

2-25-1993

## Statement of Bianca Jagger

M. Cherif Bassiouni 1937-2017

Bianca Jagger

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarlycommons.law.case.edu/documents\\_780](https://scholarlycommons.law.case.edu/documents_780)

---

### Recommended Citation

Bassiouni 1937-2017, M. Cherif and Jagger, Bianca, "Statement of Bianca Jagger" (1993). *Documents*. 47.  
[https://scholarlycommons.law.case.edu/documents\\_780/47](https://scholarlycommons.law.case.edu/documents_780/47)

This Document is brought to you for free and open access by the United Nations 780 Commission at Case Western Reserve University School of Law Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Documents by an authorized administrator of Case Western Reserve University School of Law Scholarly Commons.

Check against delivery

STATEMENT OF BIANCA JAGGER

February 25, 1993

Mr. Chairman, members of the commission:

Thank you for the opportunity to address you on the crisis in the Balkans. I have just returned from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbian occupied territories. My trip began against the backdrop of the shelling of B-H. It is now fifteen days later and the shelling continues, and has indeed intensified.

I travelled through former Yugoslavia with U.N.H.C.R. personnel. For months now the U.N.H.C.R., U.N. Staff and NGO's have been risking their lives in former Yugoslavia to deliver humanitarian assistance to more than 3 million refugees and besieged displaced residents, in the middle of a war.

I was in B-H when the crisis was precipitated by the Bosnian government appeal to the U.N.H.C.R. to get an urgently needed relief convoy to Cerska, a community of about 35,000 Muslims, who had been completely cut off by Serbian forces from food, medicine and other humanitarian relief since last April.

For months the bosnian Serbs have been refusing to give humanitarian convoys access to more than 200,000 people besieged in Gorazda, Zepa, Srebrenica and several other towns in order to starve people out of their homes. They are forcing the residents of these towns to leave or to be killed by indiscriminate shelling, sniper fire, or blockades that cause starvation and public health disaster.

In other words the strategy of Ethnic cleansing. In early January nearly 5,000 civilians on the brink of starvation, some losing their fingers and toes due to frostbite, were forced to evacuate Cerska by foot along frozen paths through the hills. An unknown number died en route. There are reports of another 5,000 civilians in Srebrenica waiting to come out.

On the 11th of February the U.N. High Commissioner on Refugees, Sadako Ogata, condemned the Bosnian Serb police for Denying humanitarian convoys access to besieged enclaves. In a letter to the leader of the Bosnian Serbs, Radovan Karadzic, Mrs. Ogata said U.N.H.C.R. had been pressing for weeks for clearance to deliver aid to the enclaves, where civilians "are suffering untold hardship due to the military blockade. "Victims do have a fight to receive international assistance in their place of residence." Mrs. Ogata reminded Dr. Karadzic of his repeated assurances that humanitarian convoys would be guaranteed unhindered safe passage.

In an attempt to draw world attention to the suffering of the inhabitants of the besieged Eastern Enclaves the Bosnia

government and the local authorities decided to refuse the distribution of food and medicines to the 380,000 people of the besieged city of Sarajevo. The decision of Mrs. Ogata to suspend virtually all humanitarian relief to Bosnia Herzegovina on February 17 was a desperate step that reflects a desperate reality. In my view the UNHCR acted in this way because it is not possible to carry out the agency's crucial humanitarian tasks solely by humanitarian means. The UNPROFOR deployment is not able to maintain an open corridor for the passage of humanitarian assistance even under the new mandate of Article 7, due to the woefully inadequate force level. No UN mandate can solve the problem unless the international community is prepared to implement Security Council resolution 770 (use of all necessary means) to deliver humanitarian aid.

Today's status quo in Bosnia-Herzegovina is unacceptable. Serbian forces in conjunction with the Yugoslav Army have an enormous military advantage. To deter further Serbian aggression the following steps are needed:

1. Impound heavy weapons.
  2. Enforce no shelling and no flight orders.
  3. Establish greater UN presence and greater assets with U.S. troop participation.
  4. Deploy UNPROFOR forces in key military positions.
- Failure to implement these steps will leave no other recourse than to lift the arms embargo so that the Bosnians can exercise their right to self defense in accordance with the UN Charter.

In the thirteen days since Secretary Christopher's Statement, the U.S. has taken no action to assist the humanitarian effort in B-H or to enhance protection for the UN efforts. Furthermore, the Secretary's statement was unfortunately perceived by Serbians as a green light for escalating the aggression and besieging the civilian population of B-H with increased brutality. The Bosnian Government and Muslim people perceived the Secretary's statement as a signal that the world has forsaken them and that all they have left is to die with dignity. Over and over again in the most remote places in refugee camps, in hospitals and Sarajevo men, women and children ask me "why has President Clinton abandoned us". I told them repeatedly that I was certain that President Clinton and the American people will not allow genocide to go on without taking concrete steps to stop it. I am here because I believe that you will not allow the deliberate extinction of any ethnic group because of their religious beliefs. After months of ineffective negotiations, broken agreements and violated cease fires, the aggression has consistently escalated. The process and the formula it has produced are fundamentally flawed.

