

Forensic experts recover remains of more than 70 Srebrenica victims

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TUZLA, Bosnia-Herzegovina (AP) -- Forensic experts recovered the remains of more than 70 victims of the 1995 Srebrenica massacre from a mass grave in north-eastern Bosnia, an official has said, adding the site may contain up to 150 bodies.

It is the fifth mass grave experts found in the village of Liplje and like the previous four, "it contains remains of people from Srebrenica," said the head of the forensic team Murat Hurtic, adding so far his team has found "70 incomplete bodies and one complete body at the site".

He said his team may work on this mass grave for another two or three weeks since it could contain up to 150 bodies and due to the rainy weather they had to cover the entire grave with a tent.

The experts found bullets and nylon thread among the remains. The bodies were originally buried elsewhere but later moved to the Liplje location to cover up the crime, he said. About 1,000 victims were found in previous four mass graves discovered in the village.

Most of such so-called secondary mass graves contain parts of bodies since those who tried to cover up the crime excavated them from the original locations with bulldozers. When found, the remains are collected in bags and completed in laboratories.

Experts then extract the DNA from the bones of the victims and match it with DNA from the blood of family members of the missing. This way thousands of victims from the 1992-95 Bosnian war have been identified.

Most of the bodies found in mass graves in north-eastern Bosnia are those of Bosnian Muslims killed in the 1995 massacre in Srebrenica, the worst slaughter of civilians in Europe since the Second World War.

Serb troops overran the eastern Bosnian enclave, which had been declared a safe zone by the United Nations, and killed as many as 8,000 Muslim men and boys.

Over the years, UN and local forensics experts in Bosnia have exhumed 16,500 bodies from more than 300 mass graves. Thousands of people remain missing and are presumed dead.

About 260,000 people were killed and 1.8 million driven from their homes during the 1992-1995 war, which pitted Bosnia's Muslim Bosniaks, Catholic Croats and Orthodox Serbs against one another