

HE REPUBLIC OF SRPSKA

[handwritten number: 37]

MINISTRY OF INTERIOR

CRIME INVESTIGATION POLICE DEPARTMENT

B I J E L J I N A

Number: [handwritten numbers: 15-02-31/96]

Date: 5th February 1996

On 5th February 1995, JOVIČIĆ SLAVKO, son of Jovo (father) and Borka, maiden name Andrić (mother), born on 10th May 1953 in the village of Doljani, SO¹ Hadžići, a lawyer by occupation, a Serb, citizen of the Republic of Srpska, married, father of three children, previously employed at the MUP² of the former BiH³ - V Department of DB⁴, previously resided in the village of Doljhani⁵ [sic] number 24, with no criminal record, came to the SJB⁶ Hadžići and gave the following

S T A T E M E N T

I had been working in MUP in Sarajevo until 19th April 1992. I was staying at home in the village of Doljani since 19th April 1992 due to the disruption of traffic. In that period, the Muslim police had already been controlling Pazarić. They were commanded by NAIL HUJIĆ, around 45 years old, born in Pazarić. They were patrolling, keeping the watch at the checkpoints and going through the villages. At that time, Hujic's deputy was MIRSAD ŠABIĆ from the village of Dragovići, around 37 years old. The police was arming Muslim people. The weapons were brought in through Kreševo. According to my findings, the most active persons in the arming were a man named LIHOVAC alias "Gera" and his cousin LIHOVAC alias "Đida". As far as I could find out, Muslims organized around 700 Muslims in the reserves of the so called SJB Hadžići with headquarters in Pazarić. All active Muslim police officers who resided or were born in this area immediately joined this SJB. The ones I know are Osman Šunj, a former police officer in OBL⁷; Avdo Mujan, a former

¹ Translator's note: Municipal Council

² t/n: Ministry of Interior

³ t/n: Bosnia and Herzegovina

⁴ t/n: State Security

⁵ t/n: the correct name of the village is Doljani

⁶ t/n: Public Security Station

⁷ t/n: Security of Persons and Property

traffic police officer at the Road Traffic Safety Police Department I Sarajevo; Fikret Kovačević, son of Šaban (father), a former police officer at SJB Hadžići; Azem Turčinović, a former police officer at SJB Hadžići. The most extreme police officers were Muhamed Turčinović alias “Zeko”, born in 1953 in the village of Dragovići, son of Muhamed (father), a former Head of the II Department of DB of MUP of BiH; and Enver Dupovac, born in 1951 or 1952 in the village of Dupovci, SO Hadžići, a former Inspector General for military tasks in the former MUP BiH. According to my findings, the two of them were organizers of the establishment of the so called SJB Hadžići, as well as of the “Silos” camp in Tarčin and the “Krupa” camp in Zovik – Pazarić. These two persons organized and conducted the first hearings. Besides them, the following persons conducted the hearings: NEZIR FIŠO, around 35 years old, born in the village of Trzanj – Tarčin, a former inspector at the V Administration of DB of the former MUP BiH; Milan Božić, around 35 years old, a former crime scene technician at the CSB⁸ Sarajevo; MENSUR ČOVIĆ, around 35 years old, previously employed at the Secretariat for NO SO⁹ Hadžići; SALKO GOSTO, around 35 years old, previously employed at the SJB Hadžići as an inspector, born in Tarčin; RIFAT ČULJEVIĆ, around 32 years old, employed at the SJB Hadžići. These persons conducted all the interrogations and decided on who was going to be sent to the camp, and who was going to go back home. During the interrogations, we were physically abused in the following way: we were hit with fists, kicked with legs, rifle butts, cables and batons filled with sand. During my interrogation, unknown reserve police officers beat me, as ordered by Muhamed Turčinović. I had already known him since we went to primary school together. All the tasks regarding the apprehension and imprisonment of Serbs in the “Silos” camp were finalized by Refik Tufo, a retired police officer who was a commander of the Police Station Department of the so called SJB Hadžići, with headquarters in Tarčin. Since he was an old police officer who was not familiar with all the methods of the operational service, he was using the most brutal force in order to extort confessions. During April and May in 1992, Muslim police were patrolling through the village and imposing pressure on Serbs in order to intimidate them. Serb’s freedom of movement was restricted, so we did not receive truthful information on what was happening in other parts of the municipality.

