Reconstruction in Bosnia
International aid and non-compliance with Dayton agreements

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Introduction
The same warlords who took control of the town of Prijedor, in northwestern Bosnia and Herzegovina, through systematic policies of ethnic cleansing — including pre-meditated slaughter, concentration camps, mass rape, and the takeover of businesses, government offices, and all communal property — have retained total control over key economic, infrastructure, and humanitarian sectors of the community in the post-war period. The architects of 'ethnic cleansing', many of whom are under investigation by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, interact daily with representatives of international organizations. This contact grants them a wholly undeserved legitimacy, given that they achieved their positions by 'disappearing' the duly elected mayor of the town, Muhamed Cehajic, and thousands of other Bosniak or Bosnian Croat community leaders and citizens. While international attention previously focused on the atrocities committed during and after the takeover of the town, little attention has been given to the fact that the mayor, deputy mayor, police chief, hospital director and director of the local 'Red Cross' got away with their crimes and became rich men in the process, having expropriated businesses, homes, and other assets of the non-Serbs of the community, estimated to be worth several billion German marks.

In Prijedor, as elsewhere in the former Yugoslavia, the international community’s failure to detain war criminals or to control ongoing abuses by unindicted war criminals has combined with the donation of aid to enrich and empower many of the very people most responsible for genocide and 'ethnic cleansing'. As recently has been done in Doboj and Teslic, Human Rights Watch/Helsinki has conducted field research in Prijedor to uncover who is continuing the cycle of human rights abuses and intimidation and why these criminals remain at large and in positions of power. The detrimental impact that Bosnia’s war criminals continue to have on respect for human rights and on long-term prospects for peace is abundantly clear. It is essential to the peace process in Bosnia and Herzegovina that the international community strategically utilize the economic and political leverage at its disposal to facilitate the successful implementation of the civilian components of the Dayton agreement, most important of which is to hold war criminals accountable and to bring an end to ongoing abuses against vulnerable populations in the region.

1. This article is based on research conducted by Human Rights Watch/Helsinki. More details relating to this article can be found in: Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, 'Bosnia and Herzegovina — The unindicted: reaping the rewards of 'ethnic cleansing', vol. 9, no. 1 (D) — January 1997.
Authorities in Prijedor
The Bosnian administrative district of Prijedor, located west of the city of Banja Luka in what is now Republika Srpska, was before 1992 a multi-ethnic area with a non-Serb population of well over 50,000. After the Bosnian Serbs took control of the region in April 1992, the communities and homes of non-Serbs were destroyed, families were separated, and thousands of people were incarcerated in concentration camps, where many were tortured and executed. Tens of thousands were forcibly deported under inhumane conditions. Today, only about 600 Bosniaks remain. The town also has a small Bosnian Croat community, left without a parish priest since the abduction and ‘disappearance’ of Roman Catholic priest Father Tomislav Matanovic in September 1995. According to the Roman Catholic charity Caritas, there are approximately 2,674 Bosnian Croats remaining in the Prijedor out of more than 6,000 Bosnian Croats registered in the 1991 census. The Catholic church and all mosques in Prijedor were destroyed in 1992.

The criminal administration established in the town of Prijedor achieved their goal of eliminating non-Serbs from the society, through the planned murder, ‘disappearance’, and expulsion of non-Serb officials, such as Mayor Cehajic, and civilians. According to survivor reports, Mayor Cehajic and six other men were removed by Bosnian Serb guards from Omarska camp on July 26, 1992, and have never been seen again.

Many of the men responsible for these crimes were members of the ‘Krizni Stab Srpske Opstine Prijedor’, or ‘Crisis Committee of the Serbian Municipality of Prijedor’, established to conduct the usurpation. A number of current officials in Prijedor were members of the Crisis Committee.2

Crisis committees were formed in a number of towns and villages in Bosnia and Hercegovina in order to facilitate the takeover by Serb forces and authorities. The ‘Crisis Committee’ in Prijedor, aided by many others, targeted non-Serb community leaders and business owners, many of whom were summarily executed or immediately rounded up and imprisoned in concentration camps, particularly in Omarska camp. During the period when such committees were being set up in various towns in 1992, the Prijedor Bosnian Serb authorities secretly began developing nine new police stations.

In early April 1992, Serb police officers in Croatia and Bosnia and Her-

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2. These include the recently-ousted but still powerful police chief, Simo Drijaca; current Mayor Milomir Stakic; the president of the local (self-designated) Serbian Red Cross, Srdjo Srdic; and Prijedor Hospital Director Milan (‘Mico’) Kovacevic (previously president of the Prijedor Executive Committee, or city council). According to the U.N. Commission of Experts, ‘Slobodan Kuruzovic’, now director of a local newspaper, was an officer in the Bosnian Serb Army, a key military figure on the ‘Crisis Committee’ and the commander of the Tmopolje concentration camp. Other alleged abettors in the ‘ethnic cleansing’ include Deputy Mayor Momcilo Radanovic (nom de guerre ‘Cigo’), who has been accused of atrocities in Kozarac and in the concentration camps; Marko Pavic, director of the PTT (Post Office, Telegraph and Telephone); and Milenko Vukic, director of the electric company.

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