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RAPE CAMP VILINA VLAS HOTEL: WHY IS THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY STILL UNMOVED?

Senad SEVDİK

Independent Researcher

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1945-2042>

Abstract: *This research paper investigates the Vilina Vlas hotel in Visegrad city of Bosnia and Herzegovina which was used as a former rape camp for torturing, raping, beating, and killing innocent civilians, mostly Bosnian Muslim women. The main problematic and ethical issue of this paper regarding Vilina Vlas hotel is that it functions as a tourist place and tourists still accommodate and sleep in the same beds which women were attacked. The hotel receives high support from the Visegrad mayor, Republika Srpska entity's Tourism Ministry, and from Serb ethnic-nationalist politicians. These politicians and the local community of Visegrad constantly deny these crimes or erase any traces that can be used as evidence against them. Therefore, this research paper takes a new approach for trying to solve this denialism at the state level such as using OHR's (Office of the High Representative) possible interventions (Bonn Powers) through building a monument near the hotel and definitely terminating all tourism activities of the hotel. This paper also highly values the suggestions of Vilina Vlas survivors during the creation of a memorial for victims. Thus, it asks the main research question of "What do survivors of Vilina Vlas demand from the current High Representative of BiH (Bosnia and Herzegovina) to commemorate the rape victims of Vilina Vlas Hotel in Visegrad?" It proposes the combination of two theoretical frameworks which are conflict reconciliation and Alexander Wendt's constructivism for stressing to construct "collective identity and shared ideas" against rape, beatings, and killings of innocent civilians. The paper's main argument is that the former rape camp of Vilina Vlas hotel*

must be closed and a monument must be built to remember all victims. The Serbian government has no choice rather than cooperate positively with the BiH government for closing Vilina Vlas hotel since they have a high historical responsibility for committing these crimes.

Keywords: *Bosnia and Herzegovina, Visegrad, Vilina Vlas Hotel, Women Rights, International Community, Monument*

TECAVÜZ KAMPI VILINA VLAS OTELİ: ULUSLARARASI TOPLUM NEDEN HALA HAREKETSİZ?

Öz: *Bu araştırma makalesi, çoğunlukla Bosnalı Müslüman kadınlar olmak üzere masum sivillere işkence etmek, tecavüz etmek, fiziksel saldırı ve öldürmek için eski bir tecavüz kampı olarak kullanılan Bosna Hersek'in Visegrad kentindeki Vilina Vlas otelini incelemektedir. Bu makalenin Vilina Vlas oteli ile ilgili temel sorunu ve etik konusu, bir turistik yer olarak işlev görmesi ve turistlerin hala kadınların saldırıya uğradığı aynı yataklarda konaklaması ve uyumasıdır. Otel, Visegrad belediye başkanı, Sırp Cumhuriyeti tarafının Turizm Bakanlığı ve Sırp etnik-milliyetçi politikacılardan yüksek destek almaktadır. Bu politikacılar ve Visegrad yerel halkı, bu suçları sürekli olarak inkar etmekte veya aleyhine delil olarak kullanılacak her türlü izi silmektedir. Bu nedenle, bu araştırma makalesi, bu inkarcılığı devlet düzeyinde çözmeye çalışmak için, otelin yakınında bir anıt inşa ederek YTD'nin (Yüksek Temsilcilik Ofisi) olası müdahalelerini (Bonn Yetkileri) kullanmak ve tüm turizm faaliyetlerini kesinlikle sona erdirmek gibi yeni bir yaklaşım benimsemektedir. Bu makale aynı zamanda kurbanlar için bir anıtın oluşturulması bağlamında Vilina Vlas'tan kurtulanların önerilerine de büyük değer vermektedir. Böylece ana araştırma sorusu olan "Vilina Vlas'tan kurtulanlar, mevcut Bosna-Hersek Yüksek Temsilcisi'nden, Visegrad'daki Vilina Vlas Otel'in tecavüz mağdurlarını anmak için ne talep etmektedir?" sorusunu sormaktadır. Masum sivillerin tecavüze uğramasına, dövülmesine ve öldürülmesine karşı "kolektif kimlik ve ortak fikirler" inşa etmeyi vurgulayan çatışma uzlaşması ve Alexander Wendt'in inşaaacılığı olan iki teorik çerçevenin birleşimini önermektedir. Bu araştırma makalesi'nin ana argümanı, eski tecavüz kampı olan Vilina Vlas otelinin kapatılması ve tüm kurbanları anmak için bir anıt inşa edilmesi gerektiğidir. Bu suçları işlemek ve sebep olmak konusunda yüksek bir tarihsel sorumluluğa sahip olduğundan dolayı Sırp Hükümetinin Vilina Vlas otelini kapatma konusunda Bosna-Hersek hükümetiyle pozitif işbirliği yapmaktan başka seçeneği bulunmamaktadır.*

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Bosna-Hersek, Visegrad, Vilina Vlas Otel, Kadın Hakları, Uluslararası Toplum, Anıt*

Introduction

This research paper focuses on Vilina Vlas hotel in Visegrad which was used as a rape camp by Serbian paramilitaries and Bosnian Serbs during the Bosnian war in 1992. Approximately 200 women mostly Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaks) and also Bosnian Croats were raped, tortured, and beaten by radical Serbian paramilitaries in this hotel during the summer of 1992.¹ Although there are many research papers, artworks, movies and interviews with victims have been done², this hotel still works as nothing has happened in the past and many foreign tourists still visit and stay there without knowing its historical background.

Thus, this research paper aims to stop this denial of genocidal rape argued by authorities of Republika Srpska, Vilina Vlas hotel representatives, and local people of Visegrad. To achieve this aim, this proposal will discuss the possibilities of actions for commemorating women victims of Vilina Vlas through building a memorial monument near the entrance of the hotel. Thus, this research paper aims to push all limits of state actions especially with interventions of High Representatives to build a monument for remembering 200 innocent women war victims.

Therefore, this research paper investigates the main research question: What do survivors of Vilina Vlas demand from the current High Representative of BiH to commemorate the rape victims of Vilina Vlas Hotel in Visegrad? This paper also asks one sub-question which will help to build a monument in the hotel. This sub-question is that; In case of denial by local forces and politicians in BiH, how does the international community plan to intervene against local politicians?

Overall, this research paper investigates theories of conflict reconciliation and Alexander Wendt's constructivism in the framework of states' responsibilities for facilitating reconciliation and solving denialism problems among Bosnian people.

