

S T A T E M E N T

Prior to the war break out I had been living with [REDACTED] Street, in the settlement of [REDACTED], the municipality of Novi Grad, Sarajevo. I owned [REDACTED] in Ilidža. When the war broke out, I went to my brother's place in the [REDACTED]; he had already left Sarajevo and gone to [REDACTED]. I was alone in his apartment. During that time, my son [REDACTED]. In May of 1992, while I was in my brother [REDACTED] apartment, a young man in civil clothes whom I hadn't known came to me and said: "You are going to an interrogation with me". I went with him to the building he took me to. It was a building that, I think, now belongs to the Electric Company. Upon our arrival, the young man took me to a basement and there were many people already, both men and women. I have never seen the young man after that.

The person in charge in that prison was a person that I had never seen before, the only things I knew about him were that his name was "Senad", that he lived in the village of Švrakino Selo, that he was around 30 years old at that time and that he was blonde – brownish. The basement we were in was about 20 square meters big and there were at least 30 people in there. Every day, some people were taken from there and others were coming, so it was always full. There were more imprisoned men than women in the basement. Men were taken to the upper floor and beaten mercilessly. They were given shirts, the kind of shirts they wear in psychiatric hospitals. They would tie up their arms and legs, and torture them to exhaustion whenever they could. On one occasion, Senad came to the basement alone, and he beat a person whose last name was Drašković, I cannot recall his name; before mine and everyone else's eyes he beat him, kicked him with legs and wooden bats. Drašković died as a result of injuries from intense beatings. Then, two unknown civilians came and carried him to the unknown destination. Every time Senad tortured and beat someone, he

[signature: [REDACTED]]

would force me to wash his legs and the bloody floor. On these occasions, he kicked me with legs and cursed my chetnik¹ mother. When they would return from a battlefield, they were like crazed animals. On these occasions, they regularly came down to the basement in groups and took out imprisoned men in order to beat them, and they

¹ t/n: a derogatory nickname for Serbs, origin comes from Serbian guerilla forces in WWII

physically abused some of the men in the basement. After we spent several days in the basement, they sent us to the upper floor in a room bigger than the previous one, although this room looked like a basement, too. I remember they once brought in 17 people with last name [REDACTED] I know that [REDACTED] were physically abused, while their women and daughters were raped. I am neither familiar with their location now, nor with their identity.

Food in the basement was very poor. We were given a slice of bread with ajvar². We had enough water. During the time spent there, no one had a shower, i.e. we smelt like a stinky skunk. We had never received medical assistance.

Juka Prazina came every Thursday and took us outside. He used to line us up and point his finger to the prisoners, saying to his soldiers: “You take this one to “Ćelo”, this one stays”. After that, they drove people off in small army trucks, and the rest of us returned to the basement.

All the women in the prison I was in were raped every day by soldiers of AR-BiH³ who came back from battlefields, as well as by “Senad”, the commandant of the prison. Except for Senad, one more person with the same name came in; this person tortured men and raped women in an extremely atrocious and humiliating way. That other Senad was dark and tall. I am familiar with the fact that a person named Jasmin, a taxi driver who drove Mercedes, sexually abused women the most. Of all the raped women, I only knew [REDACTED] (died) and [REDACTED] whose current location I do not know. I do not know other women of various ages, but I definitely know that they were all raped, regardless of their age. The oldest woman, [REDACTED], was about 70 years old, and the youngest girls were about 20 years old. At any time, day or night, women were taken away and sexually abused. They took them to the apartments in the same building and sexually and violently abused them. Women were anally raped, too, and they also demanded oral sex from them.

I was among the raped women. They raped and abused me every day in the worst ways possible, as I have already described and as they abused all the women. Of all the persons who raped me, I only know “Kruško”, Senad, and Jasmin the taxi driver, whom I have already mentioned. During the rapes, sometimes, a group of 5 to 6 soldiers sexually abused one woman. It happened to me, as well. We, women, were not allowed to talk about the rapes we have suffered, and neither were men who were captured with us, because there was always a guard standing at the door and he would not allow us to say a single word to each other.

