

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



04654681

WITNESS INFORMATION

Last Name: [REDACTED] K73

First Name(s): [REDACTED]

Father's First Name: [REDACTED]

Nickname: [REDACTED]

Gender: Male

Date of Birth: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Place of Birth: [REDACTED]

Address:

Telephone: Home Phone :
Office Phone :

Ethnic Origin: [REDACTED]

Religion: [REDACTED]

Language(s) Spoken: Serbian, Albanian, English, German, little Hungarian

Language(s) Used in Interview: **English**

Current Occupation: unemployed

Date(s) of Interview(s): [REDACTED]

Interviewers: Philip Coo and Paolo Pastore Stocchi

Interpreters: none

Names of all persons present during interview(s): interviewers and witness

[REDACTED]

Signature
(Witness)

[REDACTED]

Initials
(Persons present)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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WITNESS STATEMENT

1. I am giving this statement voluntarily and I will describe things I know to the best of my knowledge and recollection.
2. I understand that I am requested to describe things I know because I observed them and I will clearly differentiate in my statement facts I know personally from those I learned from others. I am requested to make a truthful statement on what I have personally experienced in that connection.
3. I have not provided statements to any other authority in relation to my experiences during the conflict in the former Yugoslavia.
4. The representatives from the OTP who are interviewing me have informed me that the statement I am making could be used in criminal proceedings. In this connection I wish to state that I am willing to testify before the Court at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. [REDACTED] I have given this statement under the condition that it is strictly for the purposes of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. I do not give authorization to release this statement to any other agencies or to any other Governments without my consent.

[REDACTED]

5.

[REDACTED]

6. Chronology

7.

[REDACTED]

8. In March 1993 the Yugoslavia Army (VJ) called me to be a reservist, at that time there was war in Bosnia. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I was about a week in Niš after which I was allowed to go home but to be in stand-by for mission in Bosnia. The day after I arrived home I received a telephone

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call from Niš Command Brigade. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and the following morning we got the bus and went to Banja Bašta to report at the VJ Command where they were already waiting for us to arrive. Somebody drove us over the Drina Bridge to the other side, in Skelani [REDACTED]. I remained in Skelani for about four weeks while my unit stayed about one month.

[REDACTED] and they lost five men in combat in a short period of time, so they sent us because we already had combat experience. The name of the commander of combat team was [REDACTED] who later got killed in combat in Košare, Kosovo in July 1998, when was already a Major. [REDACTED]

9. [REDACTED] After four weeks, in April 1993 I was authorised to go home. When I returned home I restarted my studies, I married my wife, my first child was born and I remained away from the Army until November 1995.

10. In November 1995 I voluntarily joined the VJ as a professional soldier [REDACTED]. When I joined the VJ in 1995 [REDACTED] I received the rank of Razvodnik (In English is little higher than a private). About a year later I became a Corporal in the same unit.

11. [REDACTED] I went through the conflict in Kosovo. [REDACTED]

12. Around 16th June 1999 I left Kosovo and officially I terminated my Army service in December 1999. [REDACTED]

13. [REDACTED]

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Initials
(Others present)

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[REDACTED]

14. Skelani 1993

15. In Skelani the Special Unit Corps was deployed. The Special Unit Corps consisted of: 63rd Parachute Brigade with about 40 men, 72nd Special Brigade from Belgrade with about 50-60 men, the Guards Brigade, 80 Russian volunteers, one or two Četnik companies from the Serbian Radical Party (SRS) and if I recall well there was also the Special Police from Serbia possibly from Special Operation Unit (JSO) or Special Anti Terrorist Unit (SAJ) but I would not be so sure about this last unit.

I remember that before going to Skelani (my unit) had to remove our patch on the uniform to be replaced with the patch of the VRS. The order was that we did not have to carry with us any document, and I mean military ID, dog (identity) tags, and more precisely nothing that could suggest that we were coming from Serbia.

16. I recall a detail, when five men from "Drina 1" combat team died in action, on the obituary it was written that they had died as heroes in Banja Bašta. This was a lie because they were killed some 30 to 40 kilometres deep in Muslim territory in Bosnia and the "Drina 1" command had to negotiate to get the bodies back. I know that in order to get these bodies the "Drina 1" gave the Muslim Army food, ammunitions and weapons as part of the deal. I was told that the Muslim side sent a Serbian woman to negotiate the release of the bodies with the "Drina 1" command and I heard that this woman and her child were being held hostages by the Muslims. The purpose of the operation carried out by "Drina 1" was aimed to capture or to kill Naser ORIĆ.

