

On 5 May 1993 in Milići regional hospital, Šarac Veselin, son of Manojlno, born 17 November 1938 in the village of Podravanje, former Srebrenica municipality, where he also lived, worker at Boksit¹ mine, Milići, was found on treatment, and an informative conversation was carried out with him concerning the circumstances of his capture by Muslim formations from Srebrenica, and on that occasion he gave the following

S T A T E M E N T

"Since I was born, I lived in the village of Podravanje, Srebrenica municipality, where I had a house and I was employed as a manual worker in the Boksit mine, Milići. Near my village, there are Muslim villages of Bijelo Polje, Kutezero, and Bučje. Up until a year ago, we worked together with the Muslims and we did not have any confrontations or problems of another kind until the outbreak of the war. For example, all Muslims from the aforementioned villages loved and appreciated my son Dušan as a worker while they worked together. With the occurrence of the party elections and withdrawing of Yugoslav army from Bosnia, us in the village felt that the Muslims were in some manner starting to distance themselves from the Serbs. That was also beginning to be felt at work. For example, the manager for assigning tasks started assigning the nicer tasks to the Muslims, and so on.

Also, on 24 September 1992, when my village of Podravanje was attacked by armed Muslims, in the village there were women, children, elderly people, and there were some defenders of the village, i.e. people who were guarding the village so the Muslims would not enter it, kill the people and burn the village down. Despite that, we did not expect the people who used to be our neighbours until recently to be able to do in Podravanje what they eventually did.

On 24 September 1992, I was in the village when around 6.00 o'clock it started shooting from all sides around our village. I, as well as my neighbours, soon realized that the village was attacked by Muslims. Muslims were tightening the encirclement around the village, shooting at our village and practically bare-handed people from infantry weapon. The few defenders of the village could not resist the mass of armed Muslims, who were also leading behind them many civilians whose task was to loot Serb property, to kill, and to burn our houses. The attack at the village lasted, so to say, the whole day. On that day, a little further in the village, my son Dušan was killed as well as my brother Milan, born in 1929, who was a pensioner. Upon seeing that they would get killed, our locals started to abandon the village and go towards Gunjaci mine in the direction of Milići. Muslim attack at Podravanje was the hardest from the direction of the mine, but it was already almost dusk, so the locals started abandoning the village through a smaller passage, saving themselves. It could have been around 17 o'clock when I entered my single-storey house to change my clothes and get some basic things and to leave the village. When I came out of the house, I heard a male voice saying the order, "Stop, put your hands up". The Muslim - young man was behind my back holding a Kalashnikov rifle. I did not recognise him. Other Muslims who stood armed a few steps away said, "Get him alive, don't kill him". The one who ordered me to surrender then asked to give hand over to him all the money that I owned. I took it out of my pocket and the scene, there in the village, I gave them 130 billion². Then they requested flour. I gave them the whole 50kg of flour that I had in my house. I did not know either one of them and I could not recognize them now. They told me that they would not burn my house in my presence. Around 17 o'clock, they tied my hands with an electrical cable. There, on the village road in Podravanje, i.e. near my house, I recognized Irkić Maho from Kutezer. He was unarmed and leaning against a fence with his shirt untucked falling over his pants. He's a man born in 1937. He used to work as a manual worker at the Šumarnica³ part of the mine. After tying me up, 4 Muslims led me towards Srebrenica, i.e. towards Šumarnica cut. Along the way, more Muslims came out of the forest in groups. There were some who were armed with Kalashnikov rifles and there were also civilians. At the Šumarnica, they put me on the body of FAP⁴ 18 vehicle which was yellow and was full with Muslim army. There were 4 other captured Serbs, whom I did not immediately see or recognize on the full truck until we got to Srebrenica. On the truck, someone hit me on the back with a rifle several times.

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¹ Translator's note: bauxite

² t/n: the currency is Yugoslav dinar

³ t/n: name of the mining cut

⁴ t/n: Fabrika automobila Priboj - Serbian automotive manufacturer of trucks with headquarters in Priboj

Around 19 o'clock I was brought to Srebrenica and placed in a prison that was in the building of SUP⁵ Srebrenica. In the prison there was concrete floor on which I lied. There they placed Branković Zoran, Nevenko, Radić Nedeljko from Milići, and another younger Serb whom they killed within a few days during an interrogation. I think he was from Indija and was visiting some relatives in Podravanje. After a few days, an older man Jovanović Drago, or a something similar to that because I am not sure about his surname, was brought to the prison, and I know that he was a postman in Fakovići. He is balding, he likes to, as he says, drink and he said that he had been captured while he was picking corn in Fakovići.