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note:
Tufo Refik

[signature in Cyrillic: Slavko Jovičić]

⁸ t/n: Security Services Centre

⁹ t/n: National Defence of the Municipal Council

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We were also not able to predict what Muslim side was preparing. Contact with other Serbs in the village was minimised since Muslim police officers were constantly present, preventing us to exchange information.

On 25th May 1992, my house was surrounded by Muslim police unit. There were about 50 people armed with automatic weapons. They called on me to surrender, which I did, since I did not have any intentions to fight my own private war, nor was I able to offer any resistance – like all the other people in the village as well. I did not carry any weapons with me except for my service weapon with all the certificates for it. Muslim police officers took this weapon while searching my house, but did not give me any kind of written confirmation of this. On that occasion, they also took a “Motorola” handheld radio owned by the former MUP BiH. Osman Šunj commanded the apprehension. Mensur Čović took my statement at the SJB. I said in the statement that, because of the nature of my work, I travelled across the former BiH and noticed many people arming themselves. They released me that day and promised not to apprehend me ever again.

On 26th May 1992 at 2:30 PM, Muslim police officers came to my house again. They took me to the “Silos” camp in Tarčin, without giving me any explanation of the reasons for my arrest.

At the camp, I was greeted by ŠERIF MEŠANOVIĆ, a former guard at the Central Prison in Sarajevo and a deputy camp warden in the “Silos” camp at that time. During the search, he took my documents and my transistor without giving me any written certificate. I was placed in the cell No. 7. Nebojša Stajić, Nikola Andrić, Kosta Lojanica and a man around 55 years old, whose name was Obren Šinik, I think, were already in the cell. The dimensions of the cell were 9x4.5m, and it had previously been used for storing crops. There was only concrete floor in the cell, and we were not given any blankets or anything else that we could use for laying down, so we were forced to lay down on a wet concrete. There were no conditions whatsoever for performing physiological needs. We had only one meal a day which consisted of 50g of bread and five spoons of warm water that Muslims called “soup”. The meals were made of waste from food and later I learned that the guards urinated in our food. They forced us to eat this meal in 1 minute. I did not know the guards who did these tasks in the “Silos”. On 2nd June 1992, the guards sent me out to pour a bottle of water for prisoners in my cell. On that occasion, a young man awaited for me. He was around 30 years old, over 185 cm tall, [illegible] built, with short brown hair and dressed in

a camouflaged uniform. He started hitting me in my face. He hit me with so much force that I fell on the ground, and he continued kicking me with his legs. IBRAHIM MAKSUMIĆ alias “Škola” was with him. He was born in 1946 and he worked at the former SO hadžići. He did not even try to stop his young man from abusing me. From 1st June until 4th June 1992, we were not given any food.

On 4th June 1992 around 9 AM, Bećir Hujčić, the camp warden came. He was around 35 years old, born in the village of Ljubovčići – Pazarić, a former guard in the Central Prison Sarajevo. He told us that the HOS unit was about to arrive and that we should hand over all our valuables (gold, watches and so on) to him since there was danger that the HOS¹⁰ would rob us. Enver Dupovac was brought into this group at around 11 AM. Around 30 men and one woman wearing camouflaged uniforms raided the cell I was in. They had various markings (checkerboards, HOS, a half-moon). Among them was a foreigner, a German. I knew five well-known Muslims in this group by sight; they were from Sandžak and they were prone to criminal offences before the war. One of them recognized me as we had contact in the former MUP of BiH, when they attempted to forcefully free Jusuf Prazina. They took Lazar Krstić and I out of the cell and physical abuse started immediately. They beat us with everything they could (rifle butts, batons, battens, legs and so on). They forced us to fight with each other, i.e. they forced us to knock our heads. A person who stood out from the group by his brutality was Tiro alias “Tiki”, son of Bajro (father), around 30 years old, from the village of Osjenik, OS Hadžići; and a person named Miralem alias “Minerali”, around 32 years old, born in Sarajevo and residing in the village of Raštalica. I passed out soon after the first punches, so I do not know how long the abuse lasted for and how they beat us. Everything was followed by verbal insults, spitting and other kinds of humiliation.

