



Monument to the Croatian victory "Oluja 95" in Knin

Author: Tamara Banjeglav

## A Storm of Memory in Post-War Croatia

Tamara Banjeglav

Cultures of History Forum, published: 12.04.2015

DOI: 10.25626/0035

The article analyzes the official, state-sponsored celebration of "Operation Storm", a military action that took place in Croatia in August 1995, and shows how the celebration has been used in constructing the official narrative about the 1991–1995 war, but also in creating and reinforcing Croatian national identity. The article also explores how the official narrative regarding the 1990s war has been deconstructed and contested by oppositional, sectarian narratives.

### Recommended Citation

Tamara Banjeglav: A Storm of Memory in Post-War Croatia. In: Cultures of History Forum (12.04.2015), DOI: 10.25626/0035

Copyright (c) 2015 by Imre Kertész Kolleg, all rights reserved. This work may be copied and redistributed for non-commercial, educational purposes, if permission is granted by the copyright holders. For permission please contact the editors.

## A Storm of Memory in Post-War Croatia

The article analyzes the official, state-sponsored celebration of 'Operation Storm', a military action that took place in Croatia in August 1995, and shows how the celebration has been used in constructing the official narrative about the 1991–1995 war, but also in creating and reinforcing Croatian national identity. The article also explores how the official narrative on the 1990s war has been deconstructed and contested by oppositional, sectarian narratives, which can be discerned in unofficial, counter-commemorations and celebrations of war events and which also struggle for their place in the public sphere. The aim of the article is to examine more nuanced forms of public memory of the 1990s war in Croatia.

### "Memory has become an intense battlefield"

As scholars in the field of memory studies have already demonstrated<sup>[1]</sup>, political elites selectively articulate cultural memory in order to construct and maintain political legitimacy and to build state/national/ethnic identity. From the perspective of the ruling elites, the goals of public commemorations and memorials are most often, in the words of Benedict Anderson, related to nation-building and to defining an "imagined community".<sup>[2]</sup> The symbols and rituals engaged in this process serve to produce and reinforce the feeling of collective belonging and solidarity within a group and to distinguish it from others. Thus, in post-conflict societies, rather than commemorating victims and contributing to public dialogue about the past, the goal of those elites who organize such commemorative rituals may instead be to assert particular identities in the public sphere that articulate narratives of political legitimation. A recent UN Report of the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights states that "memory has become an intense battlefield", in which remembering serves to justify political agendas.<sup>[3]</sup>

In Croatia, commemorative culture regarding the last war has proved to be a platform for politicians to create nation-building narratives and strengthen national identity. Official (state-organized) memorialization and commemorative practices related to the events of the 'Homeland War' (Croatia's 1991-1995 war for independence) are used to construct the official, dominant narrative about the war; at the same time, however, they carry an added significance as they are usually associated with the foundation of the state. What they enact is a narrative of sacrifice, struggle, suffering, and, in the end, victory and heroism in the battle for the independence of the Croatian state. One of the most important of these rituals is the celebration held every year on 5 August to commemorate Operation Storm, which was carried out by Croatian armed forces on the same day in 1995. During this military operation, the entire occupied Croatian territory was brought back into the Croatian legal order, except for Eastern Slavonija, which was peacefully re-integrated later. 'Operacija Oluja' (storm) and 'Operacija Bljesak' (flash), which was carried out in May 1995, were the critical military operations leading to the end of the war. Official celebration of this national holiday, which happens every year in the Dalmatian hinterland town of Knin (the main site of events that occurred during 'Operation Storm') provokes passionate reactions from and has various meanings for different segments of the Croatian society. The official memory of this military operation is one-sided, referring primarily to the victory of the Croatian Army and its success in bringing back the occupied territories under Croatian rule. The memories of Serb civilians who were evicted from their homes and whose family members were killed by members of the Croatian forces at the end of the war, however, are missing from the official ceremonies and official narratives of these events. Another factor that has complicated construction of the official narrative of Operation

Storm was the trial before the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) to Croatian Army generals Ante Gotovina and Mladen Markač, who were accused (but later acquitted) of knowing about and not punishing the crimes committed against Serb civilians. The ICTY trial thus invariably influenced the interpretation of the recent past.

