows to perceive connections among issues, people, and places in unanticipated ways.

We are extremely grateful for the opportunity provided by our supporters. Humanity in Action Bosnia and Herzegovina looks forward to the next year's program, enlarging its Senior Fellow network, as well as creating more exchange among emerging leaders in all countries where Humanity in Action is operating and beyond.

**41**

**LECTURES**

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**FELLOWS' TALKS**

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**STUDY VISITS**

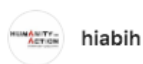


## >> HUMANITY IN ACTION CONFERENCE IN BERLIN

Humanity in Action held its Eighth Annual International Conference "Populism, Nationalism and Transatlantic Relations: New Realities, New Tensions" in Berlin, June 22-25, 2017. The conference explored the rise in nationalist sentiment, xenophobic rhetoric and political extremism across Europe and the United States, and the resultant challenges to transatlantic relations and domestic policies on both sides of the Atlantic.



The conference hosted 37 diverse speakers including keynote speeches, workshops, panel discussions and breakout sessions organized in order to explore topics of participants' particular interest in further depth, and additionally comprised 6 carefully chosen thematic city walks and 4 site visits.



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hiabih #HIA2017 Sarajevo Fellows with Dr. Judith Goldstein at the #HIAconference



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JUNE 23



Humanity in Action Bosnia and Herzegovina  
June 23 · €

>> Good morning from Berlin! The Eighth Annual International Humanity in Action Conference started yesterday with introductory remarks about the importance of history by founder and CEO of Humanity in Action, Dr. Judith Goldstein. #HIA2017 #HIAconference >>



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## >> FELLOWS

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**Ana Caldeira Beels**  
Columbia University



Born and raised in Brussels, Ana is a Portuguese and Dutch rising senior at Columbia University, with a double major in Middle Eastern, Asian and African Studies and Human Rights. Ana is part of the Dual BA between SciencesPo and Columbia and spent her first two years of college on the Menton campus, a small town in the south of France, where she started taking Middle Eastern Studies. She has volunteered in the Ventimiglia refugee camp in France and has continuously been engaged with the ongoing refugee crisis. On campus, she is involved in the European Society and in No Lost Generation, a refugee support program. Ana is passionate about dance and theatre, and she wishes to work in the field of education and culture.

**Sylwia "Sylwana" Dimtchev**  
Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań



Sylwia started her higher education in cultural anthropology, and later moved to Poznań to study Bulgarian Philology at Adam Mickiewicz University. Thanks to the Lifelong Learning Programme Erasmus, she spent another two semesters studying at Sveti Kliment Ohridski University in Sofia. As part of the Polish Student's Mobility Programme "MOST", she learned Serbian Philology in Wrocław for one semester. After graduating in 2015, she plans to pursue Doctoral Studies in a humanistic or linguistic discipline. She writes a blog ([www.zwyklyzeszyt.pl](http://www.zwyklyzeszyt.pl)), and creates vlogs on her YouTube channel (@zwykly vlog).

**Lydia Ghuman**  
University of Missouri



Lydia Ghuman was born in Cincinnati, Ohio and graduated from the University of Missouri with a double major in English & Women and Gender Studies. Being coordinator for a peer educator group called Diversity Peer Educators, president of her campus's Feminist Student Union, and a McNair Scholar who researched the intersections of sexism and gender identity sparked Lydia's passion to become a civil rights lawyer. This career choice prompted Lydia to intern at the Missouri House of Representatives where she lobbied and researched policy that aimed to improve urban school conditions in St. Louis. She continued to advocate for marginalized individuals through public policy as an intern for Congressman Clay (MO-1) and as a legal intern for the Missouri Commission on Human Rights. After graduation, Lydia plans to gain more public policy experience by working at a human rights based think tank before applying to law school.



**Malte Breiding Hansen**  
University of Copenhagen



Born in Copenhagen and raised on the island of Bornholm, Malte is a Political Science student at the University of Copenhagen. Malte has throughout his studies paid special attention to issues of crisis management, conflict resolution and human rights. Being the chair person of the student association Consilium, he has initiated and executed several debates and seminars focusing on various aspects of conflict studies; a politically underprioritized field of study and research in Denmark. Seeking to address discrimination and violence against LGBTQ individuals, he recently hosted an international seminar on Queering War & Peace, bringing together academic experts, practitioners and activists from around the world. In addition, Malte is the former co-founder of the Junior Analyst Department at the Danish Council for International Conflict Resolution. Malte plans to pursue a master in International Relations either in Denmark or abroad.

*"What I liked the most was engaging with a new problem and sharing knowledge with peers. The Fellowship also opens your eyes to rich post-conflict and peacebuilding knowledge."*

**Danielle "Ella" Tazuana Johnson**  
Bucknell University



Born and raised in Los Angeles, California, Ella is a recent graduate from Bucknell University where she earned a Linguistics major and double minor in Arabic and African Studies. Ella has an interest in international relations and humanizing marginalized groups. Her recent TEDx Talk focuses on prisoner advocacy in the US. Her experiences abroad in St. Kitts and Nevis and Jordan, and as a Gilman International Scholar in Ghana, helped her to develop more interest in developing countries and learning about other cultures. In her spare time, Ella performs spoken word poetry, with diverse topics that range from racism to feminism. After the completion of Humanity in Action in Bosnia, Ella continues her international journey as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Morocco.

**Nikola Lero**  
University of Banja Luka



Nikola is an undergraduate student at the University of Banja Luka where he is finishing his BA studies in Law. He was born in Sarajevo, but lived in 10 cities in three ex-Yugoslav countries during his childhood. Due to his life story and the effect 1992-1995 war has had on it, he decided to dedicate his work to human rights. That is why he is an active NGO volunteer at the Banjaluka Centre for Human Rights, and a member of the executive board of AIESEC in Banja Luka. He participated in the Council of Europe Human Rights Legal Clinic in September 2016. Nikola also writes poems and blogs. Some of his work was published by PEN Center BiH and in over 20 magazines. He also writes for youth magazine karike.ba. His mission is to merge activism and art, in order to create a powerful tool for a global change.

*"Even as a local Fellow, I have learned a lot about my own country, the conflict and different narratives. I recommend this Fellowship because you become a part of a movement of smart, young, passionate fighters for human rights – you become a part of a worldwide family!"*

**Vlatka Lučić**  
University of Mostar



Vlatka was born in Bosnia and Herzegovina and has spent most of her life in Mostar. She is soon to obtain her Master's Degree in English Language and Literature and Art History at the University of Mostar. Vlatka currently works as an English teacher and a houseparent at the international school United World College in Mostar. Her previous experiences include youth engagement work at the NGO Local Democracy Agency and active engagement at AIESEC Mostar. Her main social interest is women's rights but her professional focus is on youth education. Since 2015, Vlatka has been one of the coordinators of Mostar Summer Youth Programme, the summer school with an alternative curriculum that has offered courses on human rights, activism and feminism, among others. Together with her team of international and local volunteers, she is forming an organization around MSYP that will offer other education-related projects for the youth.

**Katrina Martell**  
Columbia University



Born and raised in Dallas, TX, Katrina Martell is a 2016 graduate of Columbia University with a B.A. in Economics and Political Science. Her undergraduate years were spent learning to row for the Women's team, managing a retail store, consulting in case competitions, interning at the Clinton Foundation, and working at Columbia's nonprofit, Community Impact. At CI, she began with mentoring her "Little Sis" and volunteering as a youth programs coordinator, eventually earning a voting seat on the Board. She currently researches LGBT policy issues for a Columbia Law project in addition to working at Union Theological Seminary at Columbia. Katrina plans to pursue a career at the intersections of law, advocacy, and policy.

