

Reporting the Siege of Sarajevo

Kenneth
Morrison
& Paul
Lowe



B L O O M S B U R Y

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Abbreviations

ABC	American Broadcasting Company
AFP	Agence France-Presse
AP	Associated Press
APC	Armoured Personnel Carrier
APTN	Associated Press Television News
APTV	Associated Press Television
ARBiH	Army of Bosnia & Herzegovina
ARD	<i>Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland</i>
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BiH	Bosna i Hercegovina.
CBS	Columbia Broadcasting System
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CNN	Cable News Network
CSCE	Commission for Security and Cooperation in Europe
DPA	Dayton Peace Agreement
EBU	European Broadcasting Union
EC	European Community
ECMM	European Community Monitoring Mission
EPA	European Press Agency
EU	European Union
FTNA	Frontline Television News Agency
GRAS	<i>Gradski saobraćaj Sarajevo</i> (City Transport (of) Sarajevo)
HDZ	<i>Hrvatska demokratska zajednica</i> (Croatian Democratic Community)
HDZ-BiH	<i>Hrvatska demokratska zajednica Bosne i Hercegovine</i> (Croatian Democratic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina)

HOS	<i>Hrvatske obrambene snage</i> (Croatian Defence Forces)
HRW	Human Rights Watch
HVO	<i>Hrvatsko vijeće obrane</i> (Croatian Defence Council)
ICMP	International Commission on Missing Persons
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia
IEBL	Inter-Entity Boundary Line
IFOR (NATO)	Implementation Force
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOC	International Olympic Committee
ITN	Independent Television News
JNA	<i>Jugoslovenska narodna armija</i> (Yugoslav People's Army)
JRT	<i>Jugoslovenska radiotelevizija</i> (Yugoslav Radio Television)
KSHS	<i>Kraljevina Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca</i> (Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes)
MUP	<i>Ministarstvo unutrašnjih poslova</i> (Ministry of Internal Affairs)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OHR	Office of the High Representative
OIC	Organisation of Islamic Countries
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PEN	Poets, Essayists and Novelists
PIC	Peace Implementation Council
PL	<i>Patriotska liga</i> (Patriotic League)
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
PTT	<i>Pošta, telegraf i telefon</i> (Postal, Telegraph and Telephone)
RAF	Royal Air Force
RPG	Rocket-propelled grenade
RS	<i>Republika Srpska</i> (Serb Republic)
RTB	<i>Radio televizija Beograd</i> (Radio Television Belgrade)

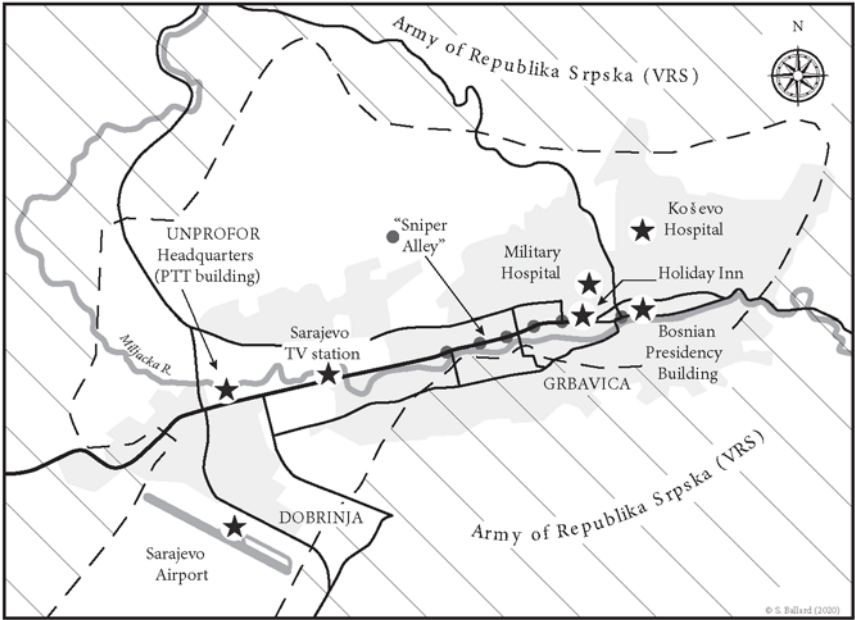
RTBiH	<i>Radiotelevizija Bosne i Hercegovine</i> (Radio Television Bosnia & Herzegovina)
RTL	<i>Radio Télévision Luxembourg</i> (Radio Television Luxembourg)
RTS	<i>Radio Televizija Srbije</i> (Radio Television of Serbia)
SAO	<i>Srpska autonomna oblast</i> (Serb autonomous region)
SAP	Sarajevo Agency Pool
SAS	Special Air Service
SDA	<i>Stranka demokratske akcije</i> (Party of Democratic Action)
SDP	<i>Socijaldemokratska partija</i> (Social Democratic Party)
SDS	<i>Srpska demokratska stranka</i> (Serbian Democratic Party)
SFOR (NATO)	Stabilisation Force
SFRJ	<i>Socijalistička Federativna Republika Jugoslavija</i> (Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia)
SIJA	Sarajevo International Journalists Association
SIPA	State Investigation and Protection Agency (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
SK-BiH	<i>Savez komunista Bosne i Hercegovine</i> (League of Communists of Bosnia & Herzegovina)
SKJ	<i>Savez komunista Jugoslavije</i> (League of Communists of Yugoslavia)
SKS	<i>Savez komunista Srbije</i> (League of Communists of Serbia)
SOF	Soldier of Fortune
SRJ	<i>Savezna Republika Jugoslavija</i>
SRS	<i>Srpska radikalna stranka</i> (Serbian Radical Party)
SRSJ	<i>Savez reformskih snaga Jugoslavije</i> (Alliance of Reform Forces of Yugoslavia)
TO	<i>Teritorijalna odbrana</i> (Territorial Defence)
TVSA	<i>Televizija Sarajevo</i> (TV Sarajevo)
UCSB	University of California Santa Barbara
UKRBAT	Ukrainian Peacekeeping Battalion in Bosnia and Herzegovina
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees

UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protection Force
UPI	United Press International
US	United States
VOPP	Vance–Owen Peace Plan
VRS	<i>Vojska Republike Srpske</i> (Army of Republika Srpska)
WHO	World Health Organization
WTN	World Television News

Maps



Map 1 Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992). © Sebastian Ballard.



Map 2 Key buildings and routes used by journalists in besieged Sarajevo. © Sebastian Ballard.

Chronology of the siege of Sarajevo, 1992–96

This chronology outlines key events during the siege. It is necessarily brief, by no means exhaustive and is not a detailed chronology of the Bosnian war. It is, rather, an outline of the most important events that took place within the city over a four-year period and is intended to contextualize the authors' historical analysis of the role and work of foreign correspondents in Sarajevo during the siege.

1992

February/March

'Referendum Weekend' held after European Community (EC) insist referendum must be scheduled as a condition for recognizing independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Serbian Democratic Party (SDS) call for boycott of the referendum and majority of Bosnian Serbs do so. Murder of Nikola Gardović, a Bosnian Serb who was attending the wedding of his son, heightens tensions in Sarajevo. The first SDS barricades are erected in Sarajevo. Demonstrators succeed in having barricades dismantled. The government of Bosnia and Herzegovina declare independence after confirmation of the result of the independence referendum. Peace demonstrations in front of the Parliament – largest ever gathering in Bosnia-Herzegovina – organized by 'Omladinski Program Radio Sarajevo' – and entitled *Mi smo Valter* (We are Walter). UN peacekeeping forces – based in Sarajevo to administer the ceasefire in Croatia – arrive in the city and establish their headquarters in retirement home in Nedžarići.

April

Anxiety in Sarajevo caused by what citizens fear is a military encirclement of the city by the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) and the armed supporters of the SDS. Further peace demonstrations. Olga Sučić and Suada Dilberović shot dead on the Vrbanja Bridge as demonstrators move toward the area of Grbavica. Demonstrators break into the parliament building and establish 'All People's Parliament'. Shots fired from the Holiday Inn hotel by gunmen from SDS killing six. The EC recognizes Bosnia and Herzegovina as an independent state and the siege of Sarajevo begins. The EC's recognition is shortly followed by the United States (US). Shelling of Sarajevo by the JNA. Curfew introduced in the city. Armed clashes begin in the vicinity of the Ilidža hotel complex, where most foreign journalists are based. The shelling of the city increases, with many of the city's key buildings under attack. Among them is the Olympic Museum which is destroyed by shells fired from Bosnian Serb positions.

