

Sarajevo Safari - Wikipedia

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This article is about war tourism during the siege of Sarajevo. For the documentary film, see [Sarajevo Safari \(film\)](#).

A sniper warning sign in Sarajevo

Date	During the siege of Sarajevo (1992–1996) ^[1]
Time	During the 1,425-day siege of Sarajevo
Location	Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina (Allegedly Grbavica, and other VRS positions)^{[1][2][3]}
Also known as	"Tourist snipers", ^[3] "Weekend snipers", ^[4] "Sniper Safari" ^[5]

Type	Alleged war tourism / human hunting ^[1]
Cause	Commercial transaction, recreational activity ^[6]
Target	Civilians in besieged Sarajevo ^{[1][2][7]}
Perpetrator	Unidentified foreign nationals (allegedly with VRS logistics) ^{[1][2]}
First reporter	Rumors (1990s): Corriere della Sera ^[8] Official (2022): Miran Zupanič (film) ^[9]
Patron	Allegedly: State Security Service of Serbia ^{[4][8]}
Organised by	Allegedly: SDB Serbia (incl. Jovica Stanišić ^{[4][8]}), Yugoslav People's Army (logistics), ^[10] Army of Republika Srpska (positions) ^[1]
Participants	Unidentified foreign nationals (allegedly from Italy , Canada , Belgium , the United States , and Russia) ^[11]
Outcome	Open investigations by the Prosecutor's Office of BiH (2022) ^[12] and the Public Prosecutor's Office in Milan (2025) ^[4]
Casualties	Civilians in Sarajevo, including children ^{[1][6]}
Deaths	Unknown (as part of the total siege casualties)
Injuries	Unknown
Inquiries	Active investigation by the Prosecutor's Office of BiH (since 2022) ^[12] Active investigation by the Public Prosecutor's Office in Milan (since 2025) ^[4]
Suspects	Unidentified persons (BiH complaint) ^[12] Italian citizens (Milan investigation), incl. a "Milanese businessman" ^{[8][4]}
Charges	Criminal complaints: Benjamina Karić (to BiH & Italian prosecutors) ^{[13][4]} Ezio Gavazzeni and Guido Salvini (to Milan prosecutors) ^[4] Counter-complaint: Ljubiša Ćosić (against the film's director) ^[14]
Publication bans	Requests filed for a "ban on screening" the film in Republika Srpska ^[15]
Footage	Sarajevo Safari (2022) documentary film ^[9]

Sarajevo Safari

Sarajevo Safari is the name for an alleged [war tourism](#) phenomenon during the [siege of Sarajevo](#) (1992–1996) involving [human hunting](#).^[1] According to the reports, wealthy foreign men were enabled, for large monetary fees, to shoot at civilians in the besieged city with sniper rifles for entertainment purposes.^{[1][2][7]}

Claims about this phenomenon came to international public attention in 2022 with the premiere of the Slovenian documentary film *[Sarajevo Safari](#)*, directed by Miran Zupanič and co-produced by [Al Jazeera Balkans](#).^{[16][9]} The alleged activity took place from established positions of the [Army of Republika Srpska](#) (VRS) in the hills surrounding Sarajevo.^{[1][2]}

In response to the film's allegations, official legal actions were launched. The Prosecutor's Office of [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) opened a case in November 2022.^[12] In November 2025, the Public Prosecutor's Office in Milan (Italy) also opened an investigation into the alleged participation of Italian citizens in these acts,^{[4][6]} but involves other nationalities as well, like French, Belgians, Swiss, and Austrians.^[17] Officials from [Republika Srpska](#) and war veterans' associations sharply denied all allegations, calling them "propaganda" and "heinous lies" directed against the VRS and the Serb people.^{[15][18]}

Rumors about the phenomenon had existed earlier.^{[10][8]} As early as 1992, the Italian newspaper *[Corriere della Sera](#)* reported on the possibility of Italian extremists traveling to Bosnia to spend weekends as snipers.^[8] The phenomenon was also mentioned in the book *The Bastards of Sarajevo* (*Italian*: *I bastardi di Sarajevo*) by the Italian author Luca Leone.^[3]

The 1992 documentary "Serbian Epics" by [Paweł Pawlikowski](#) featured Russian [National Bolshevik](#) [Eduard Limonov](#) hosted by [Radovan Karadžić](#) on the hills above Sarajevo and firing a machine gun with a telescopic sight at the besieged town.^{[19][20]}

The film's allegations subsequently gained weight with the discovery of earlier, independent testimony before the [International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia](#) (ICTY).^[3]

John Jordan, a former US Marine and firefighter, testified in The Hague in 2007 during the trial of General [Dragomir Milošević](#), commander of the VRS's Sarajevo-Romanija Corps.^[3] Jordan stated under oath that on "several occasions" he had seen individuals he described as "tourist snipers."^[3] He noted that they "did not appear to be locals" based on their "clothing, weaponry, and the way they were being escorted by local officers."^[3]

When asked directly where he had seen these individuals, Jordan replied: "while I was visiting the Serb firefighters in Grbavica."^[3] This location matches the testimony from Zupanič's film.^[11]

Main article: [Sarajevo Safari \(film\)](#).