Historical Background of Vilina Vlas Hotel

Vilina Vlas is a former rape camp that was used by criminal Serbian paramilitaries to torture, rape and beat mostly Bosniak women and also

1 Wikipedia, "Vilina Vlas," Wikipedia, August 6, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vilina_Vlas

2 Wikipedia, "Vilina Vlas," Wikipedia, August 6, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vilina_Vlas

Bosnian Croat women during the Visegrad massacres in the Bosnian war of the 1990s. However, instead of closing this rape camp completely, Republika Srpska authorities allowed opening this hotel as a tourist facility since local people deny these atrocities that Serb paramilitaries raped and tortured women. Hence, as long as local people in Visegrad deny and support these rape crimes, they are also part of these crimes since they are either silent or denying and standing against humanism.

This hotel was built in 1982 and established by the Uzice corps as a rape camp at the end of April 1992 for the ethnic cleansing of non-Serbs. Bosniak women and girls even “under 14 years old”, were taken to the hotel by police officers and paramilitary groups such as White Eagles, Arkan’s, and Vojislav Šešelj’s men. One of the notorious examples is the life-sentenced criminal Milan Lukic. Lukic have taken 16 Bosniak men from a bus in Sjeverin/Serbia and was brought to them and tortured in Vilina Vlas then murdered in Drina river. According to reports of the United Nations Commission of Experts to the Security Council (the Bassiouni Commission), only young and beautiful women were brought to the camp to bear Chetnik’s children.³ Many of the women were executed or became insane and killed themselves. However, the bodies of victims have not been found. The handful of the women survivors (10 approximately) established the Association of Women Victims of War. However, Milan Lukic was not charged with rape crimes despite there being many documents and proof. The president of the Association of Women Victims of War, Bakira Hasečić has criticized many times for not including “rape” in the charges of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

Overall, even today, the hotels’ architecture, furniture, beds, and rooms have not been changed since 1992. It still operates and the representatives and workers there “do not know anything”.⁴ Hence, this is completely not acceptable and therefore either Bosnian state and tourism ministries have serious humanistic responsibility to close this hotel or at least commemorate rape victims through building monument. If the Bosnian state is not capable of providing this memorial then this paper argues that both OHR and the International Community must

3 United Nations Security Council, “Annex IX : Rape and Sexual Assault,” web.archive.org, April 27, 2009, <https://web.archive.org/web/20090427201052/http://www.ess.uwe.ac.uk/comexpert/ANX/IX.htm#II.A.53>

4 Rachel Irwin and Edina Becirevic, “Visegrad in Denial over Grisly Past,” iwpr.net, 2009, <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/visegrad-denial-over-grisly-past>

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solve this issue through using its Bonn powers for providing a better future and securing women victims' rights.

Literature Review

There are many research papers, movies, art, and theatrical plays written for Vilina Vlas hotel in Visegrad and also James Ron mentions violence across boundaries between Serbia and BiH. Especially in Sandžak's Priboj and Pljevlja cities, there were ethnic harassment, attacks on Muslim property, kidnappings, and murders by Serbian paramilitaries. There were kidnappings of Muslim people from Serbian and Montenegrin Sandzak and taking them to Visegrad such as Vilina Vlas hotel and after torturing them, these people were killed and thrown into Drina river. Hence, Belgrade and Priboj municipality is also responsible for the closure of Vilina Vlas since "Serbian Muslim citizens" were killed and tortured there and even the Milosevic government helped Bosnian Serbs by leaving Yugoslav army weapons and supplies to Visegrad Serb paramilitaries. Especially White Eagles paramilitary group used Priboj town for resting and recreation in 1992. According to a reporter, Muslims were terrorized by Serb paramilitaries. He stressed that: "In August, an elderly man in ... Visegrad, 18 miles northwest of here, gave a detailed account of having watched members of the White Eagles take Muslim residents to a bridge, kill them and throw their bodies in the Drina river."⁵

In 1992, 16 Bosniak citizens of Serbia from the village of Sjeverin were abducted from a bus and brought to Vilina Vlas hotel in Visegrad, and then they were executed in Drina river.⁶ This kidnapping was done by Milan Lukic's men. Therefore, the Serbian government and Priboj mayors are also responsible for these crimes since the victims were Serbian citizens. Serbia must collaborate with BiH for the closure of Vilina Vlas hotel since Serbia's officials' argument that the "out of jurisdiction area" approach is not valid. This is because Serbian citizens also were killed in Vilina Vlas hotel.⁷

5 Ron, James. "Boundaries and violence: Repertoires of state action along the Bosnia/Yugoslavia divide." *Theory and Society* 29, no. 5 (2000): 609-649.

6 Rachel Irwin and Edina Becirevic, "Visegrad in Denial over Grisly Past," iwpr.net, 2009, <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/visegrad-denial-over-grisly-past>

7 Ron, James. "Boundaries and violence: Repertoires of state action along the Bosnia/Yugoslavia divide."...

Another article stresses that some women committed suicide by jumping from the balconies because of hopelessness. The current swimming pool of the hotel was also used to torture and store the bodies of humans. The same bed frames can even be found in hotel rooms today. Tourists are also unaware of the hotel's rape camp history due to it does not mention its history in the Trip Advisor reviews.⁸ Generally, young women were detained there and there were efforts to impregnate the women so that they would have Chetnik babies.⁹ According to witness statements from the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), one victim stressed that she was held prisoner in Vilina Vlas hotel and raped by Oliver Krsmanovic, Zeljko Lelek, and Milan Lukic who imprisoned and brought her there. The theatrical play "Seven Kilometers North East" was written by the Australian Kym Vercoe who was also the main protagonist and narrator in the movie. Vercoe left 200 flowers in a bed of a room for every victim in the hotel.¹⁰

Bosnian director, Jasmila Žbanić's film "For Those Who Can Tell No Tales" is also another crucial contribution for Vilina Vlas's victims. Both of the theatrical work and film represent Avery Gordon's haunted sites of social life that are not observable but make their presence felt. During the filming of the movie, both Kym Vercoe and Jasmila Žbanić felt sick in the Vilina Vlas hotel because of the Visegrad's heavy atmosphere.¹¹ Moreover, United Nations, included rape in the category of crimes against humanity for the first time in 1993. However, there are several problems in investigating rape crimes such as cases having to meet stringent guidelines, granting security for the victims, the problem of satisfaction with the sentences, and a large number of cases. According to Beverly Allen, "genocidal rape" is compatible with the Bosnian war since Serb forces take several women of varying ages, rape them in public view, and prohibit safe abortion for producing Chetnik Serb babies. According to Samuel Totten and Paul Bartrop, genocidal rape is used as a way to degrade, demoralize and humiliate both the female victims and their families which aim to create "bastards" who don't

8 Mitchell-Bajic, Emily. "Navigating Research On Conflict-Related Sexual Violence In The Post-Yugoslav Space."

9 Williamson, Holly. Towards an Understanding of Combatants' Motivations: The Implications of the Links Between Gender Bias and Political Violence. Arizona State University, 2019.

