

Witness Hearing Record

Made on 08/11/1995 with the Investigative Judge of the Basic Court in Ilidža in the criminal procedure against N.N. because of the crime described in Article _____ of the Criminal Law.

Bratislav Čukić - judge

W i t n e s s

Dragan Ristović

Court reporter

Witness hearing attended by:

Aleksandra Cvetković

Public prosecutor

Defendant

Barrister

Started at 08:30 hours

The witness is warned that he is obliged to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. He is warned about the consequences of giving false testimony, and that he is not obliged to respond to specific questions if it is likely that such responses would expose himself or his loved one a relative to grave shame, substantial material harm or prosecution (Article 229 CPA). To general questions, the witness responds as follows:

- 1) First and last name Dragan Ristović
- 2) Father's name Boro
- 3) Occupation worker
- 4) Place of residence temporary Vogošća, Zagorke Radić St, No.34, 071/434-012
- 5) Place of birth Sarajevo
- 6) Year of birth 30/06/1970
- 7) Relationship with the defendant and the victim _____

After this, the witness says the following about the subject:

I was born in Velešići, a suburban neighborhood of the municipality Novo Sarajevo. I was studying to be a mechanic, but I never finished my studies. I lived together with my parents in our family home.

My family, Ristović, is one of the indigenous families in Velešići, and there were 18 of our houses. Also, as far as I can remember, according to the last census before the start of the war in former B&H, in Velešići there were around 900 Serbs and more than 10.000 Muslims, who came to this area illegally, over the last 10 years or so, and migrated mostly from East Bosnia and Sanjak.

The neighboring settlement to Velešići is Kobilja Glava, which has almost exclusively Muslim population who came there over the last 10 years or so, but there is also a small number of indigenous Muslims there. After he ran from Velešići at the start of the war, Murat Šabanović came to Kobilja Glava where his sister lived. When he came there, he formed an armed unit called "The Podrinje Brigade" which mostly included Muslims from Kobilja Glava.

Murat Šabanović, together with his unit, participated in the assault and burning of Serb houses in the settlement Pofalići in June 1992, on which occasion, as I heard, there was a large number of civilian casualties. Following this attack, he and his HQ came to Velešići, and formed a base in some of the abandoned Ristović houses, after the people who lived in these houses fled at the start of the war or immediately after the attack in Pofalići. Shortly after the events in Pofalići, Murat Šabanović started raiding individual Serb houses in Velešići with his unit, as well as terrorizing the Serbs who lived there.

I know that, when they raided the house of Krsto Buha, they killed him, looted and set his house on fire. Krsto Buha burned inside the house.

As far as I remember, on July 09 or 10, 1992, a group of four armed Muslims, for whom I assume were members of the Murat Šabanović's unit, stormed the house of Obren Ristović, on which occasion they killed:

1. **Obren Ristović**, owned of the house, around 38 years old
2. **Pero Ristović**, Obren's brother, around 40 years old
3. **Bosiljka Ristović**, Obren's sister, 33 years old
4. **Radosava Ristović**, Obren's mother, around 60 years old
5. **Danilo Ristović**, Obren's cousin, 13 and a half years old
6. **Mila Ristović**, Obren's aunt, around 50 years old.

Dušan Ristović was wounded in this attack.

They were all caught during lunchtime, when the following people stormed the house and killed them with automatic and hunting rifles:

1. MIRSAD HODŽIĆ, born in 1971, from Kobilja Glava, together with whom were 3 other Muslims whose names I do not know.

Immediately after the killings, they fled. Other than Dušan Ristović, Stojanka Mastilo was also there at the scene. She was born in 1962 in the village Jabuka near Foča and lived in Vojkovići - Sarajevo. She was inside the house because she visited her friend Bosiljka Ristović. Dušan Ristović now lives in Grbavica, Lenjinova St No.9, and Stojanka Mastilo now lives in Novi Sad where her sister lives, and whose name I do not know. It is possible that she has married and changed her last name.

The perpetrators of this crime were caught by the police. On the trial, they were declared legally insane, sentenced to five years in prison each and forwarded for treatment to the neuropsychiatric clinic in Sarajevo, from where they were soon released and are now free in Sarajevo.

The Serbs in velešići were raided on 24.12.1992, when, supposedly, the raiders search for weapons. On that occasion, the raiders killed Željko Kljajić, Ostoja Šoja, Drago Šoja, Vojislav Čangalović, Todor Ristović, Konstantin Božić, Živko Kretija, Jovo Kretija, Mišo Šekira, Momčilo Kovačević, Ranko Krunic and Trifko Božić. They were transferred to the premises of the construction company "Vranica" in Po-falići, which served as HQ for some Muslim unit. They were tortured and physically brutalized there, and Trifko Božić succumbed to the wounds, a driver from Velešići, 48 years old. The others were taken to the prison in the "Viktor Bubanj" barracks.