17. I remember that on some occasions in combat, the [redacted] volunteers had the task to provide my unit with guard and security during the night hours when we were having our sleep. My unit would go to take over a village, and after the action the [redacted] would arrive along with local Serbs to loot the properties. I saw that with my eyes, I saw the [redacted] while they were looting televisions, appliances, furniture and everything they could loot.

18. I heard from some of the [redacted] volunteers that they had raped Muslim women in a village called Sase, located not far from Skelani. In another village that I do not remember the name, I saw a human head that was impaled on a fence post. The [redacted] told me that one of the heads, belonged to a pregnant Muslim woman that had been raped and killed by [redacted] two or three months earlier. The [redacted] were proud to tell this story to me and to other colleagues of mine. The heads had already turned into skull as the incident had happened long time before we arrived.

19. As far as I know no Army commander tried to prevent these crimes from being committed nor did they punish those who committed the crimes. I remember that Captain OSTOJIĆ

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(Others present)

[redacted]

[redacted]

one day said that after the war was over we should put the [REDACTED] into reserves because they were behaving like animals. We were a professional Army and we tried to behave according to Geneva Convention and to respect the enemy. I would to add that once probably in Sase Village, we captured a Muslim soldier who was wounded by shrapnel and we gave him assistance and we evacuated him to the hospital in Užice, Serbia with an Army helicopter. Later, in 1993, I saw in the newspaper an interview with this soldier whose name was Alja KRČIĆ who told the journalists that he was captured by unknown enemy and that the enemy took care of him and treated him with respect.

20. In April 1992, in another village near Osmače, some [REDACTED] proudly showed me and to my colleagues four male bodies of Muslim victims and said that they had killed them. I remember that the bodies did not show gunshot wounds but their throats had been cut. One of the bodies had a cigarette in the mouth and the head was open possibly with a sword or a machete.

21. Also my superiors saw the bodies but nobody did anything to punish these [REDACTED]. After the war I heard about a paramilitary group called Yellow Wasps but I have not come across with them while I was in Bosnia. I remember that speaking with some of the [REDACTED] volunteers I could realise that most of them were idiots who did things that a normal person would not do. The things that the [REDACTED] did in Bosnia are absolutely against any principles of rules of war.

22. In Bosnia Captain OSTOJIĆ gave us an oral order that during combat operations in villages we should leave a safe corridor to let the Muslim civilians flee in the direction of Srebrenica. Obviously the [REDACTED] did not comply with these orders.

23. In Bosnia the Russian volunteers were regularly engaged in combat along with my unit as infantry forces. During my stay in Bosnia I participated to 15 to 20 cleansing operations conducted in villages situated North-West Skelani let's say that we started to cleanse from the village of Jezero and we went on to Sase, Kraglyivode, Osmače, Hadrovići and some other villages around Srebrenica. We encountered resistance from Muslim enemy and the order was to cleanse these villages.

24. General MLADIĆ came to Osmače to congratulate us for the victory in the battle in Osmače. I recall that MLADIĆ said that when we had the win Osmače then Srebrenica would not be a problem. MLADIĆ meant that it would not be too difficult to take over Srebrenica. During all the operations in Bosnia we had support from the Serbian artillery that was positioned in Tara Mount in Serbian territory. From there the Serbian artillery was shelling with 140 mm. called Nora and VBR (Multiple Rocket Launcher). We had direct radio contact with the VJ in Tara Mount.

25. Kosovo 1997-1999

26. In September and October 1997 I was deployed in Đakovica [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] The task we had was to provide support to border units along the Albanian border to prevent the smuggling of weapons and ammunitions from Albania to be delivered to the UČK (Kosovo Liberation Army) – KLA. Specifically we were ordered to ambush the UČK/KLA and I remember that the UČK/KLA utilised horses loaded with weapons to cross the border so we often shot at

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

horses and in this way we confiscated large amount of weapons and ammunitions. Sometimes the border units had clashes with the UČK/KLA and during these clashes some UČK/KLA got killed or captured.