May

The 'Battle for Sarajevo' – JNA and armed SDS militias attempt to push into the centre of Sarajevo but are held back at the Skenderija intersection. The Sarajevo Post Office is destroyed from within by JNA sappers, bringing down most of the city's telephone communications. Bosnian President, Alija Izetbegović, taken hostage by JNA on return from peace talks in Lisbon. Freed following day after a botched exchange in which seven JNA soldiers are killed by members of the nascent ARBiH. The JNA relinquishes command of its estimated 100,000 troops in Bosnia and Herzegovina, effectively creating the Bosnian Serb Army (VRS). The majority of foreign journalists temporarily depart Sarajevo along with most European Community Monitoring Mission (ECMM) staff and UNPROFOR personnel. Bosnia and Herzegovina becomes a full member of the UN. The 'Zetra' sports centre is destroyed by heavy artillery fire and many other buildings in Sarajevo – among them the Bristol Hotel, the *Sarajka* department store, the *Elektroprivreda* building, the Bosnian parliament and the Holiday Inn – are badly damaged by mortar and shell fire. Heavy fighting in Pofalići. A VRS mortar attack on a bread line in Vaso Miskin street in Sarajevo kills seventeen people and over 140 wounded. Days later, the United Nations (UN) imposes sanctions on the new Federal Republic of Yugoslavia – comprising Serbia and Montenegro – for fomenting war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. Heavy shelling of Sarajevo continues.

June

The heavy shelling of Sarajevo continues unabated, with many of the city's key buildings targeted. The Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina declares a state of war and general mobilization. The last JNA soldiers from the Maršal Tito barracks leave Sarajevo. The Holiday Inn hotel re-opens to become the main base for foreign correspondents, who begin to return to the city in larger numbers. Muslim and Croat citizens are evicted from the Sarajevo district of Ilidža by VRS and paramilitaries. The *Oslobođenje* building is burnt down after heavy artillery attack by the VRS. Bosnian government issues instructions to Sarajevo citizens about sniper fire, shelling and how to best move around the city. All communications with the outside world are severed. French President François Mitterrand makes a surprise visit to Sarajevo. By the end of the month, UN peacekeepers hoist flag at Sarajevo Airport after agreement over control over the airport concluded.

July

International airlift – 'air bridge' – operation to Sarajevo commences. UN humanitarian aid is distributed but some ends up on the black market where it is sold for highly inflated prices. Fewer than half of all communities in Sarajevo receive aid. Heavy shelling of the city continues. Artillery attacks kill twelve in Sarajevo including three waiting in line for humanitarian aid. A convoy of mothers and children, organized by the 'Children's Embassy' leaves Sarajevo for Italy. Four power transmission lines leading into Sarajevo are dynamited by VRS cutting off city's electricity and water

pumps. Very little water in the city as surrounding reservoirs are held by the VRS. ‘The Republic of Herceg-Bosna’ proclaimed by Mate Boban. Shelling and sniping remains a daily occurrence in Sarajevo. Bosnian defenders launch offensive against Serbs in hills around Sarajevo; at least forty Bosnians killed as they fight with light weapons against heavy weapons of Serbs.

August

Attack on a convoy of children from the Ljubica Izević children’s home. Two young children – Vedrana Glavaš and Roki Sulejmanović – are killed. The mother of the former, Ruža Glavaš, is subsequently targeted at her son’s funeral. UNPROFOR headquarters in Sarajevo shelled, wounding four French soldiers. CBS journalist David Kaplan killed near Sarajevo Airport while reporting on the visit of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia’s Prime Minister, Milan Panić. The UN Security Council adopts two resolutions on Bosnia and Herzegovina: Resolution 770 – approving the use of armed force to conduct humanitarian missions – and Resolution 771 – which condemns violations of human rights. The Europa Hotel in Baščaršija goes up in flames after grenade attack by VRS forces. A shell lands in a market in Alipašino polje killing eight and wounding more than fifty. Sarajevo Airport temporarily closed after shots fired at British Royal Air Force (RAF) Hercules C-130. The National Library in Sarajevo is gutted by fire after attack – with incendiary shells – by the VRS. Mortar attacks hit main Sarajevo hospital and Bosnian parliament building. Sarajevo Airport intermittently closed because of fighting in the environs of Dobrinja, Butmir and Sokolović kolonija. Koševo Hospital shelled. Five Bosnian journalists wounded in the shelling of the ruined *Oslobođenje* building.

September

Clashes in the Sarajevo district of Stup – VRS launches a fierce offensive in the area. Heavy fighting continues in Sarajevo. Sustained VRS shelling of the Hrasno district. Four people killed by mortar shells in Alipašino polje. Italian plane carrying UN aid crashes near Sarajevo. Water completely cut off. Citizens of Sarajevo begin chopping down trees and removing park benches for firewood in anticipation of a winter under siege. Citizens of Muslim and Croat nationality are permitted to leave Serb-held Grbavica but are ordered to pay for their departure by the VRS and Serb paramilitaries. The *Zora* chocolate factory is destroyed by shells.