10 Rajiva, Mythili, and Agatha Schwartz. "Haunting and the Aesthetics of Trauma in A Woman in Berlin and For Those Who Can Tell No Tales: Redefining Cultural Memory." Slavonica 23, no. 2 (2018): 75-90.

11 Jurich, Joscelyn. "Haunting Lessons." Етноантрополошки проблеми 11, no. 2 (2016): 435-454.

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know their fathers and are often unwanted by their mothers. For example, Hasiba was just one of the victims in Vilina Vlas who was raped, bearing Serb children, and was forced to convert to Christianity.¹²

Google engines, TripAdvisor, and tourist brochures all need to either include the wartime history of rape in Vilina Vlas or completely do not mention the Vilina Vlas hotel in all of them.¹³ Hague prosecution failed to judge Lukic cousins for their rape crimes. According to one victim who talked to Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN), argued that; “all the rooms in the hotel were locked. They would throw pieces of bread in our rooms and we had to catch them with our teeth because our hands were tied. They would untie us only when they wanted to rape us.”¹⁴ Hence, rape was not included in the final indictment of Lukic.¹⁵ Former chief prosecutor Carla Del Ponte left out the rape charges for Lukic cousins since the tribunal was under the pressure from the United Nations Security Council to complete all first-instance cases by the end of 2009.¹⁶ Bakira Hasečić is one of the survivors from Vilina Vlas hotel, asked ICTY’s Chief Prosecutor, Carla Del Ponte for why Lukic cousins were not charged with rape. The answer was that: “We had no witnesses who would come forward with such evidence”.¹⁷ However, many pieces of evidence are reported by Amnesty International and a local NGO, Association of Women Victims of War.

Another article argues that rape in BiH is under control, it is a rape unto death, rape as a massacre, a rape to destroy a people and therefore it is a rape of “genocide”. According to radical Serbs’ idea that as long as the father (rapist) was Serb, the child would be considered as Serb.¹⁸ As Stiglmayer argues, rape crimes in BiH were unique since the entire world and international media were able to watch these crimes during the

12 Como, Jennifer R. *Historical Taxonomy of Mass Rape in Wartime*. Western Illinois University, 2019.

13 Fregonese, Sara. “Holidays in the danger zone. Entanglements of war and tourism.” (2018): 91-93.

14 Edina Bećirević, “Hotel Vilina Vlas, Višegrad — Then and Now, Commemorating Rape Victims,” www.spiritofbosnia.org, 2012, <http://www.spiritofbosnia.org/v7n2/hotel-vilina-vlas-visegrad-then-and-now-commemorating-rape-victims/>

15 Rachel Irwin, “Visegrad in Denial over Grisly Past,” [iwpr.net](https://iwpr.net/global-voices/visegrad-denial-over-grisly-past), 2009, <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/visegrad-denial-over-grisly-past>

16 Simon Jennings, “Lukic Trial Ruling Provokes Outcry,” [iwpr.net](https://iwpr.net/global-voices/lukic-trial-ruling-provokes-outcry), 2008, <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/lukic-trial-ruling-provokes-outcry>

17 Simic, Olivera, and Zala Volcic. “In the land of wartime rape: Bosnia, cinema, and reparation.” Griffith University Law School Research Paper 16-01 (2016).

18 Gilboa, Dahlia. “Mass rape: War on women.” (2001): 1-7.

atrocities were happening.¹⁹ Another article stresses that since Milan Lukic was sentenced to imprisonment for the remainder of his life then he has the opportunity to be early released.²⁰ Therefore, during the Bosnian war, only in Visegrad 3000 people of Bosnian Muslims including women and children were killed for only achieving Greater Serbia.²¹ Humiliation was another aim of the rape camps. For example, Kadira was forced to urinate on the Koran, or forty-five-year-old Ziba was forced to watch the rape of her fourteen-year-old daughter.²² The most tragic story of a Bosniak woman, Jasmina Ahmetpahić ended her own life by jumping from the third-floor balcony of Vilina Vlas.²³ Another article argues that there are also other criminals such as Risto Peresic and Dusko Andric. While the former was a Chief of Police and the latter was the wartime director of the Vilina Vlas hotel.²⁴ According to Saliha Djuderija's book 'Monography about Rape and Sexual Violence During the War in Bosnia and Herzegovina' Serbian community in BiH still does not condemn the rape crimes and therefore this denialism prevents us to deal with the collective trauma of these persons.²⁵

As Mersiha, a rape victim from Visegrad stresses that: "I want to tell the Westerns the real truth. I want them to stop these crimes. There are plenty of girls in a worse position than me."²⁶ It should not be forgotten that the Uzice corps of JNA (Yugoslavian army) from Titovo Uzice, Serbia entered Visegrad in April 1992 and left their weapons to local

19 Stiglmayer, Alexandra. "Mass Rape: The War Against Women in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Edited by." (1998).

20 Mujuzi, Jamil Ddamulira. "Is There a Need for the ICTY to Clarify the Difference (s) between Life Imprisonment and Imprisonment for the Remainder of the Offender's Life-The Galic and Lukic Decisions." *Int'l Crim. L. Rev.* 10 (2010): 855.

21 Gutaj, Perparim. "Patterns of Ethnic Cleansing in the Balkans." PhD diss., The University of Utah, 2019.

22 Paaso, Amber Cheri. *Recognizing gender-based violence in armed conflict: Incorporating the voices of women in international humanitarian law.* Florida Atlantic University, 2004.

23 Quillinan, Sarah. "Remembering wartime rape in post-conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina." PhD diss., 2018.

24 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "Refworld | War Criminals in Bosnia's Republika Srpska: Who Are the People in Your Neighbourhood?," Refworld, 2000, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6af53.html>

25 Denis Dzidic, "'20,000 Women Sexually Assaulted' during Bosnian War," *Balkan Insight*, September 29, 2015, <https://balkaninsight.com/2015/09/29/bosnian-rape-victims-still-waiting-for-justice-09-28-2015/>

26 Hamed&Himzo Oprasic, "In Memoriam: Jasmina Ahmetpahić," *Visegrad Genocide Memories*, February 28, 2010, <https://genocideinvisegrad.wordpress.com/2010/02/28/967/>

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paramilitaries of White Eagles, Arkan's and Seselj's men who later killed many people. It is also stressed that certain soldiers at Vilina Vlas were taking revenge for dead Serbs at Zepa.²⁷ According to a UN report in 1994, Vilina Vlas hotel was the rape camp where less than 14 years old girls were taken there.²⁸ The searching for victims in lake Perucac continued and according to Amor Masovic, the head of the Bosnian commission for missing persons, argued that 396 cases have been discovered during two and half months of research.²⁹

