

Changing the rules of war:

The NATO bombing of RTS on 23rd April 1999

It was arguably the biggest war crime committed against a civilian media institution and its workers in history.

Exactly 11 years ago today, on 23rd April 1999, NATO bombed Serbian Television (RTS), murdering 16 innocent people. British Minister, Clare Short claimed RTS, a station that regularly broadcast repeats of *Only Fools and Horses*, but which committed the 'crime' of challenging NATO's propaganda during the bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999, was a 'legitimate target'.

The bombing as well as being an appalling war crime, set a terrible precedent.

As Robert Fisk, wrote at the time, 'Once you kill people because you don't like what they say, you have changed the rules of war'

Not only have those who ordered and carried this blatant war crime got off scot-free, but the puppet government in Belgrade, which came to power after the illegal US-sponsored coup d'etat against President Milosevic and the Serbian Socialist Party in October 2000, put the RTS director Dragoljub Milanovic on trial and sentenced him to ten years imprisonment. Milanovic, a political prisoner if ever there was one, remains in prison to this day. He was effectively the 17th victim of the bombing- with his imprisonment a warning to all others who might have the temerity to run a media outlet which dares to challenge the lies of the most powerful military alliance in the world.

Here are the names of the sixteen innocent civilians murdered by NATO on 23rd April 1999. You will see that eleven of those killed were under 35 years of age. May they all rest in peace, and let us hope that some day those responsible for their deaths will finally face justice.

Darko Stoimenovski (26), technician
Nebojsa Stojanovic (27), technician
Dragorad Dragojevic (27), security guard
Ksenija Bankovic (28), video mixer
Jelica Munitlak (28), make-up artist
Dejan Markovic (30), security guard
Aleksandar Deletic (31), cameraman
Dragan Tasic (31), technician
Slavisa Stevanovic (32), producer
Sinisa Medic (33), programme designer
Ivan Stukalo (34), foreign programming specialist
Milan Joksimovic (47), security officer
Branislav Jovanovic (50), programme operator
Slobodan Jontic (54), set director
Milovan Jankovic (59), mechanic
Tomislav Mitrovic (61), programme director.

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