

## WITNESS STATEMENT

dated 14 December 1999 before investigative judge of the  
Basic court in Zvornik in the criminal proceedings against  
[no entry] due to criminal offence from Article [no entry] of KZ<sup>1</sup>.

Vaso Erić - judge

witness

Ranković Milena

I was born in the village of Pribojevići where I finished 5 grades of primary school. I married Radenko Ranković in the village of Božići, Skelani municipality, in 1970, and with him I have three children: sons Rajko and Novak, and a daughter Ružica.

Until the beginning of war in former BiH in 1992, I lived with my family in the village of Božići and practiced agriculture. With the Muslims from the neighbouring villages of Liješće, Suljagići, and Vačići, we had good neighbourly relations and there were no problems between us. As far as I remember, on 12 July 1992, Muslims attacked and burned the neighbouring Serb villages of Krnići, Podrid, and Postelje, after which the locals of my village of Božići organized holding guards and took other measures of self-protection against potential attacks by Muslim armed forces.

On 5 August 1992, around 16.00 o'clock, I went out into the garden which was about 500m away from my home, to pick some vegetables, and my husband stayed in the house. While I was in the garden, suddenly the village of Božići was attacked from all sides by Muslim armed forces, and as I was alone, I ran towards my house. The shooting grew heavier so I had to shelter and hide in the abandoned house owned by Stanko Nikolić, who moved to Barić near Belgrade before the war. Soon after, I saw two armed Muslim soldiers in uniforms ran past that house and shout, "Catch him alive," and then ran further. Immediately after that, one young man in uniform, a Muslim, entered the house carrying a submachine gun, and I ran into him at the door. He pulled the gun on me and said, "What are you doing here, aunt? I'll murder you now!" I was powerless to resist in any way, and he then took out a piece of an electrical cable from his pocket, tied one end of it around my right hand, and the other end around his military belt. He told me they would capture me and take me to prison in Srebrenica to be exchanged for Muslims captured by

<sup>1</sup> Translator's note: the Criminal Code

Serb army. He took me above that house, where soon many Muslim soldiers gathered who threatened me that they would beat me and shoved me shouting that I gave birth to Chetniks and that I sent them to Red Berets. I told them that was not true and that my children were little, and I was saved from further lunging at me by the young man who captured me.

[signature in Cyrillic: Ranković Milena]

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After shooting stopped in the village of Božići, that young men alongside other Muslim soldiers took me on foot to the Muslim village of Mioljevina. I stayed there for two days. During that time, I heard from Muslims that on 6 August 1992, another attack at the village of Božići was carried out, and on that occasion it was looted and burned, and that the attack was carried out by Muslims from the village of Osmače. In Miholjevina, I was placed in one Muslim house, where their staff was located also. Upon my arrival, on the same night, to my room came Tihić Ahmo from Liješće and Hodžić Ismet from Arapovići both of whom I knew from before because I was a sales assistant in their stores. They greeted me and asked me why was I there and who captured me.

On 8 August 1992, Muslims took me by a truck from Miholjevina to prison in Srebrenica, and I was escorted by Tihić Asmo, who upon arriving to prison ordered that no one was allowed to beat and abuse me. In fact, I assume that he influenced the guards to treat me fairly. In the room where I was imprisoned, I found nine prisoners from Karno, of whom I only know Milić Anđa from Pibojevići, whose married name I do not know, Velimir, and Radojka, whose surnames I do not know. In that room I spent eight days, after which I was exchanged together with the people from Karno.

While I was there in that room, I heard that prior to my arrival, one younger woman, a prisoner from Karno, poisoned herself, but I do not know from which reasons. They told me that they were beaten and abused, but I did not see that happen, nor did I see on their faces and bodies traces of beatings.

Two days before the exchange, young men Zlatan from Bradići and Milun from Bujakovići, whose surnames I do not know, were brought to the room. They are 1<sup>st</sup> cousins because their mothers are sisters. Before coming to that room, they were imprisoned in another room. Milun told us that they were beaten in prison by

Muslims, but I did not see traces of beatings on their faces.

All aforementioned people were exchanged

[signature in Cyrillic: Ranković Milena]

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on the same occasion as I. Except for aforementioned Tihčić Ahmo and Hodžić Ismet, I did not recognize either one of the Muslims neither when I was captured nor during imprisonment in prison in Srebrenica.

Actually, now I remember, among the guards who interrogated me in prison, I recognized a former policeman in Skelani, Savkić Mehmedalija, and Nurija, whose surname I do not know. During interrogation, Nurija was very rough, reproaching me for giving birth to "Chetniks" and questioning me about army and police in Skelani, threatening that he would beat me.

After exiting the prison, I went to Bajna<sup>2</sup> [sic] Bašta, where I live today alongside my family.

During the attack at the village of Božići on 5 and 6 August 199, Muslims looted all Serb houses and burned them, and took the livestock away. They looted and burned my new house and old house, two stables, a storeroom, and a shed.

That is all I had to say on the previous matters.

The record was loudly dictated and everything I stated was entered in it. I accept it and sign it as my own.

[signature in Cyrillic: Ranković Milena]

The examination ended at 20 o'clock.

RECORDING CLERK  
[signature: illegible]

JUDGE  
[signature: illegible]

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<sup>2</sup> t/n: actual name of municipality and town is Bajina Bašta