27. Kosovo 1998

28. As from the 28th of February I was deployed with the all battalion [REDACTED] near Đakovica. The entire battalion numbered 300 men maybe more and [REDACTED]. The battalion consisted of Antiterrorist Squad [REDACTED] Company for the Special Operations with transporters, 1st Company of Military Police, Traffic Police Company, Logistic Support Platoon, Platoon for Service of Military Police, Platoon for Indirect Fire Support armed with 82 mm. mortar. [REDACTED]. During 1998 ANTIC became Commander of the Company for Special Operation and he was replaced by a Lieutenant who came from Kosovska Mitrovica whose name I do not recall.
29. The entire Battalion remained in [REDACTED] until September 1998 as the Battalion was replaced by MUP that came from Vojvodina. I personally remained [REDACTED] until the 11th of June 1998 because I was wounded on my left leg by friendly fire shot by one of my colleague. This incident happened during a shooting that took place inside our camp at Radoniči, early morning, between us and the UČK/KLA. I was taken to the military hospital in Niš where I remained about a month. After that I went back to Pristina but I did not work until September 1998.
30. Nothing specific happened between September 1998 and January 1999, we were always in stand-by but never engaged in combat.
31. Elements of the 72nd Special Brigade from Belgrade was based at a cement factory located at the border General Janković between Kosovo and Macedonia. Around end of January or beginning of February 1999 [REDACTED] I went to General Janković. A joint operation with the 72nd Brigade had been planned to clean up the UČK/KLA forces that were positioned on the hill where a communications repeater station was installed. I remember that there was a shooting with the UČK/KLA and a Sergeant from the 72nd Brigade got killed. A couple of days later [REDACTED] the 72nd Special brigade was sent to Našec, a place situated near Prizren where a youth camp was located just on the bank of the river. We remained in Našec for a month.
32. Our task there was to conduct a reconnaissance operation around the Albanian villages and we went to a village that the name I do not recall, where we searched almost all the houses in the village and at the end of the search we confiscated weapons and ammunitions. The villagers told us that the UČK/KLA forced them to take the weapons which were smuggled from Albania. Most of the rifles were the Chinese re-production of Kalashnikov.
33. At that time the 72nd Special Brigade and my Anti Terrorist Squad was under the command of Colonel Momir STOJANOVIĆ who was Chief of Security in the Pristina Corps. Three weeks after we arrived in Našec the 72nd Special Brigade and my squad received an order issued by Colonel STOJANOVIĆ that we had to ambush vehicles in a intersection near Našec, without caring whether Albanians or Serbs were in the vehicles.

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The reason for the ambush was to show the public opinion and the authorities that the UČK/KLA committed crimes. We never carried out this order because I believe that the commander of the 72nd Special Brigade did not agree with Colonel STOJANOVIĆ's order. I do not recall the name of this commander but I recall that his nickname was Markoni or Markan or something like that but I am not sure. I wish to specify that I have not personally heard that somebody said that the order was issued by Colonel STOJANOVIĆ but who else could issue such order if not Colonel STOJANOVIĆ since we were under his subordination.

34. After Našec the 72nd Special Brigade [REDACTED] went back to Pristina where we stayed at the Army Barracks called Kosovski Junaka. While we were in Kosovski Junaka barracks General Nebojša PAVKOVIĆ, General Vladimir LAZAREVIĆ, and possibly other high ranking officers came to boost our moral. I remember that there were some speeches and also General PAVKOVIĆ gave his speech during which he said that there will be war because the Americans had decided to attack us and there is nothing we can do. General PAVKOVIĆ said that we should not be afraid because the Americans are fighting for money while we are fighting for homeland. General PAVKOVIĆ also said that as soon as the first NATO bomb falls on Kosovo we have to "clean our back from Albanians" which meant that we had to get rid of the Albanians. General PAVKOVIĆ did not specifically referred to UČK/KLA or to civilians, he just said "clean our back" because General PAVKOVIĆ went on saying that after that we would not have to think about Albanians but just to concentrate to fight against NATO. This event took place about a month or shortly before the war started in Kosovo.
35. During March 1999 we were in the Kosovski Junaka Barracks in stand-by waiting for orders. It was strange to me and to my colleagues that all the other units had left and only the 72nd Special Brigade [REDACTED] remained until the 24th of March the NATO air strikes started. The moment NATO started the bombing we left the barrack and went to Gračanica where we accommodated ourselves inside some ruins of old vacant houses located in a part of the village near the lake.
36. We remained in Gračanica for about a week and after that we went back to Pristina but in Grmija where we took over a couple of Albanian houses that were already empty, and we camouflaged our vehicles in the woods. Not long after NATO located us and started the bombing. We moved deeper in the direction of Pristina Town so we could hide in other Albanian houses. We went two to three kilometres deep and we took over other empty houses. Before doing that we checked the area in order to see whether there were civilians around and in case civilians were found the order was to expel them out of the house.
37. We searched the houses, we were told to confiscate ammunition, weapons, Albanian propaganda material such as Albanian flags and of course we were told to loot valuables such as money, gold, and silver. The looted goods were to be given to the Platoon for Service of Military Police. I remember that every time we gave some of these goods they made the list of what we delivered but in case we gave them gold rings they never wrote gold, but instead they would write yellow metal.
38. At the end of March 1999 the Commander of the 52nd Battalion Military Police Major Stevo KOPANJA sent part of the Battalion to Junik, which is a village located near Dakovica. They created a new unit called Rapid Reaction Unit (Jedinica za Brze