After this event, the Muslims started forcefully detaining the Serbs in order to exchange them, as well as to mobilize them into the Muslim army. I would like to point out that the detentions for exchanges were privately conducted, and the exchanges were paid for. Because of this, I was hiding and avoiding contacts with Muslims, as I tried to cross to the territory of the Republic of Srpska, but the Muslim military police found and arrested me on 05.12.1992. They brought me to prison in the former YPA barracks "Viktor Bubanj" in Sarajevo, and told me that they would conduct an informative interview with me. They brought me to the cell number 11. In this cell, I found Zoran Plavšić, Boško Gogić, Dragutin Mihajlović, Radomir Veljković, and Zdravko Vukajlović, who were also arrested. Mihajlović and Veljković were born in Kruševac, and lived and worked in Sarajevo as teachers. They were both retired, and Veljković was a distinguished professor of quantum physics. The others were from Sarajevo. They were all beaten and their strength was leaving them, and Boško Gogić was in the worst condition.

Immediately after they brought me to this prison, I was interrogated by the military police which was part of the 101st Brigade, and the premises of which were located in the prison building. They interrogated me for 15 days, and the whole time I was beaten and tortured. Usually, four to five police officers participated in these beatings, and they used batons and other objects, they kicked me with their boots, hit me with rifle butts, thick electric cables and other objects when they encircled me and kicked me between each other, etc. On this occasion, they broke four of my ribs on the left side of my ribcage. I specifically remember one day when they interrogated me using the “hot-cold” system, which means that they would first beat me hard, and then they would sit me down on a chair and start a “normal” conversation, offering me a cigarette, and if they were not satisfied with my answers, they would continue beating me. Then, when I took a lit cigarette, one of the officers cursed my Chetnik mother, lifted me from the chair, pushed me against a locker, shoved a gun barrel in my mouth after he had first cocked the gun, severely wounding my palate and other parts of my mouth. He also hit my head with the gun handle.

I do not know the names of these officers, because they never called each other by names while they were around me.

After I was interrogated by the military police officers, an investigation started against me, and I was then interrogated by the investigative judge, whose office was upstairs in the prison. During the investigation, I was not beaten or terrorized.

While I was in the “Viktor Bubanj” prison, I heard from other inmates that 12 Serbs had died before I came there. They died of hunger and beatings, but I cannot remember their names. While I was there, in the cell number 9, a name whose last name was Odžaković died of hunger. As far as I can remember, his first name was Neđo, I do not know where he was from.

I know that, while I was serving my sentence in the Central prison on the fifth floor, Joca Nešković died, a butcher who worked in Blagoja Parovića St in Sarajevo, and the official medical findings stated that he had died as a cardiac patient. Dragan Zelić and Jovo Ninković also died while they were serving their sentence on the third floor. Dragan Zelić was found hanging in the toilet while he was in a solitary confinement unit, and Jovo Ninković died officially as a cardiac patient. All these cases happened under strange circumstances, and among the inmates, there was a conviction that they had been killed.

I was released from the Central prison by exchange on 26.09.1995. My parents are still in Velešići, they filed a claim to leave Sarajevo, but their request was denied.

While I was in the cell number 2 in the Central prison, my cellmates were, for a while, the former members of the armed forces of Mušan Topalović aka “Caco”

and his deputy Ramiz Delalić aka “Ćelo 2.” Those were Alen Hatić and Emir Kapetanović. In the living room area, I also talked with Samir Kapetanović and Haris Kulenović. Hatić was imprisoned because of thievery, Emir, and Samir because of an armed robbery and murder of some children, and Haris was their accomplice. I talked several times with Hatić and Emir Kapetanović, who told me, among other things, that they had participated in numerous actions of the aforementioned units, in which they captured many Serbs in Sarajevo, brought them to dig trenches, etc., and, according to them, many Serbs were killed. Their bodies were brought to a place called Kazani¹, above the settlement Bistrik in the Stari Grad municipality. They were thrown in these cauldrons in layers, and, as they explained, they would first throw 30 or 40 bodies, then they would pour quicklime over them, then another layer of bodies, then again quicklime, and over the quicklime a layer of dirt, and so on, and according to them, there was about 10 of such layers. They did not say who did the killing, and they never said they had done it. According to them, Samir Kapetanović and Haris Kulenović had also participated in these actions.

They also talked about the massacre of the citizens in the bread line in Vase Miskina St. They said that no grenade was thrown at the line, rather a strong explosive was planted in an ice-cream chest in front of the store, but they did not say who planted this explosive. Another massacre, the one that happened at the “Markale” market was a consequence of, as they said, a grenade was thrown from one of the nearby buildings, organized by the Muslims. About the last massacre, the one at the “Markale” market, which happened in spring 1995, they said that that, on that occasion, a grenade was launched from Kazani, also organized by the Muslims.

Alen Hatić was released and is now free in Sarajevo, and Haris Kulenović and Emir and Samir Kapetanović were transferred to the Zenica prison to serve their sentences.

That is all I had to say. The record was dictated loudly and everything I said is clearly written down. I do want to read it, I acknowledge it as my own and I sign it as such.

Dragan Ristović
(signed)

The hearing completed at 14:00 hours

COURT REPORTER
(signed)

JUDGE
(signed)

¹ T/N - The name of the place, Kazani, has the meaning of cauldrons.