

FORENSIC ASSISTANCE PROJECT

Consultant Report 1999-012

Dariva I

Republika Srpska Commission on Tracing Prisoners and Missing Persons
5 May 1999

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*International Commission
on Missing Persons*

Summary of Events

On May 5, 1999, the Republika Srpska Commission on Tracing Prisoners and Missing Persons investigated two riverside locations in search of a mass grave. Twenty civilians were reportedly killed in 1992 and buried in this area of metropolitan Sarajevo. The two sites were investigated by backhoe trenches. No evidence of clandestine burials or mass graves were found in either case, although there is still circumstantial and geomorphological evidence, corroborated by witness reports, that indicate that Dariva 1 should be re-investigated.

Summary of Recovery Operation Results (MNI: Minimum Number of Individuals)

Site	Grid Coordinate	MNI
Dariva 1	BP 944 593	0
Dariva 2	BP 949 591	0

(Editor's note: In 1999, it was agreed that the "State Commission on Missing Persons (Bosniak Side)" and the "Federal Commission on Missing Persons – Croat Side" would eventually be referred to as the "Federation Commission on Missing Persons – Bosniak Side" and "Federation Commission on Missing Persons – Croat Side," respectively. For purposes of simplicity and clarity, any reference to either of these commissions in 1999 reports will use the "Federation" names.)

Participants and Observers

Republika Srpska (RS) Commission on Tracing Prisoners and Missing Persons

KRČMAR Goran	Member
KARAN Dr. Željko	Forensic Pathologist
MARIĆ Milko	Crime Technician

Federation Commission on Missing Persons

ODOBAŠIĆ Jasmin	Member
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Physicians for Human Rights (PHR)

BOAZ Dr. Noel	Forensic Consultant
TORLAKOVIĆ Azur	Field Assistant

Office of the High Representative (OHR)

CHILVERS Peter	Exhumations Officer
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Narrative

The two sites investigated can be found on the Sarajevo topographic map (Sheet 2782 I; Edition 9-DMA; Series M709; Scale 1:50,000; Figure 1). Grid coordinates are listed in Table 1; these were determined using a Global Positioning System (GPS) unit.

Dariva 1

The RS Commissioner reported that local witnesses identified the area as the site of burial of approximately 20 civilians in a mass grave in 1992. No grave markers were present. A water-filled pit with an adjacent mound of earth, apparently removed from the pit, occupies the site which is a sand and gravel bar on the north side of the Miljacka River, east of Sarajevo. On May 5, 1999, at the direction of the RS Commissioner, a backhoe dug a trench from west to east from the western extremity of the gravel bar to approximately 10 m west of the water-filled pit (Photo 1). The length of the trench was approximately 25 m. Examination of the wall of the trench revealed no disturbed sediment, there being normal stratification of water-laid sediments down to the bottom of the trench, which was approximately 1.5 m in depth. No skeletal elements were discovered in the trench. At the suggestion of this consultant the backhoe then sectioned the mound of earth adjacent to the water-filled pit. No skeletal elements were found here. The mound showed no natural stratification and was interpreted as fill removed from the pit.

This consultant then suggested that the pit be drained in order to ascertain whether any human remains might be discovered here. This suggestion was met with reluctance by the RS Commission, and Mr. Jasmin Odobašić of the Federation Commission – Bosniak Side became quite excited and left the site by car in the direction of Sarajevo for approximately an hour. The RS Commission decided to halt operations at Dariva 1, citing the lack of a pump with which the pit could be drained. They informed this consultant that they intended to return to the site of Dariva 1 when they had obtained the use of a pump.

During the 1999 exhumation season, the RS Commission did not return to the Dariva I site. This consultant observed on September 11, 1999, that the entire site, including the water-

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filled pit, had been bulldozed. This action may have been incidental to the clean-up of the north bank of the Miljacka River for local recreational purposes, or it may have been an intentional attempt to cover up the site. In either case, this disturbance of the site should not have occurred, and the site remains an important potential mass grave that should be investigated.

Dariva 2

A 32-m-long, east-west trench (Photo 2) was dug at the base of cliff on the north side of the road on the north side of the Miljacka River, approximately 1 km east of Dariva 1. A small pile of refuse, including plastic bottles, cans, and paper, was present at the base of the cliff, but there were no surface remains of skeletal elements. The trench was dug down to bedrock, about 1 m deep; the stratigraphy was found to be undisturbed, and no skeletal remains were recovered.