*"The Humanity in Action Fellowship is an amazing opportunity to see and learn about a new place while meeting like-minded and socially conscious people."*

**Jorinde van der Meijden**  
University of Amsterdam



Jorinde van der Meijden graduated in September 2016 in Holocaust & Genocide Studies (MA) at the UvA/NIOD. In her studies she mainly focused on ideological violence against national and ethnic groups in Europe and the Soviet Union in the 20th century. During her undergraduate studies she often traveled to the Balkans to add a personal experience to the academic reading at university. She wrote her MA thesis on the ethnic cleansing of Italians in Trieste and the Istrian peninsula by the Yugoslav troops during the Second World War. After finishing her studies, she tries to keep up with the developments within her field and is very interested in the news of the Balkan region and in particular Bosnia Herzegovina and Kosovo.



**Rachel Salcedo**  
Pace University



Rachel Salcedo lives in New York City, and this spring she will be graduating with a double major in Women's and Gender Studies and Peace and Justice Studies. Having spent the last year working with PAX, an international peacebuilding organization that works closely with the United Nations on issues like Syria, South Sudan, and Iraq, she has become incredibly interested in the ways that marginalized groups are often left out of the high-level workings of diplomacy, transitional justice, and reconciliation. She is also deeply invested in understanding the barriers that stand in the way for communication between groups, and has spent the last year researching diaspora groups in activist groups surrounding Israel/Palestine.

**Alia Schwelling**  
Maastricht University



Alia graduated from Maastricht University with a BA in European Studies in 2016. Her research and political interests are primarily concerned with migration and asylum. Throughout her studies, Alia participated in a research project on refugees in Europe and completed an internship at the Centre for Political Beauty in Berlin. She coordinated a cultural festival and a student teacher organisation in Maastricht. After her studies she moved to Berlin, where she worked for a project that seeks to create spaces for intercultural exchange with refugee women, participated in the Refugee Law Clinic and is currently working at a contact and consultation centre for refugees and migrants called KuB. Alia plans to continue her studies with a Masters degree in Migration Studies or Human Rights this fall.

**Bono Siebelink**  
Bard College Berlin



Bono Siebelink is from the Netherlands, currently living in Berlin. In 2013, he moved to Bosnia and Herzegovina for two years to finish high school, while studying political philosophy, art and literature at a university in Berlin. Bono is mainly interested in issues of social justice, sociology and social history. Besides this, he really lives for music. Over the past years, he has engaged in different activities related to the political circumstances of the places he has lived in, through for example clowning for children in Bosnia, or organising German language classes for refugees in Berlin.

*"I was impressed with the amount of lectures in the program. The Fellowship was a very interesting experience which requires intensive work, but the reward at the end is great."*

**Virginia Spinks**  
Emory University



Virginia Spinks is a recent graduate from Emory University where she double-majored in Dance and a joint major of Religion and Anthropology. She has also earned an unofficial minor in Arabic language and spent time abroad at Al-Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco. During her time at Emory she was heavily involved in the dance community and in Campus Life, working to foster dialogue around problems of diversity and inclusion. She completed her honors thesis in Anthropology and Religion entitled, "The Silence of Narrative Echo Chambers: An Analysis of College Students' Perceptions of the Connection between Islam and Terrorism." She was named one of Atlanta's Top 20 Under 20 in 2013 for her work with the homeless community. After the fellowship, she plans to return to Atlanta to work as a professional dancer, while pursuing human rights work with local non-profits, focussing on integration and immigration.

*"The Humanity in Action Fellowship program is rigorous in the way the best and most productive learning environments should be."*

**Daria "Daca" Vilišić**  
University of Tuzla



Daria completed her Bachelor's studies at the University of Tuzla. She is a full-time activist and a youth trainer of intercultural competences, social cohesion, advocacy, and gender-based violence. Daria gained a valuable leadership experience through executive positions in several local and international student organizations such as AEGEE and AIESEC. She is a board member of the Forum of Social and Political Science, a representative of Youth Movement „Revolt” in Coalition Against Hate-Tuzla supported by the OSCE, and a member of the group for the establishment of Youth Council in Tuzla. Daria has a vast experience in journalism and media, since she worked as a journalist on the local radio and local TV stations for a long time. Having a passion for literature and literary criticism, she writes reviews of recently published books.

*"I enjoyed exploring Bosnian history through fruitful discussions with lecturers, and I have learned a lot about other cultures and their problems through discussions with other Fellows."*

**Aldin Vrškić**  
University of Sarajevo



Aldin Vrškić was born in Zenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina and is currently enrolled as a student of International Relations and Diplomacy studies in Sarajevo. Aldin was part of several regional youth projects as a participant, speaker and coordinator. He was also a member of a non-formal group of activists that organized two major protests in B&H: ID number and Erasmus+. Aldin currently works for a local NGO on international projects and is a co-founder of and a writer for the first satiric portal in B&H, karakter.ba. Over the last eight years, he has worked on many projects and with different NGO's such as: HIA, YIHR, SHL, Swiss Helsinki Committee, AIESEC and he is also a trainer for non-formal education.



### **Legacies of the Conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Facing Truths, Realities and Consequences**

Dr. Nicolas Moll (Independent Researcher)



Dr. Nicolas Moll, a historian who works as an independent researcher in Sarajevo, had a pleasure to give an introductory lecture to newly arrived Fellows at the very beginning of the Fellowship. Dr. Moll thoroughly presented the history of the Balkan region focusing particularly on the Bosnian war in 1992-1995, and the post-conflict dynamics. Dr. Moll described ethnic composition in BiH, the current political landscape of the country, and commented on many legacies of the conflict. His presentation was followed by a number of questions related to the historical evolution of the country, reasons for ethnic divisions as well as the current political challenges, among others.

### **Collective Memory of Mass Atrocities in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

Hikmet Karčić (Senior Associate, Institute for Islamic Tradition of Bosniaks)

Mr. Karčić discussed the role of the collective memory of mass atrocities within BiH, in the aftermath of a violent conflict, taking place in the '90s. He argued that different collective memories exist in each of the three ethnic groups, and they are instrumentalized differently within each of the groups. He explained in details the meaning of collective funerals, exhumation of mass graves and a variety of memorials, which fill up public space in Bosnia. Mr. Karčić also mentioned the use of audio-visual tools and learning from witness reports and court evidence as useful practices in preserving the memory and collective narratives.



### **Navigating the Post-Dayton Conundrums**

Dr. Valery Perry (Independent Researcher)



Dr. Perry provided a detailed analysis of the political and legal situation in BiH, after the Dayton Peace Agreement has been signed in 1995. She pointed out three relevant periods in post-Dayton Bosnia: a stabilization phase from 1 December 1995 until 1997, the transitional phase from 1997 until 2006, and the third period from the end of 2006, which lasts until today. Dr. Perry argued that the Bosnian war had no winners or losers since the core issues have not been resolved, and this is why the situation in the country is quiet but not very stable.

## Rendering Justice from Afar: Local Perceptions of the Role of the ICTY in Prosecuting War Crimes

Almir Alić (Registry Liaison, ICTY Office in Sarajevo)

Mr. Alić talked about the role of the ICTY in prosecuting those who committed crimes during the wars in former Yugoslavia, as well as the next steps as the tribunal hands over responsibility to domestic courts after its closing at the end of 2017. He provided a background of the wars that took place in former Yugoslavia between 1991 and 1999, while stressing that young citizens in BiH still feel the effects of the war every day and are living the consequences of this war. The court is helping to fight denial of crimes committed during the wars in the former Yugoslavia. The court has given a voice to the many victims of the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, including the 140,000 killed and millions of displaced people. More than 500 witnesses have testified at the tribunal, with over 85% of them not having any form of protection of identity. Of the 161 persons tried before the ICTY, including senior political and military leaders, 20 have pled guilty, while 80 have been convicted, with a sentences of over 1100 years of imprisonment, as well as five life sentences.