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Intervenzie) which was made by part of the 52nd Battalion Military Police, part of 72nd Special Brigade, part of 63rd Parachute Brigade and all together numbered between 140 and 160 men who rotated in a flexible way. In Junik we were based in Albanian houses that we found already empty as Junik had been cleaned months before. In that border area all the villages had been already cleaned starting from summer 1998.

39. In Junik our task was to fight UČK/KLA in the border area near Košare and during that period we were intensively engaged fighting them.
40. In April 1999 while we were in Junik we received Commander KOPANJA gathered the officers and gave the instruction that from now on we have to clean the area from Albanians. Commander KOPANJA clearly said that we had to send all the Albanian civilians towards Korenica because there they are waited by MUP with the list of names of terrorists. It was clear to me at that time that this was just a cover up story and that the only purpose for this operation was to cleanse the villages. I couldn't imagine any KLA willingly going to Korenica and not fleeing the advance of our forces.
41. The units that participated in the operation were; 63rd Parachute Brigade, part of 52nd Battalion Military Police and the PJP (Special Police Unit). The first village that we sealed was Dobroš and the cleansing started from there until Korenica. The operation started at 6 o'clock in the morning and lasted two days until the following day at 17:00 hrs. or 18:00 hrs. We went through several villages, it is hard for me to say how many villages we went through because sometimes we would find four houses, sometimes 20 and sometimes 40 and one does not have time to count villages and to learn the names of the villages. I remember that the area was predominantly Catholic and we operated in a range of about three kilometres frontage. We formed a line with the PJP on the right, [REDACTED] straddling the road to Korenica, and the 63rd Brigade on the left.
42. During the first day of the operation we only encountered civilians and sometimes we arrived in villages that were already empty because the civilians could probably see smoke and hear machine gun fire so they would flee. The Mortar Platoon were always two to three kilometres behind us in case we had contact with UČK/KLA. I remember that we expelled hundreds of Albanian civilians on the first day; after the civilians left we set their houses on fire as this was the order. I personally never set a house on fire but colleagues did; I was against this also for the reason that the Serbs could later take over these houses. During the operation the civilians were begging us not to expel them; I remember in the first house we went in Dobroš a man said that his brother was invalid and could not walk; [REDACTED] Captail Saša ANTIĆ did not care about that and ordered the people to leave that house. During the first day of cleansing I did not witness killings.
43. I remember that on that day we found an Albanian civilian hiding in the woods, and this man said that he was from Skivjan We took the man with us and went to a village where we spent the night. When we arrived we pulled the villagers out of their houses and put them in the street. [REDACTED] asked me to tell the civilians in Albanian language that they did not have to be afraid of us and to tell them to go towards Korenica. So a group of about 50 civilians including men, women and children and elderly around 18:00 hrs. headed towards Korenica. I remember that in this village there was a small child, two to three years old who was scared and was crying. This child reminded me of my child, so I had a candy in my pocket and I asked the mother to give it to her child. The child let the

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(Others present)

[REDACTED]

candy fall down from his mouth, his mother collected the dirty candy from the ground and put it back in the mouth of the child as she was so terrified that I was going to be angry because the child did not eat the candy. I left the scene quickly because I could not look at that as I was too emotional. I went to the garden of the house to rest my mind for few minutes to avoid that my superiors and colleagues would notice that I was stressed. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Captain ANTIĆ asked the civilians whether there were UČK/KLA in the village but they replied that there was no UČK/KLA. Captain ANTIĆ then took three civilians men from the group and told the rest of the civilians that we would keep the three men with us plus the one that we found in the woods and that if nothing would happen during the night they are free to go with their families on the following morning.

