

INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE PROSECUTION
OF PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR SERIOUS VIOLATIONS
OF INTERNATIONAL LAW COMMITTED IN THE TERRITORY
OF THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA SINCE 1991

WITNESS STATEMENT

WITNESS INFORMATION:

Name:	TETAJ	Rrustem	Miftar
	Last	First	Father's name

Nickname/Alias: none

Date and Place of Birth: 27 April 1953 in the village of Donja Luka (Lluka e Ulet)

Ethnic Origin: Kosovo Albanian Religion: Muslim

Occupation: Current: unemployed Former: Officer/Teacher

Language(s) Spoken: Albanian – Serbian - Macedonian

Language(s) Written: (if different from spoken)

Date(s) of Interview(s): 9, 10 and 12 July 2002 + 8 August 2002 and 13 and 17 April 2007

Interviewers: **Roel Versonnen and Pekka Haverinen** (9, 10 and 12 July 2002 + 8 August 2002)

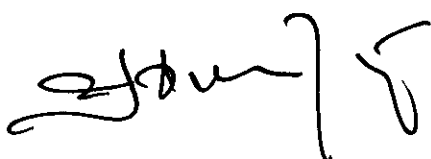
David Re, Shazada Sultan, Elena Martin Salgado, and Katrina Gustafson (13 and 17 April 2007)

Interpreter: **Mirlinda Saracini** (9, 10 and 12 July 2002 + 8 August 2002), **Maklen Misha** (13 and 17 April 2007)

Language(s) Used in Interview: English - Albanian

Names of all persons present during interview(s): the above mentioned

Signed/Initialed: _____





WITNESS STATEMENT:

1. Since 1981 the regime in Belgrade was facing problems and riots with ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, which escalated in 1989 when Belgrade removed Kosovo's autonomy. Ethnic Kosovo Albanian JNA officers were often harassed and interrogated by the JNA Military Security about the activities and whereabouts of their relatives and friends in Kosovo. It was an organised campaign against ethnic Albanians within the JNA and most of the Albanians left or resigned from the JNA as a result of this. On 12 December 1989 I decided to quit the JNA as well. I moved back to Kosovo where I continued living in the village of Donja Luka in Kosovo, where I had built a house in the meantime.

2. In the beginning of 1990 I applied for the job as Chief of the RTP which was the Radio and Television of Priština. However the same day I was granted this job the RTP building was entered by the MUP who dismissed and forced out all the employees and closed down the station.

3. I subsequently got a job as a professor in the secondary school in Klina (Luigj Gurakuqi) where I was teaching "defense and security", which was related to how civilians should provide immediate assistance in cases of emergencies, such as natural disasters (like earthquakes etc.). The pupils of the school consisted of a mixture of Serbs (5%) and Albanians (90%). The same percentage was reflected in the number of professors. However the pupils and professors were divided by their ethnicity. The Serbian and the Albanian pupils had to follow their courses in separate classrooms. Each ethnicity had its own classrooms and its own professors in the same school. However the Director of the school was always a Serb, who was appointed by the authorities. This systematic discrimination led to the dismissal or resignation of most of the

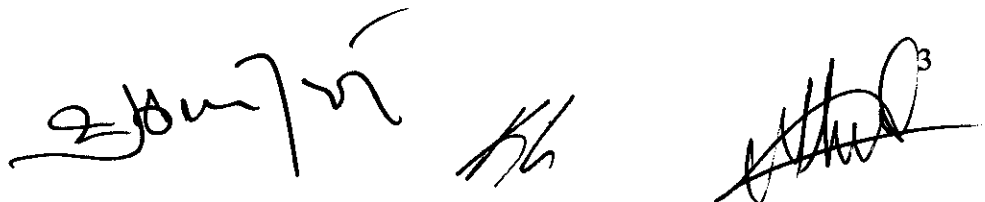
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Albanian teachers. I left the school in 1992, because we, the Albanian teachers, had refused to teach or follow the education program that was ordered by the authorities.

4. From then on I was jobless and started doing some agriculture in my village, which became my only income. However on 29 September 1993 I was arrested by the SUP from Peć and Dečani, being suspected of establishing an illegal army (militia) to secede Kosovo from Yugoslavia. I was sentenced to five years in prison for subversive activities against the Yugoslav authorities, in particular to achieve the secession of Kosovo from Yugoslavia. I appealed against this sentence and it was reduced to two years. I was released on 15 September 1995. After my release I continued working as an agriculturist since I was still jobless.