The next day, they led us one by one for interrogation. The interrogation was conducted upstairs in SUP, and Mirzet, chief of SUP, interrogated most. Mirzet is younger and it is possible that he is from Budak or Potočari near Srebrenica. There were also civilians whom they interrogated, and Mirzet was in charge for that. He beat me with his hands and kicked me, and he did that during the night. I was interrogated 5-6 times. They rarely beat during the day. When they are interrogating, there are as many as 10 of them, wearing both uniforms and civilian clothing. I know that they call each other by names Dule, Beli, and Kemo. Kemo has a beard and he is from the village of Pale. In prison, Kemo also beat me with his hands and kicked me, as did the people called, i.e. nicknamed Dule and Beli. We were mainly beaten by people we did not know. I was not taken to see a doctor. Within a few days, the young man from Indija was killed. I remember exactly when they led me to Podravanje on 26 September 1992 to show them where the weapons were over there, although there were no weapons in that village, that morning, near Šumarnica cut they threw the body of the young man from Indija, since they had already killed him, on a truck and then they threw it off the truck somewhat further down the road right by the Šumarnica itself. When throwing the body of the captured young man, one Muslim shot the dead body from a rifle. They took me to the hamlet of Šarci in Podravanje - there were no weapons so they returned me to Srebrenica prison. In the prison, we were beaten during the night. I stayed in the prison until 16 October 1992 when I was exchanged. In the prison, they often requested that we put two fingers up into the air, and then they would kick us in the ribs, or hit us in the ribs with their hands or with a round log. I was forced to clean the toilet with my hands. In prison, we ate a piece of proja⁶ with tea almost the whole time, and that was usually once a day, rarely twice.

One evening, 3 men from my room were led upstairs, and then they came to get me too. When I went in I found all three men lying on the floor beaten up and water splashed on them. There they broke me too by beating me. I am still being treated at the Milići hospital after the exchange because of the fractures. After that beating, i.e. the next day when we came to they led us into the toilet, requested that we wash our faces and told us we were about to be exchanged. In the prison, Naser once punched me in the temple with his fist; I know Naser well, because he asked me if I knew Huskić Akif, his deputy. Of course, I did not know that person. Dule, Beli, and Kemo are the ones who beat the most in the prison. I heard that two days ago a woman also captured by Muslims, called Petrović Dušanka, wife of Savo from Podravanje, was released from that prison. I remember that in Srebrenica prison we found some young man from Zenica, but he was in some other prison, i.e. another room, not with us. In fact, I knew him briefly (for 2 hours), and I heard that he was released from the prison.

I will feel the consequences of beating for a very long time, since I am still in the hospital. I know that the Muslims burned all houses in Podravanje, that can be seen from nearby places, even though some Serbs do enter the Muslim fire-devastated village. Most of the residents had newer houses; certainly around 50% were new houses, whether multi-storey houses or single-storey houses, as residents of Podravanje lived well because most of them were employed.

The houses which burned down were the houses of the following people: Perendić Ivko, Tomislav, Miloš, Uroš, Erić Dragoljub, Perendić Vasilije, Marković Tanasije, Momir, Ivan, Milomir, Lazarević Rade, Lalo, Milisav, Ilija, Srećko, Rade's third son, Jovanović Pavld, Pero, Svetozar, Vojin, Ilić Mirko, Radovan, Jovanović Mitar, Nikolić Slavoljub, Milomir, Radomir, Mirko, Milosavljević Đorđo, Nikolić Milan, Tomić Marko, Mirko, Šarac Mišo, Novak, Cvetin, Vojstlav, Dragutin, Milan, Veselin, Vojin, Tomić Cvetko, Mihajlo, Sreten, Ratko, Šarac, Marinković Miloš, Dikosava, Desanka, Vladimir, Milan, Radovan, Slobodan, Petrović Milorad, Miloš, Mirko, Jovan, Šarac Blagoje, Drago, Miloš, Mitrović Mirko, Mihajlo, Miladin, Jovanović Milenko, Mile, Krunić Borka, Dragica, Jovanović Vidoje, Milovan."

Citizen:

Šarac Veselin

[signature in Cyrillic: Šarac Veselin]

Authorised official:

Maksim Maksimović

[signature:illegible]

⁵ t/n: Secretariat of the Interior

⁶ t/n: Serbian cornbread