



MEMORIJALNI  
CENTAR  
SARAJEVO

## PANEL IN MEMORY OF MICHAEL SAFIER

# URBICIDE AND THE FATE OF CITIES: SARAJEVO AS A GLOBAL REFERENCE

Date: May 17, 2025 | Time: 10:00–14:00

Venue: Conference Hall, Memorial Centre Sarajevo & Online (Hybrid Format)

## CONCEPT

This panel is dedicated to the memory of Professor Michael Safier, whose engagement with Sarajevo during its most tragic period of urbicide profoundly shaped both his academic legacy and Sarajevo’s urban recovery discourse. The session will examine the destruction of cities as complex cultural, political, and ethical events, with Sarajevo as a central reference in global urban studies. Special attention will be given to the destruction of libraries and urban institutions, cosmopolitanism under threat, and the challenges of post- conflict reconstruction.

The symbolic handover of Professor Safier’s personal library to the National and University Library of Bosnia and Herzegovina — an institution whose destruction in 1992 marked the cultural dimension of urbicide — will be a gesture of knowledge restitution, solidarity, and legacy-building.

The panel will be held in hybrid format, enabling in-person participation as well as virtual attendance by an international audience of scholars, students, and professionals.

## BACKGROUND

Sarajevo, as a city of deep cultural, religious, and ethnic pluralism, has historically embodied the European ideal of “unity in diversity.” This pluralism has survived centuries of imperial rule, modern statehood, occupation, war, and recovery. In the late 20th century, Sarajevo became the site of one of the most intense urban destructions in modern European history — an urbicide in both material and symbolic terms.

While urbicide remains outside conventional legal frameworks, it is increasingly recognized in urban theory as the targeted destruction of the urban fabric, identity, and continuity. The long-term consequences of urbicide, and the paths of recovery that follow, demand new frameworks of planning, memory work, and resilience.

The work of Michael Safier, an urban planner and theorist, significantly contributed to the understanding of these issues. His time in Sarajevo during the war, and his sustained intellectual engagement with the city's fate, influenced global discussions on adversity-activated development, cultural trauma, and the ethics of reconstruction.

### MODERATOR:

*Dr. Amra Hadžimuhamedović*, architect, expert in post-war recovery and reconstruction of heritage, Director of the Centre for Cultural Heritage, International Forum Bosnia

## PROGRAM

### 10.00-10.15 OPENING ADDRESSES

*Dr. Ahmed Kulanić*, Director, Memorial Centre Sarajevo

*Elmedin Konaković*, Minister of Foreign Affairs Bosnia and Herzegovina

*Professor Dr. Rusmir Mahmutćehajić*, President, International Forum Bosnia

### 10.15 - 10.30 INTRODUCTION

*Dr. Amra Hadžimuhamedović*, specializing in cultural heritage, International Forum Bosnia

### 10.30-11. 45 FIRST SESSION

#### PANELISTS

*Prof. Dr. Tom Selwyn*, anthropologist, Professorial Research Associate, SOAS, University of London

*Dr. Nataša Pelja Tabori*, architect and urbanist, Sarajevo Canton Institute of Planning and Development; lecturer, International Burch University

*Nada Al Hassan*, architect, expert in architectural and urban heritage, Paris.

#### DISCUSSION

*Invited respondents:* Antigoni Michael, archeologist, Europa Nostra; Sabina Zahirović, adjunct lecturer, IUS Alla Al Khatib, MA in architecture, Cottbus University, ISSY20; Sofija Grubač, University of Groningen, ISSYH20; Adisa Džino Šuta, CHwB, Bosnia and Herzegovina; dr Lejla Odobašić Novo, Associate Professor, Burch University.

### 11.45-12.00 COFFEE BRAK

### 12.00-13.30 SECOND SESSION

#### PANELISTS

*Prof. Dr. Camillo Boano*, Professor of Urban Design and Critical Theory, UCL London & Politecnico di Torino

*Dr. Safet Hadžimuhamedović*, anthropologist, Research Fellow, Centre for the Sciences of Place and Memory (CSPM), University of Stirling

*Dr. Lejla Kreševljaković*, architect, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Architecture, University of Sarajevo

#### DISCUSSION

*Invited respondents:* Ammar Azzouz, British Academy Research Fellow at the School of Geography and the Environment, University of Oxford; Aida Bičakčić, curator, Museums of the City of Sarajevo; Katelyn Williams, Academic Coordinator for the Council on International Educational Exchange in Berlin, lecturer at John Hopkins University; Lejla Krivošić-Dizdarević, architect, assistant professor, IUS; Mohona Chakraburty, Program officer FAR, ICCROM, Dr. Lejla Džumhur-Šabić, assistant professor, Faculty of Architecture, UNSA, Elma Hašimbegović, Director of the Museum of History, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

11. INTERNACIONALNA KONFERENCIJA “SARAJEVO I SVIJET”  
MAJ, 2025.

**13.30-14.00 SYMBOLIC HANDOVER OF THE LIBRARY OF MICHAEL SAFIER TO THE  
NATIONAL AND UNIVERSITY LIBRARY OF BOSNIA NAD HERZEGOVINA AND CLOSING  
REMARKS**

Prof. Dr. Tom Selwyn

Representative of the National and University Library

Rector of the University of Sarajevo (TBC)

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**NOTE**

The panel will be accessible both in-person and online via Zoom. Registration details and the link for digital participation will be provided in advance. With the consent of the speakers, the presentations will be recorded and made available on the YouTube channel of International Forum Bosnia.