5. At that time I had never heard of the UCK. The first time I heard of the UCK was in 1996 or 1997 when the Albanian newspaper "Koha Ditore" started mentioning its existence. The same time people were finding some flyers about the UCK in their yards. These flyers were called "Clirimi" (Liberation) and were published by the LPK (Popular Movement of Kosovo) and they were highlighting some particular events such as the killing of Edmond Hoxha and Zahir Pajaziti in 1997 in Vučitrn by the MUP. The pictures of the deceased were on those flyers in order to draw the attention of the people to this event.

6. The second time I heard of the UCK was when a group of three to four armed persons, dressed in camouflage uniforms with masks over their heads, appeared in public at the funeral of Halit Geci, a teacher who was killed by the MUP in the village of Lauša. I think this was in November or December 1997. This was published in the "Koha Ditore" and the RTV in Priština broadcast images of the funeral. This first appearance in public caused quite some commotion amongst the Albanians, because in the past the Albanians had always felt some reluctance towards the goals of the UCK.

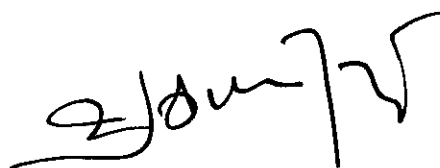
The bottom of the page contains three handwritten signatures or initials. The first is a large, stylized signature that appears to be 'Zoran'. The second is a smaller signature or set of initials, possibly 'Kh'. The third is a signature with a superscript '3' at the end, possibly 'Alban'.

7. In the beginning of 1998 the UCK became more and more public and famous, and gained increasing public sympathy, when the RTV Priština was broadcasting images of the ongoing clashes between the MUP and the UCK in the Drenica area (such as the attack on the Jashari compound in Prekaz and the images of the killed Jashari family members).

8. The first time I heard of the UCK presence in the Dukagjin area was when the MUP attacked the compound of the Haradinaj family in Glodjane at the end of March or the beginning of April 1998. Prior to this attack some local MUP officers were killed in Ratiš and afterwards in Glodjane. The given name of the killed MUP officer in Ratiš was "Slobodan" and he was from Dečani. Rumours were spread that Daut Haradinaj killed the police officer in Ratiš at close range with a firearm. This was not true. It was only propaganda.

9. When the MUP attacked the Haradinaj compound and the village of Glodjane, the Haradinaj family members and the villagers of Glodjane were defending their homes. I later on heard that, during the MUP attack, the village of Glodjane was defended and fortified by armed local fighters, some in camouflage uniforms and others in civilian clothes. I learned this from my brother Lah Tetaj who was told this by people from Glodjane when he went to offer his condolences to the families of people who had been killed in the attack. It is my opinion that this resistance led to the creation of the UCK in the Dukagjin area, because before this event I had never heard of any UCK existence or whatsoever in the area.

10. I could hear the attack on Glodjane as the village of Donja Luka is situated some 6 to 7 kilometers from Glodjane. Around 1500 hrs. I could also see the air attacks carried out by MUP helicopters. The weather was nice and the sky was clear. The helicopters were sometimes circling and occasionally passed close to Donja Luka.



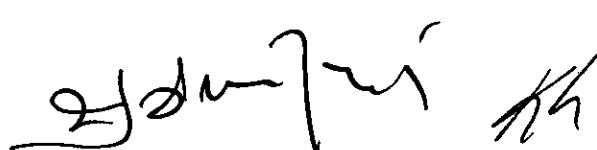
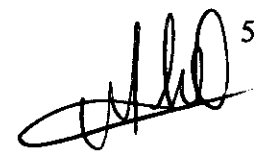
11. At that time, I had heard of the Haradinaj family, but I only knew the father, Ilmi Haradinaj, because he used to own a shop in Kodralija when I was a kid.

12. After the MUP attack I considered my life in danger because I used to be a military officer and it was known that the MUP were looking for UCK members and also Albanians with a JNA background. They could become a danger to the MUP and an asset for the UCK, because of their military experience. I decided to leave Donja Luka for Peć, where I stayed for 3 to 4 days in the house of my friend Taf Kelmendi, in the neighbourhood of Zatraj, which was known as a very calm neighbourhood, where I could hide from the MUP.

13. When I heard that the MUP had withdrawn from Glodjane (approximately 2-3 days after the attack), I decided to go back to my village. The next day I went to Glodjane out of curiosity and to see what had really happened. I noticed a lot of material damage to the houses, caused by the impact of the air strikes. The villagers were in panic because some of their relatives had been arrested by the MUP and were still missing. I did not see any UCK soldier around, at least I did not notice any UCK uniforms.