October

UN Security Council Resolution 781 leads to the banning of all military flights above Bosnia and Herzegovina except UN aid flights – which begin operating again. The Sarajevo City Bakery suffers heavy shelling. Intensive shelling of the city. A shell lands on the Ljubica Izević orphanage killing three children. The Presidency building among those hit. More than thirty shells fall on Koševo Hospital, killing one nurse. Electricity supplies in the city are completely cut off for three weeks as winter approaches.

UNICEF campaign 'A Week of Silence for Children' – a convoy of trucks carrying milk, blankets and winter clothes, arrives in Sarajevo. Irregular water, electricity and communications in the city.

November

A convoy of Slovenians from Sarajevo leave the city following an agreement with the Association of Slovenians and the Slovenian government. Aid flights into Sarajevo halted; city is without water and electricity again. Ceasefire declared – 2,000 refugees allowed to leave Sarajevo; convoys halted by VRS. The Sarajevo Post Office reconnects some of the city's telephone links, but only for those people who are prioritized. Banks are re-established in the city. Some intermittent electricity but no water. First snow of winter falls in Sarajevo. Elie Wiesel briefly visits the city.

December

VRS launches another heavy attack in the Sarajevo suburb of Otes. The ARBiH is forced to withdraw and evacuate citizens. The ARBiH win a strategic victory by taking a crucial part of Mount Žuč, which had been used by the VRS as a position from which to shell Sarajevo. UN headquarters in Sarajevo – PTT building – is shelled by the VRS. UN aid convoys still manage to get into Sarajevo with 220 tons of food despite artillery shelling. Sarajevo Airport temporarily closed and aid into the city becomes increasingly limited leading to inflated prices on the black market. Bread in short supply because of lack of oil and water. UN suspends airlift to Sarajevo for two days after US plane hit by small arms fire. Heavy snow falls in Sarajevo as winter takes hold. The temperature in the city is -13°C and there is regularly no electricity, gas or water. UN commander General Philippe Morillon claims his home in Sarajevo was shelled by a mortar from ARBiH positions.

1993

January

UN Secretary General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali arrives in Sarajevo; citizens mobilize to protest against UN policy and for his comment that the situation in Sarajevo was 'better than in ten other places in the world'. International mediators Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen unveil plan to divide Bosnia into ten provinces, mostly along ethnic lines. Bosnian Deputy Prime Minister, Hakija Turajlić, killed by VRS soldier in UN armoured vehicle near Sarajevo Airport. Peace conference begins in Geneva. VRS offensive against Sarajevo. VRS fires shell into a crowd of citizens waiting to fill water containers in the vicinity of the Sarajevo Brewery, killing eight people. The City Assembly of Sarajevo, on behalf of citizens of Sarajevo, passes motion to reject humanitarian aid in solidarity with those starved of aid in eastern Bosnia – as a consequence of the VRS blocking UNHCR aid convoys.

February

UN Security Council establishes the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) to be based in The Hague. Alija Izetbegović signs Vance–Owen peace plan in New York. Conflict between Bosnian Croats and Muslims over the 30 per cent of Bosnia not seized by Bosnian Serbs continues. A Muslim funeral in Sarajevo fired upon by anti-aircraft machine guns killing one. VRS mortar hits line of people waiting for water in Sarajevo, killing three. UN aid flights to Sarajevo resume. ARBiH launches attack against Serbs in Ilidža. Sarajevo's last operating bakery temporarily shuts doors due to lack of fuel. The daily newspaper *Oslobođenje* is named 'World Newspaper of the Year'. The first wartime cinema *Obala* begins working – films are screened in basements. New fighting in Sarajevo – VRS shell Serb suburb of Stup. One – Egyptian – UNPROFOR soldier killed by sniper fire.

March

The shelling of Sarajevo intensifies along with VRS tank assaults on western part of city. Water and electricity cut off again after heavy bombardments of the city, though they are restored soon after. *Oslobođenje* publishes its 'European Issue'. The rock concert 'Help Bosnia Now!' takes place in Sarajevo. The clement weather in Sarajevo means that citizens venture outside. Two children are killed – one by sniper fire, the other succumbing to shrapnel wounds.

