

## **ABC News TV Report, March 1993**

### **Transcript:**

TONY BIRTLEY, ABC News reporter:

- General Philippe Morillon, the commander of UN forces in Bosnia visited the town. He told the authorities that he would open up the road corridors to get food in and order the placement of military observers in the town that he hopes will deter shelling that locals say comes from across and near by Drina river in Serbia. But the Serbs have so far failed to give their agreement to the General's plans.

But as General Morillon tried to leave, hundreds of refugees, many of them recent arrivals in Konjevich Polje, blocked his way. They chanted for peace and food, and believe that if the UN commander left, the Serbs would start shelling.

OLD MAN:

- The tanks are above waiting to attack. If you leave, they will come and attack us.

GENERAL PHILIPPE MORILLON, UN COMMANDER BOSNIA:

- Polako.

YOUNG GIRL:

- I've heard the news that General Mladic will attack Srebrenica. We just want bread, we want blue helmets to protect us.

TONY BIRTLEY, ABC News reporter:

- They kept their vigil all night around fires, and in the end General Morillon decided to stay until a cease-fire takes effect and the Serbs allow UN helicopters to fly into Srebrenica.

GENERAL PHILIPPE MORILLON, UN COMMANDER BOSNIA:

- I have discovered on arriving here that the situation was worse than I feared myself, and I understood the real fear, anguish, panic of this population. And I wondered, too, that their desire for me to stay here was probably the best solution in order to help them to survive.

TONY BIRTLEY, ABC News reporter:

- The refugee problem is so acute that people have been forced to live in forests in homes made of logs. They're even worse off here, miles from the nearest road, with no hope of aid or medical treatment. These people say two elderly and three children have died here of starvation in the last few weeks. Refugees continue to flood into the town, most from Konjevich Polje where the fighting has intensified. Ten women and children were killed on Friday in Serb shelling, and 30 were wounded, including two UN soldiers.

LARRY HOLLINGWORTH, UNHCR:

- There were a lot of people there, a lot of people we saw last night on the streets, a lot of people who are sleeping in very, very cold schoolrooms. There are a lot of people who genuinely have had absolutely no food for three days. Children, women, old people, no food for three days, and there's no prospect of food at the moment.

TONY BIRTLEY, ABC News reporter:

- 150 alone are sleeping in this cramped room. They lie on the floor, on tables, and even under them. Srebrenica simply can't cope with this huge influx of refugees. Several hundred are arriving each day. They arrive tired and hungry, desperate not only for food but for shelter as well. This 75-year-old lady lays exhausted after a trek of 17 hours across mountain tracks.

There is no food to feed her and she'll probably die within a few days. The sense of hopelessness here is increasing. For some, General Morillon's words were a kind of comfort but few believe they will change the fortunes of this battered people. Tony Birtley, ABC News; Srebrenica, Eastern Bosnia.