## IDPs and Returnees in BiH: Unresolved Questions and Socio-political Dilemmas

Dr. Selma Porobić (Center for Interdisciplinary Studies, University of Sarajevo)

Dr. Porobić spoke to the fellows about internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees to BiH following the war in the 1990s. She told the fellows her personal story of leaving BiH at the start of the war and eventually settling in Sweden, which was the only country accepting refugees in the early 1990s. She presented findings from three recent research projects related to return and migration, with a focus on forced



migration in the former Yugoslavia, and showed a documentary film she filmed earlier this year. Fellows learned that there remain people with refugee status over 20 years after the war ended. After the war, there were 2.2 million displaced in BiH: 1.2 million refugees and 1 million IDPs. The last registration of IDPs was done in 2006, with 100,000 IDPs still in BiH and 8,000 of these still living in camps. Dr. Porobić's own study found there are differences in the different generations that exist within returnees.

## Failing to Keep "the Peace": Learning from the Recovery and Identification of the Missing in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Admir Jugo (Ph.D. Candidate, Durham University)

Mr. Jugo talked about the exhumation of mass graves, the job he does on a regular basis. He explained an ongoing process of exhumation of mass graves in BiH, where bodies from 52 mass graves have been already exhumed. After the exhumation, the bones are washed and examined in the laboratories where victims' age and sex are determined. Finally, on the basis of kinship the DNA of victims is compared with

the one of the relatives. If the conditions are perfect the computer takes at least one week to find a match between the DNAs, which is a very costly process. It is a lengthy process since bodies fall apart, they are mixed and in the state of decomposition, which makes the identification of victims more difficult. Mr. Jugo stressed the importance of exhumations whose goal is to alleviate uncertainty of family members and let them close a painful chapter with a proper funeral of their murdered relatives.



### Seeking Justice for Women Victims of War

Armela Ramić (Legal Associate, Ademović, Nožica & Partners Law Office)



Ms. Ramić talked about the process of seeking justice for women war victims in BiH. She discussed legal and moral aspects of holding perpetrators accountable for the rape crimes they committed in wartime. Ms. Ramić thoroughly described the criminal procedure and the imbalance between the treatment of victims and perpetrators. Perpetrators have a right to two or even three lawyers, whereas victims have no access to free legal aid, psychological assistance, or social welfare. If victims are traumatized and come alone to the

court, they do not want to testify and answer extremely intimate questions in front of the public. The initiative to provide women war-victims free legal aid was so far rejected four times by the parliament. Only fifteen cases have been resolved before the courts. After Ms. Ramić's presentation, Fellows asked many questions related to the stigmatization of raped women, male sexual violence, wartime abortions and lack of sexual education.

### The Yugoslav Powder Keg - Ethnopolitics Dominating Rational Minds

Dr. Asim Mujkić (Professor at Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Sarajevo)

Dr. Mujkić spoke about the political elites of imagined national states which had to handle the process of ethnical "unmixing". He discussed how the nationalist democratic revolutions gave birth to a new consolidation of nation states, thus repeating the process of nation-building. He claimed that this primitive process of nation-building is paradoxically a European concept. Most of the European countries such as Germany, France or Poland became ethnically consolidated after the Second





World War and today they are rewarded for that by being part of the European Union. Those states, which after the war failed to have one dominant national group, are considered today to be the source of instability. Since the elites failed to nationalize states and manage the diversities into the “manageable”, these states are far from the EU accession. Fellows wondered if there is no alternative to the nation-state model and how could it work in the case of BiH.

### **Democratic Representation in Multi-Ethnic States**

Dr. Damir Kapidžić (Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Political Science, University of Sarajevo)



Dr. Kapidžić set off his presentation by asking Fellows what is the meaning of democracy and how it works. He explained in details the concepts of representational democracy and descriptive representation. The latter, mainly based on the concept of identity, is the root of the Bosnian power-sharing model. The speaker challenged Fellows several times asking them why Bosnians vote for people of the same ethnicity; why the divisions along ethnic lines are almost impossible to overcome and how

power in Bosnia is represented? He argued that ethnic power-sharing and corruption constitute the core problem in BiH, and only education and pressure from religious leaders could make a significant changes in Bosnia.

### **Consociation in a Post-Conflict Society: A Recipe for Success?**

Dr. Midhat Izmirlija (Assistant Professor at the University of Sarajevo Faculty of Law)

Dr. Izmirlija explained the concept of consociational democracy, a power-sharing model with power distributed along ethnic lines. In such a model rights belong not to individuals, but to the groups. The speaker explained the difference between the democracy of nation-state and consociational democracy as well as the pros and cons of the latter. He pointed out the lack of real opposition in the parliament as one of the most striking problem in BiH's politics. The existing opposition groups form in relation to



their nationals active in the parliament, and not in the opposition to their programs. The same situation occurs in the NGOs and media, the issue that leads to the fragmentation of the whole country. He mentioned that there is no mutual cooperation between different cantons and argued that the minimum consensus for different ethnicities to live together is the consent to peace, which is not enough in his opinion. Dr. Izmirlija argued that in such divided societies, like BiH, consociational democracy will not be easily abandoned and will last for hundreds of years most probably deepening further the existing ethnic divisions.



## Mosaic of Human Rights in BiH: Attainable, Segregated, Denied?

Dr. Jasminka Džumhur (Ombudsperson for Human Rights of BiH)



Dr. Džumhur talked about the history of the office of the Ombudsperson for Human Rights in BiH, which was established in 1996. She was first appointed the Ombudsperson for Human Rights in December 2008. The office is composed of three departments – minorities, children and persons with disabilities. On annual basis, the office receives about 3.000 complaints, and more than half are related to political rights. There are also many cases related to judiciary and the phenomenon of “two schools under one roof”. Besides, the office has issued a special report on LGBT rights and currently it is working on the report on journalists. Dr. Džumhur answered a number of questions posed by Fellows and finished her speech with a call for women and young people to get involved in decision-making in BiH.

## Establishing a Secular State in a Multiconfessional Society

Dr. Dino Abazović (Professor at University of Sarajevo Faculty of Political Science)

Dr. Abazović, who specializes in sociology of religion, started his lecture with an argument that for last 200 years we have been noticing the decline of the “church”. He argued that we witness the decline in the popularity and impact of religious beliefs due to the advance of science. Dr. Abazović briefly presented three main features of modern societies, the fragmentation of societies and social life, disappearance of the community and a growth of bureaucracies, as well as its increasing rationalization. However, he pinpointed that nowadays religion is once again increasingly becoming more and more significant. Dr. Abazović discussed three models of accommodating relations between state and religion and particularly focused on a secular state. For Dr. Abazović, there must be a distinction between religious rights and religious feelings, as only rights can be protected by the state. The fellows asked a number of questions, including what different strategies are for addressing secularism, which Dr. Abazović believed were dependent on actions of both the state and the organized religion in that state.



## Human Rights Protection at the State Level in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Aiša Telalović (Senior Associate, Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of BiH)



Mrs. Telalović discussed the Dayton Peace Agreement and its provisions in the context of promotion and protection of HR in the Bosnian society. She stressed that the amendment of the constitution is indispensable, so that all Bosnians can apply for any position in the country. She argues that diversity should be the most predominant value and it should be nurtured. Currently, in the light of the BH constitution, only Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats can hold certain high public office positions in BiH. Members of any other minorities such as for

example, Jews or Roma, and other nationalities people living in Bosnia, are excluded from that level of political representation. Mrs. Telalović pointed out the need for active citizenship, which is the best way for bringing social and political change in BiH. She argued that everyone owns the process of reforming Bosnia, but people do not believe that the overall reform is possible. In her opinion, people are not trying hard enough to change the status quo, but they remain active in its support.

## Bosnia and Herzegovina 22 Years after Dayton – An (Un)Pacified Country at the Crossroads

Dr. Dennis Gratz (Sarajevo School of Science and Technology and Member of the Parliament of FBiH)



Sarajevo Fellows had a chance to learn more about the post-Dayton challenges in politics and economics with Dr. Dennis Gratz, actively involved in politics since 2008. He provided Fellows with an overview of political and social events since the Dayton Peace Agreement in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He presented the political system and ethnic composition of the country. Dr. Gratz argued that in Bosnia since 2006 there has been a status quo, which is now slowly turning into a break-up of the country. There is a need for more active push-

back and formation of stronger political alliances to fight the dominant ethno-national narratives. The lecture ended with a short Q&A session.

