
Conflict in Bosnia in the Year 1991 as compared to 1993

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1 *Introduction*

The Yugoslav Wars, from 1991-1995 were the first substantial conflicts on European soil following the Second World War. The Bosnian War in particular, rekindled the memories of mass displacement, crimes against humanity and even wholesale genocide. While 1995 stands in memory as the year of the Srebrenica genocide and the second Markale massacre, prompting American involvement and the end of the war, the nadir of the war for Bosnia and her majority population, the Bosniaks - Bosnian Muslims - was 1993 [7]. The year marked not only utter abandonment and complicity in the crimes by the Western powers, but the consequent push by the Serbs and Croats to partition Bosnia, making it the most brutal in the war.

By 1993, the Western powers denied Bosnia the ability to arm by not lifting their arms embargo, [4] dubbing it 'the biggest single Western contribution to the destruction of Bosnia.' (p.249). They agreed for the Bosniaks to be kept in 'safe areas', guarded by UN forces, who were only ordered to shoot if they and not the Bosniaks were shot at, threatening to withdraw all UN peacekeepers by the end of 1993 [4] p, 250). Additionally, the Western powers were sympathetic to the Serbian and Croatian designs on a brutal ethnic partition, under the guise of the Vance-Owen plan, administratively affirming and rewarding ethnic cleansing [4]. Further, in 1993, the Serb forces stepped up their campaign against the Bosniak enclaves in Eastern Bosnia, continuing their genocidal intentions [4]. This resulted in 95 percent of the Bosniak population of towns such as Višegrad and Foča either being killed or displaced, as the Serbs controlled two thirds of Bosnia [4]. Finally, with the Western powers encouraging division with 'ethnic labels on the map', in the Vance-Owen Plan Croatia and the Croats, entered the war against the Bosniaks over areas of central Bosnia, with partition in mind [6], [4] p.248). The UN Human Rights warned that the plan stimulated Ethnic cleansing, however it fell to deaf ears [1].

The Serbo-Croatian aggression killed thousands people and displaced two million more [4]. It destroyed villages, towns, cities and half a millennium of culture, irreparably destroying a country. Justice was served somewhat, as Srebrenica was tried as a genocide and the Croatian involvement as Joint Criminal enterprise [5], [8]. Hence, grasping the total number of fatalities in the bloodiest year of the Bosnian War can help not only grasp the severity of the atrocity, but also that all the casualties took place in a military and political context, one

which did not prevent atrocities, but rather encouraged them. This concludes in the research question 'What was the total number of fatalities in Bosnia in the year 1993 and how does this compare to the year 1991 which was right before the onset of the Bosnian war?'

2 *Methods*

The data adopted in this analysis is extracted from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program [2]. Data provided by this program is widely used in academic research and adapted to this purpose in terms of reliability [3]. The dataset utilised provides a single conflict dynamic per entry defined by among others the year of the incident, the country in which the incident took place, and the number of fatalities. This analysis will take into account the country, Bosnia, the year, 1991 and 1993, and the best, highest reliable and lowest reliable estimate of total fatalities.

The full dataset was explored with PowerShell, which showed that in 1993 there were a total of 616 conflict events. Knowing that 1993 was during the Bosnian War, comparing this to the year before the onset of the war was deemed useful. The data for the years 1991 and 1993 in Bosnia was extracted from the full dataset through PowerShell and saved as a new json file.

Using Python, the reduced json file was then selected for variables needed to answer the research question. As mentioned before, these variables were the year and the best-, highest reliable-, and lowest reliable estimate of total fatalities. In Python, the json file was converted to a csv file in order to do the final data manipulations and a data visualisation in R.

[Click here](#) to be directed to the GitHub repository in which all codes used are saved.

3 *Results*

Year	Best Estimate	Highest Reliable Estimate	Lowest Reliable Estimate
1991	1130	1130	1130
1993	5903	8892	5246

Table 3.1: Total fatalities in Bosnia in the years 1991 and 1993 as a result of conflict. Provided are the best estimate of total fatalities, the highest reliable estimate of total fatalities, and the lowest reliable estimate of total fatalities.

Table 3.1 exhibits that in the year 1991 there were 1130 fatalities as a result of violent conflict. The best-, highest reliable-, and lowest reliable estimate are all the same, meaning that there is no variation and 1130 fatalities is a reliable estimate. The year 1993 does present a variation between the different estimates of total fatalities, concluding the estimate is less reliable.

