

SERB REPUBLIC BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

State documentation center for the research of war crimes against Serbs

WITNESS STATEMENT

Witness Dr. Trifko (Đuro) Guzina from Sarajevo, born on 24.04.1934 in Fojnica village, Gacko, gave a statement to the State documentation center for the research of war crimes against Serbs on 12.11.1992 about (1) time, place, and circumstances and the scope of the crime and violence; (2) victims of the crime and violence; (3) perpetrators of the crime and violence; (4) potential witnesses and documentation about the crime.

I worked as a specialist physician, a urologist. From 1985 I was the director of the Urology clinic at the Koševo hospital in Sarajevo. When the war started, I was a member of the Politics council of SDS, members of which also were Nikola Koljević, Slavko Leovac, Biljana Plavšić, Aleksa Buha, Sava Čeklić, Milutin Najdanović, etc. Just prior to the start of the war, at the Clinic, I felt that something was happening as my Muslim colleagues started behaving differently. Still, I could not even imagine that it was then when my suffering would start. I will tell you all about it, as much as I can, in this mental and physical condition.

First troubles began several days after the war broke out when Kerim Lučarski, chief of the military police, came to my workrooms. He came with his guards, behaved very rudely, and allegedly, his aim was to guard the machines for breaking stones in kidneys and gallbladders. The chief guard was a certain Memo. This all happened in agreement with dr. Mustafa Hiroš. Immediately they took over the storage unit with drug and other material supplies. At the same time, they spread the propaganda that, supposedly, Serbs, known to them, had already brought all the medicines and medical material to Pale from the Clinic, which was pure fiction. They searched all Serb nurses every day. They found ten or so pills of some children's medicine on Božica Lalović, and I barely managed to save her from getting arrested. Memo, their chief guard, who was particularly arrogant and prone to drinking, once, drunk, tried to crash the monument to Blagoje Kovačević, the founder of the Surgery clinic, by tying it to his car. I managed to intervene and stop this incident.

Immediately afterward, they emptied the upper floor and brought our soldiers there who were wounded in the Skenderija massacre. Among them was Lieutenant colonel Božinovski. His wife's name was Ljubica; I know that she worked at the military hospital. They accused him of shooting one of the attackers at the YPA barracks in the mouth. Arrogantly, as if I was a prisoner, they pushed me into the room to check

on the wounded “chetnik” while they spat on and maltreated him. I gave my professional opinion, purely from the medical perspective, as I did with all my patients.

Their police hid the guard Memo. They did this to hide an extraordinarily indecent and arrogant man who proclaimed himself to be a soldier pinning some ranks and medals onto himself, that he found and confiscated in one of his many raids on military apartments.

On one such apartment raid, he found nurse Mira Milutinović. He maltreated her and asked her whether she knew where the apartments of Dr. Babić and Dr. Guzina were. Shortly afterward, they searched my apartment three or four times. I legally owned a military carbine, which I had already given to some Čamo from the Territorial Defense. After the search, four police officers from HOS, one of whom presented himself as Čalo and other as Dodig, brought me somewhere towards hotel Zagreb, following orders of their commander Srna from the Bureau for investigation of war crimes. They brought me to the fourth or fifth floor, into an unknown room, where I waited for two hours casually talking to one of the officers. Then, they blindfolded me and brought me by car to an unknown location.

They brought me into some hallways and then into a toilet where I had to sit on the toilet seat. They handcuffed me there. I sat there for another hour, and then they brought me, with a blindfold on, to some other rooms. When they took the blindfold off me, I was in a room where I could see a connections device, a bar, and a movie camera. They tried to talk to certain Lalović there, trying to exchange me for 28 Muslims from Vogošća. He gave me the phone and told me to say: “It’s Trifko Guzina speaking.” I was forced to admit that I was a chetnik and a murderer, which I did not want to admit. I told them that I was a physician who swore to treat all people disregarding their nationality or anything else. The connection broke then, after which they blindfolded me again and brought me somewhere near some steamer and brought me, with a blindfold on, to a private apartment on the sixth floor. Their commander Srna came there, middle Hight, brown hair, round face - with no other distinguishing features. He took some list and told me: “You were a member of the Politics council of SDS.” She showed me a document from our meeting, which I had signed. He asked me what the Politics council was. I told him that it was a Council for inter-party cooperation. He interrogated me then about what I knew about each of the Council members individually. I told him that I had operated on some of them or their family members personally and that that was how I had met them. This happened around 1 a.m. on a June night. Srna then left. In the meantime, my wife went to see Juro Pelivan, as he, too, was a patient of mine. That Croatian connection prevented me from getting killed earlier. As Pelivan intervened, they brought me again to their Bureau, where I was forced to give a statement for the Television in which I condemned the

genocide over the Muslims. I said that I condemned all ill-intentioned actions over all people alike. From there, they blindfolded me, brought and surrendered me to the local police, that is, some sort of a night's watch, which brought me home.