[signature in Cyrillic: Slavko Jovičić]

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When I regained my consciousness, Miroslav Samouković was laying on top of me, all covered in blood and unconscious. All my clothes were cut with sharp objects and I was covered in blood but, as I passed out soon, I do not know who did this to me. I could not get up off the concrete floor for more than fifteen days. Serbs from my cell provided me with help I needed. It often happened that we did not get any food

¹⁰ t/n: Croatian Defence Forces

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note:
no food
was delivered
to cell No. 7
from 1st June
6th June '92.

for 48 hours. There were 37 Serbs in the cell number 7 in middle June of 1992. They were all in a very poor condition due to lack of food and everyday physical abuse. We did not have any conditions for managing our personal hygiene. There were people who could not perform their physiological needs for 45 days. I did not have a bowel movement until 35th day upon my imprisonment. People were losing weight rapidly. In two months in the camp, I lost 43 kg. I weighed only 34 kg on 8th [illegible] 1992 when I was diagnosed with pneumonia. [illegible] Obren Kapetina, 63, died from hunger on 8th November 1992. He was born in the village of Deovići – Pazarić. I found out afterwards that Petko Krstić, around 30 years old from Tarčin (died on 14th October 1992) died of hunger and constant abuse; and that Bogdan Vujević, over 60 years old, from the village of Doljani – Pazarić, died from the consequences of abuse. According to my findings, he was the first victim that died in the “Silos” camp. During November 1992, an old man called Vaso Sarenac died in the camp. He was around 85 years old and completely senile even before the war. Muslim police brought him to the camp under accusations that he was a sniper. Around 380 Serbs were imprisoned in the camp during the periods with most prisoners.

On 14th August 1992, the camp warden Bećir Hujčić made us enlist in the TO BiH¹¹. He promised us the freedom and better status for our families. Of course, none of the imprisoned Serbs ever joined those paramilitary formations.

On 26th November 1992, the International Committee of the Red Cross led by a Swiss, Marc de Perrot, comes to the camp for the first time. The members of the Committee were appalled by the state we were in and the conditions in the camp. On 10th December 1992, they brought us two blankets for each prisoner; it was the first time we could lay down on a blanket or cover with it. Muslims cut our hair very rarely. When they let us out to bring some water, they would show us to the citizens and say that we were all Chetniks¹² with long hair and beard.

All the prisoners in the camp were civilians brought from their homes, except for 11 reservists of the former JNA¹³ who were brought in from the “Krupa” military warehouse. Later, Muslims turned the warehouse into the camp for Serbs. On 29th December 1992, Muslims transferred 137 Serbs to the “Krupa” camp under the guise of working on the first battle lines. The group consisted of well-educated Serbs and situated householders. Muslims’ Government intention was to get us all killed while working on their lines on Igman. Besides this reason, they also wanted to hide us from MKCK¹⁴.

¹¹ t/n: Territorial Defence of Bosnia and Herzegovina

¹² t/n: a derogatory nickname for Serbs, it originates from Serbian guerrilla forces in WWII

¹³ t/n: Yugoslav People’s Army

¹⁴ t/n: the International Committee of the Red Cross

In January, the first group of prisoners has been sent to forced labour in Hrasnica. The organizer was VAHID ALAĐUZ, a former deputy commander in SM¹⁵ Hadžići. The group spent around 65 days in Hrasnica. In the middle of April, the second group of around 30 Serbs, including me, went to Hrasnica. We were placed in a newly-built building's basement in Hrasnica. We did not have any blankets or beds in this camp, either. We were forced to a 22-hour labour every day, with only two very poor meals a day. We had almost no opportunity at all to rest or sleep. There were also around 30 Serbs from Hrasnica and Sokolović Kolonija in this prison. There were 9 women and one minor. According to my findings, around 20 Serbs had already been murdered in this camp. The murders happened in the Primary School in Hrasnica, private garages and the FC "Famos" stadium. No one could get in or out of Hrasnica. They were completely isolated.