14. A couple of days after the attack I attended the funeral of three or four male villagers from Glodjane who were killed during the attack. A huge crowd had gathered in a meadow to attend the ceremony and a speech was given by Fitnete Ramosaj from the village of Carabreg e Ulet, who was close to Faton Mehmetaj. Present were also representatives from the different political parties, but I cannot remember their names. Musa Berisha from the Protection of Human Rights and Freedom Counsel in Dečani (who had organised the funeral together with the villagers of Glodjane) attended this funeral as well.

15. I later on learned that Fitnete Ramosaj used to be a significant UCK member for some time. That's why she was allowed to give the speech at the funeral. It was a very political and patriotic speech in which she described the

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deceased as martyrs and heroes and that the people from Kosovo should wake up and react. However I did not see any UCK soldiers in uniforms attending the funeral. It made me wonder why there were not any since the funeral was obviously used to refer to the heroic fight against the MUP attackers.

16. I do not know if the members of the Haradinaj family were attending the funeral as well. I think that the father, Ilmi, attended the funeral, because I remember that he looked very concerned. I do not know if his sons attended the funeral as well, because I did not know them yet at that time.

17. After the MUP withdrew from Glodjane, the area around Glodjane was controlled by men from that village. Several days after the funeral I learned that the UCK had established an organised defense and a guard duty in the village of Glodjane. I was told this by people who had noticed this when visiting Glodjane to pay their condolences to the families of the deceased. Amongst them was my brother, who told me that he had seen armed soldiers in uniforms. Some of them had UCK insignia on their caps and on their uniforms. However some of them were armed, but dressed in civilian clothes. My brother told me that he had seen the soldiers saluting each other with the right fist to the head. They also communicated via handheld radios when checking the people who were visiting the village, which made my brother realize that someone was in command. However he did not see anyone who was in command or who was giving orders.

18. At the entrance of the village my brother had also noticed a checkpoint, which was manned by armed UCK soldiers from the village. Some were dressed in camouflage uniforms and others in civilian clothes.

19. I personally saw this checkpoint when I was visiting Glodjane one week or ten days after my brother went. This checkpoint was at the entrance of the village and consisted of some kind of a gate. It was manned by armed soldiers, dressed in UCK camouflage uniforms.

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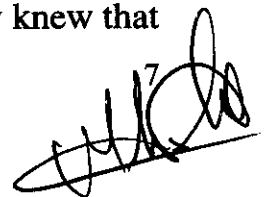
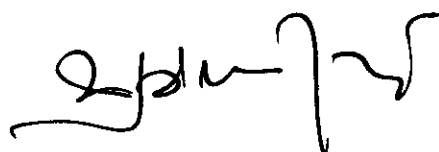
20. I went to see the village of Glodjane because I wanted to know what was going on there and I wanted to meet the UCK HQ in Glodjane. I went to Glodjane because it became known as the epicentre of the UCK after the MUP attack. I had realised that after the funeral the Albanians in the area were showing more and more sympathy and respect to the UCK and around the end of March and beginning of April some of the surrounding villages of Glodjane had already started to form their own UCK HQ, such as Dubrava, Babaloc, Gramacelj, Shaptej and Ljumbardh. The formation of these village HQ's was public knowledge at the time, but I also saw the Ljumbardh HQ myself, as it was near my own village. I know that at that time the commander of the village of Gramacelj was called Ali Avdjia (aka "Baraba"). The one in the village of Ljumbardh was called Deli Lekaj. I do not know the names of the commanders in the other villages.

21. My village had not reacted yet, because they were waiting for my personal reaction. The villagers from my village and from some of the neighbouring villages had stated that they would only join the UCK on the day that I would be wearing an UCK uniform.

22. So since the pressure was increasing on me, because I wanted to have my village organised and prepared as well in case of an attack or emergency, I decided to go to Glodjane to discuss this matter with the local UCK HQ, and in order to join the UCK.

23. I also did this because of some doubtful methods the UCK was using to make people join the UCK. One of these methods was that, by nighttime, UCK soldiers went to the villages or the houses of some villagers who had not joined the UCK yet. They used to fire some rounds after which they left the spot.