44. That night there was some shooting and one soldier from our battalion was killed and another one shot at his own leg as reaction to the stressful situation. The fire lasted a couple of minutes and the following morning we found a dead body of a UČK/KLA combatant wearing uniform and with a RPJ (rocket propelled grenade launcher). The only gunshot wound I saw was on his head between his eyes. Captain ANTIĆ then ordered some [REDACTED] soldiers to put the body of the UČK/KLA in a sitting position with the back against the wall and to burn every house in the village.
45. Captain ANTIĆ ordered the four Albanian hostages to carry with us the body of our killed soldier in a improvised stretcher, as we had to move on with the operation. Then we went to the next village which the name I also do not remember. In the centre of the village we found a car which we used to transport the dead body of our soldier and the wounded one to the hospital in Đakovica. Captain ANTIĆ ordered to put the four hostages in the centre of the village. We made contacts with the PJP and shortly after they arrived to joined us. At a certain point one of my colleagues asked the hostages whether they preferred to continue with us or if they wanted to be handed over to the PJP. I remember that the hostages begged us not to hand them over to the PJP. Captain ANTIĆ handed over these four hostages to the PJP because the PJP commander requested the hostages to be handed over because they were civilians and it was a matter to be dealt by police. The PJP took the hostages and we left village and when we were at the end of the village we stopped to allow the PJP to form a line on our right side. The commander of the PJP unit called one of his officers and I heard him to say to the officer: "these four assholes belong to you" the officer took these four hostages to the woods some 20 meters from us. I remember someone from us whop asked Captain ANTIĆ what would happen to the hostages. In that moment I saw the commander of the PJP unit taking the Motorola radio to communicate with the officer in charge of the hostages. I heard the PJP commander to remind his officer to remove the plastic ties from the wrists of the hostages. In that moment I thought that the four hostages were going to be released but it was not so because a minute later we heard multiple gunshot sound from the woods. I saw the officer coming back with the plastic ties in his hands. The officer looked satisfied and said to his commander in front of us: "I was too fair, I gave them a cigarette and they were smoking and crying because they understood what was going to happen". The officer was smiling when he said that and I will never forget his face. The officer was fat, short and the colour of his hair was whitish and he was in his 40s. I do not know the name of this officer nor do I know the name of the PJP commander. I only know that that PJP unit was from either Đakovica or Prizeren.

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(Others present)

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[REDACTED]

- 46. On that day we went to Korenica where we were expecting to see civilians but there were absolutely no civilians there. I only saw a lot of policemen from PJP and the village was burning. I saw no dead bodies lying on the ground. In Korenica we got on a civilian bus and went back to Junik.
- 47. Two to three days later we were sent back to Pristina to protect General LAZAREVIĆ and after that we were put under the command of Colonel FNU LALOVIĆ who was an active officer of the VRS. LALOVIĆ claimed that he was Chief of Security of General MLADIĆ during the war in Bosnia.
- 48. While I was in Pristina we were deployed in Kosovska Mitrovica where we remained 12 days to stop deserters from the 7th Brigade to go back to Serbia. During these 12 days we had clashes with the UČK/KLA.
- 49. After that we went back to Pristina where I continued to be in the security of General LAZAREVIĆ. I never spoke to General LAZAREVIĆ about strategic matters [REDACTED] LAZAREVIĆ was sleeping in Gračanica in a house of Serbian family that owned a restaurant there. [REDACTED]
- 50. I did not see General PAVKOVIĆ in the basement of the Pristina Corps command which was set up at the Grand Hotel in Pristina. I saw Colonel Momir STOJANOVIĆ almost every day at the Grand Hotel but my platoon had nothing to do with him as we were only taking care of General LAZAREVIC.
- 51. Eventually NATO arrived and we pulled out of Kosovo, although I, with 5 others, were ordered by [REDACTED] to stay behind and commit acts of sabotage, under the direction of a Colonel (name not known). I did not stay as ordered. My colleagues left later.
- 52. Today I was shown a photograph bearing in the back side the number K0210105 and the Investigator informed me that this is the Evidence Registration Number assigned by the ICTY. In this photograph I see a group of policemen wearing PJP uniforms.
- 53. While I was in Pristina I heard from my colleagues that the Serbian police burned bodies of Albanian victims in Obilić power station. I am not aware of movement of bodies from Kosovo to Serbia, I only learnt from media of the refrigerator truck with bodies found in the Danube.

Declaration

I have been advised that my statement may be provided to other law enforcement agencies and or judicial authorities. I do not 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 without my consent.

Signature _____ 10 _____
 (Witness) _____ Initials _____
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[REDACTED]

WITNESS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This Statement consisting of 11 pages 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.

Dated: [REDACTED]

Signed: [REDACTED]

(Witness)

Signature
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