

WITNESS STATEMENT

dated 31 October 1994 before investigative judge of the
District court in Belgrade in the criminal proceedings against
[no entry] due to criminal offence from Article [no entry] of KZ¹.

Simić Ilija - judge

witness

[no entry]

Simeunović Velimir

Recording clerk

Persons present at witness testimony:
public prosecutor

Trajković Gorica

[no entry]

defendant

[no entry]

defence attorney

[no entry]

Testimony began at 11.00 o'clock

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I was born and lived in the village of Karno and practiced agriculture. As for my family, I have a wife, Radojka, and four children, two of whom have been living in Pančevo for about ten years (son Mile and daughter Milijana), and my son Radenko lives in Bajina Bašta, while my daughter Milenka lives in Vladimirci, where they have all formed their families and are permanent residents.

Until the beginning of war in former BiH, I lived normally in the village and I had no problems. With the Muslim neighbours from neighbouring villages of Greben and Karačići, we lived well, visited each other and helped each other, and that also goes for the Muslims from other neighbouring villages of Međe, Grujičići, Osmače, and so on.

¹ Translator's note: the Criminal Code

At the beginning of May 1992, a number of locals from Karno fled to Serbia, and 17 of us locals stayed in the village. Besides me and my wife Radojek, the following people stayed in the village: Subotić Manojle, now in B. Bašta², with his wife Milena; Subotić Mladen, now in Odžino selo near Šabac; Subotić Vidoje, now in B. Bašta; Subotić Ilinka, now in B. Bašta; Subotić Radivoje; Gagić Cvijetin - Mato, now in B. Bašta; Gagić Anđa, now in B. Bašta; Gagić Petar, now in Riđake near Vladimirci; Gagić Mileva, now in Pančevo; Andrić Petrija and Andrić Milovan that are now located in Vladimirci.

At that time, we heard about how Muslims were attacking and burning Serb villages in that area. In fact, from the village one could see the surrounding Serb villages of Radačevići, Valtovići, Crni Vrh, Radoševići, Lubnice, Pustanovići, and Knezovi, as well as Čagljevići, burning.

As far as I remember, around 7 May 1992, Muslims killed in a stable in the village of Crni Vrh Petrović Krsto, about 50 years of age, Jevtić Radoje, about 40 years of age, Đurić Vojislav, about 60 years of age, and his son Novo, about 25 years of age. After about 10 days, the persons mentioned were buried, and Petar Gagić and several Muslims from Međe attended the burial.

After those murders, the locals from Krano [sic] fled to the Muslim village of Greben and where they found shelter at their Muslim friends, and during the day they went to Karno to tend to the livestock. The only people who spent the nights in the village were me and my wife.

[signature in Cyrillic: Simeunović Velimir]

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On 15 May 1992 in the morning, my friends Edem Alifendić from Greben and his brother Šefko came to visit me. While we were sitting and talking, sometimes around 10 o'clock, heavy shooting from rifles directed at my house suddenly started. Šefko immediately went out to see what happened and he never returned, and Edem stayed with me. I went in front of the house with Edem, we stood behind one cover and we saw that the attack was conducted by some Muslims from Osmače. A number of them I knew by sight, but I do not know their names because they are younger people.

During that attack, the locals who were there started running away from the village, on which occasion, Andrić Petrija died, and Subotić Vidoje was wounded, but I did not see the moment when that happened.

² t/n: this refers to Bajina Bašta

The attack lasted for about two hours, and after that the Muslims searched the house and looted groceries which they loaded onto carts and took them to their villages.

After the attack, Edem went to his village, and my wife and I stayed in our house.

Two days later, Petar Gagić came to see me and told me that I should go to the village of Greben at the invitation of Nežad Bektić from Karačići, a former JNA³ officer, who said that nothing would happen to us. All of us men from the village of Karno gathered in Greben at his invitation, and the women were placed in Muslim houses in Greben.

We men went to the house of Husein Zukić and his son Fadil. We were there individually interrogated by Nedžad Bektić, mostly concerning weapons and ammunition we allegedly owned. After that interrogation, Nedžad told us to the village of Međe the next day to the house of Abid Ukić, which we did and we were at the agreed location at about 11 o'clock. Interrogations concerning weapons and ammunition continued there, and we were interrogated by Nedžad Bektić and Hakiija, former policeman in Srebrenica, whose last name I do not know. They did not beat us or abuse us during those interrogations. On that occasion, Hakiija asked where were the bombs Milun from Brežani had. Abid Ukić said that he knew those bombs had been taken to Serbia by Milun, to which Mladen Subotić replied that he saw Milun give Milojko three bombs. Immediately after that, Milojko was separated from us and taken to Karno to hand over the bombs to them.

[signature in Cyrillic: Simeunović Velimir]

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Hakiija accused me of possessing weapons and ammunition, so Nedžad Bektić and 15-20 of their soldiers took me to my house in Karno to search it. Since my wife had the house key and she was in Greben, we went from there to Milojko's house. In his house, besides Milojko, there were his wife Ljubica, Radivoje Subotić, and others from Karno who were brought there in the meanwhile. Since they found some weapons on Milojko and Radivoje, the Muslims tied them up and took them to the village of Međe and I returned to my house which was broken into in the meanwhile and searched.

Radivoje Subotić was murdered by Muslims on 24 May 1992 in the evening, above the village, on the northern side. I did not see that murder, but I heard gunshots coming from the place where it happened. The next day, I

³ t/n: Yugoslav People's Army

attended the burial together with my wife Radojka and Mladen Subotić. I saw that Radivoje was riddled with bullets. He was buried in Karno and I know the exact place of his grave.