The annual celebration serves as a constant reminder of which narratives and whose memories of the war are not part of the official narrative and do not deserve to be remembered in public space. However, there also exist oppositional counter-narratives that challenge the official narrative and are expressed through counter-commemorations and memorialization organized by the local Serb population.

## Operation Storm and the Official Narrative of the War

The fifth of August is a public holiday and is celebrated in Croatia as Homeland Thanksgiving Day; since 2001 it has also been known as The Day of Victory and Homeland Thanksgiving, and since 2008 as Croatian War Veterans' Day. In political speeches held during the central annual celebration, it has often been stressed that Operation Storm marked a new beginning and rebirth of the Croatian nation. This can be discerned as well in the decision of the first Croatian president Franjo Tuđman to take the oath for his second presidential mandate, in 1997, on the very date of the Operation Storm celebration. The performative character of this event, which involves pledging allegiance, laying wreaths and raising the national flag, have contributed to the promotion of Operation Storm as a foundational myth of the Croatian state.<sup>[4]</sup> Moreover, the town of Knin has continued to be a symbolically loaded site with regard to Croatia's recent history.<sup>[5]</sup> The annual celebration of Operation Storm moved to Knin with the change of government in 2000, when a coalition of six left-oriented parties came to power. However, the new Prime Minister, Ivica Račan, chose not to attend the celebration in Knin due to his government's fear of protests from Croatian war veterans, who were dissatisfied with the new government's policy of cooperation with the ICTY.<sup>[6]</sup> This cooperation began under pressure from the international community and the ICTY for Croatia to investigate war crimes committed during and in the aftermath of Operation Storm and to extradite Croatian army generals suspected of knowing about and not punishing war crimes committed by Croatian army members against Serb civilians. However, many in Croatia thought it was impossible for Croatian Army members to have committed war crimes, since the Homeland War was perceived as being defensive, just and liberating – a definition that was even made official a few years later with the 'Declaration on Operation Storm' adopted by the Croatian Parliament in 2006.<sup>[7]</sup> A radical understanding of the war was provided by former President of the Supreme Court, Judge Milan Vuković, who said in an interview that it was impossible for war crimes to be committed in a defensive war.<sup>[8]</sup> The adopted 'Declaration' actually mentions crimes that happened during Operation Storm, without identifying who the perpetrators were and who the victims. It only states that victims were "innocent and powerless civilians", but their victimhood is then relativized by the statement that "this is what usually happens in war."<sup>[9]</sup>

The government's nonparticipation in the official festivities in Knin changed when Franjo Tuđman's party, the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), returned to power at the end of 2003. The following year, in August 2004, the town's anniversary celebration was attended by all high-ranking state officials (the president, prime minister, and speaker of the Parliament), which emphasized the importance of this event and its place in the national consciousness and history.<sup>[10]</sup> However, after returning to power the HDZ government continued the cooperation with the ICTY. This proved to be problematic for this government as well, because it needed to find a way to address and incorporate the issue of cooperation into the official celebration, without at the same time allowing the official interpretation of the war to be

called into question. Moreover, criticism of the government began growing after high-ranking politicians started mentioning war crimes committed against Serb civilians in their speeches during the Knin celebration. For example, in 2005 Prime Minister Ivo Sanader declared in Knin that "Operation Storm should be separated from the tragic events, criminal acts and injustice committed against Croatian citizens of Serb nationality before full implementation of the legal order".<sup>[11]</sup> Nevertheless, Sanader's statement actually suggested that these crimes were committed because the Croatian legal system had not yet been implemented in these areas, that the events had taken place out of reach of the Croatian police and that therefore the Croatian authorities were not responsible for them.<sup>[12]</sup> By not naming the perpetrators, the crimes were thus obfuscated and presented as just another horrible consequence of the war. Presenting them in this way also enabled the political leadership to exempt the state from liability to pay reparations to victims, since individuals, and not the state, were to be held responsible for the crimes.

