**Srebrenica massacre memorial to point finger at UN**

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SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina – Phillip Ruch's monument to Srebrenica is a huge jumble of worn shoes, more than 16,000 of them, each pair representing a victim of Europe's worst massacre since World War II.

Seen from afar it will spell out U.N. in gigantic letters.

The "Pillar of Shame" is to be raised in the hills above Srebrenica with a controversial goal: singling out the United Nations and international leaders as the ones most responsible for failing to prevent the mass killings.

Ahead of the 15th anniversary Sunday of the massacre, Ruch said he is looking forward to the debate the monument is almost certain to generate when it goes up at some point next year.

The German activist describes his project as a "warning for all future U.N. employees never again just to stand by when genocide unfolds" — alluding to the failure of U.N. peacekeepers to protect the Srebrenica victims during the Bosnian war.

On July 11, 1995, more than 8,000 Bosnian Muslim men and youths were slaughtered by Bosnian Serb troops in an enclave supposedly protected by U.N. peacekeepers.

The United Nations had declared Serb-besieged Srebrenica, some 90 kilometers (60 miles) northeast of Sarajevo, a protected area for civilians. But the few hundred Dutch Blue Helmets on the ground were left short of credible weaponry or a clear mandate to protect the town.

Srebrenica fell to the Serbs after senior U.N. commanders dithered on Dutch requests for air strikes and its overwhelmingly Bosnian Muslim residents swarmed the U.N. military base, seeking refuge. But the peacekeepers allowed the Serbs to take away the townspeople when Gen. Ratko Mladic, their leader, said they would not be harmed.

The shootings began shortly after. While Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic is now being tried by the U.N. tribunal at the Hague for allegedly masterminding Srebrenica, Mladic remains at large. And the bodies, bulldozed into mass graves, keep turning up by the hundreds each year.

"Pillar of Shame" creator Ruch says worn shoes have been pouring into Bosnian collection centers since he launched his appeal for footwear six weeks ago.

They will be encased in wire mesh, in 8-meter (nearly 9-yard) tall letters spelling out U.N and placed on a hill overlooking the graves of the Srebrenica victims.

Also displayed — in a way still to be determined — will be names picked by Bosnian Muslims of U.N. and other international officials considered responsible for botching the task of protecting Srebrenica.

Bosnian Muslim Zlata Konakovic is so fired up by the project she donated seven pairs of shoes, including ones mailed from Washington from her son and grandson.

"I knew over 8,000 people were killed but only when you see this mountain of shoes do you get the picture of how many that is," she said.

On Sunday, as the Srebrenica commemorations start, Ruch plans to dump 8,372 collected pairs in front of Berlin's Brandenburg Gate.

In Srebrenica, the presidents of both Serbia and Croatia will for the first time pay respects to victims alongside Bosnian Muslims.

Ethnic distrust continues to plague postwar Bosnia, but the leaders' joint presence at the Srebrenica ceremonies is meant to be a powerful sign of reconciliation 18 years after the eruption of Europe's fiercest post-World War conflict.

The U.N. will not be represented. But the failure of U.N. peacekeepers to protect the Srebrenica victims is vividly etched in the collective Bosnian Muslim memory.

"They watched genocide — live," said Srebrenica survivor Munira Subasic, who lost 22 relatives.

Then-U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan said in a 1999 report that the United Nations failed at Srebrenica because of errors, misjudgment and "an inability to recognize the scope of the evil confronting us." He said the U.N. treated Serbs and Muslims equally when they should have made a "moral judgment" that ethnic cleansing — practiced mostly by the Serbs — was evil.

An independent study by the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation cleared the Dutch troops of blame, noting they were outnumbered, lightly armed, undersupplied, and under instructions to fire only in self-defense. However, the Dutch government has accepted "political responsibility" for the mission's failure, and has given tens of millions of dollars to Bosnia, with a third earmarked for rebuilding Srebrenica.

But for most Bosnian Muslims, that is not enough.

"We are taking the United Nations to the Court of Human Rights," said Subasic, who heads the victims' association Mothers of Srebrenica.

"We will never give up."