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RAPPORTEURS AND REPRESENTATIVES

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-eighth year

Letter dated 24 May 1993 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the
Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed
to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a memorandum on war crimes and crimes of genocide in eastern Bosnia (communes of Bratunac, Skelani and Srebrenica) committed against the Serbian population from April 1992 to April 1993, deposited with the State Commission for War Crimes (see annex).**

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under item 115 (c) of the preliminary list and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dragomir DJOKIĆ
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

* A/48/50.

** The annex is being circulated in the original language of submission only.

YUGOSLAV STATE COMMISSION
FOR WAR CRIMES AND GENOCIDE

ANNEX

MEMORANDUM
ON WAR CRIMES AND CRIMES AND GENOCIDE IN EASTERN BOSNIA
(COMMUNES OF BRATUNAC, SKELANI AND SREBRENICA) COMMITTED AGAINST
THE SERBIAN POPULATION FROM APRIL 1992 TO APRIL 1993

Belgrade, April 1993

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STATEMENTS OF WITNESSES -

ASSAULT ON GNIONA

It was 6 May, St. George's Day. The Simićs celebrated.

Already in the morning the people from the nearby village of Čumovići mentioned that on their way from Čumići to the house of the family celebrating their St. Patron's day in Gniona, passing through a forest known as Vrhovi, they spotted some strangers who seemed in a hurry; when Mihailo Vukadinović greeted them they did not say anything in return.

During the same day nothing could be noticed on the Muslim side except that they did not move around like before, nobody could be seen near their houses and we did not know the reason why.

On 6 May an assault was launched on Gniona at 17.30.

We were first addressed through a loudspeaker by Naser who said: "The people of Gniona, hand over your weaponry within 15 minutes at Pera Simić's house. We will not hurt anyone, but unless you hand over your arms we will capture whoever is still alive" and he repeated it. On hearing this, the villagers of Gniona started jumping out of their houses and windows and ran towards the forest.

Naser did not wait even for 2 minutes but immediately opened heavy fire on us with all available weapons.

In 2 - 3 minutes we were already in the woods, and they ran after us and set immediately five or six houses on fire.

We did not know how many of them had attacked us but there were many. Gniona was encircled with positions where the Muslims had been deployed already that morning and maybe even earlier without us knowing it.

On that occasion 2 people lost their lives in Gniona - Lazar Simić, 55, from the neighbouring village of Studenac and Radojko Milošević, 75, from Gniona.

Lazar Simić was killed on his way to Zoločuja and Radojko Milošević, being old and unable to run, remained stranded in the house which was set on fire, according to his wife who watched from the forest their house, with Radojko inside, go up in flames. The villagers of Gniona set out in the direction of Zalazje, some of them that night and others early in the morning. After 2 - 3 days nothing was to be found in Gniona, everything was destroyed in the fire which they had set.

The houses which could not catch fire were mined.

(Miladin Vukadinović)

/...

VITOMIR VUČETIĆ, of father Sreten, born in the village of Loznica where he is living now in the municipality of Bratunac, worker, Serb by nationality.

S T A T E M E N T

on the Muslim assault on the Serb village of Loznica on St. Vitus' Day on 28 June 1992 when the Muslims killed 8 and wounded 7 civilians

On the eve of the Orthodox feast St. Vitus' Day, the villagers of Loznica appointed village guards to alert the village in case of a possible Muslim attack. On the very St. Vitus' Day I was on guard duty until 11.00 hrs together with Zoran Vučetić. We did not notice anything unusual. Then we left home to take a rest. Soon after I fell asleep and was woken up by my wife Dragana who told me: 'Get up, the village has been attacked'. I jumped out of bed and heard the sound of bullets coming from several directions. We were attacked by the Muslims from the direction of Cijepalo, Pirič, Doliva and Brdo. I immediately opened fire from my window in the direction of Šumerice, because I saw fire from infantry weapons come from that direction. I noticed that the hamlet of Cijepalo near the village of Loznica was all ablaze, the Muslims had set on fire all houses and everything that could burn. Close by our side, Djokan Milovanović and Miloš Stojanović were wounded and we bandaged them up. The villagers of Cijepalo had already withdrawn towards me and we all together offered resistance to the Muslims. I saw many Muslims opposite my house, shouting 'Allah uegber'. From the direction of Piriči, some 300 meters away from me and the stables I saw the court executor Fahrudin - Redja Hasanović, of father Edhem, my former class mate, shouting on top of his voice: 'Serbs, are you glad'. He took a loudspeaker from Rahman Sinanović, an old merchant from Bjeloc and said: 'Ustashis, do you need help?' I recognized him by his voice. At the same time, Alija known as Kurta, who used to work in Sase before the war as a mine-layer called his Muslims and said: 'Catch Vasa Petrović alive and take his mortar away from him'. As a matter of fact, he and Vaso Petrović used to work together at Sase. We were almost totally encircled and had been under constant fire from 14.00 to 18.00 hrs. before we received aid from Bratunac.

The following persons lost their lives close by my side :

Miloje Damljanović, Svetozar Vučetić, Milorad Rončević, Djordje Filipović, Milenko Nikolić and Radovan Lukić. Near the house of Bogomir Andrić, withdrawing towards the road and firing from their weapons, Verica Filipović, 17, and Jelena Stojanović, about 40, were shot down.

