

# HIKMET KARČIĆ, GENOCID U BOSNI I HERCEGOVINI - INSTITUCIJE, POČINIOCI I POSLJEDICE

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Reviewer: Omer Merzić

Hikmet Karčić's book "Genocid u Bosni i Hercegovini - institucije, počinioi i posljedice" provides a shocking study of the camp system and the way in which mass war crimes, from sexual abuse to genocide, were carried out during the aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1992 to 1995. As emphasized in the subtitle of the book itself, the emphasis of the book is placed on the institutional structures that enabled the crimes to be carried out.

The author of the book, Hikmet Karčić, is a research associate at the Institute for Research on Crimes Against Humanity and International Law at the University of Sarajevo. This book is a kind of adaptation of a doctoral dissertation. The author systematically approaches the research of this topic with the first two

“” Merzić O. (2025), Genocid u Bosni i Hercegovini - Institucije, Počinioi i Posljedice, by Hikmet Karčić, *Journal of Balkan Studies*, 5(2), 325-327.

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chapters, “The Eve of Genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina” and “The Year of Intention - 1991”, in which he provides the context and roadmap for a detailed plan for the dehumanization of Muslims and gradual escalation through the establishment of a parastate and accompanying elements in the form of paramilitary formations and parallel structures of the judiciary, army and police.

The most extensive chapter, which is also the most important in the book, is the third chapter, or “Institutions of Crime - Camps”. Karčić begins the chapter with a historical overview and a cross-section of the use of camps and their history, and then provides one of the more significant elements of this book in the form of a literature review. In addition to citing world-famous authors who created and wrote in English, he devotes a significant part of the literature review to Bosnian-Herzegovinian authors and their works. Only after these introductory considerations does Karčić begin his analysis of the camp system in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the aggression.

The book cites the Omarska, Manjača, Uzamnica, Batkovići and KP Dom Foča camps as case studies. These camps were chosen to present a wider range of events and abuse of detainees during the war, and the author himself often uses the comparative method to show the similarities and differences between these camps. In doing so, he does not omit disturbing details and testimonies of surviving prisoners; rather, based on their testimonies, creates a broader spectrum of crimes and cruelty which were more pronounced and deadly in some camps, especially those operated by the police.. Karčić uncensoredly lists the inhumane conditions of the camps, as well as the crimes that were committed, including physical and psychological torture, sexual violence, rape, but also liquidation and murder. He also lists individuals he calls “kapo”, that is, collaborators and helpers of the Serbian forces from among the Muslims. In addition to detailing the events and crimes inside the camps during the war, Karčić explores the long-term consequences of the genocidal policy and the collective trauma suffered by Bosniaks, as well as the systematic dehumanization they went through during their captivity, in the last three chapters, “Consequences of Genocide Policy”, “Triumphalism” and “Responsibility and Punishment”. The author also touches on the problem of triumphalism, where in the chapter of

the same name he discusses the phenomenon of denial, but also the glorification and glorification of crimes and their perpetrators.

Finally, Karčić explores the crucial issue of responsibility and punishment, as well as the consequences that the perpetrators themselves suffered after the war. He presents different levels of responsibility from low-ranking soldiers, police officers, members of the reserve forces, to lower-ranking officials in courts, prosecutors' offices and other government structures. Finally, he states that although individual perpetrators from the ranks of high-ranking military and state apparatuses, as well as direct perpetrators of crimes, were prosecuted, this problem was never completely resolved, and a detailed legal analysis and criminal process aimed at the entire system of oppression and crime were never conducted.

Although this book contains many shocking personal testimonies taken from the testimonies of victims during the trials in The Hague, it is still an essentially important work that analyzes the bloody system of camps in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the war. As the author himself states in the subtitle, he presents the institutions and perpetrators of genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the consequences of these events on Bosnian and Herzegovinian society.