## Civil Society Initiatives in BiH

Darko Brkan (President of Association "Why Not?")

Mr. Brkan runs an organization which deals with active daily monitoring of the government's actions and the fulfillment of electoral promises made by politicians. Mr. Brkan discussed with Fellows the role and the state of civil society organizations (CSOs) in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the past two decades. In his view, CSOs play a role of systematic watchdogs of the government and parliament; they monitor corruption and misuse of power. He claimed that in total there are around 12.000



CSOs in BiH, but only a couple of hundred are active. In his opinion, the local CSOs are the most efficient since they belong to the community. The fragmentation of the CSOs, political polarization and variety of opinions within the country increases the frustration of society. Mr. Brkan also described the active role he and his organization had during the protests in 2013 and February of 2014.



### International Community's Involvement in Post-Conflict Reconstruction of BiH

Adela Pozder-Čengić (Head of Sector for Rural and Regional Development at UNDP BiH)

Mrs. Adela Pozder-Čengić talked to the HIA Fellows about the international development aid in Bosnia and Herzegovina since 1995. She discussed the beginnings, evolution and the current shape of the UNDP's development aid in Bosnia, and gave an overview of the

major challenges in each of the stages. She talked about the role and structure of UNDP today, and focused on discussing key success stories connected to sustainable development at local levels, as well as various initiatives in UNDP branch offices in Srebrenica, Bihać, and elsewhere.

### Civil Courage in Times of War and Peace

Dr. Svetlana Broz (GARIWO)

Dr. Broz engaged in a discussion about the role and aims of civil society organizations (CSOs) in post-conflict societies. She argued that young people in BiH are very much influenced by politicians and they are obsessed with the question of identity, which easily becomes a tool in hands of politicians. Although a person can have countless identities in BiH children are taught that they have only two identities – the national one and the religious one. Children and students do not know what it means to be a citizen and how to behave like one. Dr.



Broz confronted Fellows with a question: which identity they would easily give up? Their answers varied a lot. Some of them pinpointed ethno-national identity, national identity. One of the Fellows stated that she could not give up her identity, but she could change it. Afterwards, Dr. Broz discussed with Fellows how to support young people to put pressure on others and how to foster their civil courage.



## Bosnian Diaspora: Mobilization Abroad

Dr. Dženeta Karabegović (University of Warwick)

Dr. Karabegović spoke to Fellows about the Bosnian diaspora and mobilization abroad. At the very beginning of her talk she asked Fellows how diaspora is relevant and whether any Fellow is a member of the diaspora. On the basis of her research Dr. Karabegović presented the influence of the Bosnian diaspora on the transitional justice in BiH. An estimated one third of BiH's population lives outside of its territory. She discussed the differences between the Bosnian diaspora in Sweden, Germany, France and Switzerland. Their ways of mobilizing vary from country to country. For instance, in Sweden Banja Lukans release their own magazine, establish associations, organize events and attend collectively the commemorations held in Bosnia, such as Srebrenica or White Armband Day in Prijedor. Nevertheless, the voter turnout is relatively low for the diaspora in all four countries.



## BiH and the EU Integration Process

HE Mr. Khaldoun Sinno (Deputy Head of the EU Delegation in BiH)



Mr. Khaldoun Sinno gave a presentation on the EU accession procedure, and steps BiH governments need to take to successfully complete the process. Mr. Sinno talked about the Copenhagen criteria set up in 1993, which have to be fulfilled by the states aspiring to enter the EU. The criteria concern the state of democratic institutions, state of the rule of law, market economy and the ability to adopt *acquis communautaire*. Fellows asked a number of questions about the relationship between the EU and the UN in BiH, the influence of Russia and Turkey on BiH and

potential negative consequences of BiH's accession to the EU. Mr. Sinno addressed some of them and emphasized that there are still too few CSOs in BiH where the society does not put enough pressure on politicians. In his opinion, the best solution is to regularly vote and become politically active. He argued that you empower MPs by making them important and contacting them.

## Social Identities in (Post-)Conflict Societies

Dr. Sabina Čehajić-Clancy (Professor and Dean of Political Science Department, Sarajevo School of Science and Technology)

Dr. Čehajić-Clancy, a trained psychologist whose research is focused on the reconciliation process, spoke with the Fellows about social identities in (post-) conflict societies with a particular focus on youth in BiH. She mostly discussed the Bosnian context, however, she also admitted that the Bosnian society is not exceptional in dealing with the process of transitional justice. Since in all post-conflict scenarios the perception of “other” is very negative, it is crucial to answer a question how to move further and restore the trust that has been damaged. Dr. Čehajić-Clancy discussed in depth the approach she adopts while conducting interviews with people. The key point of these conversations is to be non-judgmental and try to find a common ground with interviewees. Such a point of departure makes it easier to achieve reconciliation which should be based on three elements: the acknowledgement of the past, intergroup forgiveness and acceptance of moral responsibility. Dr. Čehajić-Clancy explained that the process of reconciliation is non-measurable, because its goal is to regulate negative emotions such as fear, anxiety and anger. Dr. Čehajić-Clancy described the concept of communication of moral variability based on the idea of communicating to people that those belonging to the opposite group are not all the same. The research showed that such a mechanism increases intergroup understanding and enhances the reconciliation process. Such a technique could be also effective as a preventive mechanism in a non-post-conflict society.



## Rights and Freedoms of the LGBTQI Community in BiH

Slobodanka Dekić (Associate, Media Center)



Ms. Dekić focused her talk on explaining how it is difficult (and almost impossible) for gay people to openly declare their sexual orientation in public space in BiH. Consequently, they cannot get married, they have to hide their partners and their lives from others. The situation is even more difficult for transgender people who do not find any form of social acceptance, and have to go abroad to get medical assistance in order to change their sex. Fellows asked Mrs. Dekić a number of questions about her involvement in the LGBTQI community, the cooperation with international LGBTQI community and the relation between the sexuality and religious perspective.

## Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina: a Retrospective

Dr. Lamija Tanović (Professor at Sarajevo School of Science and Technology, HIA BiH Board Chair)

Dr. Tanović provided an overview of the country's educational history. She discussed the consequences of war in BiH and presented to Fellows the current situation of BiH explaining the change in the country's ethnic composition and influences on the education system. She described the divided educational system in Travnik, Stolac and Mostar, which are examples of "two schools under one roof". She explained the functioning of secondary schools and universities in BiH. At the end of her presentation Dr. Tanović opened a Q&A session.





## Structural Economic Issues in Post-conflict BiH

Damir Šaljić (Advisor, British Embassy in Sarajevo)



Mr. Šaljić, started off with a brief overview of the economic situation in BiH. Before the recession the economic growth was significant, however, after the recession since 2012 it is about 3%. The GDP of the country is about 17 bln, which is the equivalent of money generated by the New York City in three months. Despite the slowdown of the economy, the Bosnian currency, fixed by the international community, is one of the most stable currencies in the world. Mr. Šaljić discussed three main reasons for such a state of affairs

pointing out the unemployment, excess of employment in public institutions as well as grey zone. First of all, a high rate of unemployment is the most striking problem in the country. Second, the excess of employment in public administration and state-owned companies constitutes a great challenge for the Bosnian economy. For instance, BiH Telecom is a state owned company, which employs 3500 people, but in reality it needs only 2000 employees. On top of that, in order to get such a job people first get into a political party, which obviously sustains a huge patronage network. Mr. Šaljić argued that the economy will shape Bosnia's future – "When the economy is growing it is easier to make decisions, the focus shifts. When you are hungry, do not have a job, you make bad decisions".

## >> WORKSHOPS

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### Movie Screening "Missing You..."