When I withdrew with the wounded towards the road, around 18.00 and turned over the wounded, I went back to the village to collect the dead, our neighbours and relatives. Then I saw my house being consumed by flames. Only two beds and a glass showcase were burnt down, so we managed to save the rest by putting the fire out.

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All other houses in the village had already been burnt down and the smouldering fire there could not be extinguished. There were only 3 houses which they didn't burn down for lack of time.

I forgot to mention that I saw my relative Radovan Lukić dead; he was killed and the golden cross that he had around his neck was inserted in his mouth. They first took off his boots. The following were wounded in this attack: Stanoje Milovanović, Dragan Vučetić, Zvonko Filipović, Rado and Djokan Milovanović, Miloš Stojanović.

Vitomir Vučetić - Vito, sgd.

/...

ZVONKO FILIPOVIĆ, of father Nedja
born in 1959 in the village of Loznica
farmer, Serb by nationality

S T A T E M E N T

On 28 June 1992, on St. Vitus' Day I was in the hamlet of Cjepale near the village of Loznica where I defended together with other villagers our houses and property. This being a small hamlet, there were only 7 of us locals defending it, all of us farmers. Our wives and children were for the most part in flight.

We didn't attack any neighbouring Muslim village, nor did we provoke them in any way to do that on us. Occasionally, Muslims would open fire from the villages of Pirići and Poloznik, but they didn't break into our hamlet because we repelled their attacks.

However, on St. Vitus' Day, around 14.00, we were attacked from all sides. It rained and hailed heavily and this made our efforts to defend the hamlet even more difficult. We had taken shelter from the storm in our houses, but on seeing Milovan Lukić's house on fire and the Muslims barge into the village and start encircling us, we decided to withdraw. The Muslims attacked us from all directions and with all available weaponry, so that we had to close our eyes not to see all the bullets they showered upon us. We defended ourselves for some 2 hours and gradually withdrew in the direction of the Drina River. I saw the Muslims charging from the direction of the Pirići village shouting 'Allah Uegber', but the visibility was poor, I could not recognize anyone my sight being blurred by the forest, the shrubbery and the hills. I recognized only one Muslim by the sound of his voice; his name is Kurta and I heard him shout to the Muslims: 'Catch me Vasa Petrović alive!'

They opened fire from infantry weapons from the direction of Pirići, and we had by then already come down from Cjepale to the point which we farmers call Krizevac. I was wounded in the heavy shelling there and further away my neighbours Rado Milanović and his brother Djokan sustained injuries as well. All of us wounded, we helped each other reach with difficulty Milutin Damjanović's house, where they extended first aid to us. Radovan Lukić perished at Cjepale in an attempt to defend his home, and Djokan Milovanović was wounded and then taken towards the Drina by Ivko Filipović. While they administered first aid to me in Milutin Damjanović's house I learnt that many villagers had perished there in our close vicinity. I saw in person the body of Jela Stojanović and the little girl Verica Filipović. From that house I was taken to hospital in Loznica where I was told by my family who came to visit me that on that self-same day, i.e. St. Vitus' Day, 6 villagers and my neighbours had died and a woman Jela with her daughter Verica Filipović. Some of the corpses had been heavily mutilated.

I am prepared to repeat this statement anywhere and anytime because we were attacked by the Muslims without any reason or motives.

Zvonko Filipović, sgd.

/...

MILADINOVIĆ MILEVA, married to Petko, born in 1939 in the village of Repovac, resident of the village of Loznica, municipality of Bratunac, housewife, mother of 4, Serb by nationality

S T A T E M E N T

On the eve of Holy Trinity in 1992, I remember it was a Sunday, I was working in my garden when my husband Petko came back from his guards duty and asked me to make him a cup of coffee because he was tired. I went into the house and made him a cup of coffee and I didn't as much as fill the cups when two of our Muslim neighbours barged in:

1. Šaban Hasanović, of father Edhem, from Pirići,
2. Mevludin - Kiko Hasanović, of father Edhem from Pirići
3. Mehmedalija Begzadić, of father Šahman from Pirići.

Šaban attacked my husband Petko right away and started beating him, hit him with the butt of his rifle on the head so that Petko fell down. I started yelling and Šaban pressed his hand on my mouth, hit me with the butt of his rifle above my left eye and hurt me badly. Šaban was assisted by his brother Kiko, while Mehmedalija Begzadić was watching them do it.

After that, all three of them made it for the door and took away the rifle which they had seized from my husband and fled in the direction of the river.

After this incident my neighbours helped us reach the Health Home in Bratunac, and the hospital in Loznica where Petko stayed for 4 days and I was treated for 7 days for the wounds inflicted us by our Muslim neighbours on our very doorstep. We lost all documents testifying to the treatment received in this war but the copies are certainly available at the hospital.

On 14 December 1992 the Muslims attacked Bjelovac and killed my two sons Mirko and Čeda Miladinović.

Milena Miladinović, sgd.

/...

SLAVKA MATIĆ, wife of Radivoje
born in 1945, resident of the village
of Loznica, municipality of Bratunac

S T A T E M E N T

I was in the school at Bjelovac doing something when around 6.00 in the morning the Muslims launched a strike on Bjelovac. There was shooting from all sides then, namely from the direction of the Drina as well as from the foot of the Kunjevac hill, i.e. from the direction of the Muslim villages of Pirići and Biljača. I noticed a large group of Muslims armed with rifles. They had knitted caps on their heads, rucksacks slung over their shoulders, wore blue clothes and orange bands around their heads. I could not make it to my house, which is around 1 km away from the school, and my children and husband were there. The Muslims killed my husband Radivoje Matić and my daughters Snežana, 27, and Gordana, 25.