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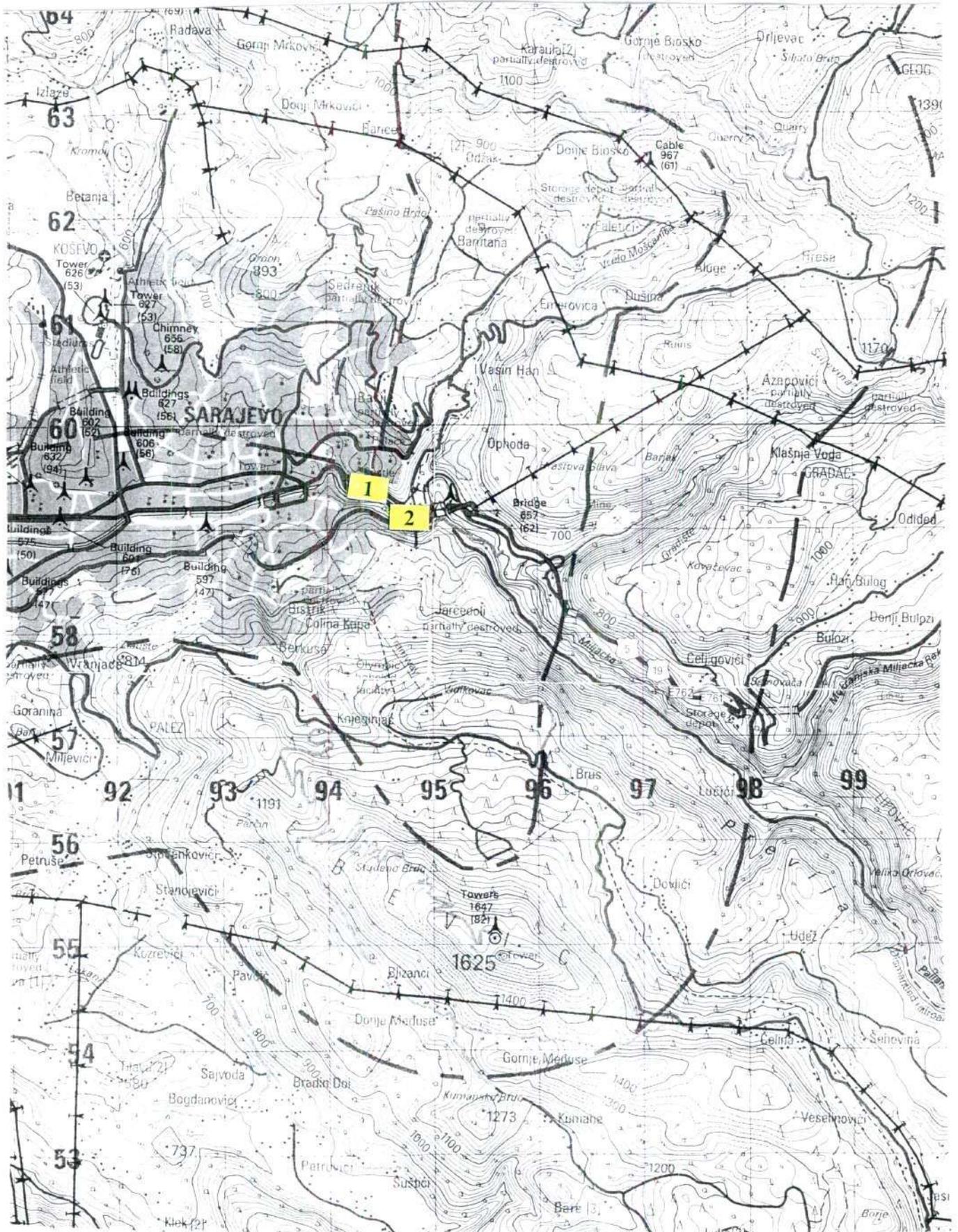


Figure 1. (1) Dariva 1 (2) Dariva 2

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Photo 1. Dariva 1 Site.



Photo 2. Dariva 2 Site.