24. This obviously caused a lot of commotion in the village, but also alarmed the MUP who came to the spot to investigate. The MUP officers often harassed, mistreated and arrested innocent local Albanians to find out who had been firing the shots. The MUP never went to the villages where they knew that



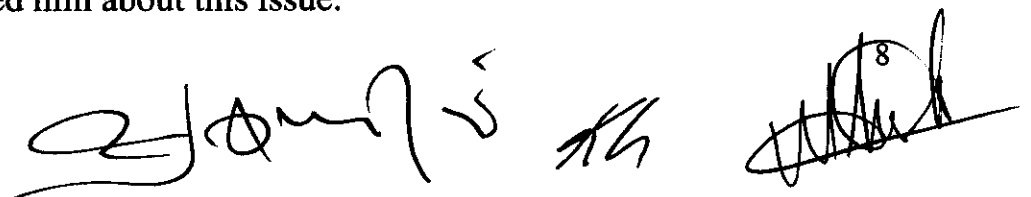
there were some armed civilians. When they knew that there was no armed resistance at all they did come in and mistreated the local villagers. Since a lot of Albanians became fed up with being harassed or mistreated by both the UCK and the MUP, I finally decided to go to Glodjane to join the UCK.

25. Similar events also took place in my village. For example, at one night in mid-April 1998, Deli Lekaj and Zymer Ukaj from Ljumbardh, came to my brother's house. In front of my brother's house they started firing some rounds with their automatic weapons. Nobody witnessed this, but later on they confirmed this to me personally when I had joined the UCK. That was also one of the reasons why I also went to see the UCK HQ in Glodjane.

26. I heard about the detention and killing of an Albanian woman called Sanije Balaj from the village of Streoc. She was captured sometime in June 1998 and killed later on. Rumours say that Faton Mehmetaj and Mete Krasniqi from the village of Vranoc were also involved in this crime. Allegedly Mete Krasniqi and others arrested and detained her on the order of Faton Mehmetaj. Reportedly she was arrested and executed because she was suspected of giving information to the MUP and the Secret Police. Her body was found in early August 1998 in the mountains near the village of Barane.

27. When I asked Faton Mehmetaj about what had happened to Sanije Balaj, he said that she was suspected of being a spy and collaborating with the State Security and the MUP and that she therefor had to be eliminated. He said that he had given the order to Mete Krasniqi to arrest and eliminate her. Later on I met with Mete Krasniqi, who confirmed to me that he had arrested and eliminated Sanije Balaj on the order of Faton Mehmetaj. Mete Krasniqi was always wearing a black MP UCK uniform and everyone from the Baranski Ljug area knew that he was a member of the UCK MP.

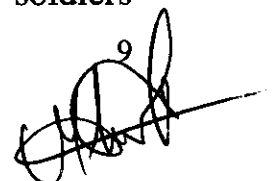
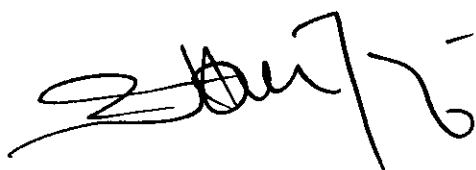
28. Mete Krasniqi was living in the village of Vranoc, which was part of my sub-zone. Because Sanije Balaj's parents had asked me what had happened to their daughter, I asked him about this issue.

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29. I know that a lot of people were "blacklisted" by Faton Mehmetaj and Fitnete Ramosaj as mentioned above, officially for not being loyal to the UCK or for sympathising with the LDK or for having worked for the MUP or other authority bodies. These lists were circulated amongst the UCK village guards in specific villages that were sympathising with the UCK. The guards had to check the identities of the persons who were travelling through their villages and to refuse access to the ones whose names were mentioned on the lists. The purpose of this procedure was to compromise or discredit the mentioned people.

30. My name was on such a list as well. In the beginning of May 1998 I was called by Faton Mehmetaj for interrogation. Faton Mehmetaj and a person called aka "Ujku" interrogated me in the premises of the Hodja in the mosque of the village of Požare. They interrogated me about the reason why I had left my village to stay in Peć for a while as I described above. I was still a civilian at that time, meaning that I had not become a member of the UCK yet. However they accused me of giving information to the MUP in Peć about the UCK, considering I was a former JNA officer. I denied this and told them that I had been in Peć for some medical treatment. Personally I think they wanted to compromise my personality and my reputation, because they knew I was popular amongst the people from my area because of my military (JNA) experience. The interrogation lasted for two hours, after which I was free to go. They did not mistreat me, although I was interrogated in quite a threatening way.