According to the director of the Rehabilitation Center Vilina Vlas, Dusana Bukvic: "The promotional campaign 'We are waiting for you in Visegrad' is a great opportunity to attract more tourists to our region and we supported the idea and gave our facilities as a prize."³⁰ While many survivors are searching for the bones of their loved ones and raped women have psychological traumas, Serb authorities and Vilina Vlas director rehabilitate people in their hotel. As Nizija Hecimovic whose brother and son were killed and thrown into Drina river. She argues that "I will never find peace until their bodies are found".³¹ Another article argues that young citizens opened an online petition which is signed by more than 25.000 supporters for removing Vilina Vlas as a tourist site in Google. The author of the change.org appeal, Amela Trokic asked that: "If somebody decided to turn Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camps into a wellness retreat perfect for a 'relaxing weekend getaway,' would you let them promote this on Google?"³² Survivors from the Vilina Vlas hotel insist on for its closure and become a memorial to the victims of wartime. However, Republika Srpska's official tourism organization calls the Vilina Vlas an "unavoidable destination in terms of health

27 Web.archive, "Annex VIII : Prison Camps (Part 8/10)," web.archive.org, February 3, 2007, <https://web.archive.org/web/20070203101023/http://www.ess.uwe.ac.uk/comexpert/ANX/VIII-08.htm#III.A.85>

28 Nerma Jelacic, "Visegrad Rape Victims Say Their Cries Go Unheard," Balkan Insight, December 10, 2007, <https://balkaninsight.com/2007/12/10/visegrad-rape-victims-say-their-cries-go-unheard/>

29 NDTV, "100 Skeletons of War Victims Found in Lake," NDTV.com, 2010, <https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/100-skeletons-of-war-victims-found-in-lake-437450>

30 Ehlimana Memisevic, "Serb Authorities Want Tourists to Stay in a Hotel That Was Once a Rape Camp," Trtworld, 2020, <https://www.trtworld.com/opinion/serb-authorities-want-tourists-to-stay-in-a-hotel-that-was-once-a-rape-camp-38050>

31 Nedin Dervisbegovic, "Hope for Bosnia Town Whose Bridge Will Shine Again," Reuters, May 26, 2007, <https://www.reuters.com/article/idUKL261004720070526?edition-redirect=uk>

32 Dzenana Halimovic, "Mortified Bosnians Seek to 'Ungoogle' an Ethnic-Cleansing Hotel of Horrors," RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty, 2020, <https://www.rferl.org/a/mortified-bosnians-seek-to-ungoogle-an-ethnic-cleansing-hotel-of-horrors/30847067.html>

(tourism).” Survivors call it a house of horrors. Turizam Republika Srpska (RS) advertises the Vilina Vlas as home to waters for the prevention and treatment of rheumatic, respiratory, and other ailments.³³

Generally, Serbians consider the Drina river to be the “backbone of the Serbian national body”. For Bosniaks, Drina is a sacred river a symbol of suffering and death since their fate in Drina river has been repeated throughout history. Moreover, in both Sjeverin and Štrpci cases, Serbian citizens were taken to Visegrad and tortured in Vilina Vlas hotel and then thrown into Drina river.³⁴ Finally, another article focuses on an exhibition of Motel Vilina Vlas by Italian artist Dennis Del Favero at the Mori Gallery in Sydney. The exhibition focuses on the story of a young man who was forced to participate in the pack rape of his girlfriend of different ethnic origins.³⁵ Another article argues that Hotel Vilina Vlas as a center for relaxation ceased to mean a “place of conscience” for visitors due the hotel’s role is not mentioned or visually represented. Hence, this article argues that at least a monument for women victims must be built in the hotel for reconciliation and education.³⁶

Overall, the literature review points out that many articles focus on movies, artworks, and theatrical plays for understanding women victims. However, these works do not sufficiently contribute to providing a solution to denialism in Visegrad or taking state-level actions against Vilina Vlas hotel. Hence, this paper contributes to this research gap by trying to find solutions to this problem through “state-level intervention”. In my own opinion, these sensitive issues of sexual crimes must be solved through interventions of the international community such as OHR with taking into account the suggestions of women survivors. In this sense, this paper proposes to build a monument or closure of the Vilina Vlas hotel as soon as through using Bonn Powers of OHR.

33 Dzenana Halimovic, “Mortified Bosnians Seek to ‘Ungoogole’ an Ethnic-Cleansing Hotel of Horrors,” RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty, 2020, <https://www.rferl.org/a/mortified-bosnians-look-to-ungoogle-an-ethnic-cleansing-hotel-of-horrors/30847067.html>

34 Karčić, Hikmet. “Uncovering the Truth: The Lake Perućac Exhumations in Eastern Bosnia.” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 37, no. 1 (2017): 114-128.

35 Genocchio, Benjamin. “The subject of rape: Dennis Del Favero at the Motel Vilina Vlas.” *Third Text* 9, no. 33 (1995): 98-100.

36 Jeftić, Alma. “The Role of Memorials in the Post-Conflict Society: Active Memory and (Im) Possibility of Reconciliation.” In *Book Of Proceedings*, p. 152. 2013.

Theoretical Framework

This paper proposes two types of theoretical approaches which are conflict reconciliation and Alexander Wendt's Constructivist Approach. The latter stresses that the state needs to play role in these conflicts to solve denialism problems. For example, the former High Representative (HR) of Valentin Inzko's new ban on genocidal denialism in BiH illustrates and proves Wendt's constructivist approach. This research paper also strongly supports both frameworks since it aims to provide a reconciliation between Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Muslims through building a monument near Vilina Vlas hotel to commemorate the women victims. Another framework stresses that state representatives (here in this paper, High Representative of Christian Schmidt) should play a role to solve denialism of genocide and rape crimes of women through imposing laws with Bonn powers. Therefore, the Vilina Vlas hotel which was used as a rape camp for humiliating, raping, and destroying small girls and women's lives, must be closed immediately and turned into a museum or a building monument to represent the victims.

Conflict reconciliation is defined as mutual acceptance, coexistence, and social reconstruction between different groups in a society.³⁷ However, this does not mean that former enemies should love or forgive each other. It is a kind of learning process and accepting moral values of being a "human" which should create condemnation of rape crimes against women. Hence, gradually people's psychological orientation (especially Bosnian Serbs) has changed towards the other. Reconciliation captures crucial concepts of peace, truth, justice, humanism, contact, and mercy. Therefore, both sides of people do not take into account the past as their defining future and they acknowledge each other for a constructive relationship with a shared future and collective responsibility.³⁸ Especially Bosnian youth defines reconciliation with concepts of an interdependent and fair society, accepting and dealing with the past, and constructing positive relationships.³⁹

37 Fischer, Martina. "Transitional justice and reconciliation: Theory and practice." (2011).

38 Staub, Ervin. "Reconciliation after genocide, mass killing, or intractable conflict: Understanding the roots of violence, psychological recovery, and steps toward a general theory." *Political psychology* 27, no. 6 (2006): 867-894.