These results are visualised in Figure 3.1, which shows that overall the total number of fatalities in Bosnia was much lower in 1991 as compared to 1993. Furthermore, the whiskers in

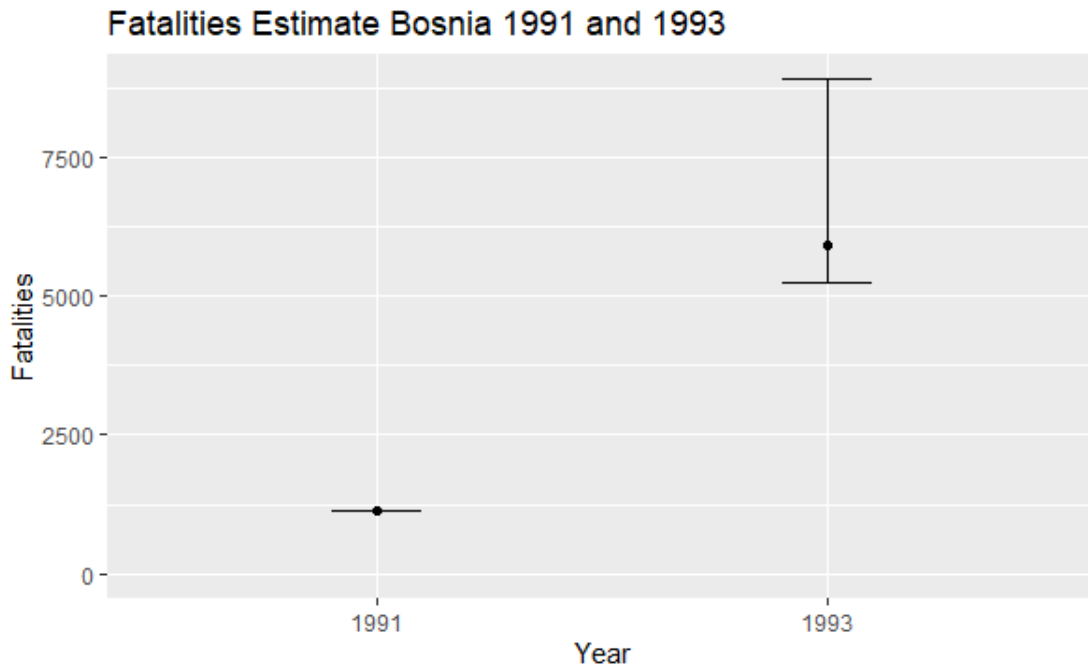


Figure 3.1: Plot showing the estimated of total fatalities in Bosnia in 1991 and 1993. The whiskers represent the lowest- and highest reliable estimate of total fatalities, with the points representing the best estimate of total fatalities for those years.

the figure also visualise the much greater variability in estimates in the year 1993 as compared to a lack of variability in estimates in 1991.

4 *Discussion*

Considering the Bosnian War impacted the lives of thousands of people, the comparison of the number of fatalities in the year 1991, before the onset of the war, as compared to 1993, which was the year of the Srecrenica genocide, is relevant. There has not been enough emphasis on the atrocities that took place in this country and their severity.

The analysis of the reduced dataset extracted from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program showed a significant difference between the estimated number of fatalities in 1991 and 1993. As mentioned before and presented in Table 3.1 and Figure 3.1, there is no variation in the estimated number of total fatalities in 1991, which makes the result of 1130 fatalities reliable. For the data in 1993 there is, however, a much bigger variability in the data (see Table 3.1 and Figure 3.1). This greater variability could be caused by the fact that during the war many people were displaced, which could mean that some sources count some of these misplaced people as fatalities while others do not [4]. This would explain the variability of estimated total fatalities in this year. Considering this, in order to provide a number representing the

estimated total amount of total fatalities in the year 1993 in Bosnia would be the count of the best estimate. Overall, this concludes that the estimated total fatalities in Bosnia in 1991 was 1130, whereas the estimated total fatalities in Bosnia in 1993 was 8892. This shows a huge increase in the amount of fatalities as result of conflict and therefore reiterates the horrors of the Bosnian War, more specifically the Srecrenica genocide.

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