They tried to set my house on fire throwing three bombs into it having beforehand killed my whole family. On putting people in our village to death the Muslims immediately set about burning down our houses. I could not recognize anyone because I was far away which made it difficult to make out anything of it all. Bogdana Ilić, wife of Milun from the village of Vojna from Srebrenica, sought to come to the rescue of my children, was wounded by the Muslims but struggling for her life she killed a Muslim who had previously killed my family. I saw the wounded Radosav Vučetić near a haystack. Boraka Petrović lay close by but I do not know who had wounded them. I saw the wounded Cvjetko Lukić being taken towards the Drina to receive first aid but the Muslims had already been there awaiting our wounded to kill them while first aid was administered to them. It was there that they shot Milisav Ilić and wounded Stojan Ilić while he was transporting the wounded. But as Ilija Ilić had also been there, he managed to open fire and keep the Muslims at a distance for a while. On the right bank of the Drina in Yugoslavia Miliwoje Vučetić and 5 more civilians from our village were wounded when sniper fire was opened on them from a point known as 'Bunarevi' in the Muslim village of Biljaša. I know that Vidoje Ilić, Milovan Simić and Mladjen Nedeljković, all from Sikirić were wounded while receiving first aid on a boat crossing the river.

On 21 December 1992
Bratunac

Slavka Matić, sgđ.

NEDJO PETROVIĆ, son of Mladjen
from Sikirić, commune of Bratunac,
born in 1952

STATEMENT

On Sunday, December 14, 1992 I was on guard duty from 12.00 midnight to 3.00 a.m. guarding the village of Loznička Rijeka, commune of Bratunac. When I went off duty I went to sleep at the house of my neighbour Ljubisav Nedeljković. That morning i.e. on December 14, 1992, around 6 a.m. I heard shooting in the village. I got up and went out and saw my acquaintance Ljubisav Nedeljković running towards me, shouting that the village had been attacked. Firing could be heard all around us, from the direction of the Moslem villages, most of all from the direction of Pirići and Sikirić, i.e. the Moslem hamlet called Skela. I saw a group of Moslems advancing from the direction of Bjelovac towards our village. They were in camouflage uniforms and a few of them were in mufti. There were 17 of them in the group, of whom 2 were unarmed. They were silent. Having encountered a group of Moslems below Jovanovići we turned towards Bjelovac and saw another group of about 10-12 Moslems about 20 m from us. They were armed and said: "Come to us, we are on the same side". I was in the company of Srećko Mitrović and we went to the Drina and along the Drina river hoping to save ourselves; at a certain point he left me and was killed a bit later. After having met this last group I negotiated my way through the shrubbery and sat down on the bank of the Drina and started to take off my clothes intending to swim over to Serbia. Then I decided to follow the Drina and go along its bank up to Bjelovac and on the way I met Miloje Tanasić. I threw the rifle which I had into the bushes. We hid on the banks until dark, i.e. 1.p.m, and then from the direction of the Moslem Zalužje another group of Moslems came along going towards Jovanovići. It was possibly a bit before 1.p.m. when that group of enemies set off towards Jovanovići. I crossed over to Serbia by boat in the evening. I did not recognize anyone among the groups I met. The Moslems storming the village could be heard shouting "Get them alive".

I asseverate that among these voices I recognized the voice of one "Kokan", the son of Edhem from the village of Pirići, who worked with me for about 15 years in the Sase mine. "Kokan's" words were: "Get them alive, f... their Chetnik mothers".

I am not aware of any other circumstances having left the village in the above described way.

Nedjo Petrović

JANJA SIMIĆ, wife of Ratko, born in 1949
resident of the village of Loznica,
municipality of Bratunac

S T A T E M E N T

In the morning of 14 December 1992 I and my husband were asleep in our house in the village of Loznica when we were woken up by the blast of two bombs. We got up and my husband went out to empty the ash receptacle of our stove and bring in some fire to light it. When he went out and closed the door behind I heard a burst of fire that killed him. He called for our help twice but we couldn't get out for we were fired on from the direction of the Muslim village of Biljača.

My husband was shot at about 7.00 hrs., and already then the Muslims started firing at everything in our village. The moment my son Zoran, 22, went out, someone from among the Muslims called on him to surrender. He had better surrender, or else he would be exchanged. This was a trick of theirs, for they fired at Zoran right away and wounded him.

My son Zoran recognized Midhat Salihović by his voice and asked him: 'Midhat, is it you?' Midhat replied: 'Yes, it's me, come over for a drink. If you don't, we'll catch you and impale you alive to teach you how good the Turks are at that'.

At that moment Mulija Zukić, formerly my neighbour, called me to come over for a cup of coffee, cursing my 'Chetnik mother'. My brother-in-law Lazar Simić was wounded then, and was called by someone, I think it was Rifet Salihović, who said: 'Surrender, you Chetniks, your goose is cooked. Our people with Muja addin are in Veljavica, there are 1,500 of them, we'll f..k your mother'. Someone was wounded and asked for help and Midhat Salihović said: 'Wait, now we'll slaughter the Serbs'.