## Counter-Celebrations and Contested Narrative

On the tenth anniversary of Operation Storm, in 2005, contested narratives about the recent past emerged. As Jay Winter argues, "public commemorations [...] have the potential for dominated groups to contest their subordinate status in public. However much political leaders or their agents try to choreograph commemorative activity, there is much space for subversion or creative interpretation of the official commemorative script."<sup>[13]</sup> Retired Croatian Army generals and members of the far-right opposition, frustrated by the government's cooperation with the ICTY, organized their own (counter-)celebration of Operation Storm. Their dissatisfaction with the government culminated in 2005 mostly due to ICTY's continued pressure to extradite one of the most prominent figures and symbolic heroes of the Homeland War – general Ante Gotovina.<sup>[14]</sup> Gotovina had been charged by the ICTY with not preventing and not punishing those who committed war crimes against Serb civilians during and directly following Operation Storm, and an indictment against him was issued in 2001.<sup>[15]</sup> War veterans, protesting the government's efforts to arrest Gotovina, refused to participate in the official, state-organized main celebration in Knin, so they organized a parallel (counter-) celebration in the near-by town of Čavoglave.<sup>[16]</sup> The organizers of this 'counter-celebration', which was organized under the slogan 'Let's rise for Croatia', issued a statement in which they sharply criticized the government for its policy of cooperating with the ICTY.<sup>[17]</sup> By organizing this counter-celebration and expressing their frustration over the official celebration in Knin, the opposing side (far-right parties, war veterans' associations and retired army generals) symbolically countered the official narrative of the war. In their narrative about what had happened in the war, no Croatian Army generals were to be held responsible for war crimes, inasmuch as they had fought a legitimate, defensive war for Croatia's freedom and independence.

## The Problem of 'Truth' and the (In)Visibility of Civilian Victims

After Gotovina's arrest, Croatia's relations with the ICTY again became a topic of political speeches held at the annual celebration in Knin, but this time the ICTY was mentioned in connection with the 'truth' that it was trying to establish about the war in Croatia. During the 2006 celebration of Operation Storm, Prime Minister Sanader asserted that "the court proceedings will show what is the truth, but until a judgement is reached, nobody is guilty"<sup>[18]</sup> – alluding to the ICTY trial against the generals Ante Gotovina, Ivan Čermak and Mladen Markač. The following year, however, in 2007, during the same annual celebration of the Operation Storm, Sanader announced that "no one but [Croatia] will write our history and change the historical truth,"<sup>[19]</sup> alluding to perceptions that the ICTY was rewriting history through its trials of

Croatian officers. In 2010 the new Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor likewise emphasized that "nobody will erase the historical truth that we were victims of aggression and that we were defending our homeland and our home,"<sup>[20]</sup> which also alluded to the ICTY indictment of Gotovina, Čermak and Markač and the charges against them of taking part in a joint criminal enterprise.

Glorification of the Operation Storm and narratives of victimhood, as stated in the examples above, downplayed or completely ignored the fate of civilian victims killed during the operation. Either they were never even mentioned during the main festivities, or crimes committed against civilians were rationalized by the Croatian army's having conducted a defensive military operation with the aim of bringing back Croatia's territory under its control. In 2008, for example, Speaker of the Croatian Parliament speaker Luka Bebić said during the annual celebration that "the Croatian Army has no reason to apologize because it was defending its territory."<sup>[21]</sup> Similarly, in 2011 Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor said that "we will not accept resentment of our victories, which were victories of democracy and freedom over Slobodan Milošević's Greater Serbian policy of aggression, destruction and hatred."<sup>[22]</sup> Although she did mention that crimes had been committed (without specifying victims or perpetrators), the Prime Minister relativized them by referring to them in the wider context of other crimes, such as profiteering and corruption.<sup>[23]</sup> What is interesting is that Prime Minister Kosor's statement came at a time when the ICTY, in a first instance judgement that was later overturned on appeal, found generals Gotovina and Markač guilty of crimes committed during Operation Storm, sentencing them to 24 and 18 years in prison respectively.