On 22nd April 1993, three Serbs escaped while digging the trenches. Then, all hell broke loose for us. They used any objects

[signature in Cyrillic: Slavko Jovičić]

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they could find to beat us up. Anyone living in Hrasnica was allowed to beat us. The fact that the escaped prisoners escaped from two different ends of the working site at almost the same time, indicated to Muslims that it was an organized escape. As a former DB employee, I was accused of organizing the escape. Even though I confessed nothing, Muslims subjected me to several days of torture. They broke four of my ribs and relocated my right kidney from its position. They stripped me naked, poured water over me and kept me outside, on the frost, for several hours during night. I lost consciousness several times. The inspector on my case and main person in the prison in Hrasnica was Mustafa Gegaj alias "Mujo". He was around 24 years old, well-developed, over 185 cm tall, with short, dark hair and high sideburns on his forehead and an earring in his left ear. Gegaj was the most monstrous man I had ever met during my time in the camps. According to my findings, he was the creator of all the evil that happened in Hrasnica. He beat the prisoners often and threatened to slaughter them. He offered me to cooperate with their MUP and proposed to give me 100.000 DM to cross to the Serbian territory and murder Radovan Karadžić or Momčilo Krajišnik. During the assassination, my family were supposed to be hostages of Gegaj. If my assassination attempt had succeeded, they would have transferred me and my family to some of the Arabic countries. Besides Gegaj, I was also interrogated and abused by ZIJAD GAGIĆ alias "Zijo", a former employee in the Road Traffic

¹⁵ t/n: Police Station

Safety Police Department Sarajevo who was assigned the Head Security Organ of 109th Mountain Brigade of the so called Army of BiH with headquarters in Tarčin; and a certain “HOTA”, around 40 years old, who was assigned one of the Heads of 14th Division of the so called Army of BiH in November of 1995.

During my interrogations or any other contacts with Muslims, I was forced to use Turkisms or Arabic words. If I did not do that, I was punished.

During operational work in Hrasnica, Gegaj had help from ZAIM LALIČIĆ, a guard in prison in Hrasnica, who stood out in physical abuse of Serbs. This Laličić guy used to come to beat me at Gegaj’s invitation. Later I found out that a guard named FUDO murdered three imprisoned Serbs: Milan Krstić (he shot him with a pistol in the forehead from 10 cm distance); and Slaviša Kapetina and Ranko Varagić were murdered from 2-3 m distance with a burst fired from an automatic rifle. The guard has never given a statement regarding this, nor has anyone ever tried to call him to account for the murders.

With assistance of the prison warden ZIJAD GAGIĆ alias “Zijo”, Gegaj did not let me out of my cell until 1st August 1993. I was also deprived of any contact with other prisoners. Everyday abuse continued during this course of time. Since Gegaj suspected that prisoners might escape again, he did not allow me to linger in forced labour and locked me in until 25th August 1993. I was working from 25th August 1993 until 30th October 1993, and that was the end of my stay in Hrasnica.

Later I found out that Vojo Šuvajlo got killed as a living shield on the first line in middle June 1993. He was 26 years old, and he was from Tarčin. I also found out that Slobodan Krstić died in a similar way, in middle July. On 28th July 1993, prisoners in Hrasnica: Slobodan Nikolić - around 30 years old and Momo Kovačević - over 50 years old, got killed by a grenade. During my stay [illegible] the last victim was Goran Andrić, around 35 years old. He was killed by a grenade on 17th September 1993. I remember that day because my last beating in Hrasnica was on that day.

On 30th October 1993, my group and I were transferred back to the “Silos” camp. At that time, there was less abuse in the camp. The first official delegation of the so called Army of BiH led by Nedžad Ajnadžić, a captain in the former JNA and the Head Security Organ of the 1st Corps of the so called Army of BiH at that time, came to the Silos on 25th January 1994. He was escorted by several officers and the Commandant of the 109th Brigade of the so called Army of BiH, NEZIR KAZIĆ – a construction technician in the Military Post Office in Žunovnica. On that occasion, Ajnadžić personally threatened me that I shall never leave the camp, while he told the others they would be released after all missing Muslims from the territory of SO Hadžići were found. My cousin Mirko Mandić visited me that day. His parents are Gojko (father) and Marija (mother); he was born in 1959 in the village of Doljani.