Mirna Buljugić (Executive Director, Balkan Investigative Reporting Network – BIRN BiH)

Mrs. Buljugić opened her presentation with a short intro on transitional justice in BiH. Then she played a documentary film on the missing persons entitled: "Missing You...". After the movie screening Fellows had opportunity to ask a number of questions. They inquired about the choice of best stories for the movie, the

research process for the documentary and specific stories of the people. Mrs. Buljugić explained to them what the process was like, and she highlighted that the goal of the movie was to tell individual stories regardless of people's nationalities, but to have a composition on view that would follow a certain TJ issue.

### Visit to Special Department on War Crimes

Boris Grubešić (Spokesperson at the BH Prosecutor's Office)

Fellows had an opportunity to take part in the meeting at the Prosecutor's Office where they met with officials from the Special Department on War Crimes. During the presentation Fellows got to know the history, current developments, future plans and the structure of the Prosecutor's Office. Mr. Grubešić provided an overview of the office, including that there are 550 employees at state level institutions. Of this, 56 prosecutors work in three departments; the Special Department for War Crimes, the Special Department for Organized Crime, Economic Crime and Corruption, and Department III, each of which contains different sections working on different crimes under these umbrellas. He talked about the relationship the State Prosecutor's Office has with the ICTY, including the benchmark verdicts made by the ICTY related to genocide that states that the intention to commit genocide makes it a different type of crime. The ICTY is also the only jurisprudence that affects the work of the court of BiH. At the end there was time for a Q&A session.





## Psychodrama Workshop on Discrimination and Stereotypes

Zvezdana Jakić and Vedrana Rebić (Psihodrama Association)

The Fellows engaged in a series of exercises such as free flow of associations, emotions management, and creation of body sculptures. After the emotionally charged part of the workshop, Fellows had the opportunity to share their experiences.

## Media Accountability and Responsible Reporting

Maida Bahto Kestendžić and Đenan Ćosović (Press Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina)

During the media workshop led by Mrs. Bahto Kestendžić and Mr. Ćosović, Fellows exchanged views on the various practices of media ownership, media transparency, media literacy, hate speech and fake news referring to the examples from their home states (the United States, Germany, Denmark, Poland, Bulgaria, Bosnia). Throughout the workshop Fellows arrived to the conclusions that it is of utmost importance to promote free media and human rights, enhance critical thinking and educate people how to differentiate facts from opinions.



## Visit to Al Jazeera Balkans Headquarters

Melina Kamerić (Head of AJB PR & Communications)



Al Jazeera Balkans has offices throughout the region, with newscasters speaking the local language in each of the areas except Kosovo. The channel was established in 2011 and is funded by the Al Jazeera media network, meaning it is not dependent on advertisers and political actors. Mrs. Kamerić responsible for PR and communications, hosted Fellows at the Al Jazeera Balkans Studio in Sarajevo. Mrs. Kamerić gave a brief overview and key developments of Al Jazeera Balkans since its first broadcasting from Sarajevo. Fellows discussed with her the involvement of media in local politics and the phenomenon of fake news.



### Panel on Young Women in BH Politics

Ms. Jelena Kunić (SNSD) and Ms. Lamija Tiro (Naša stranka)

After the initial introduction, the panelists discussed various topics related to effective representation of women in BH politics. They both agreed that it is difficult to get information on how to get involved in the political activities, and that it is not easy to speak out, especially as a woman. They also pointed out that men regularly appear in TV shows, whereas women are not so eagerly invited to media. If some of them manage to get into the politics, they are often diminished by their male colleagues and confronted with a number of stereotypes on a daily basis. Despite such obstacles, both panelists argued that it is necessary to include women as decision makers wherever it is possible.



### Workshop on Media Activism

Boris Čović (Center for Cultural and Media Decontamination)



Mr. Čović designed a media workshop in which he wanted to highlight the examples of how young human rights activists can get engaged in promoting their projects. He initially explained the difference between commercial and professional (ethical) media. He argued that if you do not follow media ethics you start a propaganda. His goal was to explain to Fellows how responsible and clear we have to be for any content we publish. In order to make Fellows understand the thin border between facts and assumptions or opinions, he

ran a 'bag exercise'. Mr. Čović organized two more group exercises and at the end he showed a few short videos presenting the work done by his organization.

### Interactive Workshop on "Activism"

Ivana Kešić (Program Manager, CIVITAS BiH):

Ms. Kešić started her interactive workshop asking Fellows what their passions are. Then, she asked them to write down their own policy recommendations for BiH. Fellows suggested several ideas such as among others the educational reform, which would give end to the division of students along ethnic lines, connection of activists, cooperation with other NGOs operating in post-conflict countries and the need for more civic engagement. Then, Fellows were given a task to art prepare performances addressing the policy recommendations and problems they had come up with beforehand. Fellows prepared three artistic performances with the use of artistic expression.





## Communication Skills Workshop

Dijana Duvnjak (Foundation 787)



Ms. Duvnjak started off her presentation by asking Fellows what kind of listeners they are she shared with them her knowledge about active listening techniques e.g. repeating the words of your interlocutor, paying attention, showing that you are listening, getting feedback, not judging, being polite in your response. Ms. Duvnjak told the difference between being passive, assertive and aggressive. The theoretical introduction was followed by two practical exercises on communication and body language. Ms. Duvnjak

finished the workshop by stating: "People usually do not remember what you said, but how they felt while being with you".

## >> STUDY TRIPS

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### >> BANJA LUKA: NEW PERSPECTIVES

#### From Dayton to Brussels, via Tuzla – Post-2014 Political and Economic Restructuring in BiH

Dr. Danijela Majstorović (Associate Professor at the Faculty of Philology, University of Banja Luka)

Dr. Majstorović spoke to the fellows about an article she co-authored, on the post-2014 political and economic restructuring in BiH. For Dr. Majstorović, the main problem in BiH is that the war isn't over, as there still exists a war rhetoric and logic in many things creating a negative peace. She identified three phases of the politico-economic restructuring in BiH. The first period, between 1996 and 2006, was mainly a period where "carrot and stick" incentives were used for restructuring. The period between 2006 and 2014 was marked with a weaker level of international influence and an increase in ethno-nationalism. Post-2014, the main focus has been on the Compact for Growth document, which proposed six measures that were criticized from all sides as austerity and for being written in a "know-it-all" tone. The Compact was also criticized for removing implementation of the Sejdić/Finci verdict from its priorities. Dr. Majstorović argued that the protests that occurred in BiH in 2014 lead to a shared sense of identity, with people being equally at a loss with the capitalist system in place in what she termed a "plundered country". She called the show of solidarity in Republika Srpska with the protests in the Federation unprecedented.



#### Local Transitions and Wider Impacts

Gordana Katana (Journalist at Oslobođenje)

Gordana Katana presented her personal opinion about the situation in BiH. She has been researching and writing about the post-conflict transitional challenges in BiH, and expressed her deep concerns with the current political set up inherited after the Dayton Peace Agreement.



## >> PRIJEDOR: WHITE ARMBAND DAY

### Talk with Kemal Pervanić (Founder of Most Mira) and White Armband Day walk through Prijedor

Fellows met with Mr. Pervanić, survivor of the concentration camp, who is the founder of Most Mira and a local peacebuilder. He is also planning to open a Peace Center where children of different ethnicities will have the opportunity to play together and get to know each other. Mr. Pervanić talked about his experience in the concentration camp and most importantly the difficult relations with neighbors after the war. He showed Fellows the rebuilt mosque in his village and the memorial dedicated to the victims of the Bosnian genocide. In the second part of the day Fellows went to Prijedor where they took part in the White Armband Day.



### Local Activism in Prijedor

Goran Zorić and Branko Ćulibrk (Youth Center Kvat)

After the march Fellows had the opportunity to meet with local activists from Kvat, Mr. Zorić and Mr. Ćulibrk, who spoke about local human rights initiatives Kvat initiated in the past few years, and their long-standing fights with local community in promoting the rights of the LGBTQI population in the city.