² t/n: a pepper-based condiment

³ t/n: the Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina

There was a certain “Zvonko” in the prison, I did not know his last name back then, and his duty was to list names of prisoners of Serbian nationality. He was middle height with a very ugly face filled with acnes.

One day, they took about 25 or 30 of us outside, and escorted us to the border line, tied our hands up and set us as a living shield. At that moment, Senad talked to me and said: “What is

[signature: ██████████]

wrong, if I screwed you last night, it does not mean that I would not bring you here and kill you”. Grenade shells were exploding around us. We spent a few hours there. Luckily, not one of us was hurt. Because nobody was killed or wounded, they got so mad that they beat us like crazed beasts all the way back to the basement.

On one occasion, they brought a man into the basement; he had previously been imprisoned in Dobrinja, in the Commercial Bank basement. He looked horrible. He could not stand on his legs. He had injuries all over his head, arms, and legs – in short – all over his body. He told me his wife’s name is Gina and that they would kill him. I think his last name was Draško. Despite his extremely poor condition, nobody offered him medical assistance. After three days in the basement, two civilians came for this man and took him in the unknown direction. I have never heard about him after that. Later, when I went to Pale, one of his sisters came to me and asked me about him. I told her everything I knew. On that occasion, that woman told me that she was carrying a bag full of money for her brother; she wanted to give the bag to Juka Prazina, but Juka told her he knew nothing about him.

I forgot to mention that the prison I was in, with all other imprisoned civilians of Serbian nationality, was a prison of a unit commanded by a person nicknamed “Kruško”. I spent several months in this prison. On one Thursday, Juka Prazina came. As usual, he pointed fingers at us, so he pointed at me, too and said: “To Ćelo”. That same day, ██████████, other three women, other three men and I were taken by a truck to the SUP⁴, which was located near the FIS in the Mis Irba Street, the municipality of Centar. When we got off the truck, a group of soldiers shouted: “Here come chetniks, they have come again”. That same group of soldiers told us to put our hands on the wall and not to look in their direction. We stood like that for about 30 minutes, and then they walked us into a building, where they searched us and took our names and last names. On that occasion, a man at the reception desk, wearing police or some other uniform – I cannot remember, said: “Here is another ██████████”.

⁴ t/n: Secretariat of Interior

From there, they took us back to the truck and drove us to the “Viktor Bubanj”. One person in a military uniform met us there. They put us in different rooms. I was escorted to a room; there were around 10 women of different age. During the time spent there, I was interrogated by several investigators. One of them had a nickname “Brzi”. They asked me if I had any brothers or sisters, if I was a member of SDS⁵, if I had any weapons and so on. I told them that I have got only two sisters, and I could not mention my brother because I was too scared, regarding what I had experienced so far. I was questioned about the same things day after day. On the approximately fifth day, a middle height, young man in a military uniform came to my cell and asked: “Who is [REDACTED]?”. When I said it was me, he introduced himself as “Besim”, a warden of the “Viktor Bubanj” barracks. Then, he took me to an office, where he took my statement on the conditions of my deprivation of liberty and conditions and abuse in Juka Prazina’s prison. I told him everything the way it had happened. Three more soldiers were there on this occasion. The interrogation was conducted on the floor above the prison. The prison was located on the ground floor, and consisted of a hall with cells on both sides. I did not have a chance to see who else was imprisoned here. I was imprisoned in a cell on the right side of the hall, somewhere at the middle of the hall. Because of the mental state I was in due to the torture I have been through in Juka Prazina’s prison, I was not able to find out

[signature: [REDACTED]]

which other women were in the prison, the women who I shared my cell with as well.

The conditions of life and staying there were the hardest. We were not given the right to adequate nutrition, hygiene maintenance, we did not have the right to take walks, we were not allowed to receive post and packages, the guards were constantly addressing us with insulting words and curses based on our nationality, cursing our chetnik mothers and threatening to repeat the abuse and torture we had previously gone through. I never had a hearing in front of the prosecutor or a judge, nobody ever told me on what grounds I was kept in this prison or for what purpose. No one ever explained to me the nature of the institution I was in....

⁵ t/n: Serb Democratic Party