I saw a group of around 20 Muslims. They wore camouflage fatigues, shouted to us to surrender for Bjelovac was ablaze. I couldn't recognize anyone. By that time the following were wounded: my son Zoran, Milenko Stojanović, Lazar Simić, Goran Lukić. As for the dead, my husband Ratko was shot and in Vujadin Kovačević's house Mitar Sarić and Zoran Trišić were shot down and Aleksa Kovačević was wounded.

At dusk, I heard the Muslims shout to each other: 'Catch Janja alive, encircle the house from left and right'. And someone called on our local villagers on the Kunjerac hill: 'Come on, carry away your dead, we have killed them all'. When day turned to night, I was the first to come out and was followed by my son and Andjelko Stojanović. We headed toward Bjelovac near the Drina and took a boat across the river to Serbia and thus managed to stay alive.

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Withdrawing to Bjelovac, I heard the Muslims rejoice and shout: 'Long live Panić, just wait, Serbs, until he takes over, he'll teach you obedience and the Shipetars in Kosovo will then make short work of you'.

We remained alive since we managed to hide in the cellar as the upper part of the house was demolished completely by MP mine throwers.

Bratunac, 16 December 1992

Janja Simić, sgd.

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Milorad Marjanović, resident of the village of Brežane, municipality of Srebrenica
born on 10 November 1961
to father Ivan and mother Višnja

Statement on the attack on the village of Brežane on 30 July 1992
in which 19 villagers of Serbian nationality were killed

Since the fall of Srebrenica, all Serbian villages of Orahovica, Jasenova, Radoševići, Ratkovići were burnt down and we remained isolated because the nearest village was around 15 km away from us. Since we were alone, we sent our wives, children and elderly to Fakovići so as to spare them. There were a total of some 35 of them. Around 60-65 men remained in the village some 20 of which able to fight. There were in addition some 15 women taking care of hygiene, cooking and looking after cattle. We were in a very grave situation, poorly armed, getting whatever we needed from Fakovići on horseback by a road leading through the forest. We found it most difficult to obtain medicines and medical supplies and had no medical personnel to help us. As a result we didn't receive any medical services for some 3,5 months. We also had 3 mental patients. We were short of cigarettes, and for the heavy smokers among our men that was worse than going without food. In the past two weeks they smoked walnut leaves. We waged constant battles with the Muslims from Osmaća and Bukova Glava. For a while we contemplated breaking via Osmaća into Fakovići but the Muslims were in the majority and for that reason we wouldn't be able to defend the village.

Seven days prior to the attack, a young man Novak Krstajić decided to try it alone to Faković and bring us cigarettes. The Muslims caught him alive and in that way found out how many people we had. Until then we had deceived them by stoking fire even in the abandoned houses and by opening fire here and there from different directions, but after Novak was captured, the situation changed. The Muslims made extensive preparations for an attack, cursed 'our Chetnik mother', threatened us and started digging trenches. They launched an attack at 4.45 hrs. on 30 July. They charged first from the direction of Osmač from almost as many as 10 villages. At night they would come closer and open mortar fire in the morning. There were at least 1,000 of them. They would emerge even from places where we couldn't expect them from. After some fierce fighting they started capturing even our own trenches and, running out of ammunition, we began to withdraw. In the process, we split up into smaller groups. Some fled toward Fakovići, and some toward Podravanje and I together with the elderly and women went toward Lipad. There were some 10 men able to fight there, and the group totalled 27. We entered the forest and the Muslims followed us shouting: 'Let us go after them and may God help us'. Then they nevertheless gave up but let loose hunting dogs to track us down. On our way to Čičevci they had set an ambush and a patrol by the road in order to stop us. There were many of them on the road. We were walking next to the lower side

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of the road, even their dog was near us. We could not move, not even breathe. When they passed us by, we went over to the other side of the road and sat down by a brook where we stayed from 12.00 noon to 22.00 hrs. Then we started for the forest. Passing through the forest we made a lot of noise although we tried hard not to so that we decided to get out onto the road again. We noticed that Obren Jovanović had disappeared and we haven't heard anything about his whereabouts since. We followed the road toward the town. We wanted to wait until dawn there, not knowing for sure whether it was held by the Serbs. We decided to wait for the cocks to crow, for it would mean that the Serbs were there since the Muslims would have taken away everything they could find in front of Serb houses. Živko Kečević and I set out to survey and inspect the minefields and Živko put the butt of his rifle down (text of the original unclear) and said there was a mine laid there. We fortunately walked around it and eventually escaped an almost sure death. After that we went to Sase and then to Bratunac. There were 10 victims and not a single has been buried until this very day. I know of the deaths of the following: Milomir Stevanović, Vidoje Lazić, Dostan Lazić's mother, Krsta Lazić's sister, Miloš Krstajić, Pero Krstajić, Novak Krstajić, Milenko Dragičević, Radovan Petrović, Miloš Novaković, Dragan Stjepanović, Milivoje Mitrović and his son Stanoje Mitrović, Stanko Milošević and his grandson Vidoje Milošević, Ljubomir Josipović (an 8th former of the local elementary school the upper part of whose skull was smashed by a round of bullets; he nevertheless made it some 500 meters further and then fell down), Milisav Rankić and his two sons Mirko and Dragoslav, and Obren Jovanović.

Krstina Lazić was shot and set on fire in her home, a blind woman and a mental patient to boot. Vidoje Lazić was crucified and set ablaze to die in great pain. They proceeded to set on fire his mother, brother-in-law and sister. Vidoje Milošević was himself surrounded by them and when the Muslims came closer he activated a bomb and killed both himself and those Muslims.