## >> SREBRENICA: REMEMBERING THE GENOCIDE

Fellows went for a study trip to Srebrenica where they participated in a two-hour guided tour of the Srebrenica-Potočari Memorial Center, led by Mr. Hasan Hasanović. Fellows were able to explore the graveyard where thousands of victims of the genocide have been buried and continue to be buried there on the anniversary of the start of the genocide each 11th of July. The guide, who was one of the Srebrenica survivors, gave Fellows a concise historical overview of the events, which took place before and after the genocide. Fellows saw the memorial center, visited the museum and watched a documentary screened in the museum titled "A week in July".



## >> ZENICA: SOCIAL DIALOGUE AND WORKERS' RIGHTS

Fellows went for a day study trip to Zenica, a predominantly industrial city, where they visited the ArcelorMittal steel and mining company. The group met with Mr. Bajro Melez, President of the Union of Workers in the Metal Industry, and Mr. Kenan Mujkanović, President of the Cantonal Committee of the Union of Workers in the Metal Industry. They gave an overview of the challenges local unions face in fighting for the workers' rights. The trip to the factory was followed by a visit to a local youth CSO managed by Aldin Vrškić, one of the fellows, who presented with his colleagues the work of the organization and held there his Fellow's talk.



## >> STOLAC AND MOSTAR

The final study trip of the Fellowship was in Herzegovina: the Fellows had the opportunity to visit the Radimlja stećak necropolis and Mak Dizdar's Art House in Stolac, with Dr. Gorčin Dizdar, who later took the Fellows on a guided tour of the city and provided them with an overview of its history and discussed the current divisions. In the afternoon, the Fellows visited the United World College in Mostar, where the PR of UWC, Ms. Adla Velagić-Čurić talked about the importance of the school and its impact on the society. The day ended with a Fellows' Talk by Vlatka Lučić.





At the end of the program, all Fellows were required to produce an output based on what they had learned during the previous month, in the form of an essay, presentation, series of photographs, or a short video.

### >> STARI MOST: AN UNLIKELY SYMBOL FOR CHANGE

Essay by Katrina Martell, HIA Sarajevo 2017 Fellow

A feat of Ottoman architecture, a “crescent moon in stone,”<sup>1</sup> and even a diving board for local entrepreneurial performers: The bridge in Mostar is one of the most iconic and stunning monuments that I have explored during my one month Fellowship with Humanity in Action (HIA) in Bosnia. The bridge, or Stari Most, has served as complex and dynamic symbolism over time. The bridge can be seen as a romanticizing symbol of a lost collective culture which was both multi-ethnic and multi-confessional. Alternatively, the bridge can be a divisive epitome of a country fractured by ethnonational differences. Do the consequences of these juxtaposed symbolic interpretations serve to perpetuate an already divided country? I will argue that emerging perceptions of the symbolic bridge prompt an interrogation of why these divisions exist and whether educational reform can begin to mend them.

Stari Most is the 16<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman architectural and engineering feat. In 1993, the Croat army destroyed this bridge, which was in a predominantly Bosniak neighborhood, as a strategic military move and as an act of defiance. As an irrefutable part of a shared colonial past, it's history nostalgically recalls the coexistence of multi-ethnic diversity at the fringes of empire for centuries up until the Yugoslav Wars, and subsequent Bosnian War of 1992-95. Despite it's call towards recollection of shared culture, one cannot admire the bridge as a national monument without recognizing that the original piece of history fell victim to the war. Thus many authors have termed this destruction a “betrayal” of a peaceful multi-ethnic and multi-confessional past.<sup>2</sup> Since the ethno-nationalist sentiments that drove the war still exist today, they now serve as a different driver, a driver of political divides. As previously mentioned, the bridge in Mostar is sometimes regarded as a shared symbol of a better past, calling for the formation of a collective national identity. However, this more idealistic viewpoint is complicated by the wartime destruction of the original architecture. Thus, the bridge is also an embodied metaphor for the tragic crumbling of pre-war coexistence. Therefore, this second, more negative perception of Stari Most is argued to epitomize the current political fractures in Bosnia. These current societal fractures are emphasized by nationalist politicians and perpetuated by a divisive education system. Most of the schools operating under the now illegal “2 Schools Under 1 Roof” policy are concentrated in Stolac and Mostar.<sup>3</sup>

The explanation that the old bridge in Mostar represents a now unreachable symbol of past diversity is a romanticized notion and the metaphor for the current divides is negative and overly narrow.

*While it may successfully generate tourist dollars, if this ideology is appealing and meaningful only to Bosnian Muslim urbanites and the international community, the future of Stari Most bodes well neither as a ‘bridge between cultures’ nor as a solution to help negotiate post-war ethnic and religious conflict.<sup>4</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Unknown contemporary Muslim poet

<sup>2</sup> Donia and Fine, 1994, Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Tradition Betrayed; Sells, 1996, The Bridge Betrayed: Religion and Genocide in Bosnia

<sup>3</sup> Toe, Rodolfo. “Bosnia’s Segregated Schools Perpetuate Ethnic Divisions.” *Balkan Insight* (2016).

<sup>4</sup> Grodach, Carl. “Reconstituting identity and history in post-war Mostar, Bosnia-Herzegovina.” *City* 6.1 (2002): 61-82.



Bosnia's so-called constituent peoples may not all view the symbolism of Stari Most in such simplified terms. Neither the sentimental nor the divisive vision of the bridge discussed earlier are fully expressive of what the bridge means to people now and can mean in the future. To Vlatka Lucic, a current resident of Mostar and Humanity in Action Sarajevo Fellow, the bridge represents something different, it represents home. Vlatka travelled to Mostar from Sarajevo as a refugee when she was 6, remembering that the city "adopted" her. Because of this, she now works on youth education and engagement through many roles, including teaching at United World College and coordinating a summer youth curriculum focusing on reconciliation topics. Even during the first decade of reconstruction, small hints of a seemingly positive shift in perceptions of the bridge began to appear. In 2004, Milan Miletovic, a Croat ambulance driver in Mostar, drove across the bridge to answer an emergency call from the predominantly Muslim side of the city. He viewed his rare action as a "normal" part of doing his job, a striking contrast even to the norms for pizza deliverymen at the time, who would not accept orders from across this bridge and other ethnic and religious fault lines (The Guardian 2004).<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, the bridge is increasingly becoming a place where intentionally symbolic acts towards reconciliation can be enacted. Lejla Hasandedic, a refugee who fled to Mostar at the age of 4, was part of one such act. "The student council at Lejla's secondary school decided to challenge the ethnic divisions by crossing the bridge together." It took Lejla and fellow students at one of the "2 Schools Under 1 Roof" almost one year to convince those who were fearful for their safety to participate. "It was not just crossing the bridge as a building or a monument, but it was for us crossing the bridge between us, crossing the bridge between borders in our heads and it was a start of building a new and better future for all of us." Lejla is now a psychologist in her hometown of Sarajevo, devoting much of her spare time to peacebuilding activities.<sup>6</sup>

To Lejla and those young people, the bridge could never be sentimental in symbolizing a more multicultural past because they were born during or after the war and that was before their time. After that day, the bridge no longer seemed to symbolize the divisive, war-torn society they were born into either. Rather, crossing the bridge was a moment of recognition of a new narrative, one that was fostered through self-education, critical thinking, and exposure - all in spite of forced segregation. As at Lejla's school, the students of United World College enact a positive display of multiculturalism and community on the bridge annually. During a visit to UWC with HiA, we learned that students of this international school have graduation photos taken on the bridge every year on "Flag Day." On this day, floods of caps, gowns, and dozens of international flags can be seen together with the diverse soon-to-be graduates smiling and waving from the bridge. As increasing numbers of young people participate in peacebuilding education or informal exposure to others, such as the one Vlatka coordinates during the summers at UWC, it seems more and more possible that cultural landmarks such as the bridge along with other manifestations of deeply rooted divisions can be reformed into a more collective, inclusive, Bosnian culture. However, this change must start through educational reform.

Examining the changing perceptions of the iconic Stari Most in Mostar reveal that a mending of the fault lines of Bosnian society must start with education reform. Neither the metaphor of the bridge as a nostalgic memory of past coexistence or as a symbol of post-war ethnonational fractures completely fit the emerging and productive dialogue prompted by certain young people who have benefited from reconciliatory workshops and education. In order to magnify this positive change, educational reform is absolutely necessary and moreover being demanded by young people.