April

Citizens of Sarajevo mark one year of the siege. The Koševo cemetery is reopened – twenty-seven years after the last person was buried there – due to lack of space to bury the dead. Easter Mass held in the Sarajevo Cathedral. NATO jets begin to enforce UN no-fly zone over Bosnia and Herzegovina. Susan Sontag and Joan Baez both visit Sarajevo.

May

Following Serb assault on Srebrenica and dramatic crisis of refugees arriving in Tuzla, UN Security Council declares six 'safe areas' for Bosnian Muslims: Sarajevo, Tuzla, Bihać, Srebrenica, Žepa and Goražde. Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić signs Vance–Owen plan in Athens, Greece; the Assembly of Republika Srpska later rejects it. In a referendum, Bosnian Serbs overwhelmingly reject Vance–Owen plan in favour of an independent Bosnian Serb state (Republika Srpska). Thirteen people killed in artillery attacks on Sarajevo.

June

Thirteen people killed on a playground in Dobrinja. The VRS targets people in prayer during the funeral and eight people die at the Budakovići cemetery. The UN Security

Council adopts resolution on establishing 'safe areas' in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In accordance with this resolution, Sarajevo, Žepa, Srebrenica, Bihać, Tuzla and Goražde are deemed to be 'safe areas' in which UNPROFOR peacekeepers will be authorized to 'repel' any attacks on these areas.

July

Utilities again cut off in Sarajevo. In Dobrinja, thirteen people are killed while they queue for water. VRS intensify assault on Mount Igman, breaking through ARBiH defences in three places. VRS say they will no longer allow Sarajevo to be supplied through international organizations. Fighting intensifies on Mount Igman. Renewed VRS shelling of Bosnian government positions outside Sarajevo. VRS fires artillery rounds at French UNPROFOR base in Sarajevo destroying four vehicles, damaging others. After threat of air strikes, VRS retreat on the condition that the UN move in to the positions they hold on Mount Igman.

August

VRS withdraws from Mount Igman but 'digs in' to mountain positions around Sarajevo. Launches 'air bombs' into centre of the city. Irma Hadžimuratović hit by a sniper – after significant media coverage and pressure from the international public, she is relocated to the United Kingdom for treatment. Susan Sontag premieres her production of the Samuel Beckett play 'Waiting for Godot' at the Sarajevo Youth Theatre.

September

The school year begins with children being taught in cellars and basements. Numerous incidents of firing on planes flying into Sarajevo. The airport is intermittently closed throughout the month resulting in smaller volumes of humanitarian aid entering the city and inflated prices for basic goods on the black market.

October

Continued and sustained shelling of Sarajevo. First evacuation of civilians from Sarajevo since May begins. The Sarajevo bakery ceases operations because of lack of gas and oil. ARBiH mortar attack on Sarajevo suburb of Vogošća results in heavy VRS shelling of Sarajevo. The Sarajevo 'air bridge' becomes the longest of its kind in history – beating the Berlin airlifts of June 1948 to September 1949. The Sarajevo Film Festival launches, though numerous guests remain in Ancona, Italy, unable to be transported by UN planes. The slogan of the festival is 'We can't promise you anything'. Aid flights to Sarajevo suspended after French UNPROFOR officer fired upon at the airport.

November

The city has no electricity, water, gas or humanitarian aid for several weeks. A VRS shell kills Fatima Gunić, a teacher, and three of her students outside a school in Alipašino

polje. Consequently, classes are suspended until protection measures are adopted – thereafter, it is determined that school lessons last for fifteen minutes and pupils will be absent from school from 24 December to 1 March. Five are killed and ten injured on an attack on a bridge in Dobrinja. Koševo Hospital targeted. French UNPROFOR battalion assists the citizens of the Sarajevo district of Alipašino polje to repair their homes and drain water from their basements. They also provide the materials for the construction of gas installations. Electricity is, however, in short supply in Sarajevo and supply is extremely irregular. Three children are killed in the centre of Sarajevo while playing in the snow.

December

Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić vows to bring about complete military defeat of the Bosnian government forces if VRS positions around Sarajevo are attacked. Fighting around and shelling of Sarajevo continues throughout the month. Sarajevo Airport is frequently closed and aid flights are limited due to heavy fighting. The city has little electricity and is short of water and salt. *Oslobođenje* wins the ‘Sakharov Award’ from the European Parliament. Eight people are killed on the *Drvenija most* (wood bridge) in Sarajevo.