The attackers and villains shouted: 'This is how it should be done, f..k you, where are you now to see your house burning!'

Buso Halinović led those of Skenderović, including Vehbija Jahić. His father Salkica was an Ustashi in the last war. Akif Jatić took over the command from my house onwards, Hakiya Meholjić led 140 men from Srebrenica. Our village was looted, 43 households in total, and then burnt down. All our cattle were taken away. There had been only 200 cows in the village.

Bratunac
8 November 1992
Milorad Marjanović

/...

TATOMIR (of father Radoje) GVOZDENOVIC
Born on 29 February 1976
Born in Ljubovija
Resident of Zagonj
Student

S T A T E M E N T

I lived with my parents in our house at Zagonj. Before the war, we were on good terms with our neighbours both from Blječeva and from Čizmić. I had many friends in those villages with whom I mixed and went to school. When the war broke out we set up guards around our village. There were frequent Muslim provocations from the villages of Blječeva, Čizmić and Poso; they would fire at our positions using infantry weapons and we would fire back but there was never any larger-scale assault. Early in the morning on 5 July 1992 I went to Bratunac to escort young soldiers. When the army left, I and my brother Dragan returned to Zagonj at around 13.00 hrs. My brother went immediately to the position. I, my sister Rada and godfather Goran Stojić from Studenac stayed at home. Around 15 hrs. the village came under cannon and mortar fire from the direction of Pale and within 10 minutes 30 of such grenades fell on it. I took my rifle straightaway and left for the position to defend the village, knowing that having shelled us they would launch an infantry attack. Goran stayed in the house to wake up Rada who was asleep, and it was agreed that he would go to the position and Rada would withdraw toward Bogunovac. By the time I reached my position, my house had been fired on from all directions. From the slope which we call 'Ladja' I heard them shooting and shouting 'Allah uegber'. I further heard heavy shooting from the direction of Jelovo and realized that the village was totally encircled. At the same time, a group of Muslims set out from the direction of Budak and Blječeva, drumming the saucepans and shouting 'Catch the one from Dubovi under Medja alive, there are two of them on the road near Išćine Strane' etc. I recognized among the attackers Nurija Muratović's son known as Štico who was my classmate from Blječevo although I don't remember his first name any longer. I also recognized Muriz Martović from Čizmić who shouted 'Catch me Dragan alive, f... it!' In fact, Muriz was my brother Dragan's schoolmate. I could not recognize anyone else because they were unshaven and bearded. They were clad in uniforms and civilian clothes, moved in groups of 15 or so, were armed with automatic weapons (automatic rifles, Thompsons, and an occasional hunting rifle). They would barge into houses in groups, take out valuables and then set them ablaze. They first set on fire my Uncle Ljuba's house, then those of Uncle Blagoje, Sava, Rajo, Ilija, Miloš, Nedja, Mitar, Nega, etc. I watched it all from the nearby hill known as Kruška, having managed to break through the siege and was then about 300 meters away from them but able to see everything well. Soon our army arrived and pushed back the enemy. I entered the village with the army. I first came across Uncle Drago's body and further away lay the body of my dead sister Rada. I helped others drag out the bodies (from the ruins) and I know that the

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following were killed: Drago Gvozdenović, Rad Gvozdenović, Blagoje Gvozdenović, Radinko Milošević, Ljubica Milošević, Mileva Dimitrić, Rajko Gvozdenović, Mijo Nogović, Matija Jošinski, Miloš Milošević, Mirko Dimitrić.

On that day they did not set on fire all the houses because reinforcements arrived very soon. The whole attack lasted about an hour. I am prepared to state all this before any court of law or any organisation.

Bratunac, 5 February 1993

Tatomir

/...

MILADIN GVOZDENOVIC (of father Sreten)
Year of birth: 1925
Place of birth: Zagoni, commune of Bratunac
Place of residence: Zagoni
Profession: pensioner

S T A T E M E N T

I have have been living in Zagoni - a village near Bratunac, completely populated by Serbs - all my life. I remember well the last war, during which Zagoni was burned down. That, however, had been done by the Ustashi who came from Bratunac. We had no problems with the Moslems from the neighbouring villages of Blječeva, Čizmići and Mekote. When the Ustashi were advancing we found refuge in their villages and when the Chetniks came by we sheltered them in our village. We had good relations with them from that war until 1990, at which time they started provoking us, Serbs, in different ways. Let me give you an example: on 18 May 1990, during a bus ride, Šaćir Memišević, son of Nurija, from Blječeva, wanted to tear my "šajkača" (cap which is a part of the Serbian national dress) I used to wear all the time and which had not bothered him until then. He likewise wanted to tear the "šajkača" of Mladjo from Bratunac, whose last name I forgot, and who from then on wore a visored cap, out of fear. In 1991, after those Moslems in Kajići were killed, there was firing during the night at our village from Blječeva, and we had to organize guards around the village. After that we started arming ourselves on our own, whichever way we could and knew how. When the real war started, there was almost daily firing at our village from the villages of Blječeva and Pale, while we were working on the land, and our guards responded to those provocations.