The victims of the war crimes were first mentioned by President Ivo Josipović, who won the presidential elections in 2010. In his speech at the annual celebration in Knin in 2011, Josipović said that the "brilliant military operation should not be called into question due to the dishonourable actions of those individuals responsible for crimes against our fellow citizens of Serbian nationality."<sup>[24]</sup> Josipović referred to crimes against citizens of Serbian nationality again the following year when he announced that "winning in peacetime means holding out a hand to our fellow citizens of Serbian nationality, acknowledging them as victims and paying our respect to them."<sup>[25]</sup> Prime Minister Zoran Milanović, alluding to the crimes committed against the Serb population, only stated that following Operation Storm Croatia, had "for some time, slacked off in its duties".<sup>[26]</sup> In 2013, however, after the ICTY cleared, in a second non-appealable judgement, generals Ante Gotovina and Mladen Markač of any responsibility for war crimes committed during and after Operation Storm, crimes against Serbian civilians went unmentioned by state leaders during the annual celebration in Knin. In August 2014, the victims were again ignored during the official festivities in Knin and were not mentioned in any of the speeches.<sup>[27]</sup>

The statements above highlight how the official annual celebration of Operation Storm has been used to create a framework for understanding Croatia's recent past and to establish the official narrative about the war. The official interpretation of this military battle was even institutionalized in the adoption of the 'Declaration on Operation Storm'. The 'Declaration' states that "it is an obligation of the Croatian Parliament, Croatian expert public, Croatian scientific and educational institutions, as well as the media, to transform, over time, Operation Storm into a battle that cannot and will not be forgotten: into a decisive, glorious, and victorious battle of the Homeland War that will become part of Croatia's 'useful past' for future generations."<sup>[28]</sup> The adoption of this 'Declaration' thus left no room for further contestations and/or interpretations of the official narrative of the past, while public 'memory entrepreneurs' (the academic community, institutions of science and education, and the media) were given instructions on how to remember and interpret the past for future generations.

## Conflicting Memories and Competing Narratives

This understanding of the past does not, however, have currency among that part of the population that had to leave their homes and whose family members were killed during the military operation carried out in August 1995. Commemorations of these victims are organized by the local population's victims associations and the Serbian National Council and are held in the villages of Varivode and Gošić near the town of Knin. Moreover, rare memorials erected to the memory of Serbian civilians who were killed during the war are set up only at the initiative of the local population in places where Serbs constitute the majority population or at the initiative of associations of Serbian civilian victims of war. Erecting such memorials is, however, quite controversial, so much so that some of them have even been removed due to negative reactions from certain social groups. In 2004 in the villages of Varivode and Gošić, the Council of the Serbian National Minority of Kistanje county erected wooden crosses and memorial plaques in memory of victims killed in the area in August and September 1995.<sup>[28]</sup> The memorial in Varivode was damaged, however, in April 2010; and the memorial plaque bearing names of the killed civilians was stolen.<sup>[29]</sup> The memorial was restored and a new monument put in its place in October 2010; and the same year the commemoration of the killed civilians was attended by President Ivo Josipović. In the following years, the president and prime minister sent only their representatives to the commemoration ceremonies in Varivode and Gošić; but in 2013 and 2014, no high-ranking state official was invited to the two commemorations. As the organizers explained, this was because the state leadership had promised in previous commemorations that they would advocate for punishing the criminals; but more than 19 years after the Operation Storm took place, almost nothing had been done to prosecute those responsible for the crimes. The commemorations were thus attended mainly by victims' family members, associations of victims and members of civil society organizations.

