



# PHYSICIANS *for* HUMAN RIGHTS

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**Forensic Monitoring Project Report**  
**Suhi-Potok, Gorazde Exhumations of the Tuzla Clinical Center and Gorazde**  
**Police**  
**(5-6 November 1997)**

Tal Simmons, Ph.D., D-A.B.F.A.  
Director, Forensic Monitoring Project

Report Date: 9 November 1997

## **Findings**

### Summary of Events:

Eight unidentified individuals were recovered from the exhumation at Suhi Potok, Gorazde from 5-6 November 1997. The exhumation was undertaken by the Gorazde Crime Police and Forensic Pathologists of the Tuzla Clinical Center. Minister of Internal Affairs for Gorazde, Mr. Chengic and Mr. Amor Masovic (President of the Federation's Commission on Missing Persons) had requested the presence of Dr. Tal Simmons, the Director of the Forensic Monitoring Project for Physicians for Human Rights (PHR). Dr. Simmons provided on site technical assistance and advice to the local Expert Team during the exhumation.

### Site Description Overview:

When travelling from Ustikolina to Sarajevo via the Federation corridor road, turn right at the historic cemetery (Islamic) that is located to the left of the road. Travel past Gorni Džestje for another 1-2 km. The site of Suhi Potok is located to the left, in a steep gully with an intermittent stream flowing through it. The site where the bodies were located is about 50 m upstream from the road. The area where the bodies are deposited was approximately 10x3 m within the stream and the immediate silty banks. Some clothing and skeletal elements were scattered by animals over another 2-5 m in the immediate vicinity and some had washed downstream.

#### History Relating to the Mass Grave:

Remains were located by the police who had received information from a witness regarding the execution of prisoners at this location in 1992. The information received by the police was that 12 individuals had been marched to the Suhi Potok location and executed on the spot.

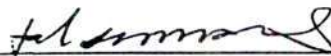
#### Exhumation:

The remains were located within the flowing stream bed and the surrounding silt deposits of its banks. Dr. Kesetovic, Dr. Cihlarz, Amor Masovic, and Tal Simmons identified the skeletal remains and clothing of discrete individuals and began to excavate around the bones and silt-filled clothing. The recovery process began at the bodies located furthest downstream, so as not to cover any remains with excavation debris carried by the flowing water. Water had to be diverted with excavated channels around the individual excavation site of each set of remains. Numerous obstacles in the stream had to be removed in order to expose the bodies. The articulation of each body was exposed fully prior to photographic documentation. Numbers were placed on remains prior to photography and several photographs of each individual body were taken, including close-ups of details such as wedding bands or watches *in situ* and dental work.

No screening of the silt surrounding the remains was attempted as the action of the stream prevented the retention of the surrounding silt matrix

#### Summary of Autopsy Findings:

Eight individuals were recovered from the site of Suhi Potok, Gorazde. The autopsies of these individuals revealed the cause of death in all eight to be multiple gunshot wounds and the manner of death to be homicide. All were males between the ages of 30 and 55 years. Although dental work (in one case a partial upper denture constructed of gold) and personal effects (watches, combs, wedding rings, etc.) were relatively numerous, none of the individuals were identified at the time of the autopsies. The bodies are being held in storage at the local hospital in Gorazde.



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