39 Magill, Clare, and Brandon Hamber. "'If They Don't Start Listening to Us, the Future Is Going to Look the Same as the Past': Young People and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and Bosnia and Herzegovina." *Youth & Society* 43, no. 2 (2011): 509-527.

The international community also decided to alter its directions towards grassroots organizations and civil society rather than nationalist parties or professionalized activists from urban elites of NGOs which monopolize aid opportunities.⁴⁰ There are also many missing persons from the crimes in Vilina Vlas, in the Drina river, or generally in Visegrad. Hence, missing persons can prevent to have reconciliation by sustaining their trauma and by fostering a lack of trust.⁴¹ Truth commissions and individualization of accountability can facilitate reconciliation as well. For example, the truth commission for the Srebrenica massacre provided an official apology from Republika Srpska (RS) entity in BiH in 2004.⁴² However political reconciliation can range from the thin one which is political cohabitation after the war and thick reconciliation which means that citizens trust their governmental institutions and the rule of law.⁴³

Another theoretical framework of this article proposes Alexander Wendt's constructivism. Constructivism prioritizes more importance on social construction instead of material construction. However, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War caused reconsideration of the dominant mainstream of realism and liberalism theories. Wendt published his book "Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics" in 1992. The book emphasizes that the limitation of the concept of anarchy from the neorealist and neoliberal theories in explaining liberalism and realism (IR) theories. Wendt also went further to develop constructivism theory in the book *Social Theory of International Politics*. In the latter, Wendt provided moderate thin constructivism which recognizes the main points of materialism and individualism and scientific methods of social inquiry.⁴⁴

40 Micinski, Nicholas R. "NGO frequent flyers: Youth organisations and the undermining of reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina." *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 11, no. 1 (2016): 99-104.

41 Clark, Janine Natalya. "Missing persons, reconciliation and the view from below: a case study of Bosnia Herzegovina." *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 10, no. 4 (2010): 425-442.

42 Kostić, Roland. "Transitional justice and reconciliation in Bosnia-Herzegovina: Whose memories, whose justice?." *Sociologija* 54, no. 4 (2012): 649-666.

43 Strupinskienė, Lina. "What is reconciliation and are we there yet?" Different types and levels of reconciliation: A case study of Bosnia and Herzegovina." *Journal of Human Rights* 16, no. 4 (2017): 452-472.

44 Guzzini, Stefano, and Anna Leander. "A social theory for international relations: An appraisal of Alexander Wendt's theoretical and disciplinary synthesis." *Journal of International Relations and Development* 4, no. 4 (2001): 316-338.

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Wendt prioritizes the importance of shared ideas (knowledge) in international relationships in his theory. According to Wendt, socially shared knowledge is the knowledge that is both common and connections between individuals.⁴⁵ First of all, Wendt stressed that the structures of human association are determined primarily by shared ideas rather than material forces. Although Wendt disagrees with the idea that the structures of human association are constructed by material phenomena which are defined by theories of neoliberalism and neorealism, he does not deny them since material elements exist and can not be ignored. However, his main argument is that shared ideas are the most important elements in IR. According to Wendt's constructivism, national interests are constructed by shared ideas rather than material factors as mainstream theories argue. Hence, Wendt stresses that everything has a material base. For example; bodies for people and territories for states however actors are distinguished with shared ideas and with their different identities, as consciousness and memory are one of them.

Wendt proposes four different types of identities which are person, type, role, and collective. Type identity refers to a social category and characteristics of appearance, attitudes, values, skills, and historical similarities. According to Wendt's constructivism, the actions of actors are also influenced by shared ideas. To conceptualize the relationship between idea, identity, interest, and action, Wendt proposes the equation of "Desire + Belief = Action", where identity refers to belief and interest refers to desire. Hence, both identity and interest together determine the actions of actors. Therefore, Wendt's constructivism stresses that identity and interest are composed of shared ideas and material forces as well. Identity is a prerequisite for interest since an actor can not know what he desires until he discovers his real personality.

Wendt's constructivism significantly challenges the neorealist idea of materialistic structural anarchy of the IR system which proposes that war is inevitable and peace is temporarily based on Hobbesian anarchy. Therefore, Wendt argues that the international system is a structure of shared ideas and different shared ideas generate different interests and actions. Thus, identity is not fixed instead it is constantly produced through the interactions of the international community and actors. After a state's identity is determined then it defines its national interests which

⁴⁵ Wendt, Alexander. "Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power politics." *International organization* 46, no. 2 (1992): 391-425.

can alter according to the changes of identity. Wendt also proposes three different international systems of anarchy cultures; Hobbesian, Lockean, and Kantian.⁴⁶ Therefore, Wendt aims to build a bridge between the realist-liberal and rationalist-reflectivist debates by developing a constructivist argument that stresses that international institutions can modify state identities and interests. Therefore, he argues that self-help and power politics do not pursue either logically or causally from anarchy and today there is a self-help world due to the process of different relationships of states rather than system structure. The structure has no existence or impact apart from the process. Therefore, *anarchy is what states make of it.*⁴⁷

According to Wendt, interaction at the systemic level alters state identities and interests. As critical IR theories stress that collective identity among states could emerge at the systemic level. This process would produce cooperation and transform systemic anarchy into an “international state”. Constructivists are focused on the construction of identities and interests so that it takes more sociological perspective instead of economical to systemic theory. Hence, states are not structurally given but constructed by historically contingent interactions. Thus, constructivism stresses that the key structures in the states’ system are intersubjective rather than material. State identities and interests are constructed by social structures rather than given exogenously to the system by human nature or domestic politics. Therefore, “collective identity” refers to identification with the welfare and well-being of another so that the other is observed as an extension of the self rather than independent. Thus, there will be an empathetic rather than instrumental between self and other.⁴⁸ It is a basis for feelings of solidarity, community, and loyalty and thus for collective definitions of interest. This situation does not mean that actors are irrational but rather they have a higher level of social aggregation which discourages free-riding by increasing willingness to bear costs without incentives.⁴⁹ Therefore, collective identity is neither essential nor equivalent to such

46 Mengshu, Zhan. “A Brief Overview of Alexander Wendt’s Constructivism.” (2020).

47 Wendt, Alexander. “Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power politics.” *International organization* 46, no. 2 (1992): 391-425.

