



HOLOCAUST  
MEMORIAL  
DAY TRUST

# **30th Anniversary of the Genocide in Bosnia**



## Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) is on 27 January each year

HMD commemorates the six million Jews murdered in the Holocaust and the millions of other people murdered under Nazi persecution. We also commemorate more recent genocides, recognised by the UK government (Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, the Yazidis) and Darfur.

# Why 27 January?

Auschwitz-Birkenau – Nazi death camp



27 January 1945 – Auschwitz-Birkenau was liberated.



## What is important about 2025?

This Holocaust Memorial Day 2025 (HMD) in January marked the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest Nazi concentration camp complex.

11 July 2025 will mark the 30th anniversary of the genocide in Bosnia.



# Definitions

- **Bosnia** - a country in Europe
- **Ethnic group** - a social group or category of the population that, in a larger society, is set apart and bound together by common ties of race, language, nationality, or culture.
- **Bosnian Serbs** - an ethnic group in Bosnia
- **Bosnian Muslims (also called Bosniaks)** - an ethnic and religious group in Bosnia
- **Srebrenica** - a town in Bosnia
- **Refugee** - a person who has been forced to leave their country to escape war or persecution
- **United Nations (UN)** - an international diplomatic organisation whose purpose includes maintaining peace

# What happened in Yugoslavia?

**Bosnia** used to be part of Yugoslavia, which was created in 1929 after the unification of Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Bosnia & Herzegovina.

After World War II, Communist dictator Josip Broz Tito became president of Yugoslavia – an appointment legitimised by his role in the defeat of the Nazis and their collaborators.

Tito held Yugoslavia together under the banner of 'brotherhood and unity', by emphasising Communist unity whilst violently suppressing opposition to his leadership. But ethnic tensions continued to exist under the surface. Similarly, religious tensions were pronounced among the Bosnian Serbs (Orthodox Christians), Bosnian Croats (Catholics), and Bosniaks (Muslims), whose differing religious identities deepened longstanding divisions.

# What happened in Bosnia?

Tito's death in 1980 and the decline of Communism in Europe undermined Yugoslavia's stability. Serbian nationalism increased, led by Serbian politicians, and countries began to declare independence.

In 1992 Bosnia voted for independence, which was boycotted by Bosnian Serbs.

In 1992 a war began, during which **Bosnian Serbs** who were seeking to control the country and join a 'Greater Serbia', intended to destroy the ethnic group of **Bosnian Muslims**.

Communities were divided by their **ethnic group** and neighbours turned against each other.

During the war, more than two million people fled as **refugees**.

Kemal Pervanić is a **Bosnian Muslim**. In 1992, the **Bosnian Serb** army entered Kemal Pervanić's village:

*"We were attacked because we were Muslims because it was the Serb's plan to claim this part of the country for themselves so in that sense what happened here was not personal. On the other hand, it was so personal when it came to the people who attacked us because I recognised many soldiers."*





# Srebrenica

On 11 July 1995, the **Bosnian Serb** Commander, Ratko Mladić, claimed the town of **Srebrenica** for **Bosnian Serbs**. Muslim men and boys over 12 were separated from women and children and over the next 72 hours, more than 8,000 of them were murdered. This was **genocide**.



# The Mothers of Srebrenica



Photograph courtesy of Remembering Srebrenica

# The Mothers of Srebrenica

Brought a civil lawsuit against the UN for failing to protect people.

Brought a civil lawsuit against the Dutch government for their troops failing to protect people.



Identify the bodies and give them proper burials.

Established a memorial to the people murdered in Srebrenica.

# The Mothers of Srebrenica

**Brought a civil lawsuit against the UN for failing to protect people.**

The UN was ruled to be 'immune' to prosecution.

**Brought a civil lawsuit against the Dutch government for their troops failing to protect people.**

The Dutch government was found to be responsible for the deaths of 300 people.

**Identify the bodies and give them proper burials.**

Thousands of victims have been identified and received a proper burial, but there are many more who may never be identified.

**Established a memorial to the people murdered in Srebrenica.**

A permanent memorial and cemetery have now been built.



# Memorial

The Mothers of Srebrenica created a memorial for those who were murdered.

What is the purpose of a memorial?

**A memorial is a physical place to reflect and remember; it is a place to honour the life and legacy of a person or event.**

Where have you seen memorials before?

On 11 July 2025, it will be the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the genocide at Srebrenica.



The flower  
symbol for  
Remembering  
Srebrenica

**Can you design a memorial to mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the genocide in Srebrenica, Bosnia?**



# Memorial

Design a memorial to mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the genocide in Srebrenica, Bosnia.  
Here are some examples.



Memorial for Srebrenica, Bosnia  
*Remembering Srebrenica*



Memorial flame for  
Holocaust Memorial Day  
*Kelvinbridge Sew and  
Sews, Glasgow*



Memorial for the Genocide in Rwanda  
*Kigali University*

# Memorial

Design a memorial to mark the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the genocide in Srebrenica, Bosnia.

Your memorial could represent:

- What you have learnt today
- The life story of a Bosnian survivor (such as [Smajo Beso](#)) or someone who was murdered in the genocide
- The work of the [Mothers of Srebrenica](#)



Artefact Life Stories

## HATIDŽA MEHMEDOVIĆ AND THE MOTHERS OF SREBRENICA

Hatidža's husband and sons were murdered alongside more than 8,000 men and boys at the genocidal massacre in Srebrenica. In 2002, Hatidža founded the Mothers of Srebrenica to ensure their killers were brought to justice.



Life Stories

## SMAJO BEŠO OBE

Smajo Bešo has seen the worst and best of humanity. After surviving the horrors of the genocide in Bosnia, he found refuge and safety in the UK where he now proudly embraces his Bosnian roots and new-found Geordie identity.



## Memorial for Srebrenica, Bosnia *Remembering Srebrenica*