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<sup>5</sup> Traynor, Ian. Bridge opens but Mostar remains a divided city." *The Guardian* (2004).

<sup>6</sup> Unknown. "Story 7: Building Bridges In The City Of The Bridge." *United Network of Young Peacebuilders* (2014).

## >> ENCIRCLING TRAUMA: AN AMERICAN'S EXPLORATION OF COLLECTIVE MEMORY IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Essay by Lydia Ghuman, HIA Sarajevo 2017 Fellow

After the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks, many Americans came together around the rallying cry of "Never Forget." This phrase was branded onto bumper stickers, t-shirts, memorials, and echoed in the protest and gatherings of countless Americans across the country. While the mantra of never forget is an admirable one that has certainly stuck around in the collective memory of Americans, imprinted even on those born after the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks, the way this collective memory has been constructed is problematic. The way Americans choose to remember this event is selective: The event is memorialized in a way that valorizes white Americans, portrays Muslims and Muslim-Americans as the enemy, and that neglects to remember any other person of color's role in the event. America does not remember the undocumented immigrants that ran into the burning twin towers to save people, but could not get treatment for the smoke they inhaled due to hospitals refusing to give them service because of their citizenship status. America does not remember how the murder rate of Muslim-Americans rose in the aftermath of the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks, and how this community still lives in fear. America chooses to forget the outrage that ensued when an artist suggested creating a memorial to 9/11 in NYC that depicted a Mexican, Black, and White firefighter rescuing citizens from the burning building (citizens only wanted white firefighters to be depicted). The way America chooses to remember reinforces America's selective and oppressive memory culture.

While studying in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) during the Humanity in Action Fellowship, I could not help but compare BiH's memory culture surrounding the war and genocide in comparison to America's memory culture surrounding the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks. While these are two completely different events in terms of impact, length, and trauma, they are both events that have generated major trauma for their countries and that have impacted the collective memory of its citizens. While BiH is a country that is still struggling to enact transitional justice, and use it in a way that can improve its social, legal, and economic reform, I believe that its collective memory is much better than America's. The difference between BiH and America is that BiH chooses to encircle trauma in its collective memory. The idea of encircling trauma comes from memory studies professor, Jenny Adkins, and it is the idea that we can't remember trauma as something of the past and that fits into a natural, linear narrative, but something that still affects and disrupts our lives today. In America, the way trauma is remembered (in the context of 9/11) are through memorials that all support one narrative: Muslim enemies attacked America, and American heroes (that are only remembered as white men) sacrificed their lives to save other American citizens, both in the war in Iraq and as first responders on September 11, 2001. The difference with memorials in BiH is that it represents the collective memory of Bosnian Serbs, Bosnian Croats, and Bosniaks. There are memorials representing all sides of the story, showing how this trauma is difficult, and still effects lives here in a complex way. By having problematic memorials from fascist regimes still stand today, by having Bosniak remembrances (such as white armband day) in Republika Srpska, BiH is encircling trauma. It is remembering this trauma in a way that mirrors the pain and difficulty of the generation that experienced the trauma itself. Only by remembering the trauma in its totality and its truth will a society be able to find a way to surpass it and heal from it.

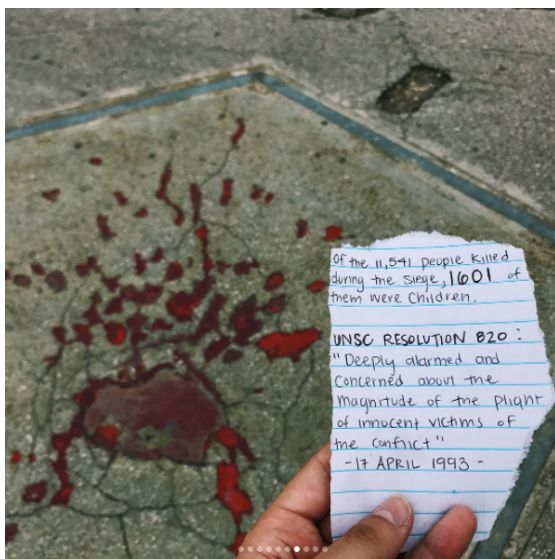
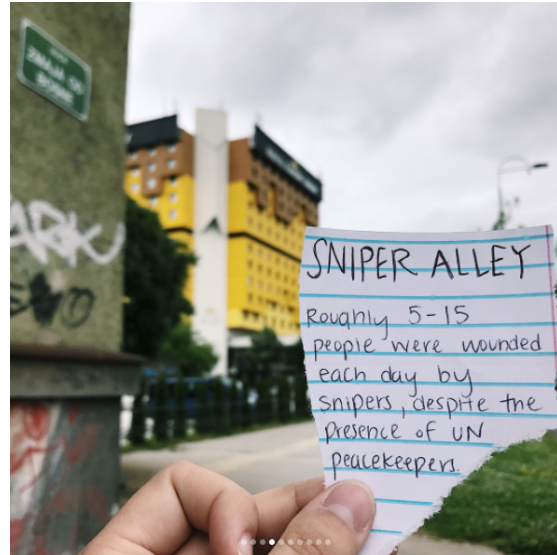
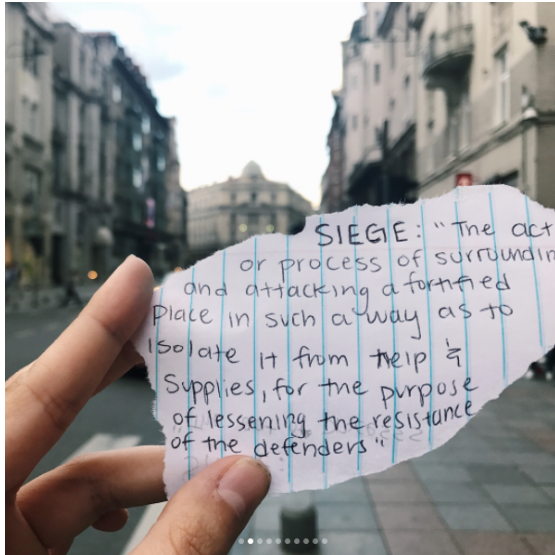
The pictures included in this photo series are memorials and moments I have come across that show how BiH encircles trauma in their society through people, memorials, and activism. While many of the moments in these pictures could be regarded as simple ones, they are radical moments that push this country to remember the atrocities that happened during the war and genocide. These moments, as painful as they are, are the moments that will push BiH to find healing through transitional justice. The moments and people in these pictures must continue and their energy and purpose must be spread to other people if BiH is to transform for the better.





## >> Photo project by Rachel Salcedo, HIA Sarajevo 2017 Fellow

Rachel created a series of photographs, visiting the city's landmarks and locations important for its history, focusing on the war of 1992-1995, and including definitions and descriptions of the sites.



## >> Presentation by Vlatka Lučić, HIA Sarajevo 2017 Fellow

Vlatka's presentation was on the language of monuments in Sarajevo, and how they communicate ideas, values, and identities, and how they impact today's perception of culture of memory in the city.