On 5 July 1992, I was at home in Zagoni. At about 11.00 a.m. o'clock I went to my brother Rajko's place. It was peaceful, but I felt something in the air. At about 3.00 p.m. I decided to go home in order to hear the news broadcast. Grapade firing started and it went on for some 10 minutes. At the same time firing from infantry weapons started from Pale and Blječeva. Soon, there was firing from all sides from the direction of Kaolin and Ladja screaming, shouting and noise made by banging pots and pans was heard. The assailants the village from all sides. I tried to find a way out of the village, and I stole my way to my son Radoje's place. At the crossroads above his house I came across the body of his dead daughter Rada. Since I could not pull her body out, I took her Scorpion and somehow succeeded in breaking through the encirclement. From the crossroads above "Papratnica" I saw our houses on fire. I heard and recognized the voice of Rada Milošević, Milenko's wife. She was screaming. When everything was over, she was found dead in the village. As her four year old child had disappeared, we thought that it too, had been killed and thrown into the fire. However, two weeks later, it was exchanged safe and sound, since the Moslems had taken it away that day.

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I saw many people attacking our village that day, but I could not recognize any of them.

That day, they plundered all the houses and then set them on fire and burned them down. They killed the pigs in the courtyards and drove the other livestock away.

On that day, the following persons were killed in the village: Rada Gvozdenović, daughter of Radoje; my son Dragoljub Gvozdenović; Blagoje Gvozdenović, son of Milorad; my brother Rajko Gvozdenović; Miloš Milošević, son of Jovan; Mirko Dimitrić, son of Mitar; Mileva Dimitrić, all from Zagoni; Ćedo and his wife Dušanka, Mijo Malović from Bratunac; Ljubica Milošević was wounded, but she died in the health station in Bratunac; Professor Jašinski, who was also wounded died in hospital, while the wounded Radojka Gvozdenović, Rajko's wife, survived.

I am ready to repeat this statement before any court of law or organization.

Statement given in Bratunac,
on 9 February 1993

signed

Miladin Gvozdenović

BOŽANA GVOZDENOVIĆ

Year of birth: 1950

Place of birth: Obadi, commune of Srebrenica.

Place of residence: Zagoni, commune of Bratunac

Profession: housewife

S T A T E M E N T

We got along well with our neighbours, the Moslems from Blječeva and Čizmići. We visited each other both on feast days and at times of mourning. When the war started we did not have any contacts since we started keeping watch around our own villages. Occasionally they fired at our guards, but they did not attack the village.

On 5 July 1992, I was at home attending to my daily chores. At 1 p. m. Desa, my sister-in-law, called me to join her in collecting the hay in the field called "Milanovača" on the side of the hill facing Blječeva. A group of eight of us, six women and two elderly men, gathered to collect the hay. When we entered the field somebody started firing at us with a machine gun from Mujčin and Zejneba Muratović's house in Blječeva and we moved away. After it had stopped, we started collecting the hay. We worked together for about an hour and then sat down in the shade to rest a bit and have a drink of water. As we sat down, somebody fired a machine gun again from the same house. I saw two men on the window, but could not recognize them. At the same time there was mortar and cannon firing all over the village and our positions. There were many grenades, but I didn't count them. We started running towards the cemetery where our men were on guard. People from Blječeva started shouting "drag them to the river, take them alive!" I saw two men with rifles and yellow bands around their sleeves coming towards us from the creek. I knew that they were Ustashi, because our soldiers wore no insignia. We continued running, and when I reached our trench I asked my husband Radoje about the children, because our daughter Rada, 1973, had stayed at home and I had no idea what had happened to our sons Tatomir and Dragan. Radoje told me to go and see what had happened to them because he had to stay and organize the defense, since the Ustashi were attacking from all sides. I heard them yelling "attack the Chetniks, don't let them go to Kaolin, get them alive." Among them I recognized Muriz Muratović from Blječeva, who was my son Dragan's school-mate and fellow conscript. He and another fellow whom I did not recognize came up to Veso's stables in the hamlet of Jelah, while Desa and I hid under the shed of that same stable. The fellow whom I did not know told him "set Veso's stable on fire". He thought for a minute and then replied "let's get them alive, there they are, running down the fields, and we'll come back later. They went towards the place where crying and screaming of women was coming from. From that place I went towards my home and went in, but Rada was not in the house. I then went back to Veso's house, hid with Desa under the veranda and when my husband Radoje came along, the three of us started towards "Papratnica", wherefrom he went further to see

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what had become of the others, while Desa and I started towards Kaolin. Our army from Bratunac had already reached Kaolin and they had pushed the Ustashi back to Blječeva. Before help had come, the Ustashi had already killed my daughter Rada on the crossroad, and ten other men and women in the village. They burned down almost all the houses, only four remained. They killed the livestock, took all the more valuable things from the houses, and then burned the houses down, yelling, firing and swearing all the time. I am ready to repeat this statement before any court of justice or international organization.

Bratunac, 5 January 1993

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ATTACK ON ZAGONI

I was in fact in Zagoni, commune of Bratunac, on both occasions the village was attacked, when innocent civilians were killed and houses of the Serbs burned down.

I remember well that the first attack took place on 5 July 1992, about 2 o'clock in the afternoon. I know the time because as I was having lunch grenades fired from Moslem positions started falling in the village of Zagoni.

As soon as I ran out of the house where I was having my lunch I met two young men whose names - as I learned later - were Dragan and Rade. I didn't know their last names. It might have been Gvozdenović.