Another commemoration and memorialization attempt considered 'problematic' for the official narrative on Operation Storm took place in Golubić, near Knin, another village where civilians had been killed during the operation. There, a monument and memorial plaque in memory of victims were put up at the initiative of and financed by local residents and by Suza, an association of families of missing Serbs from Croatia. The monument was erected in memory of the Serbian inhabitants of that village who were killed between 1991 and 1995.<sup>[30]</sup> The monument and a memorial plaque, which bears the names of 34 victims from Golubić, were set up in front of the local Orthodox church on the occasion of the church's 550th anniversary. Most of the 20 victims whose names were inscribed on the monument were civilians killed during Operation Storm; five, however, were members of the Republic of Serbian Krajina<sup>[31]</sup> army who died in combat between 1991 and 1995.<sup>[32]</sup> For this reason, the memorial plaque provoked negative reactions among the Croatian public and outrage among Croatian war veterans. Then interior minister decided to ban the commemoration to Serbian victims and the unveiling of the plaque saying that the monument was partially built on state property and that no permits had been issued for its construction.<sup>[33]</sup> In November 2011, the memorial plaque was changed so that names of victims were removed. Families of victims, under the pressure of war veterans associations and local government, changed the plaque and erected a new one with a more neutral inscription that said only "in memory of Golubić inhabitants who died in wars", without mentioning their names or in which wars they had died. Such changes thus made this plaque 'acceptable'.<sup>[34]</sup> The monument was, however, damaged in September 2013, and two days after that, the state-financed monument to Croatian victory in the Homeland War 'Storm 95' was also damaged on the main square in nearby Knin. According to some war veterans associations, the Knin monument was damaged in retaliation.<sup>[35]</sup> The monument in Golubić was repaired with financing from the village inhabitants, but was never officially unveiled; likewise, no commemoration for the victims was ever held in the village because, as one of the initiators of the monument asserted, "we lay wreaths at the monument every year, but do not gather there out of fear that the monument might again be vandalized."<sup>[36]</sup>

These examples demonstrate that sites of memory and memorialization in post-war Croatia have a strong symbolic character, which is instrumentalized by those involved in the creation of official memory politics in order to reinforce certain identities in public and to show whose suffering deserves to be publicly remembered. Officially organized commemorative practices also serve as constant reminders of which narratives and whose memories of the war are not part of the collective identity and thus do not deserve to be remembered in public space. Memorialization in Croatia is not officially recognized as a desirable mechanism of transitional justice, and it does not entail the same kind of expectations that attend transitional justice mechanisms such as war crimes trials.<sup>[37]</sup> Thus memorialization practices are not obliged to take into account alternative discourses or to serve the needs of the minority population for symbolic reparations. The official, state-initiated memorialization serves both as bearer of the official narrative about the war, which is thus recognized and given legitimacy in public space, and as guide to collective Croatian identity.

In order to understand different aspects of war memory and commemorations, I suggest that different layers of remembering (and forgetting) have to be taken into account. As Ashplant, Dawson and Roper argue, what is needed is a redefinition of the 'politics' of war memory and commemoration, which would take a bottom-up approach and embrace both the operations of civil society actors and state-organized remembrance.<sup>[38]</sup> Ashplant, Dawson and Roper approach the politics of war memory and commemorations as a "struggle of different groups to give public articulation to and, hence, gain recognition for, certain memories and the narratives within which they are structured".<sup>[39]</sup> Compared to previous, mostly state-centred and elite-focused research, this approach aims to reveal more nuanced aspects and understandings of commemorative practices and their different forms. It also helps us understand which social groups serve as promoters of which particular narratives addressed to which arenas, which can range from "networks of families or kinship groups, through those of communities of geography or interest, to the public sphere of nation-states and transnational power blocs".<sup>[40]</sup>

In the case of Croatia, in order to analyze the politics of war memory and related commemorations, what is needed is to take into account not only the official remembrance practices (in the form of officially-erected state monuments and memorials and state-organized commemorations), but also those 'counter-commemorations' and 'alternative' memorials organized and built by those segments of the society whose narratives have not been recognized by those in power and who have not yet earned their place in public space. It is important to analyze these different and diverse aspects of memorialization since they offer us insights into the various layers of memory and narratives of the 'Homeland War' that result from such competing memories.

