

REPUBLIC OF SRPKA
MINISTRY OF INTERIOR
BIJELJINA PUBLIC SECURITY
CENTRE
BRATUNAC POLICE STATION

Date: 9 December 2005

WITNESS STATEMENT

Made on 9 December 2005 in the premises of Bratunac PS, concerning the examination of witness ŽIKIĆ SLAVOLJUB on the circumstance of criminal offence specified in Article 142 of KZ SFRJ¹, committed in the area of Bratunac municipality, i.e. in Fakovići.

WITNESS STATEMENT

On 5 October 1992, I was in my field which was not far from my home, and with me there were my wife Milenka and my sister-in-law Vesić Vera. In the field, I noticed that the grass and corn were flattened which was suspicious because the field was near a forest and nearby there was occasionally self-organized village guard. While we were picking corn, and it was at precisely 12.00, the shooting started. I looked upstream and downstream Drina river and saw all the surrounding villages burning. All three of us started running towards Drina river, and I told the two of them to go downstream for about 400m where they would find a boat which they could use to cross over to Serbia. I stayed hidden near my house, and I was a civilian and unarmed, as the aforementioned persons that were in the field with me. Hidden like that, I saw all the private houses, my own included,
[signature: Žikić Slavoljub]

burning, while they did not burn buildings such as schools, post offices, and ambulances. As I saw from there, Muslim army was everywhere around, and in that moment I could not recognize anyone, but later I found out that mostly residents of Osmaći and other places participated in the attack. Towards me came a group of Muslim soldiers dressed in uniforms, and there were 5-6 of them, and one of them shouted at me: "Stop, Chetnik". They caught me and led me to my home and at home, tied my hands behind my back with a rope. I saw Zulfo Tursumović² on a horse by my house, and in front of my house and the garage of my brother Bogomir, there were about 100 Muslim soldiers in uniforms. A soldier in uniform, a black man, ran towards me with a knife in his hands and wanted to slaughter me tied up as I was. In that moment, Tursumović [sic] Zulfo shouted from the horse at him, "No, there is time until Srebrenica", and that soldier stopped. Zulfo Tursumović [sic] was clearly in charge during that attack because he commanded the others too. Among those soldiers, I knew one Muslim from the village of Pozdanovići, whose name I do not know, and I remembered him because I saw him lead out the cow and the calf from my stable and take them away, and I knew him also by sight because I used to work at the post office where he came. He was a middle-aged mad and I think I would be able to recognize him if I saw him now.

That big group of soldiers led me across the woods above Pozdanovići in the direction of Srebrenica, and behind Pozdanovići trucks were waiting for us, and they led me inside one

¹ Translator's note: Criminal Code of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

² t/n: actual surname is Tursunović

of the trucks, and 4 of their soldiers also sat with me, and I was taken to Srebrenica. At that place, I saw about 10 tractors facing Fakovići, and next to the tractors there were both soldiers and civilians who were waiting for Fakovići to be occupied so they could loot the village. While we were walking on foot, I was beaten by Muslim soldier, hit with hands, and practically kicked, which Zulfo Tursimović [sic] stopped by saying, “Don’t play heroes over an old man,” and cynically laughed while saying that, so those same soldiers would continue to beat me. They brought me in front of the police station where their prison was, and untied me because my hands were tied so tightly that they had turned black. They ushered me in one room, practically shoving me, so I fell, and in the dark I felt some shoes under me, thus I thought that they had put me in a mortuary. Someone from that dark room quietly asked, “Who are you and where are you from?” I said I was from Fakovići, and that same voice asked, “It’s impossible Fakovići fell too?” In the morning I saw that in the room, dimensions of which were 3.00x2.00 meters, there were four other prisoners, and they were Radić Nedeljko, Šarac Vojislav, Branković Zoran, and Nevenko, whose surname I cannot remember, and they were all from the village of Podravanje, Srebrenica municipality. From a later conversation I had with them, I found out that they were all captured in the Boksit³ mine in Podravanje, and that Nevenko and Branković Zoran were guards in the mine. I asked them if they were beaten and they all told me that I would see it for myself that they beat too much, that three nights earlier they murdered one prisoner called Kukuć with a firewood log, but they did not know who he was, and they told me that they found out from one guard that he was thrown in some lake. Radić Nedeljko, now living in Milići, personally told me that Kukuć was murdered in prison with a firewood log by Kemo, so-called “Beli” from the village of Pale, Srebrenica municipality. That “Beli” enjoyed beating me, and he made the aforementioned prisoners beat me, asking me was I going to listen, and the beatings were frequent and very brutal and I got severe injuries such as two broken ribs, one cracked rib, bruises from hits all over my body, and I submitted all medical documentation to the Hague, where I gave a witness statement from 11 to 17 December 2004, but I do not have that statement.

