

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:

Last Name: VELJKOVIĆ

First Name(s): Velibor

Father's First Name: Mihailo

Nickname: Veci

Gender: Male

Date of Birth: 19 November 1971

Place of Birth: Leskovac

Ethnic Origin: Serb

Religion: None

Language(s) Spoken: B/C/S

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

Language(s) Used in Interview: English and B/C/S

Current Occupation: Traffic Police Officer

Former:

Date(s) of Interview(s): 18 January 2006

Interviewer: Philip Caine

Interpreter: Vojislava Katić

Names of all other persons present during interview(s):

Benedop Beronobalt

Signature:

Benedop Beronobalt

V. Katic

WITNESS STATEMENT:

K0525564

1. I have been summonsed by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) to attend this interview. However, I give this statement voluntarily and I have not been threatened or forced, nor have I been offered any promises or incentives to do so.
2. I have been told that should any of the persons I speak about in this statement be indicted by the ICTY, my name may become known to the defence lawyers of the accused and the general public.
3. I prefer not to testify before the ICTY in The Hague, Netherlands but if required to testify by law, then I would attend. I also understand that if I were to testify, the Tribunal will take all necessary security precautions on my behalf. I consent to a copy of this statement being supplied to any other law enforcement agencies investigating allegations of war crimes committed in Kosovo during the 1998/9 conflict.
4. I have been made aware that the Serbian authorities have granted me a waiver in relation to revealing State secrets that I may be aware of and I am willing to speak openly in relation to matters and incidents that I have first hand knowledge of.
5. I am currently working in Medvede as a traffic police officer with the rank of sergeant (vodnik). I have been a member of the police since 25th April 1994. Before joining the police, I completed a police educational course for in Vučitrn, Kosovo and Metohija. I was immediately assigned to the SUP in Prizren and within two hours of arrival I was sent to Suva Reka police station, (OUP) as a police officer (milicioner). Prior to 1996, the police was known as Milicija and only had the ranks of police officer and inspector. In 1996, the structure changed and the police were known as policija. I then had the rank of corporal (mladi vodnik).
6. In 1996, before the conflict began, there were between 65 and 70 police officers stationed in Suva Reka. The situation changed around April/May 1998 when there were terrorist attacks upon the police. For example there was an incident in Dulje in which a police officer named **Sasa JOVANOVIĆ** was shot and killed by Albanian terrorists. As a result of these incidents, we were no longer given annual leave or time off and the shifts rotated quickly. We were issued with PKT and Broving light machine guns. The usual vehicles that we used for police operations were Lada Niva jeeps, BOV combat armoured vehicles and Pinzgowers. I am not sure what sort of vehicle that is as I was not a patrol officer. The uniforms worn by the regular police and reservists was dark blue camouflage. The special purpose units wore green camouflage but there were none of them in Suva Reka centre.
7. In 1998 the Commander (Komandir) of Suva Reka police station was **Radojko REPANOVIĆ**. I believe he was a captain (kapetan). He was in charge of the uniformed staff. The officer in charge of the civilian administration staff and plain clothed, criminal investigation officers was Lieutenant (poručnik) **Dobrivoje VITOŠEVIĆ**. Although **VITOŠEVIĆ** had a lower rank than **REPANOVIĆ**, he held a higher position within the structure. I cannot say whether one gave orders to the other as I was never present in their meetings. My supervising officer was **REPANOVIĆ**. The next officer below komandir was Deputy Commander (zamenik komandira) **Dragan BORISAVLJEVIĆ**. Below

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BORISAVLJEVIĆ was Assistant Commander (pomoćnik komandira) **Nenad JOVANOVIĆ**.