## Footnotes

1. Pierre Nora, *Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire*, Representations 26 (1989); Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992; Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
2. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso, 1983.
3. Farida Shaheed, Report of the Special Rapporteur in the Field of Cultural Rights: Memorialization processes, U.N. General Assembly Human Rights Council, retrieved 1 February 2015, URL: [http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session25/Documents/A\\_HRC\\_25\\_49\\_ENG.DOC](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session25/Documents/A_HRC_25_49_ENG.DOC).
4. Gordana Đerić, *Nasilje u društvenom pamćenju: Intima hrvatske i srpske javnosti povodom akcije Oluja* [Violence in social memory: Intimacy of the Croatian and Serbian public on the occasion of Operation Storm], *Filozofija i društvo* 1 (2008): 43–68.
5. Knin used to be the seat of Croatian kings, and during the 1990s it was the capital of the secessionist Republic of Serbian Krajina.
6. On 14 April 2000, the new government issued a declaration confirming Croatia's commitment to full cooperation with the ICTY. Operations Flash and Storm were no longer declared to be under Croatia's jurisdiction, but the government recognized ICTY's right to investigate war crimes committed during and at the end of the Homeland War. See Deklaracija o suradnji s Međunarodnim kaznenim sudom u Den Hagu [Declaration on cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal in The Hague], *Narodne novine* 41 (2000). retrieved 1 February, 2015, URL: [http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2000\\_04\\_41\\_957.html](http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2000_04_41_957.html).
7. Deklaracija o Oluji [Declaration on Operation Storm], *Narodne novine* 76 (2006), retrieved 1 February, 2015, URL: [http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2006\\_07\\_76\\_1787.html](http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2006_07_76_1787.html).
8. Đ. Ivanišević, *Obrana nije ratni zločin* [Defense is not a war crime], *Slobodna Dalmacija* (28 March 1995).
9. Deklaracija o Oluji [Declaration on Operation Storm].
10. This importance was made even clearer on the tenth anniversary of the Operation, in 2005, when a special state committee for marking of the tenth anniversaries of Operations Flash and Storm was formed, headed by the president, prime Minister and speaker of parliament.
11. Mesić i Sanader: Oluju slaviti, kazniti zločine [Mesić and Sanader: Celebrate the Storm, but punish the crimes], *Jutarnji list* (6 August 2005).
12. For similar statements given by President Stjepan Mesić during later celebrations in Knin see Michel-Andre Horelt and Judith Renner, *Denting a Heroic Picture: A Narrative Analysis of Collective Memory in Post-War Croatia*, *Perspectives* 16, no. 02 (2008).
13. Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory and the Shadows of War*, in *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, edited by Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning, Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 2008, p. 63.
14. For an extensive analysis of the 'hero' and 'martyr' symbolism of Ante Gotovina in the perception of the Croatian public, see Vjeran Pavlaković, *Croatia, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and General Gotovina as a Political Symbol*, *Europe-Asia Studies* 62, no. 10 (2010): 1707–1740.
15. After an indictment against him was issued in 2001, Gotovina went into hiding. He was arrested on the Canary Islands and extradited to the ICTY in December 2005.
16. Čavoglave is a town near Knin and hometown of a controversial singer of nationalistic songs, Marko Perković Thompson, who sponsors the parallel counter celebration. The Čavoglave celebration is attended mostly by retired army generals and members of right-wing political groups, while the media report every year that the number of people attending it is much higher than that of attendees at the state-organized festivities. The last celebration in August 2014 was reported to have been attended by 100,000 people.
17. Umirovljeni generali i časnici organiziraju 'svoju' proslavu 'Oluje' [Retired generals and officers organize 'their own' celebration of the Storm], *Večernji list* (1 August 2005), retrieved 2 February, 2015, URL: <http://www.vecernji.hr/hrvatska/umirovljeni-general-i-casnici-organiziraju-svoju-proslavu-oluje-808429>.
18. Sanader: Oluja je pobijedila zločin [Sanader: Storm beat a crime], *Jutarnji list* (6 August 2006).
19. Nitko osim nas neće pisati hrvatsku povijest [No one but us will write Croatian history], *Vjesnik* (6 August 2007).
20. Proslava 15. obljetnice akcije Oluja: politički suparnici zajedno na kninskoj tvrđavi [Celebration of the 15th anniversary of Action Storm: Political opponents together on Knin fortress], *Jutarnji list* (6 August 2010).
21. Za pobjedu se nećemo ispričavati [We will not apologize for victory], *Jutarnji list* (6 August 2008).
22. Pozdrav Gotovini i Markaču [Salutation to Gotovina and Markač], *Večernji list* (6 August 2011).
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Ivo Josipović: Trebamo pružiti ruku sugrađanima Srbima i pokloniti se njihovim žrtvama [Ivo Josipović: We should extend a hand to Serbian fellow citizens and pay respects to their victims], *Jutarnji list* (6 August 2012).
26. Ibid.
27. The author attended the central official celebration in Knin on 5 August 2013 and 5 August 2014.