48 Keohane, Robert. “After Hegemony Princeton.” NJ: Princeton University (1984). & Russett, Bruce M., and John D. Sullivan. “Collective goods and international organization.” *International Organization* 25, no. 4 (1971): 845-865.

49 Wendt, Alexander. “Collective identity formation and the international state.” *American political science review* 88, no. 2 (1994): 384-396.

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a multilateral institution but increases the willingness to act on “generalized principles of conduct” and diffuse reciprocity.⁵⁰

Overall, this theoretical framework argues that conflict reconciliation and Alexander Wendt’s constructivism through “collective identity” of citizens and state actors will achieve necessary empathy, understanding, and remembering women victims of Vilina Vlas hotel with the help of the international community’s interventionism. As Wendt argues that state actors with their citizens can construct their shared identities and interests through social structures instead of accepting anarchical structures without questioning them. Hence, this shared identity construction is also possible between Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina states in the Vilina Vlas case. This can be achieved through increasing and constantly keeping state actors’ interaction, communication, solidarity, empathy, and unification against any sexual crimes towards any women in their countries. Therefore, this paper argues that state actors of Serbia and BiH have a high responsibility to construct a shared identity and ideas which will facilitate building a monument near Vilina Vlas hotel for reconciliation. This is because not only Bosnian citizens were tortured and raped in the hotel but also Bosniaks from Serbian Sandzak parts (Sjeverin case) were brought there, tortured, and killed as well.

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Research Gap

This article will be a completely new research paper on the rape victims of women in Visegrad city since it will try to find a solution for closing the hotel or building a monument near the hotel through state-level intervention. Therefore, it will solve the denialism problem in Visegrad by possibly using the Bonn powers of OHR for closing Vilina Vlas hotel or at least building a monument for women victims. Additionally, there is generally less analysis about why mass rapes occurred during the Bosnian war. Therefore, according to Jennifer Como, wartime rape is not the only result of war but also is a common practice and weapon such as in Vilina Vlas hotel in Visegrad.⁵¹

50 Ruggie, John Gerard. “Multilateralism: the anatomy of an institution.” *International organization* 46, no. 3 (1992): 561-598.

51 Como, Jennifer R. *Historical Taxonomy of Mass Rape in Wartime*. Western Illinois University, 2019.

Thus, it needs more research for conceptualizing why the Serbs did these rapes on Muslim women. According to Dahlia Gilboa, the methodological rape of women and girls is still largely unknown. Therefore, this research paper tries to investigate why and how did these mass rapes occur? Also, it will try to solve the denialism problem in Visegrad by closing the hotel since it is unacceptable to remain open with its historical background.

Judicial Procedures and Results of the Perpetrators

According to the International Tribunal of the Former Yugoslavia, there were many charges against the perpetrators of Milan Lukic and Sredoje Lukic which were nine counts of violations of law under Article 3 of the Statute of the Tribunal (“Statute”) and recognized by Article 3 common to the four Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 (“Common Article 3”): murder (counts 3, 7, 10, 15 and 19) and cruel treatment (counts 5, 12, 17 and 21). The prosecution further charges Milan Lukic with 12 counts of crimes against humanity under Article 5 of the statute: persecutions (count 1), extermination (counts 8 and 13), murder (counts 2, 6, 9, 14, and 18), and inhumane acts (counts 4, 11, 16 and 20).⁵²

Milan Lukic visited several times the Uzamnica camp in two years for only beating the prisoners with extreme brutality. The trial chamber argues that the Pionirska street fire and the Bikavac fires illustrate the worst acts of inhumanity that one person can inflict upon others. In total, the Trial Chamber has stressed that Milan Lukic was responsible for the deaths of at least 132 people. Milan Lukic committed these crimes against vulnerable people such as children, newborn babies, women, and elderly people. There were six victims of children between the ages of two and four years old and a two-day-old infant.⁵³

The prosecution charges Sredoje Lukic with five counts of violations of the laws according to Article 3 of the Statute: murder (counts 10 and 15) and cruel treatment (counts 12, 17, and 21). The Prosecution further charges Sredoje Lukic with eight counts of crimes against humanity

52 ICTY, “Lukić Milan & Lukić Sredoje (IT-98-32/1) | International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia,” www.icty.org, 2009, https://www.icty.org/en/case/milan_lukic_sredoje_lukic

53 Mr Dermot et al., “United Nations Counsel for the Accused” (, 2009), https://www.icty.org/x/cases/milan_lukic_sredoje_lukic/tjug/en/090720_j.pdf

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according to Article 5 of the Statute: persecutions (count 1), extermination (counts 8 and 13), murder (counts 9 and 14), and inhumane acts (counts 11, 16 and 20). The Prosecution argues that Milan Lukic returned to Visegrad in 1992 and organized a group of local paramilitaries which was referred to as the “White Eagles” and the “Avengers”. It is stressed that this group had connections with Visegrad police and to Serb military units.

In the “Drina river incident”, Milan Lukic together with Mitar Vasiljevic, brought seven Muslim men along the bank of the Drina river and opened fire on them. While five of them were killed, two of them survived on 7 June 1992. In the “Varda factory incident” Milan Lukic with other uncharged individuals, took seven Muslim men from the Varda factory in Visegrad, where they shot and killed the seven men. For the “Pionirska street incident” Milan Lukic, Sredoje Lukic together with other uncharged individuals, robbed approximately 70 Muslim persons and forcibly brought them to a house on Pionirska street in Visegrad. These persons were locked in a room of the house, set fire to the room, and shot whoever escaped and resulting in the deaths of 70 people. This same scenario of burning people alive happened in another house in the Bikavac settlement resulted in 70 more people dying. Milan Lukic and other criminals went to the Potok neighborhood in Visegrad shot and killed a Muslim woman, Hajra Koric. In the Uzamnica camp incident, Milan Lukic, Sredoje Lukic, and other criminals beat Muslim men who were detained in the detention camp at the Uzamnica military barracks in Visegrad.⁵⁴

However, both Milan Lukic and Sredoje Lukic raised alibis in association with some charges brought against them. Both of them stressed that they were not at the relevant places either in Pionirska Street or Bikavac at the time when the crimes have occurred. However, Milan Lukic and Sredoje Lukic were not charged with rape crimes since the Trial Chamber makes it clear that it has not made any determination of guilt concerning these non-indicted crimes. Another criminal is Momir Savic who was accused by Bakira Hasecic of the rape and war crime victims’ organization “Association of Women Victims of War”. Savic was charged with crimes against humanity under Article 172 (1) (h) of the criminal code of BiH; a) Murder, b) Deportation or forcible transfer

54 Stringer, Mr Douglas, Ms Barbara Goy, and Ms Laurel Baig. “International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the former Yugoslavia since 1991.” Prosecutor (2016).