After a night spent in prison, I was taken out by their soldiers and they led me to a room on the ground floor of the same building to Mirzet, whose surname I do not remember, and he was a military official who interrogated me. Mirzet was accompanied by a few soldiers, and interrogated me on how many of us Chetniks are there, if I possessed any weapons, while other present soldiers, whom I did not know, cursed my Chetnik mother, Serb mother, and similar, and after the interrogation while walking out, one of the soldiers hit me in the face with a rifle butt and thus knocked my teeth out.

Immediately after that they led me to an interrogation in the same building, in another room, with the police, where I was interrogated by the commander of the police, whose name I do not know, and I was later told by the prison guard Sabahudin Omerović, a policeman called “Čude”, that I was

[Signed/ Žikić Slavoljub]

interrogated by the commander of the police. That commander of the Police station during the conversation called me by my nickname “Drago”, as people call me today, which meant he knew me, and among other things he asked me how come I did not know him, or was I pretending not to know him in that situation, but he did not beat me since I was already beaten up.

From 5 October to 16 October 1992 I was in the prison in the Police station, during which time the guards of the prison gave the keys to anyone who wanted to beat us, so all of

³ t/n: bauxite

us in that cell we beaten senseless, mostly during the night, but also during the day. Besides the constant beatings, we were abused in other ways, i.e. they made us individually clean the toilet where they would spill excrement on the floor, relieve themselves there, and then make us take out excrements from the hole with our hands on which instance they would force us to lie down on the floor so we could take the excrements out of the hole, and when it was my turn to clean, the water went over my back and the guard did not allow me to put something on the floor underneath my body, and during that he beat me because I wanted to put a car tire under myself. As for the food, during those 12 days, they brought us each a little cold beans, mostly the soup from the beans, with a piece of bread the size of matchbox. We prisoners had to relieve ourselves in the cell because we were not allowed to go out and into the toilet, and whenever one of us would ask to use the toilet, he would get beaten up. Only the guard called “Čude” in his shifts allowed us to go to the toilet.

I remember one day they led me out from the prison into the street in front of the Police station and I saw one truck parked and next to it a dog that was ran over, its bowels spread on the road, and they ordered me to load the remains of the dog into the truck. I wanted to get some paper to do that, which the guard did not allow me but instead stepped on my hand and said, “Why are you hesitant, Vlach? You share the same blood,” and made me scoop up the dog remains with my bare hands, and I had difficulty picking them up and putting them on the car due to my broken ribs, and later he did not allow me to wash my hands so I went back into the cell bloody.