28. Deklaracija o Oluji.
29. Tranziciona pravda u post-jugoslavenskim zemljama: Izveštaj za 2009. godinu [Transitional justice in post-Yugoslav states: Report for 2009], Documenta – Centre for Dealing with the Past, retrieved 2 February 2015, URL: <http://www.documenta.hr/hr/tranzicijska-pravda-u-post-jugoslavenskim-zemljama-izvje%C5%A1taj-za-2009.-godinu.html>.
30. After this event took place, the media speculated that the monument had been vandalized as a consequence of tensions created by the announcement by the local government in Kistanje that some of the streets would be renamed, among them the Street of Croatian Defenders and Franjo Tuđman Street, and renamed after some prominent figures of Serbian cultural and political life and history. See for example Varivode: Šibenčanin (47) osumnjičen da je srušio spomenik [Varivode: Man from Šibenik (47) suspected of having demolished the monument], Večernji list (23 April 2010), retrieved 2 February 2015, URL: <http://www.vecernji.hr/hrvatska/varivode-sibencanin-47-osumnjicen-da-je-srusio-spomenik-130629>.
31. Author interview with an initiator of the Golubić monument, 28 September 2014.
32. The Republic of Serbian Krajina was a para-state which existed on the territory of Croatia from 1991 until its defeat at the hands of the Croatian Army in 1995.
33. Golubić monument initiator, interview.
34. Karamarko zabranio otkrivanje spomenika srpskim žrtvama u Golubiću [Karamarko banned opening of the monument to Serbian victims in Golubić], Slobodna Dalmacija (1 October 2011).
35. Branitelji: Spomenik u Golubiću se i dalje gradi [Defenders: Monument in Golubić is still being built], T-portal (6 November 2011), retrieved 2 February 2015, URL: <http://www.tportal.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/158026/Branitelji-Spomenik-u-Golubicu-se-i-dalje-gradi.html>.
36. Boris Pavelić, Oštećen spomenik žrtvama 'Oluje' [Monument to victims of Storm damaged], Balkan Insight, (16 September 2013), retrieved 2 February 2015, URL: <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/o%C5%A1te%C4%87en-spomenik-%C5%B8rtvama-oluje>.
37. Golubić monument initiator, interview.
38. Brandon Hamber, Liz Ševčenko and Ereshnee Naidu, Utopian Dreams or Practical Possibilities? The Challenges of Evaluating the Impact of Memorialization on Societies in Transition, *The International Journal of Transitional Justice* 4 (2010): 397–420.
39. T. G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson and Michael Roper, *The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration*, New York: Routledge, 2000.
40. Ibid, 16.



Croatian flag on the fortress above Knin

Author: Tamara Banjeglav



Monument to Serb civilians killed in the village of Gosic

Author: Tamara Banjeglav



Monument to Serb victims in the village of Golubic

Author: Tamara Banjeglav



Celebration of Operation Storm in Knin in 2014

Author: Tamara Banjeglav