I do not know everything that happened to Miloško Subotić, but I heard from Danica Gagić that he was severely tortured, chopped to pieces and buried at the cemetery, i.e. above the school in the Muslim village of Klotijevec. Danica was told about that by Ahmo Alić from Grujičići who was captured by Serbs.

After that, the only ones who stayed in Karno were my wife and I. I saw Muslims during that time entering the village, looting abandoned houses, and taking livestock away with them, so I was forced to flee with my wife on 27 May to the village of Greben at my friend Adem Alifendić.

Together with other locals from Karno, I stayed in Greben until 17 July 1992. We were staying at Muslim houses and the entire time I stayed at Edem Alifendić's house together with my wife and Milovan Andrić. We did not dare move from Greben because there was a possibility that someone from the Muslim side would kill us for revenge, and the Muslims at whom we were staying were in danger as well for sheltering us. We ate what our hosts ate. We were not mistreated and abused.

In the meanwhile, Subotić Manojle and his wife Milena managed to get to Bajina Bašta, after bribing some Muslims to get them out of there.

[signature in Cyrillic: Simeunović Velimir]

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Since Muslim residents of Greben were in danger for sheltering us, they made an agreement with Nedžad Bektić to transport us all to Srebrenica for exchange. On 17 July 1992, alongside me and my wife Radojka, the following people were escorted to Srebrenica:

1. Gagić Petar, around 35 years of age;
2. Gagić Cvijetin - Mato (40);
3. Andrić Milovan (71);
4. Gagić Mileva (50);
5. Gagić Anđa (40);
6. Gagić Danica (40);
7. Gagić Ljubica (35).

They drove us by truck and we got to Srebrenica around 22 o'clock. We were placed all together in the prison by the Municipal court. The dimensions of the room were 3x4 meters, there were no beds, we slept on the floor which was covered with "warm floor coverings", and we also got several blankets.

In that prison we stayed until 13 August 1992 when we were exchanged. In the meanwhile, two captured young Serb men from Bujakovići, whose names I do not know, were brought to the same room.

I forgot to state that while I was staying in Greben, Muslim patrols from Ljeskovik, led by Osman Kusturica, occasionally stopped by. On that occasion, he interrogated me and asked me to give him a radio-station, weapons, and ammunition which I allegedly illegally owned and buried, and they were told that by Andrić Milovan. Because of that, they took me to my house in Karno to show them the place where I had hidden the weapons. On that occasion, they threatened to kill me, brought a knife to my eyes, ears, and nose, and threatened to cut them, and they punched me in the eyes with their fists, i.e. Osman did. Milovan Andrić was present at those interrogations and on their order beat me with a dogwood stick on the back and other body parts. Due to injuries I got from that beating, I lied immobil in Edem's room for five days. Edem Alifendić and his sons protected me from further beatings and abuse. Milovan Andrić threatened my wife that he would take get her just as he got me.

[signature in Cyrillic: Simeunović Velimir]

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The next day, after we were taken to prison in Srebrenica, Zulfo Tursunović, whom I knew by sight from before, came in our room. He asked who was Gagić Ljubica and when she answered, he cursed her Chetnik mother, asked her where the radio-station was, and then grabbed her hair and then forcefully slammed her head against the wall several times. From those hits, she fell, and he came up to the men and interrogated them also about the radio-station and weapons, on which occasion he hit Gagić Petar with his fist in the head. He turned towards Ljubica again, hit her forcefully with an open fist in the jaw, and her head hit the wall and she fell. After that, Zulfo exited the room and Ljubica took a vial of acetic acid from her bag and started drinking it. Since she was right next to me, I took the vial away from her,

but she had already swallowed some of its contents. We asked the guards to bring a doctor, but they did not meet that request. We tried to help her but she could neither eat nor drink. Guard Nurija Jusufović from Karačići brought her milk, but she could not drink. Seven days later, she died in great agony. She was buried at the graveyard by the church in Srebrenica.

During our imprisonment, we were not beaten and abused again. The food was very weak; we got each a piece of bread and some water. There were times when we did not have any food for as long as ten days, but we were saved by some Muslim women from Greben who brought us some food on two occasions, so we survived due to that.

We were exchanged on 13 August 1992. I did not return to the village of Karno again. All houses in that village were looted, destroyed, and burned. My two houses, two stables, chardak, and barn were burned, as well as other outbuildings. Five cattle and three pigs were taken away. All my furniture and agricultural tools were looted.

In my estimation, the value of looted and destroyed property could be around DM 150,000. I demand that perpetrators of aforementioned crimes be found, criminal proceedings against them conducted, and them to be appropriately sentenced, while I will deliver a damages claim later, when conditions for that are met.

[signature in Cyrillic: Simeunović Velimir]

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I forgot to mention earlier that alongside aforementioned people, Subotić Mladen was also escorted to the prison in Srebrenica.

I also wish to state that ten days after our arrival to prison in Srebrenica, Miloš, whose last name I do not know, from Vrankovina near Fakovići, who moved to Belgrade 20 years earlier, was also brought to our room. He was caught in Poznanovići by Muslims. He was taken out of the room, interrogated in some other room, and returned to our room beaten up. He was exchanged together with us, and I think that he is now in Belgrade.

I have nothing more to say on the previous matters, the record was loudly dictated and everything I stated was entered in it, I do not wish to read it, I accept it as my own and sign it.

The testimony ended at 14.00 o'clock.

[signature in Cyrillic: Simeunović Velimir]