8. The shifts also had appointed "shift leaders." At the start of every shift the patrols were issued with a written order by the shift leader stating their duties for the day. If one of the supervising officers was present, i.e. Commander, Deputy or Assistant, this would be done by him. At the end of the shift each patrol (which could be one, two or three officers) had to write a report (izveštaj) of what they had done and this was delivered to the duty service administration. The reports were supposed to be kept in the station archives for 5 years.
9. Before the terrorist attacks started, we were usually given specific orders such as go and bring a particular person. After April/May 1998 however, the orders were more vague such as to go and inspect a particular village. My understanding was that the patrols would enquire with the local people as to the situation rather than specific tasks such as taking statements. At that time, I did not go out on patrol, rather my duties were in the administration section. I had to enter the work schedule into the computer and sort out the incoming mail and put it in the various pigeon holes. The work schedules showed who was on duty at any time. The specific tasks of the patrols were entered into the computer but not the final patrol reports. The computer records were stored in Suva Reka police station. All police officers received a standard salary regardless of the hours they worked. If however you were on leave or sick leave, you did not receive meal allowances. The records for who was on leave were sent to Prizren in order to calculate the allowances. A couple of days before we were withdrawn from Suva Reka I was ordered by **REPANOVIĆ** to burn the paper records but the computer was put on a truck together with the diskettes and relocated to Kruševac. I do not know what happened to it after that.
10. Before the terrorist attacks started there were usually only two or three patrol officers on duty in Suva Reka at a time. After the attacks started however, more reserve police officers were engaged to assist. Some were used to guard the police facilities and others were sent out on patrol. They would basically fulfil the same duties as a normal active police officer. In addition, police men from other SUPs in Serbia were brought into Suva Reka as reinforcements but since I was not out on patrol, I do not know how this worked on the ground. I only completed the work schedules for those assigned to Suva Reka, not to other reinforcements from outside.
11. In July or August 1999 when the police were "clearing the ground" a police officer named **Momir PEŠIĆ** was killed by terrorists. I was not present during these operations but I knew from my colleagues that they would take up positions and then fire at the terrorist strongholds. In January 1999 a colleague, **Miloš STEVANOVIĆ** was killed whilst on patrol. His vehicle came under fire in a terrorist ambush and he was killed on the spot. In June 1999 **Radovan TANOVIĆ** was killed but this was not in the Suva Reka area. The areas that were known to be terrorist strongholds in the Suva Reka municipality were the villages of Budakovo, Pećane, Studenčane and Blace. In the town of Suva Reka itself there were no known terrorist areas. I did not see any written orders in relation to the clearing operations. The officers who took part in these operations were shown in the duty roster as being on leave and the type of leave was shown as "special assignment."
12. I know that there were some military stationed around Suva Reka. I saw the military passing through the town in their vehicles. They were not stationed in the centre but I do not know whether they took part in any operations. The Territorial Defence was located at

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the Municipality Assembly building in Suva Reka. They did not normally take part in police operations but after the airstrikes started there was some cooperation with them. I do not know who was in charge of the Territorial Defence. The DB also had their offices in the SUP building but they had a separate entrance. However I know that there was cooperation between the police and DB. I believe there were only two or three DB members in Suva Reka. One was NIŠAVIĆ, nicknamed **Miško Debejac** and another named **Milan JABLANOVIĆ** who arrived around summer 1998.

13. When I worked in Suva Reka I stayed in the police accommodation which was a building within the same compound as the police station. It was only when I had a day off that I used to travel back to Medvede. All the police stayed in that accommodation with the exception of **REPANOVIĆ** who had his family living in Suva Reka. **VITOŠEVIĆ** used to go home to Orahvac until the time of the air strikes when he stayed all the time in his office where he had a bed.
14. I know that the police had opened fire against Albanians in Suva Reka centre before the NATO air raids started but I recall the day when a large number of Albanian citizens were killed. I cannot recall the exact date but it was during the first week of the air raids. There had been shooting going on earlier in the day but I do not know who was shooting at whom. There were never any briefings given about the situation in the field. I recall that there was an Albanian man being held in the police station because it was suspected that he had been shooting at police. I was on duty in the SUP when I heard a shot coming from the court yard outside the police station. After about five minutes I went outside and saw the man lying dead in the courtyard. I did not know his name but he was quite elderly, between 50 and 60 years old. I do not know who killed the man.
15. A short time later I was inside the police station when I heard the Commander, **REPANOVIĆ** addressing a group of police officers in a small room. I saw the following present during the meeting: shift leader, **Milovan GOGIĆ**; **Sladan ČUKARIĆ**; **Radovan TANOVIĆ**; reservist, **Ivica NOVKOVIĆ**; **Ramiz PAPIĆ** and several other reservists whose names I cannot recall. The Deputy Commander was not present; he was out in the field. The Assistant, **JOVANOVIĆ** was not present and **VITOŠEVIĆ** was in the building but in his own office. **REPANOVIĆ** told the men in the room that they were to go from house to house and kill the Albanian civilians. He did not say why this was to be done and he did not specify any particular individuals. He just said that they were all to be killed. **REPANOVIĆ** ordered me to go with them and take part in the killing but I refused. **REPANOVIĆ** did not say anything when I refused the order.
16. I did not go out with the group of police immediately but followed them after about 15 minutes. I was ordered by **REPANOVIĆ** to go after them and load the bodies since I refused to kill them. I was with **Ivica NOVKOVIĆ** and one other police officer whose name I cannot recall. I have been shown a number of photographs of Suva Reka and have pointed out to investigator, Philip Caine, some of the locations. On picture 02103210-19 I have pointed out the SUP buildings. When I came out of the SUP together with **NOVKOVIĆ** and one other officer, I was standing in position marked number 1. I could see along the Reštanski Put to a house marked number 2. There I saw a large number of people coming out of the house and running away in all directions. There was a group of police officers standing outside the front of the house shooting the people as they ran away. After a short time I heard the sound of an explosion. We then walked along the road in the direction of Reštane and the first group of bodies I saw were outside a house that I have indicated on the photograph at number 2. I cannot recall the exact number of

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[Signature]