1994

January

Bosnian President Alija Izetbegović appeals for UN intervention against VRS to stop shelling of Sarajevo. Shelling of Sarajevo continues keeping airport closed for long periods. Shell kills six children playing in snow in ‘Phase C’ of Alipašino polje. Announcement of the despatch of a French ‘anti-sniping’ unit to Sarajevo – they are predominantly deployed along so-called ‘Sniper Alley’.

February

Sixty-eight people killed and some 200 wounded as a mortar shell fired into Markale marketplace in Sarajevo – the worst single incident of the siege. This followed a similar attack at a football field in Dobrinja the previous day in which ten civilians were killed. After initial investigation, UNPROFOR establish that the round fired into Dobrinja was from a VRS position, but it had not been possible to locate the source of the attack on Markale market. NATO ‘ultimatum’ gives VRS ten days to withdraw heavy weapons from Sarajevo and its environs or face air strikes. Radovan Karadžić agrees to withdraw heavy weapons on the proviso that Russian peacekeepers are deployed. Russian peacekeepers arrive and NATO deadline expires; UN states that VRS heavy weapons are being removed. US (NATO) F-16 fighters shoot down four Bosnian Serb warplanes violating the no-fly zone. The shots were the first fired by NATO in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Juan Antonio

Samaranch, the former President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) visits Sarajevo ten years after the 1984 Winter Olympics.

March

For the first time since the siege began, citizens of Sarajevo are permitted to cross the Miljacka River. Under UNPROFOR protection, the first buses from the centre of the city arrive in the Hrasnica district. The US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, visits Sarajevo.

April

UN states that the VRS have ‘mostly’ complied with the terms of the NATO ultimatum. UN accuses VRS of ‘orchestrated campaign’ against UN observers/military personnel for airstrikes including Serb sniper wounding French soldier in Sarajevo. British Embassy opened in Sarajevo.

May

The VRS attempt to recover 122 mm cannon from a UN checkpoint at Poljine, where VRS weapons are held. UNPROFOR requests NATO assistance – NATO planes fly low over VRS positions around Sarajevo. The ‘Contact Group’ announce new peace plan, including a four-month ceasefire and eventual – internal – partition of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Mortar hits Sarajevo Airport.

June

Mozart’s *Requiem*, conducted by Zubin Mehta, is played in the building of the gutted National Library in tribute to the victims of the siege of Sarajevo and the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. One person is wounded on a tram near the Holiday Inn hotel after the UNPROFOR armoured vehicle that was supposed to protect it withdrew – though it was later replaced by another armoured vehicle.

July

US and French Embassies opened in Sarajevo. British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of France Alain Juppe arrive in Sarajevo on the occasion of the opening of the French Embassy. Bosnian Serbs reject Contact Group Plan and close ‘blue roads’ around Sarajevo. Explosions in Jewish cemetery and at Vrbanja Bridge in Sarajevo. UNPROFOR says VRS moved five tanks and three artillery weapons into the Sarajevo exclusion zone. Sniper fire in Sarajevo forces police to close centre to traffic. UN accuses VRS of violations and attacks on peacekeepers. French UN troops fire on Serb snipers in Sarajevo. ‘Survival gardens’ have become commonplace in Sarajevo. Eleven people are killed after a water queue is targeted in Dobrinja. The airport is again temporarily closed after a Hercules C-141 is targeted.

August

Serbian President Slobodan Milošević severs ties with the Bosnian Serbs for rejecting Contact Group Plan. Attacks, especially by snipers – despite an anti-sniping agreement – escalate in frequency. Attacks occur in the city centre and the suburbs, directed on many occasions, at residential buildings, pedestrians and moving vehicles – such as busy trams – packed with people. UNPROFOR personnel targeted – UNPROFOR call in NATO warplanes to strike VRS heavy weapons violating the exclusion zone around Sarajevo. Fighting around Sarajevo's Jewish cemetery.

September

Airlift again suspended after Hercules C-130 hit by bullet at airport. UN officials confer with Bosnian Serb leadership and the VRS about restoring power to Sarajevo. UN commanders tell VRS they must remove guns from exclusion zone by next day or face air strikes. VRS restores utilities to Sarajevo, but continues to enforce airport closure and limit UN movements. Sniping on the increase in Sarajevo.

October

NATO threatens the VRS over the continuing obstruction of Sarajevo, citing this as a clear justification for further air strikes. The tram system is halted again after another tram is targeted in Sarajevo – the driver is killed and twelve passengers are injured.