They left me alone for two or three days, and then they brought me somewhere again around 4 p.m. They lied to me that we were going to the Presidency. I was arrested by an officer on whose accreditation I only saw number 003.

The day before that arrest, Pejanović invited me to their Presidency and ordered me to join Kosovac in the Serb Democratic Forum. Pejanović, Braco Kosovac, Boro Bjelovac, Uglješa Uzelac, Vito Žepinić and a majority of former leaders waited for me there, all of whom were Serbs. Pejanović ordered that I had to be included in the Council, as that was a condition for them to keep me alive. They recorded my presence there, and even then, I said that I had operated on more than 25 thousand people and that I was only following medical ethics.

The same police officer, with the numbers 003, told me cynically when we arrested me: "Did you have the forum - you did!" He brought me to the Bureau again, not the Presidency. The first time I was there, I was told that I was a prisoner of war and that that was my only status. In fact, they actually really wanted to exchange me for a man important to them who was imprisoned in Vogošća. Svetozar Stanić offered 28 Muslims for me, and they asked to 58. I got that information through Juro Pelivan.

Dedo was there at the Bureau, an Ustasha who escaped Bleiburg in 1945, where he was tried as a war criminal. Juka Prazina included him into his staff, but he pushed him out because he had perpetrated mass killings of Serbs from Alipašino Polje and other parts of the city. Dedo joined the Bureau as an associate. Dr. Srđan Bulatović can provide more details about this. Dr. Junuzović also said that, while with Juka, Dedo killed all Serbs that he could and that that was the reason they had split up. I told Dedo that I knew Dr. Junuzović. He then asked me if I knew Dr. Nemanja Veljkov, a liver specialist. I told him that I had heard of him, but I did not know him in person.

In the meantime, it was known that Srna had convicted me to death.

From there, blindfolded, they brought me through some corridors to a large salon and said: "Allah emanet, we will kill you, Chetnik, just chose whether with bullet or knife." They brought a German shepherd and yelled: "Rex, go smell the Chetnik too." I had to sit up straight on a bench there, head up, blindfolded, not moving at all. Many guards went by and talked to me very rudely. Then they brought two persons. They were brought in by a guard with a Montenegrin accent. I want to note that all the guards said that they were Serbs, but I could distinguish them through their accents. Very quickly, I recognized the voices of the two persons. Those were Slavko Leovac and his wife. They told me that they brought in the President of the Politics council

of SDS. They put some hood over Slavko's wife's head, which made her suffocate all the time, and Slavko, a chronic heart patient, begged them to give him his medicines. This lasted the whole night. They touched our necks with their hands. They said: "A nice neck to slaughter." They played Ustasha songs extremely loudly, especially in the morning. Slavko and I could not understand a single word because the guards were always around us, maltreating us in various ways. They told us in the morning: "Go on, get up, we're going to finish you now." They brought us into a basement room. They took our blindfolds off and gave us breakfast. At around 8 a.m., Srna came and ordered to put us into a dark closet, where we sat on three chairs. I heard the guards there saying how they would be free that night as they would kill us in the evening. I also heard that in the adjacent rooms, there were other prisoners, men and women, and even one pregnant woman. That evening a man in a completely black uniform with a patch over his eye came and said: "Guzina, get out, you're going to see the commander."

"Oslobodjenje" has already reported on my entering the Forum, but Srna still demanded my execution.

Slavko Leovac stayed there. I was later told that Pejanović helped him and his wife get out of the biggest Serb cemetery with a UNPROFOR vehicle.

I saw that we were moving towards hotel Zagreb, and the one that drove me there talked about how he was fighting in Mitnica near Vukovar. He brought me to an office in which commander Srna waited for me, together with my colleague Dr. Junuzović, who intervened, asking for me to be transferred to the military prison. I signed documents saying that they had not beaten me. I was then brought to "Barutana" to Ismet Bajramović - Čelo. I was told there that I would be formally heard. My wife did not know where I was. She learned this by accident from two Gypsies, and immediately contacted Dr. Junuzović, who talked the men in the military prison into hearing me proform. He also told them to give me a paper saying that I was questioned and that there was no need for any further hearings. They notified my wife about this and then brought me home.