During our imprisonment, Naser Orić came to our cell 4 times, and on the first visit, he asked me if I knew Jovanović Uroš from Fakovići, to which I said I did, and he asked me what was happening with him then, because he probably knew Uroš was in jail in Srebrenica and was exchanged. What I personally know is that Uroš, before my imprisonment, was in prison in Srebrenica and was exchanged on Žuti most⁴, and on the occasion of the exchange at Žuti most he was in a wheelchair because of the beatings he got in prison and the exhaustion; he was exchanged there, and was then transported to a hospital in Belgrade, where he died within 4 days from the injuries. Then Naser asked me if I knew Kovačić Božidar, a teacher in Fakovići, and as I said I did not know him, even though I did, he told me that Božidar hung himself on a doorknob in a prison in Srebrenica. On the next visit, Naser Orić asked me if I knew Arkan, and I responded that I knew from what people said that he was rich and that he married Ceca Ražnatević⁵, after which he took out a gun and asked me, “Do you know whose gun is this?” I then told him it was his, and he responded, “It is mine now, and it was Arkan’s yesterday; Zvornik fell yesterday.” On the next visit he asked us all why we were all bloody, and we were bloody because before that we were taken out into the corridor to greet in Croatian, which we did not know how to do, and I said the greeting “Bog”⁶, on which occasion the soldiers beat us, and then Naser Orić promised us that no one would beat us again. However, the same night we were led from our prison cell into a bigger hall where there were about 50 soldiers, who were picking who would beat whom, and they beat us all senseless; more precisely, I was the only one brought back to the cell conscious, while all others were brought in unconscious.

On 16 October 1992 in the morning, we were order to go outside and to wash ourselves, which we did with water from bottles, and we were all ordered to sit in one truck, which took us about 300 meters from the prison, only for the truck to go in reverse and return in front of the police station, where we were all taken into the police station building, and were interrogated one by one, asked where our guards were standing, how many of us were there and similar to that. During that interrogation, I saw Branković Zoran being taken out of the building and lifted up in the air by four soldiers who let him fall on his back on the asphalt, and I saw blood coming out of Zoran’s mouth, ears and nose, and that he was unconscious. In that condition, they put him back on the car and

⁴ t/n: Yellow bridge

⁵ t/n: actual surname is Ražnatović

⁶ t/n: Croatian *hello/bye* – informal greeting

[Signed/ Žikić Slavoljub]

they ordered me to keep his mouth opened with the threat that they would kill me and that there would be no exchange if he died. There were a few soldiers in that vehicle with us who were guarding us, only for the vehicle to stop midway and the soldier “Beli” Kemo climbed on the body of the vehicle, hit me with the rifle butt in the right shoulder region, and said, “Final goodbye for Chetnik.” After that, the drive continued until Žuti most where we were exchanged for, I believe, 19 of their soldiers. Among the killed, I recognized Akif Husić from Potočari, and I later found out that they were killed in Zalazje.

Upon arriving to Bratunac, the army took our statements, doctors examined us, and I was taken by Budimir Jovanović to his home, where I had a bath and ate. That day I heard unpleasant news, I think from Savka Vesić from Fakovići, that I was buried in Bajina Bašta during the time that I was in prison. After I went out of the prison, I personally went to Bajina Bašta to the cemetery where I saw allegedly my grave with a cross that had my name and surname inscribed on it.

I accentuate that after coming out of prison, I found out that on the day of the attack on Fakovići MZ⁷, 25 civilians were killed, and they were the following: Marković Slavka, Olga, Đokić Sreten, Milovan, Nikolić Ljuba, Milovan, Vasić Vladan, his wife Stanija, Đukić Radovan, Ristić Milutin, Zarija, Božić Desanka, Stjepanović Stojka, Subotić Milomir, Despotović Milja, Prodanović Petra, Đurić Danilo, and even more were wounded.

I am also familiar with the fact that in that same year in September, in the village of Ratkovići, during an attack by the Muslim forces, 23 civilians were killed, and I know that they were buried in Fakovići.

At that time, I was not in Ratkovići, and I did not see what was happening, but I heard that the media published a photo of a mother, Dobrila Prodanović, holding with her hands the cut-off head of her son, who was massacred by Muslim soldiers in Ratkovići.

After reading the statement, the witness stated that he had no objections.

The examination ended at 10.50 o'clock.

WITNESS:

RECORDING CLERK: AUTHORISED

OFFICIAL:

Žikić Slavoljub

Rajka Vegara

Nenad Minić

[signature: R. Vegara]

[signature: illegible]

[signature: Žikić Slavoljub]

⁷ t/n: local community