Dragan told me that his sister, Rada Gvozdenović, had been killed. I knew her only from sight, and as soon as I heard the news from Dragan I went to the crossroads in the woods near by. The road to the right from the crossroads leads to the village. Right there, by the crossroads, I found Rada's dead body. I realized that she had been shot from a rifle. Half of her head was blown up. Judging by the place I found her at I concluded that she had been coming from her village. That was confirmed to me by the villagers who said that Rada was running from her village, that the Moslems caught up with her near the crossroads and killed her.

At a short distance from there I saw a Moslem in uniform. He shouted to me "Don't shoot, I am one of you." We neither fired at him nor were involved in any fighting against the Moslems. The village was attacked by Moslems. While I was standing at the crossroads looking at Rada's dead body, the village of Zagoni started burning. There was smoke coming from the houses and soon it turned into flame.

Some of the people from the village of Zagoni succeeded in saving their life by fleeing. The screams of the Serb people, whose village had been attacked by Moslems, running away from their village in fear and panic could be heard. The Moslems were armed and they had with them a number of women who plundered Serb houses after the people had been killed, after which the houses were set on fire.

I was there some 5 - 7 days later when the village of Zagoni was attacked for the second time by Moslems.

I did not recognize any of the Moslems nor did I hear their names as they called each other, so I am unable to say anything on that.

I left the village the day after, as I had other things to attend to. I did not hear that anyone had recognized the assailants, and I never how many there had been.

signed

Goran Krstić, of father Dušan, from
Loznica, 10 Braće Jugovića street
worker; unemployed

VELISAV VASIĆ, nicknamed Veljko, son of Sreten
Born in Radoševići, Srebrenica, in 1962
Worker, Serb by nationality

S T A T E M E N T

After the fall of Srebrenica and the taking and destruction of many Serb villages by Moslems, I found myself in the village of Zalazje, as a refugee. I joined all the other villagers in the defense of the last Serb village in the territory of the former commune of Srebrenica.

On 8 June 1992, at about 5.15 a.m. Moslems attacked us from all sides from their surrounding strongholds. The defense of the village lasted until 3 o'clock in the afternoon. We succeeded in defending ourselves and pushing the Moslems back, although we had 6 dead and 12 wounded among the villagers who had taken part in defending the village. That day the Moslems succeeded in taking a part of the village and burning it, but we did succeed in pushing them back after that. The next day after the struggle we gathered the bodies of five dead Moslems and exchanged them for the villagers from the burned down the Serb village of Čumavići.

After that attack on the village an advance party of the Moslem army from the neighbouring villages, consisting of 5 armed Moslem men and two women, attacked our guards at Zalazje on which occasion I was wounded.

When my wound healed I returned to the village of Zalazje to help in the defense of the village.

On 12 July 1992, on our big orthodox holiday, St. Peter's Day, at about 9 o'clock in the morning the Moslem fundamentalists attacked us from all sides. The village was defended by 47 villagers, among whom was the cook Radinka Cvjetinović. The following persons were killed at the very beginning of the attack: Željko Giljević a Croat from Srebrenica, who joined with his family the defense of the village of Zalazje and Momčilo Rakić from Zalazje. The fighting went on the whole day. At 7 o'clock in the evening we ran out of ammunition and thus many were killed. Five persons succeeded in reaching a vehicle and saving themselves, while two did not manage to get into the car and they were killed. The vehicle was riddled by bullets. Nenad Grujičić, Gavro Pajić, Slavko Pajić, Tomo Jeremić and Branislav Stanojević managed to get out by car while the firing was still going on. I saw six of our men get caught: Miodrag Rakić, the brothers Branko and Pero Simić, Milisav Ilić, Slobodan Ilić - a judge from Srebrenica, and Miladin Tubić. We were on the opposite side of our vehicle and unable to withdraw. As there were six of us left, we climbed up on the attic of a new house.

The Moslems had already entered the village and started setting the remaining houses on fire and killing the

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defenders of the village who were wounded. Among the six of us five were heavily wounded and only one man was unhurt, a child I believe by the name of Milan Jeremić. I think that in the fighting which had taken place that day his brother, two cousins and a considerable number of the Jeremić family got killed. The Moslems first plundered and then set on fire the house we were hiding in. At about 10 o'clock in the evening we got out by means of a cable we found lying around since the house and its roof were on fire. We started towards Sase which is 3 km away. It took us 9 hours to get from the burning house to Sase.

While we were in the house, which had already been set on fire, we saw our men being taken prisoner, plundering of property, we listened the assailants swearing at Serbs, looked on as they were setting the houses on fire, on a rampage in the village and finally as the enemy army lined up in front of the house in which we were hiding. Milomir Lazarević, Gojko Jevtić, Milan Jeremić and two other men from the village, whose names I do not remember were with me in the attic.

The enemy army was lining up in front of Naser Orić, a policeman from Srebrenica, whom I know well. During the fighting and after the lining up of the enemy army I had the opportunity to see that the leaders in massacring the Serb population were the following:

1. Zulfo Tursunović
2. Hakiya Meholjić, policeman from Srebrenica
3. Amir Mehmedavić, nicknamed "Geza"
4. Senahid, policeman from Bratunac, I heard some of the policemen also calling him Nuriya, a slim, dark haired man. Each one of them was lining up his company. With them was also a unit of Gypsies, led by a Gypsy from Kazani, whom I knew by his nickname "Hake".