- bodies, probably three or four. There were men, women and children. I could see that they had been killed by firearms. All were wearing civilian clothes and I did not see if they were armed. I did not think that they were terrorists. We loaded them onto the back of a Zastava truck. It was a small truck with a cab and a flat back with a tarpaulin cover. I do not know where the truck came from. I assumed from Prizren. I did not see where the truck came from but I suppose it must have all been pre arranged. I did not know who the truck driver was. We continued along the Reštanski Put passing more bodies as we went. We reached the junction with the Studenčani/Peçane road where the truck did a U turn then on the way back we picked up the bodies on the road. In total there were about 20 bodies on the road. When we reached the end, Ivica, the other officer and I returned to the police station while the truck turned right and drove off in the direction of Prizren.
17. We stayed in the station for around 15 minutes then went out again to a Pizzeria in the town centre (it is marked number 3 on the photograph). There I saw another truck backed up to the doorway. There were people from either the Territorial Defence (TO) and/or the Utilities Services Company. I did not recognise any of these people other than Dr **Boban VUKSANOVIĆ**, who was Head of the Suva Reka Medical Centre, and also working for the TO but I do not know in what capacity. I entered the Pizzeria and saw about 40 bodies, mostly women and children, inside. I thought that these people were the ones who had managed to escape the police going from house to house. The sound of the explosion I had heard earlier had come from the direction of the pizzeria and I guessed that it had been thrown in there. None of the bodies had limbs torn away but the grenades that were issued to the police, M57 "black" grenades, exploded with shrapnel that went straight into the body.
18. We carried one body after another and loaded them onto the truck. There were two or three people who were still alive. One I recognised as a bus driver who had been hiding behind the bar. He was begging not to be killed. There was also a woman lying near the door who had been shot but not killed. The police officer **TANOVIĆ** and one other reservist shot the survivors. We loaded all the bodies onto the truck. No one said anything about what was happening or why the people had been killed. **REPANOVIĆ** was there at the front of the pizzeria though I cannot say if he had been there throughout. He did not say anything at that time either. **VITOŠEVIĆ** stayed in the police station but would certainly have known everything that happened. I do not know if any reports were written about what happened. There was a crime technician officer present at the pizzeria named **Todor JOVANOVIĆ** though I did not see him conducting any sort of investigation.
19. When we returned to the police station I heard from other colleagues that another order had been given that we were again to go from house to house and tell any remaining Albanians that they had half an hour to pack their things and leave. I assumed that this order also had come from **REPANOVIĆ**. I just stayed in the police station. Half an hour later the Albanians began to leave in their vehicles towards Prizren or the border with Albania.
20. All the Albanians left Suva Reka and there were no more killings after that day. I do not know however what was happening in the surrounding villages since only the special purpose units went to those areas. I only saw the local duty service police officers and reservists involved in the killings in Suva Reka. I did not see any PJP or military or other outside units. They may have been out in the villages, in the terrorist strongholds but they were not in Suva Reka town. I believe that the orders to carry out the killings in Suva Reka must have come from a higher level than either **REPANOVIĆ** or **VITOŠEVIĆ** because a police officer at that level could not possibly authorise such actions.

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Declaration

I have been advised that my statement may be provided to other law enforcement agencies and or judicial authorities. I agree to my statement being provided to those authorities at the discretion of the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

Deklaracija

Upozoren sam na to da bi moja izjava mogla da bude data na uvid organima unutrašnjih poslova i/ili drugim pravosudnim organima. Pristajem na to da se moja izjava da na uvid navedenim organima, prema nađenju Tužilaštva Međunarodnog krivičnog suda za bivšu Jugoslaviju.

Besudop Besudoputi

Die

V. Ketic

POTVRDA SVEDOKA

Izjava mi je glasno pročitana na srpskom jeziku i sadrži sve što sam rekao, po svom znanju i sećanju. Izjavu sam dao dobrovoljno i svestan sam da se može upotrebiti u sudskom postupku pred Međunarodnim sudom za krivično gonjenje osoba odgovornih za teška kršenja međunarodnog prava počinjena na području bivše Jugoslavije od 1991, kao i da mogu biti pozvan da javno svedočim pred Sudom.

Potpis: Besim Šeh Bevanović

Datum: 18.1.2006.

NB: Only the BCS version is to be signed

WITNESS ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This Statement has been read over to me in the Serbian language and is true to the best of my knowledge and recollection. 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.



INTERPRETER CERTIFICATION

I, Vojislava Katić, 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 Serbian language into the English language and from the English language into the Serbian language.
2. I have been informed by Velibor Veljković that he speaks and understands the Serbian language.
3. I have orally translated the above statement from the English language to the Serbian language in the presence of Velibor Veljković who appeared to have heard and understood my translation of this Statement.
4. Velibor Veljković has acknowledged that the facts and matters set out in his statement, as translated by me, are true to the best of his knowledge and recollection and has accordingly signed his signature where indicated.

Dated: 18/01/2006
Signed: V. Katić

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Велимир Велковски 18.1.2006. године