November

VRS attacks Sarajevo, drawing retaliation from the ARBiH. Fifty NATO jets and support planes respond by targeting VRS airfield. VRS detain fifty-five – Canadian – UN peacekeepers as a protection against further air strikes. Eventually more than 400 peacekeepers are held across Bosnia and Herzegovina by the VRS. NATO attempts air strike on Serbs near Bihać. Mission called off after UN fails to pinpoint targets. Another tram is hit in Sarajevo, with one killed and six injured.

December

VRS hijacks UN fuel shipment as it tries to enter Sarajevo, also taking two vehicles with satellite communication equipment. UNPROFOR officials refuse to call for air strikes or overflights for fear of the VRS killing UN soldiers. VRS continues to fire on civilians, harass UN forces and block aid convoys to Sarajevo despite promises to do otherwise. Former US President Jimmy Carter visits Sarajevo on a mediating mission which ends with announcement of ceasefire covering the period between 1 January and 1 April 1995.

1995

January

Start of 'truce' – negotiated by Jimmy Carter – for a three-month period. Missile fired from Bosnian Serb side hits Holiday Inn hotel. Sarajevo Airport closed – this time because of bad weather. Sarajevo officially marks 1,000 days of the siege. Relief flights into Sarajevo suspended for first time since truce came into effect after two planes were hit by gunfire. UN spokesman Alexander Ivanko says they may have come from Bosnian Serbs celebrating Orthodox Christmas. The cellist, Walter Dешpal, together with the Sarajevo Philharmonic Orchestra, plays a concert at Sarajevo's National Theatre.

February

Trams are frequently targeted by snipers near the Holiday Inn hotel, leading to occasional cessation of service. A strain of flu called 'Influenza Type A' arrives in Sarajevo – apparently from China. Further attacks on the Sarajevo tram system. First railroad transport in Sarajevo Bosnia in two years. Serbs fire shells at government bunkers in Sarajevo; small arms fire exchanged around Jewish cemetery. Sniper fire a daily occurrence.

March

The UN Secretary General's Personal Representative Yasushi Akashi's aeroplane is hit by gunfire as it approaches Sarajevo Airport. Two people killed by snipers in Sarajevo. VRS renews attacks on airport firing on French air transport causing UNPROFOR troops to return fire.

April

US aid plane hit by gunfire; all UN aid flights to Sarajevo cancelled. The people of Sarajevo begin fourth year of war. Some fifteen citizens gathered in Sarajevo to place flowers on the grave of Suada Dilberović, who was killed on the Vrbanja Bridge on 5 April 1992. VRS shell government-held Sarajevo suburb of Hrasnica with 120 mm mortars killing two and wounding three. A young girl, Maja Djokić, is the latest victim of sniper fire in Sarajevo. US C-130 relief plane hit by ten bullets at Sarajevo Airport by Serb snipers damaging hydraulic system, hitting cockpit. The UN again suspends flights to and from Sarajevo Airport. The UN declares that the VRS have used 120 mm mortars in violation of the ceasefire agreement in Sarajevo killing three. The UN accuses the VRS of targeting Sarajevo's civilian neighbourhoods with 'big guns', which are supposed to be banned from around the capital; they request a NATO air presence over the city. French UNPROFOR peacekeeper killed in Sarajevo while driving through Dobrinja. Three French soldiers are killed in Sarajevo in the month of April.

May

Shortage of oil in Sarajevo – buses cannot function and trams run only between Čengić Vila and Alipašino polje. Serbs shell Sarajevo suburb of Butmir killing eleven and injuring forty near tunnel under airport. Battles around Jewish cemetery – mortars and rockets hit the Holiday Inn. A French UNPROFOR soldier is killed near the Unis towers and the Holiday Inn. Humanitarian aid reaching Sarajevo reduced to half as the VRS intensify their attacks on the city – as a consequence, there is little public transport, low gas pressure and limited water supplies. Heavy fighting between the VRS and French ‘anti-sniping teams’ on Vrbanja Bridge after a UN observation post was seized by the VRS. Two French soldiers are killed in the exchanges. UN orders VRS to submit heavy weapons to UN control and remove all heavy weapons from around Sarajevo. Bosnian Serbs ignore UN order. NATO attacks VRS ammunition depot. VRS respond by shelling ‘safe areas’, including Tuzla, where seventy-one people are killed and over 150 injured. NATO warplanes attack more ammunition depots. Serbs take UN peacekeepers hostage. Eventually more than 370 are seized. Bosnian government says UN no longer feels competent to defend Sarajevo after Serb shelling which killed eleven. Heaviest fighting in two years hits Sarajevo with hand-to-hand fighting in trenches, mortars, rockets and heavy artillery; at least five killed, and twenty-six civilians and two UNPROFOR peacekeepers are wounded. VRS seize more hostages bringing total to over 200 peacekeepers. VRS soldiers disguised as French peacekeepers capture twelve French UNPROFOR peacekeepers at Vrbanja Bridge in central Sarajevo, then get in firefight with UN reinforcements – one French soldier and four VRS soldiers are killed.