The Vance Owen plan holds no real promise of peace and I will dare say it holds the seeds of renewed violence and terror, the plan has been conceived solely on ethnic criteria. The regions have been divided according to race predominance. The Vance Owen plan overlooks geographic, historic, economic and cultural

factors. Americans cannot stand by the British approach of "Divide and Govern". Instead of responding to naked aggression, the UN sponsored process has increasingly delivered a series of concessions and rewards to the aggressor, further victimizing the victims.

Let me review the story of these many months of negotiations for which the London Conference did produce an agreement. The agreement was designed to guarantee the minimal conditions for the survival of the citizens of B-H. The Geneva talks were to begin as the provisions agreed to in London were to be implemented.

Foremost among these provisions were:

1. Establishing an air/exclusion zone.
2. Placing heavy weapons under international control.
3. Securing convoys carrying humanitarian aid.
4. Opening of Tuzia airport.
5. Facilitating return of refugees to their homes.
6. Unconditional release of all civilians detained and the closure of all detention camps.
7. Lifting of the siege.
8. An end to ethnic cleansing.

These provisions were formally accepted by all sides. The talks in Geneva went on without implementation of the London agreement provisions. The talks preceded side by side with the continued genocide of the people of B-H. Furthermore the talks legitimize the Bosnian Serbs on the basis of superior military strength. The Geneva talks have given the aggressor time to try to complete its war plan.

Following my trip I am convinced that mass rapes are being used as a weapon of war in systematic campaign of "ethnic cleansing" by the Serbs. Unless the criminals are held accountable under the Geneva Convention before an international war tribunal the entire Serbian nation will bear responsibility throughout history.

It will be a tragedy if after all the negotiations and after all the involvement of the UN the end result was simply to put a stamp of legitimacy upon rewards of aggression. There are critical issues of principle/democracy, human rights, and sovereignty, as well as crime against humanity to which the US cannot afford to turn a blind eye.

In this war, civilians are the specific focus and primary target of violence. The enormity of the suffering inflicted on the civilian population in this conflict defies expression. Approximately 80% of the injured are civilians and 20% belong to other groups and soldiers. However it should be emphasized that children make 15% of the wounded, and in the last few weeks that number has increased.

The Conflict in B-H has entailed widespread destruction of life, acts of unspeakable brutality, killing, mutilation, and disappearances. In his attempt to create "ethnically clean Serbian territories" and to exterminate non-Serbian populations, the aggressor established a great number of concentration camps, gathering centers and prison for torture and liquidation of non-Serbian civilian population in the municipalities where muslim and Croats were the major population.

The aggressor pursues tens of thousands of civilians capturing them in the streets, houses, schools, and taking them to concentration camps and prisons. The camps are placed in different facilities such as sports, school, medical, recreation, and catering establishments; factory premises, hotels, state prisons, blockhouses, tunnels, warehouses, distribution centers, rail way stations, mines, old pits, garages, cellars, etc.

The Majority of the captives are the civilians who survived terroristic attacks on towns and settlements populated mainly by Croats and Muslims after which they are taken by force to local stadiums and other facilities and selected according to their nationality and age, men are separated from women and children. By "this ethnic cleansing" of the occupied territories, the aggressor changes the demographic structure of B-H by force thus realized his plan to create "Greater Serbia". He plans to establish a Serbian state within B-H in the occupied territory form which he forcefully displaced Muslim and Croats. Many cities such as Sarajevo, Gorazde, Gradacac, Jajee and others are besieged and savagely demolished by the aggressor for months and they represent a concentration camp with greater number of captured civilians.

Even though the proportions of the horrible crimes committed in the camps and prisons have been not fully known, according to the data gathered so far it is clear that the prisoners and captives were exposed to the most brutal methods of physical and psychological torture, and killing. Namely the aggressor continually and bestially beats the captives until they lose consciousness in the most cruel way using unseen methods: sticks, irons, wood rods, chains, whips with iron balls on top, metal rollers, feet, butt-ends specially for hitting them on their heads, kidneys and testicles.

On the bodies of many captives hands, foreheads, and faces the Chetniks make the sign of cross and the letter "V" with their knives in their mouths and on their throats threatening them with slaughter, push iron rods into their mouths, throw them into fire, stab them with bayonets, break their teeth, take by force their money and jewelry, force them to lick blood form the floor, cross themselves, swallow pieces of glass, grunt like pigs, eat cigarette butts, make holes in their ears, force the men into unnatural obscene acts, cut their genitals, and take them to force of labours.

Liquidation of captives and prisoners in camp and prisons have been documented many civilians were taken from camps to unknown directions and their destiny is not known, many captives and prisoners were starved to death. The TV images of those suffering men "alive corpses" eyes wide open with hunger and illness" taken in the concentration camps in Omarska and Manjeka. That appeared in the months of August shocking the entire world. Many of the captives looked like alive corpses and resemble those from the NAZI camps during the second world war.

I know of your concern for the people of B-H. I do hope you find a satisfactory solution.