### World War I monument



- ▶ The plaque marks the spot where the archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated
- ▶ Purely informative
- ▶ No symbols, omissions, labelling or emotional language
- ▶ 'Ideologically neutral'?
- ▶ Script/language: Latin/BCS-English

### World War I monument erected in Yugoslavia



- ▶ Gavrilo Princip's footsteps and original plaque removed in the mid-1990s
- ▶ Script/language: Cyrillic/Serbo-Croatian
- ▶ *From this spot on 28 June, 1914, with his shot, Gavrilo Princip expressed the people's protest against tyranny and centurial aspiration for freedom of our peoples*



## >> SOCIAL NETWORK ACTIVITY

**Humanity in Action**  
20 June at 16:44 · 🌐

Bosnian national TV featured Humanity in Action today! National Director Jasmin Hasic and Fellow Bono Siebelink spoke about the Sarajevo Fellowship and the future of human rights education in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Watch the interview in Bosnian starting at 1:46:32: <http://www.bhrt.ba/.../jutro-za-sve-.../jutro-za-sve-20-06-2017/>



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👍 You, Dženeta Karabegović, Alma Mujanović and 25 others

3 shares

**Humanity in Action Bosnia and Herzegovina** with Malte Breiding Hansen.  
4 June · 🌐

>> The Sarajevo Fellows visited the Srebrenica-Potočari Genocide Memorial Center, where they learned about the atrocities that took place in 1995. #HIA2017 >>



744 people reached

Boost post

👍 Senad Bektic, Cahala Alshaim and 11 others

**Ella Tazuana Johnson** shared Humanity in Action Bosnia and Herzegovina's photo.  
15 June at 18:12 · 🌐

Got to share some spoken word with my fellows today. Looking forward to working on our projects now #znam #fino #dobro #super



**Humanity in Action Bosnia and Herzegovina**  
15 June at 17:02 · 🌐

>> We ended the last day of #HIA2017 lectures in Sarajevo with a Fellow's Talk by Ella Tazuana Johnson. Tomorrow, our Fellows are taking a study trip to Stolac and Mostar, after which they will start working on the development of their Action Projects. Stay tuned for updates! >>

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👍 You, Ivana Kešić, Lydia Singh and 64 others

**Nicole Srbin** #znaš  
Like · Reply · 🗨️ 1 · 15 June at 20:26  
👤 Ella Tazuana Johnson replied · 1 Reply

**Aldin Vrškić** ❤️  
Like · Reply · 26 June at 14:32

**Dženeta Karabegović** shared Humanity in Action Bosnia and Herzegovina's photo.  
13 June at 15:31 · 🌐

Action shot of my lecturing pose. A pleasure to be a speaker for Humanity in Action's Sarajevo Fellowship this morning.



**Humanity in Action Bosnia and Herzegovina**  
13 June at 14:04 · 🌐

>> Our first speaker of the day was Dr. Dženeta Karabegović, who talked about the process of mobilization of the Bosnian diaspora. #HIA2017 >>

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👍 You, Armela Ramic, Selma Hasić and 200 others

View 12 more comments





**Ella Tazuana Johnson** shared Ivana Kešić's video.  
16 hrs · 🌐

Last month I had the privilege to participate and become a Humanity in Action International Fellow in Bosnia and Herzegovina. I learned so much about this post-conflict country and met some very brilliant young people and various Bosnians who are taking action to improve their country. Through lectures, site visits, workshops, etc., my experience was one that I will not forget.

If you are a sophomore to recent grad (up to two years) of any nationality and major in the US (those who are students in European countries have to check the website), and interested in Human Rights and related topics, please consider applying to Humanity in Action (especially if you're a Posse Scholar). I'm glad I did. If you have any questions, feel free to fb message me or email me!

<http://www.humanityinaction.org/.../14-humanity-in-action-fel...>  
Humanity in Action Bosnia and Herzegovina



410 Views

Ivana Kešić posted a video to her Timeline.  
15 June at 19:43 · 🌐

Lydia Singh, Bono Siebelink and 20 others

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**Humanity in Action Bosnia and Herzegovina** with Alma Mujanović and 5 others.  
15 March · 🌐

>> Humanity in Action BiH is pleased to announce our new cohort of Fellows. This year we selected 11 highly successful candidates who will spend their summer in various HIA programs focused on promoting a dialogue about understanding and responding to the challenges that democratic countries face as they become more diverse societies >>



2,161 people reached

Boost post

Maida Mujanović, Ahmed Kosovac and 52 others

7 Comments

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**Dennis Gratz**  
8 June · 🌐

S velikim zadovoljstvom sam jutros u prostorijama Ekonomskog fakulteta u Sarajevu održao predavanje o kapacitetu postojećeg političkog sistema da apsorbuje neophodne promjene kako bi postao funkcionalniji i obezbijedio jednaku primjenu demokratskih standarda na prostoru cijele BiH.

Predavanje je ponuđeno stranim i domaćim studenticama i studentima u sklopu programa Humanity in Action Summer Fellowship, a ovogodišnji moto je simboličan - Breaking Boundaries.

Hvala organizatorima Humanity in Action Bosnia and Herzegovina na pozivu!



Like Comment Share

106

Top comments



**Humanity in Action Bosnia and Herzegovina** with Malte Breiding Hansen.  
28 May · 🌐

>> We're starting the program with Dr. Nicolas Moll, who is currently talking about the '92-'95 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and its legacies. #HIA2017 >>



746 people reached

Boost post

Lydia Singh, Zvezdana Marković and 19 others

Like Comment Share

**Humanity in Action Bosnia and Herzegovina** with Jorinde van der Meijden and 3 others.  
15 June at 11:23 · 🌐

>> After a lecture on the educational system in Bosnia and Herzegovina, #HIA2017 Sarajevo Fellows, together with HIA BiH Board Chair Professor Lamija Tanović, expressed their support to the Građanska Inicijativa "Naša Škola" ("Our School" Initiative) which supports the high school students fighting against divisions within the educational system in Jajce. >>



2,447 people reached

Boost post

👍❤️🌐 Mahir Sijamija, Milan Todorović and 33 others

1 Share

👍 Like    💬 Comment    ➦ Share

**Ivana Kešić** added 10 photos and a video — attending HIA students Artivism Class with Maida Omerčehajić and 3 others at Ekonomski fakultet Univerziteta u Sarajevu.  
15 June at 19:42 · Sarajevo · 🌐

It's been an honor & privilege to work with new generation of #HiA students  
#HIA2017 #sarajevo #bosniaandherzegovina



👍 Like    💬 Comment    ➦ Share

👍❤️🌐 You, Armela Ramic, Maida Omerčehajić and 58 others

**Cahala Alshaim** It was a great pleasure and an honour to work with you!  
Like · Reply · 🌐 1 · 16 June at 19:41

➦ Ivana Kešić replied · 3 Replies

**Humanity in Action Bosnia and Herzegovina** added 2 new photos — with Jorinde van der Meijden and 8 others.  
10 June · 🌐

>> We spent the day in Zenica, where we visited ArcelorMittal and had a discussion with representatives of the factory's union, as well as unions of the workers in the metal industry of the Zenica-Doboj canton and the Federation of BiH. We ended the day with a visit to the "Naša djeca" NGO and had a talk about the organization's work with local youth and their Radio "Active", followed by Aldin Vrškić's Fellow's Talk. We thank the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in BiH for making this visit possible, and we look forward to our next program week dedicated to exploring post-conflict identities in the country. Stay tuned for #HIA2017 updates! >>



801 people reached

Boost post

👍❤️🌐 Tamara Tešnjak, Fahira Brodijica and 16 others

**Lamija Tiro** shared Humanity in Action Bosnia and Herzegovina's photo.  
12 June at 22:04 · 🌐

Zadovoljstvo je bilo biti panelistkinja u okviru Humanity in Action Fellowship programa u Bosni i Hercegovini i razgovarati sa mladim ljudima iz cijelog svijeta o izazovima i preprekama političkog angažmana žena. Ono što smo u diskusiji naglasili kao važan segment u pristupu ovoj temi je položaj žena u samoj političkoj stranci. U tom smislu govorila sam i o Inicijativa50% kao pozitivnom primjeru Naše stranke i platformi za djelovanje i jačanje sopstvenih kapaciteta, te o sjajnim i hrabrim ženama unutar nje.



**Humanity in Action Bosnia and Herzegovina** with Lamija Tiro.  
12 June · 🌐

>> We started the morning with a panel discussion, talking about the position and role of women in politics with our guests Jelena Kunić and Lamija Tiro, who shared their experiences as young politicians. #HIA2017 >>

👍 Like    💬 Comment    ➦ Share

👍❤️🌐 Maida Omerčehajić, Sabiha Kapetanovic and 26 others

Write a comment...