June

Heavy fighting in Sarajevo. Artillery being used again in city. Seven citizens waiting in line for water killed. First aid shipment in several weeks reaches Sarajevo brought in by government drivers escorted by Bosnian Serb police after Akashi approves scaled-back UN operations in exchange for allowing aid into Sarajevo. NATO defence chiefs, meeting in Paris, agree on rapid reaction force to bolster UN peacekeepers in Bosnia and Herzegovina. VRS release 111 more UN hostages. All but the last twenty-six UN hostages are released. Bosnian government launches offensive to break siege of Sarajevo. Offensive gradually stalls; VRS intensify shelling of Sarajevo. Last twenty-six UN hostages released. In retaliation for the ARBiH offensive, a VRS ‘modified air bomb’ hits TV building in Sarajevo and adjacent apartment block. Five are killed and dozens wounded.

July

UNPROFOR headquarters – the PTT building – in Sarajevo shelled by the VRS. Shelling of Sarajevo intensifies. VRS attacks and overruns the ‘safe area’ of Srebrenica. The Bosnian Serb wartime capital of Pale attacked by NATO warplanes. A total of 300 British and 500 French soldiers move onto Mount Igman to establish artillery and light tank positions. French UNPROFOR peacekeepers start to use 120 mm mortars – biggest calibre weapon used against the VRS since the beginning of the war – on road into Sarajevo.

August

VRS shells Sarajevo region, killing six and wounding thirty-eight – including six Egyptian UNPROFOR peacekeepers – after ARBiH shells VRS arms factory. VRS fire shell into a Markale marketplace in Sarajevo, killing thirty-seven and wounding scores. NATO planes, supported by ground troops of the UN rapid reaction force, launch massive airstrikes to silence Bosnian Serb guns around Sarajevo. VRS shell Sarajevo in response. ARBiH fires fourteen mortar rounds at Serb ammunition factory in Vogošća – Sarajevo suburb – killing two civilians. VRS retaliates by shelling Sarajevo, killing six and wounding thirty-eight. VRS fires on UN observation post in Sarajevo wounding six Egyptian peacekeepers. Three US diplomats, Robert Frasure, Joseph Kruzel and Nelson Drew, killed when armoured personnel carrier slips off Mount Igman road. Three other Americans and three French injured. NATO planes begin attacks on Serb positions – sixty planes launch strikes on air defence radar installations, SAM batteries, communication facilities, ammunition factories and dumps.

September

NATO resumes attacks to force withdrawal of VRS heavy weapons around Sarajevo. NATO suspends attacks. Slobodan Milošević pledges that Bosnian Serbs will withdraw guns from around Sarajevo. NATO suspends air strikes, but VRS General Ratko Mladić rejects UN demand to remove guns around Sarajevo unless ARBiH does likewise. Seven wounded by VRS rocket-propelled attack in Sarajevo. VRS refusal to move heavy weapons causes NATO to renew bombing around Sarajevo. In the presence of the Serbian President Slobodan Milošević, an agreement is signed – by Radovan Karadžić, Ratko Mladić and Richard Holbrooke – on the withdrawal of VRS heavy weapons deployed around Sarajevo. The agreement also binds the ARBiH to refrain from offensive actions in and around Sarajevo. VRS allow for the reopening of Sarajevo Airport. In a joint statement, UN and NATO commands state that the VRS had withdrawn heavy weapons to within twenty kilometres from Sarajevo before the set deadline, and that UN and NATO commanders had agreed that air strikes ‘need not be resumed for the time being’.

October

Warring parties agree to a sixty-day ceasefire. Guns fall silent in the hills around Sarajevo. After a seven-month blockade, gas and electricity flow into Sarajevo. Western road out of Sarajevo opened by UNPROFOR after being cleared of landmines.

November

Peace talks begin at the Wright-Patterson Air Base in Dayton, Ohio. Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić and General Ratko Mladić, his military commander, indicted for war crimes by the ICTY for their alleged roles in Srebrenica massacres. Leaders initial peace accord, granting 51 per cent of Bosnian territory to Muslim – Bosniaks –