of population, c) Torture, d) Coercing another by force or by the threat of immediate attack to sexual intercourse (rape).⁵⁵

Moreover, some facts need to be considered. The most critical facts were that local Serb paramilitaries have taken all the weapons which were left by Yugoslavian Public Army (JNA). These were used against innocent Bosniak people who were killed and raped by local Serbs. It was clear that when the conflict started, Visegrad was inhabited by almost twice as many Muslims as Serbs. However, in 1997, the Serb population increased to 95 percent and the Muslim population dropped to below one percent. There were many various paramilitary units in Visegrad such as “Vojislav Šešelj’s Men”, “Arkan’s Men”, “Garavi Sokak”, and “Beli Orlovi” or “White Eagles”. The White Eagles was a paramilitary group from Serbia that entered Visegrad with the JNA on 13 April 1992. Other members of White Eagles were Mitar Vasiljevic, Slobodan Trifković, Veselin Vucelja, and Oliver Krsmanovic. Hence, the Uzice corps or JNA gave these weapons to local Serbs in Visegrad with the help of the Serbian state. Therefore, the Serbian government must be responsible for the crimes of murder and rape against innocent Bosniaks. These were supported by the given testimonies of victims.⁵⁶

In May 1993, the UN Security Council established the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). The Tribunal has jurisdiction over grave breaches of the Geneva Convention, violations of the law, the crime of genocide, and crimes against humanity. The UN Commission of Experts suggested the prosecution of sexual violence under each of these legal provisions. According to Article 2 in the Geneva conventions, rape is considered to be a form of torture. Hence, the grave breaches of the 1949 Geneva Conventions are reproduced in Article 2 of the ICTY Statute. They cover any of the following acts against persons protected under the Conventions: (a) willful killing; (b) torture and inhumane treatment, (c) willfully causing great suffering or serious injury to body or health. However, rape is not included in the list of grave breaches under the 1949 conventions and thus is not included under Article 2 of the ICTY. It should also be noted that the forms of sexual violence committed against women in the former Yugoslavia, should be viewed as “inhumane treatment” and “great

55 Wikipedia Contributors, “Momir Savić,” Wikipedia (Wikimedia Foundation, October 12, 2020), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Momir_Savi%C4%87

56 Stringer, Mr Douglas, Ms Barbara Goy, and Ms Laurel Baig. “International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the former Yugoslavia since 1991.” Prosecutor (2016).

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suffering or serious injury to body and health”. Torture is another tool to extract information from victims. For example, the story of Hasiba can illustrate that there was a use of rape for extracting information.

Article 3 of the ICTY Statute allows the Tribunal the authority to prosecute individuals for violations of the laws, including the employment of weapons. Hence, it should be stressed that rape was a weapon that caused great psychological and physical suffering on victims. According to Article 4 of the ICTY Statute: rape as an act of genocide means the intention to destroy, in whole, in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group: (a) killing members of this group; (b) causing serious bodily injury or mental harm to members of the group; (c) imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group. According to the 1948 Convention, genocide is an international crime that carries individual criminal responsibility for all perpetrators along the chain of command, including civilians. Hence, sexual violence during the war was aimed to destroy the Muslim population through the forced impregnation of Muslim women and defilement of them. According to survivors, the latter also illustrate shame and humiliation for Bosnian Muslims since Islamic customs often blame a woman for her rape. Hence, survivors can be rejected by their community and family. Therefore, this sexual assault can destroy a group’s social structure which is a genocidal act. Also, forced pregnancy and forced maternity of Muslim women was another act of genocide. According to Islamic practice, the children who were born as a result of rape by non-Muslim may not be considered Muslims. This annihilation of the group is again an act of genocide. Hence, these crimes must be considered genocidal rape and thus punishable under Article 3 of the ICTY.⁵⁷

Finally, article 5 stresses that the Tribunal has the authority to prosecute crimes against humanity, whether international or internal, for the following crimes committed against any civilian population: murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation, imprisonment, torture, rape, or religious grounds. This is the only article of the ICTY Statute that specifically lists rape as a crime. However, the requirement is that rape must be part of a racial, religious or political attack. Thus, rape is a crime against an ethnic or religious group and it is not a crime against only women. However, these requirements do not reflect all the victims. For women like Azra, Ifeta, and Kadira, sexual violence was considered to

57 Paaso, Amber Cheri. *Recognizing gender-based violence in armed conflict: Incorporating the voices of women in international humanitarian law*. Florida Atlantic University, 2004.

destroy the Muslim population. Hence, the law again fails to illustrate the varied experiences of war-rape survivors. In our history, International Humanitarian Law failed to prosecute the perpetrators of rape, sexual torture, forced prostitution, and all forms of gendered violence which occurred during wartime. However, under the ICTY, for the first time rape has been prosecuted on a broad scale. The acceptance of rape as a crime against humanity, as an act of torture, and as an instrument of genocide is also crucial.⁵⁸

Overall, the International Humanitarian Law (IHL) has failed to recognize the women victims who were the common denominator of destroying a group. Gender-based violence can be investigated in Rome Statute which was adopted by the UN on July 17, 1998. Article 7 specifically lists rape as a forbidden act. It is also expanded to include crimes of sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence. Hence, rape attacks should not be viewed in only ethnic, racial, religious, and political terms. Additionally, the international community needs to produce international legislation that recognizes women's specific needs and concerns during wars. For example; a treaty on the protection of women can be proposed in this regard. According to Dixon, criminal prosecution of perpetrators of gender-based violence is not sufficient under IHL because victims cannot speak about their crimes comfortably because of rejection and depression problems.⁵⁹ Hence, civil issues must be solved in rape crimes. This can be done through increasing women victims' voices with establishing international victims compensation tribunal (IVCT) through voluntary donations or funding through the UN's monetary budget. Hence, IVCT will allow understanding sexual violence from the eyes of victims instead of through the eyes of male politicians and lawyers. IHL has failed to do this. Overall, women's voices must be incorporated within international law for a more visible representation of their experiences.⁶⁰

In February 2005, the ICTY filed a request to refer the case of Milan and Sredoje Lukic to the Bosnian authorities for trial and it is decided to transfer the case to Bosnia and Herzegovina. This was because the

58 Paaso, Amber Cheri. Recognizing gender-based violence in armed conflict: Incorporating the voices of women in international humanitarian law. Florida Atlantic University, 2004.

59 Dixon, Rosalind. "Rape as a crime in international humanitarian law: where to from here?." *European journal of international law* 13, no. 3 (2002): 697-719.

60 Dixon, Rosalind. "Rape as a crime in international humanitarian law: where to from here?." *European journal of international law* 13, no. 3 (2002): 697-719.