31. I do not know anything about the kidnappings or disappearances of Serbs in the area of Dukagjin, with the exception of the case of two Serbs, called Miloš (LNU) and Slobodan (LNU) from the village of Dašinovac in late April or the beginning of May 1998. I heard two different stories about the circumstances in which they disappeared. The first one is that Deli Lekaj, the UCK commander of the village of Ljumbardhe, accompanied by his soldiers



(Haxh Lekaj, Zimer Ukaj, Sami Lekaj and some others), went to the village of Dašinovac. They were armed and dressed in UCK uniforms. They entered the house of Slobodan to loot it. They thought the house was empty since the Serbs were believed to have left the village of Dasinovac.

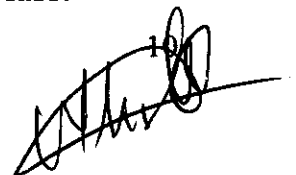
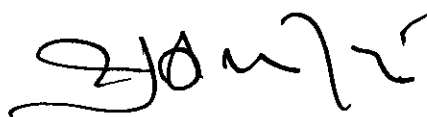
32. However when they entered the house they were shot at and Deli Lekaj got wounded. They returned fire during which allegedly the Serb called Slobodan got killed. Deli Lekaj was subsequently taken to the village of Požare where he was treated by the local doctor, Syl Berisha. This is the story that Deli Lekaj told me afterwards.

33. I also heard of the kidnapping of two other Serbs in May 1998. They were driving a Mitsubishi van (combi), when they were kidnapped by Nasim Haradinaj on the road from Djakovica to Dečani, somewhere at the villages of Prilep and Rastavica. I heard they were taken away but I do not know where they were taken to or what happened to them. I do not know the names of those two kidnapped Serbs and I do not remember who told me about this.

34. Tahir Zemaj and his FARK soldiers were also operational in the Dukagjini area. The FARK were fighting together with the UCK against the VJ and the MUP, but they operated in a separate way from the UCK. The FARK and the UCK had each their own military structure.

35. The FARK consisted of about 500 soldiers who were divided into 3 brigades. The three brigade commanders were : Nazif Ramabaja, whose brigade HQ were located in the village of Barane, Shemsedin Cekaj (or Ceku), whose brigade HQ were located in the village of Žebelj, and Tahir Zemaj whose brigade HQ were based in the village of Papracane (in the premises of the Jusuf Gervalla primary school).

36. Tahir Zemaj was in fact the commander of the FARK. He issued the orders to the three brigades. His rank within the FARK was Major. He used to be a former JNA officer, who had graduated from the Belgrade Military Academy as Lieutenant and was promoted later on to Captain first Class.



37. The FARK was operational in Barane - in the area between the villages of Lodja and Gornja Luka, up to the village of Grgoc. There was also a FARK unit deployed in the villages of Jasić and Junik under the command of Rrustem Beriša and Agim Ramadani, who were both UCK commanders but nevertheless subordinated to Tahir Zemaj. It was Tahir Zemaj who was the issuing the orders to this unit. I personally overheard Tahir Zemaj giving orders to this unit over the satellite phone from the village of Papracane. I also heard Rrustem Beriša briefing Tahir Zemaj over this satellite phone.

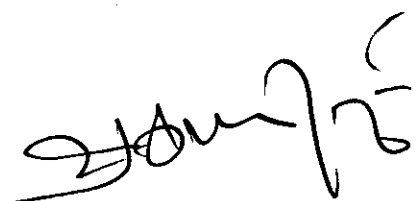
38. The FARK soldiers had the same camouflage uniforms as the UCK soldiers. They even had the UCK insignia on their uniforms, because they did not want to upset the UCK who did not like the arrival of the FARK in Kosovo and who was opposed to the FARK deployment.

WITNESS ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The interpreter Mr. Maklen Misha has told me that the 38 paragraph statement in English that I have signed is identical to the Albanian translation which I have read and received a copy of. I have given this Statement voluntarily and am aware that it may be used in legal proceedings before the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991, and that I may be called to give evidence in public before the Tribunal. However, because of my security concerns, I am not prepared to testify.

Signed: 

Dated: 17 April 2007



INTERPRETER CERTIFICATION

I, Maklen Misha Interpreter, certify that:

1. I am duly qualified and approved by The Registry of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991 to interpret from the Albanian language into the English language and from the English language into the Albanian language.
2. I have been informed by TETAJ Rustem that he speaks and understands the Albanian language.
3. TETAJ Rustem has acknowledged that the facts and matters set out in his Statement are true to the best of his knowledge and recollection and has accordingly signed his signature where indicated.

Signed: _____

Maklen Misha

Dated: 17 April 2007

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[Handwritten initials]

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