The police force of the Bureau for investigation of war crimes was organized at that time, wanting to attack the Presidency and the Military prison. This was stopped by Čelo and about 5 or 6 thousand of his police officers - they blocked the whole city.

When I was to be delivered to the Military prison, Srna told me: "I'll come back for you." He even threatened Dr. Junuzović, saying that he was personally responsible for releasing the biggest Serb Chetnik, to which Junuzović responded that he protected me at the cost of his own head.

That night, when I came home, two of their rival police forces collided. The city was blocked. Nobody bothered me anymore, but I was ordered by Stjepan Kljujić to go to work regularly. I was to be tried later.

At work, one of their police officers came to me and said: “You must stick to the Forum, otherwise you’re dead.”

While I was away, the staff of my Clinic changed. Instead of me, the director was now Dr. Hiroš. Some new people came, as well. Their chief ideologist was Dr. Konjhodžić and executor Safet Ćibo.

I went to work for about 15 days, and I was only there physically. I went to work on foot from Gorica, sneaking between the buildings and running away from rifle fire, while others were brought in by armored vehicles. Some of them even lived and ate at the Clinic, after they had sent their families to Croatia or elsewhere abroad.

One of ours, Dr. Srđan Bulatović, was also allowed to live at the Clinic. He was taking care of Juka Prazina, so Juka helped him however he could. He was simply in love with Dr. Bulatović. I think that he even gave him a weapon.

Bulatović is the key figure in terms of shedding light on the genocide and many other crimes perpetrated against helpless Serbs. He even told me once that he would spit on himself because he is so helpless, yet has an opportunity to look at thousands of Serb bodies in the Koševo stream, Pionirska valley, around the stadium and the Koševo hill. He also knows that all the people buried at the “Lav” cemetery, market with N.N. are actually innocently killed Serbs. Dr. Bulatović probably has something to say about how the innocent were killed somewhere near the Television at the time when the Miljacka rose and was full of bodies.

I myself heard from the people who lived near Koševo how they complained about the smell of decaying human bodies suffocating them. I also heard a story about crime over Dr. Najdanović: Juka Prazina tied him up, placed a picture of Tito beneath him, and forced him to say: “Juka, you are Tito!” Dr. Milutin Najdanović was found somewhere with multiple stab wounds and shot with a bullet to the head. Dr. Bulatović might know more about this as well.

When I got out of prison, “Večernje novine” published an article about the killings of Muslims in Vogošća ordered by Joja Tintor. The same article said that I, Dr. Trifko Guzina, was the creator of the idea, and Tintor’s spiritual leader. In their Press center, that article was distributed to all of their and foreign press. I denied these claims because otherwise, I would be dead, however, they did not want to publish this.

That was the time when Sefer Halilović took everything into his own hands. Once again, I was brought in for a hearing, this time to the police station, where they

interrogated me about everything for three to four hours. They had already arrested Srna and Dedo, and they asked me to testify against them in an emergency procedure. They told me that they planned to shoot me together with Dr. Nemanja, and they released me.

Four days later, in the evening - there is the Military police again, and once again, they took me to "Barutnica." There I found Dževad Topić, arrested, an assistant to Ismet Ćelo, as well as all the other main executors from their police. When I came there, they told the arrested police officers: "Here is Dr. such and such, the best urologist - who will give a statement that Srna wanted to shoot him."

Again, new statements, new hearings, everything new - because their Military police now wanted me to sign the document saying that they saved me from being shot by the Bureau police. At the time, their police forces collided all the time, trying to blame each other for the cruelty over the Serbs and many other crimes.

When they got a statement from me that they wanted, they let me go home again. However, this time, they told me that I had to leave by myself, on foot, but to be very careful because: "The police force that arrested you are everywhere," as they said. Even earlier, I noticed that I was being watched and that they followed my every move.

When they let me go alone to the streets, I did not have any of my identification documents. It was very dark outside, which helped me reach my apartment alive somehow. Midnight was near.

I learned around then that a convoy was preparing to leave Sarajevo. A requirement for leaving was having a confirmation of poor health. A panel of doctors gathered immediately, just for my case, and I got that life-saving document. I used it to leave Sarajevo, i.e., flee from it in convoy as an ill person. Until 11.11.1992, I lived in Antona Mavraka Street No. 6.

I wish to say that, after everything that happened to me, I am mentally exhausted, and I cannot remember everything or talk about everything in a coherent manner, which is why I promise to, should I remember anything important, subsequently adjust my statement.