The phenomenon became globally known after the premiere of the documentary film *[Sarajevo Safari](#)* by the Slovenian director Miran Zupanič, screened at the AJB DOC Film Festival in Sarajevo in September 2022.^{[10][9]} The film was co-produced by the Slovenian company Arsmedia and Al Jazeera Balkans.^{[9][16]} Zupanič had previously filmed in Bosnia during the war, and described *Sarajevo Safari* as the darkest part of his unofficial "Bosnia trilogy".^{[21][22]}

Main allegations of the film

The film bases its claims on the testimonies of several sources, including an anonymous former member of an intelligence service.^{[22][11]} According to these testimonies: organized arrivals came via [Belgrade](#), which had a functional airport.^[10] Participants were allegedly transported by a [Yugoslav People's Army](#) helicopter or by road to [Pale](#), and then to VRS positions.^[10] The primary location cited for the shootings is the Sarajevo neighborhood of [Grbavica](#), which was under VRS control and had a direct view of the city.^[11] Witnesses mention that the "tourists" came from various countries, including the [United States](#), [Canada](#), [Russia](#), and [Italy](#).^[11] The most controversial allegation from the film is the existence of a "price list," with a witness stating that "tariffs were higher if a child was hit."^[11]

Following the film's premiere, the then-mayor of Sarajevo, [Benjamina Karić](#), filed a criminal complaint in late September 2022 with the Prosecutor's Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina against unidentified persons and responsible members of the VRS.^{[13][7]} On November 1, 2022, the Prosecutor's Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina confirmed that a case had been opened and assigned to a prosecutor in the Special Department for War Crimes.^[12]

Karić later supplemented the complaint, attaching John Jordan's ICTY testimony and proposing the hearing of author Luca Leone.^[3] She also requested access to the military archives of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, a move supported by director Miran Zupanič.^{[3][10]}

By November 2025, three years after the case was opened, there was no public information on its progress, prompting Benjamina Karić to send a new inquiry to the Prosecutor's Office regarding the case's status.^[13] Italian media and journalist Ezio Gavazzeni reported that the investigation in Bosnia and Herzegovina had been "archived" or that there was a "lack of any proceedings."^{[4][23]}

Due to the perceived stagnation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, an investigation was launched in Italy.^[4] Journalist Ezio Gavazzeni and former judge Guido Salvini filed a detailed criminal complaint with the Public Prosecutor's Office in Milan on January 28, 2025.^{[8][4]} Gavazzeni's investigation included an interview with a former Bosnian intelligence officer, who claimed he reported the existence of the safaris to [SISMI](#), who allegedly responded that they have "put a stop to it" and the trips eventually ceased.^[24]

In the spring of 2025, Milanese prosecutor Alessandro Gobbi officially opened an investigation.^{[4][25]} The legal classification of the crime is "intentional homicide with the aggravating circumstances of cruelty and base motives."^{[4][25]} The crime has no statute of limitations in Italy and carries a maximum life sentence.^[26]

According to Italian media reports and Gavazzeni's complaint, the investigation is focused on Italian citizens, including those linked to the far right.^{[4][6]} A "Milanese businessman who owns a private cosmetic surgery clinic" is mentioned, as well as others from Turin and Trieste.^[8] The alleged route involved a flight from [Trieste](#) to Belgrade (on the Serbian charter company "Aviogenex"), followed by a helicopter transport to VRS positions.^{[6][8]} There are allegations that the operation was organized by the [State Security Service of Serbia](#), with [Jovica Stanišić](#) being named.^{[8][4]} The amounts were specified as a "package" equivalent to €80,000 to €100,000 in today's value.^[27] Multiple sources in the Italian investigation confirmed the allegation that "the highest price was paid for killing a child,"^[27] or that "shooting children cost more."^[6]

In February 2026, Italian media reported that an alleged perpetrator was under investigation by Italian authorities. The suspect, a former truck driver, had allegedly bragged about his actions.^[28] In June, [Carabinieri](#) police searched the home of a 65-year-old man and found "significant" evidence that the man took part in the shootings; according to his ex-wife, he used to complain about nightmares as a result of his actions.^[29]

In November 2025, Belgian Member of Parliament [Leila Agic](#) reported that Belgian nationals may have participated in the so-called "sniper safaris" during the Siege of Sarajevo in the 1990s.^[30] The individuals allegedly paid Bosnian Serb forces for access to sniper positions from which civilians were targeted.^[30] Agic urged the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office to investigate potential war crimes, though no names or prosecutions have been confirmed.^[31] Italian politician [Matteo Salvini](#) declined to provide further details but twice emphasised Belgian involvement in the case.^[30]

- [Bosnian genocide](#)
- [Human safari \(Kherson, Ukraine\)](#)

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