He was a member of the so called Army of BiH and I believe he was the II Company Commander of a local battalion.

[signature in Cyrillic: Slavko Jovičić]

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I also want to mention something I have forgotten to state earlier in my statement. Milan Hodžić, who used to work as an inspector in the Muslim police, in June of 1992 showed me a certificate of my death in battlefront in Bijeljina, issued by the Muslim police.

During 1994, all prisoners in the Silos faced the heaviest physical labour. I was forced to unload heavy sacks that weighed 50 kg, even though I weighed less than that and was in a very poor physical condition. By way of illustration, on one occasion, ten of us had to unload 215 tons of flour in two hours.

On a number of occasions in 1994 and 1995, I had a chance to personally see Alija Izetbegović and his escort on the Tarčin heliport, around 30 m away from the “Silos” camp. In November of 1994, we had to build a command of the 14th Division of the so called Army of BiH. It was a two-storey building, and the material was obtained by looting Serbian villages that were under Muslims’ control. We had to build this building at very short notice, so the work was done non-stop, during both day and night. The building was only about 20 m away from the “Silos” camp. The aforementioned heliport was also built by us, prisoners. We were working regardless of weather conditions and with no machines or any other kind of assistance. A person named Munib was the one who forced us to labour the most. Prior to the war, he was employed at the Housing Fund of the former JNA in Sarajevo.

General Vahid Karavelić visited us on several occasions. He was always pushing the camp authorities to get the work done faster. Even today there are plates on these building, stating that the construction was financed by the Army of BiH. All the time during our stay, flags of SDA¹⁶ and military formations that had headquarters there were fluttering above the command. I can state quite categorically that all delegations in BiH, both official and nonofficial, were familiar with what was going on in the “Silos” camp. To prove this, I want to say that, at the beginning of 1995, two associates of A. Izetbegović visited us in the camp. Their names are Fadil Pekić and Akir Šišić, and they were brought there by Nezir Fišo.

¹⁶ t/n: Party of Democratic Action

I know that Muslim police officers used imprisoned Serbs as living mines during the conflict in the settlement of Nedžarići, in June 1995. Namely, they were forcing Serbs to carry dynamite to our trenches, and then the Muslims would activate the dynamite by remote controllers. Dane Čičić got killed in that way when he was hit by a launcher. They would tie up the Serbs using cables and force them to go towards our trenches.

I know that, on 1st April 1993, Muslim authorities sentenced 17 prisoners to imprisonment sentences from 18 months up to 3 years. The judge was Mladen Veseljak from Zenica. The indictment was for possession of weapons and membership in the SDS¹⁷. In November of 1994, Muslim authorities realised that we would manage to endure the sentences, so they organized a new trial. This time, we were accused of committing criminal offences pursuant to Article 124, Paragraphs 1 and 2 and in connection to Article 139 taken over from KZ SFRJ¹⁸ and in connection to Articles 159 and 191 of KZ BiH¹⁹. Investigative judges were Davor Jukić and Muhidin Kapo. We have never been sentenced and yet, we have a prisoner status.

Dayton Peace Accords ensured our release, although Muslim side was still trying to find any possible way to avoid our extradition.

During the last two months in the camp, they were pressuring us to stay on the territory of the Federation. They even offered us jobs, all this to try to cover up everything that happened in the “Silos” camp.

I was released on 19th January 1996, after 1334 days of imprisonment.

The statement was loudly dictated; I accept it as my own and confirm it by signing it.

WITNESS:

[signature in Cyrillic: Slavko Jovičić]

STATEMENT TAKEN BY:

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¹⁷ t/n: Serb Democratic Party

¹⁸ t/n: Criminal Code of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

¹⁹ t/n: Criminal Code of Bosnia and Herzegovina