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crimes were committed in BiH's territory and the victims were Bosnian nationals.⁶¹

Demands of Vilina Vlas Survivors and Possible actions from High Representative

A handful of survivors from Vilina Vlas hotel desire to have a memorial for the victims. However, the hotel is still on Trip Advisor and there is nothing about its historical wartime crimes. Hence, unsuspected foreign tourists can book and stay at a hotel that was used for murdering, raping, torturing, and killing innocent Bosnian Muslim women. Additionally, the bed frames that tourists sleep on today are still the same ones today on which significant amounts of women were attacked. As the president of the Association of Women of Victims of War, Bakira Hasečić argued that: "People who go there don't know they are staying in beds where women were raped, and swimming in a pool in which people were executed."⁶² Hasečić further stressed the importance of remembering Vilina Vlas as a memorial center for wartime victims so that "We believe that the place may be whatever it is, but it is important for future generations that it is marked a place of sacrifice of Bosniaks, a place of rape and sexual torture and murder."⁶³ Hasečić expresses her Association's main goal is that "We have one goal, this is to gather women who were raped in Bosnia and Herzegovina no matter what their nationality or religion is."⁶⁴ Her association also works in the field often for taking photos of war criminals so that they can prove and tell prosecutors that it is not true that criminals are not available. According to BBC News, another victim is Ramza Muhic who was attacked and raped at the Vilina Vlas hotel by Milan Lukic. Her demand for Vilina Vlas is that "It should be leveled as if it never existed. Not even a tree should grow on that spot."⁶⁵ Hasečić's eldest daughter was raped also by

61 Milan Lukić and Sredoje Lukić, "Milan Lukić And Sredoje Lukić Will Be Tried Jointly At The ICTY" (, 2008), https://www.icty.org/x/file/Outreach/view_from_hague/jit_lukic_en.pdf

62 Emma-Graham Harrison, "Back on the Tourist Trail: The Hotel Where Women Were Raped and Tortured," the Guardian, January 28, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jan/28/bosnia-hotel-rape-murder-war-crimes>

63 Carlo Angerer, "War Crimes Took Place in This Hotel. You Can Book a Room.," euronews, June 3, 2018, <https://www.euronews.com/2018/06/03/hotel-hospital-where-war-crimes-occurred-remain-open-bosnia-herzegovina-n878086>

64 TRTWORLD, "One-Woman Army," www.youtube.com, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e2vR8hN7y30>

65 BBC News, "Grim History of Bosnia's 'Rape Hotel' - BBC News," YouTube Video, YouTube, April 8, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dPgK8wfbxTY>

a local police officer, Veljko in her home. Hasečić explains that moment as “What Veljko did to my family I can never forgive or forget. My daughters were in the house and I had to see the eldest one being raped in front of my eyes by this Chetnik (Serb Nationalist) who then slashed her head open.”⁶⁶ Hence, her association message to victims is to break the silence and speak out publicly and loudly for their suffering and future generations.

Visegrad town and the directors of Vilina Vlas hotel are now run by people who either prefer to forget these crimes against the Muslim population or even worse they constantly deny these crimes and erase any trace that can be used for evidence. This denialism is most apparent in the speech of Visegrad mayor, Mladen Djurevic who stresses that “I don’t know what happened there, I am not interested in going back to the past. Why would I read about that if I’m not interested in going back to that?”⁶⁷ These kinds of administrators and their supporters have tried to demolish the ruins of Pionirska Street House where 70 Muslims were burned alive. This administrations’ mentality blocks for a memorial and they instead allocated funds for repairing the road to the hotel and adding a “luxury” floor. Some victims of the hotel call for the hotel to be pulled down as well. According to the prosecutor of Milan Lukic at the Hague, Dermot Groome stressed that “There was ample evidence about a large number of rapes, murder and other serious crimes being committed at the Vilina Vlas hotel.”⁶⁸ He added that he confronted some of the most traumatized people from Vilina Vlas in his work as a prosecutor.

In terms of High Representative, the international community especially Germany and US must support OHR for removing such as the politicians of Mladen Djurevic due to his denialism of genocidal rape against Bosnian Muslims. This can be done by using Bonn powers of High Representative. Unfortunately, this denialism is highly common in the Republika Srpska entity of BiH and this prevents them to move forward in a common shared of identity. The new genocide denial ban illustrates this necessity however genocidal rape against women in Visegrad can be easily denied by local politicians and the local community. Therefore, the international community must also provide special laws to protect BiH

66 Remembering Srebrenica, “Breaking the Silence - the Women of Bosnia,” www.youtube.com, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=doUqTUK11qk>

67 Emma-Graham Harrison, “Back on the Tourist Trail: The Hotel Where Women Were Raped and Tortured,” ...

68 Emma-Graham Harrison, “Back on the Tourist Trail: The Hotel Where Women Were Raped and Tortured,” ...

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women against genocidal rape, humiliation, and denialism of local people.

Conclusion

Overall, Vilina Vlas hotel must be closed and definitely there should be a monument for commemorating women victims near the hotel. Although some of the most notorious perpetrators have been charged with many crimes, there could be more perpetrators who have not been charged and live freely in Visegrad city. Therefore, most Bosnian wartime rape victims have still been waiting for justice since some of the crimes cases have not been completed. The literature review also illustrates a need for action against Vilina Vlas hotel. Although there are cinema, artworks, and theatrical plays about Vilina Vlas, there has been no appropriate action from the state level. Thus, this research paper takes a new approach against Vilina Vlas by looking for ways to close it and building a monument as well at state-level. This necessary action must be done through state-level intervention of Bonn powers of High Representative of BiH. This state intervention is also supported by the combination of two theoretical frameworks which are conflict reconciliation and Alexander Wendt's constructivism approach which suggests "collective identity". Hence, the main research question of this article is that "What do survivors of Vilina Vlas demand from the current High Representative of BiH to commemorate the rape victims of Vilina Vlas Hotel in Visegrad?"

All in all, the former rape camp of Vilina Vlas hotel must be closed to remember the women victims and alleviate the suffering of survivors as well. The Serbian government has no choice but rather cooperate positively with the BiH government for closing Vilina Vlas hotel and building monument since Serbian officials such as Priboj mayors' "out of jurisdiction area" approach have never been valid and completely unacceptable. This is because where were these Serbian officials and their "out of jurisdiction area" approach when Uzice troops of Serbian/Yugoslavian National Army (JNA) entered illegally to Visegrad city of sovereign BiH country and later left their weapons "intentionally" to local Serb paramilitaries of Visegrad? Who were the Serbian officials and soldiers who were said to have defended themselves when the Muslims had not a single weapon in their hands? Hence, Serbian officials and their government must and will pay the prices for illegally intervening in a sovereign country of BiH and destroying many innocent civilians' lives.

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