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The Symbolism of the new Old Bridge in Mostar

The Old Bridge in Mostar was built in 1556 by mimar Hayruddin, the student of the main Ottoman architect Sinan. It was built as the one-arch stone structure with the span of around 28 m. Its construction was very significant for the development of the historic urban area of Mostar having in mind that the Bridge with its towers formed the nucleus around which, the city was formed.

During the war the Bridge was completely destroyed in 1993 by shelling. This stunning architectural jewel, iconic bridge collapsed into the Neretva river on November 9, 1993. That day the world went silent.

The reconstruction of the bridge was supported by international community with respect to its uniqueness and rarity, and symbolic value to the Mostar community. The reconstruction started in 1997, under the patronage of UNESCO and was completed in 2004, when it was inscribed on the UNESCO list. The official justification of the inscription of the Old Bridge Area of the Old City of Mostar on the World Heritage List is: „With the “renaissance” of the Old Bridge and its surroundings, the symbolic power and meaning of the City of Mostar - as an exceptional and universal symbol of coexistence of communities from diverse cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds - has been reinforced and strengthened, underlining the unlimited efforts of human solidarity for peace and powerful co-operation in the face of overwhelming catastrophes.”

The Old Bridge area was inscribed only under criteria (vi) because of its symbolic value and the memory of the site. It was recognized as an exceptional case, such as Auschwitz Concentration Camp, the Island of Goree and the Hiroshima Peace Memorial, all of which are symbols of human suffering and yet the great strength and win.