Among the Moslems who attacked Zalazje and performed this unheard-of massacre I recognized also the following:

1. A man nicknamed "Beno", who used to be a worker in the "Sase" Zinc and Lead Mine, from Srebrenica by birth,
2. A man by the nickname of "Mijač," from Srebrenica,
3. A man known by the nickname of "Kreja," also from Srebrenica,
4. A man by the nickname of "Djuli," from Srebrenica,
5. Velid Delić from Srebrenica,
6. Sarija Mulalić from Bajramović, commune of Srebrenica,
7. Šukrija Čelo from Potočari who worked in the "Akumulatori" enterprise
8. A football player, also known as "Čelo", from Srebrenica,
9. Husić, whose first name I do not know, by the nickname of "Hake" from Srebrenica, a teacher from Potočari.

Out of the five of us who were wounded, two men suffered a serious nervous breakdown and are completely disabled.

signed STATEMENT GIVEN BY:
Velisav Vasić, called "Veljko"

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Vinka Božić, wife of Petar, daughter of Mladjen, born in 1937 in Opravdići, commune of Bratunac, permanent residence in Magašići, hamlet of Gornji Magašići, temporarily residing in Bratunac at Kubatovac street, house unnumbered, Serb by nationality, housewife, has given the following

STATEMENT

On July 20, 1992, I was in my house. Around 11.45 a.m. strong fire began from all sides but I did not realize at once that the Ustashi had attacked our village, I went out of the house and Krstina told me that the Ustashi had attacked the village. I ran and first hid in Boja's pigsty and later when I heard the Ustashi making a racket I jumped out of the sty and into some bushes and nettles nearby from where I could hear and see everything well. I heard Hajro Osmanović, son of Ibrahim, swearing at his men and saying: "Hurry up, if they get help, we'll all get killed". I saw him clearly, he was in mufti and he was carrying a rifle, I do not know of which make. A group of Ustashi led by Šaban Osmanović, son of Junuz, from our village, hamlet of Močilo, was coming from the direction of Deronjići. With him were Nedžad Osmanović, son of Munib, from our village, hamlet of Šumanići, and his brother nicknamed Cvrko and the sons of Hakiija Osmanović, one nicknamed Tuzlo and the other Čičo. Šaban ordered them to go to my hamlet of Božići and to take from the houses everything they could and then burn everything; so they went to the village, took out everything they could from the houses and then set fire to the houses, silos and all auxiliary buildings. When they finished, I heard Šaban cursing them for having set fire to the silos without having taken the grain out. Among the Ustashi I also saw Meho Osmanović, son of Junuz, from the hamlet of Močilo, Senahid Avdić, son of Idriz, from Glogova. They assembled near their graveyard, there were a lot of them. I heard and recognized Šaban's voice saying that they were going to Avdagina Njiva to kill everyone and burn everything, but when they set out from the direction of the forest called "Klančić", fire was heard and Šaban said: "Here come men from Kajići and Kravica, retreat quickly.", after which they started retreating towards Krčevina and further on towards Blječeva.

Bratunac, October 24, 1992

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Radomir Ilić, called Rado, son of Tomo, born on April 24, 1938 in Magašići, commune of Bratunac, farmer, permanent residence in his place of birth, has given the following

STATEMENT

"For years we lived in harmony and got along well with our Moslem neighbours from the hamlet of Močilo. When war broke out in this area for a time we lived together but relations were impaired for every people kept guard around its villages. In the month of May, I do not know the exact date now, all the Moslems from the hamlet of Močilo left their houses, said good-bye to us, all were crying and went towards Blječeva and Čizmići. Their departure had nothing to do with us, they left their homes of their own accord, without any problems or apparent reason. Until July 20, 1992, no larger military units attacked our village, but there were daily provocations from the direction of Čizmići from where they opened rifle and machine gun fire on positions held by our villagers. On July 20, 1992, we were at home or working in the fields. Around 12 noon, suddenly and from all sides strong forces attacked our village opening fire from every conceivable weapon on everything moving. We started running trying to escape towards Avdagina Njiva. My son Marjan took my wife Smilja, Milenija Ilić, Zora Ilić, Ljubinka Ilić, wife of Ljubisav and Ljiljana Ilić towards Avdagina Njiva by road and I ran to a creek and hid in the bushes. I had no weapons on me. From that creek some 20 meters in front of me I saw Meho Osmanović, son of Junuz, until yesterday our neighbour, who was naked to the waist and had a machine gun called "Šarac" in his hands, he was shooting from it and moving towards the hamlet of Božići. With me in the creek was also Milojka Božić who also saw him. Meho was shooting and shouting: "Get them, get them!" At that moment I saw that the houses in the hamlets of Božići and Deronjići had been set fire to. When our army came and pushed the Moslem forces back towards Čizmići, I learned that not far from Avdagina Njiva Moslem extremists had killed my son Marjan, my daughter-in-law Zora, Ljilja and Ljubinka Ilić, the wife of our neighbour Ljubisav. I then also learned that in the hamlet of Popovići the throats had been slit of Blagoje and his wife Ljeposava Popović in a cellar and that Ljubica Milanović, wife of Vladimir, had also been killed. Vinka Božić said that among the attackers on our village she had recognized our neighbour from Močilo, Šaban Osmanović, son of Junuz, and Milka Božić, wife of Drago, told us that she had seen Ćamil Hasanović, son of Mehmed, from Glogova and his group kill Milenija, Marjan, Zorka, Ljubinka and Ljilja. My wife Smilja stayed alive by sheer luck because she could not keep up running with this group and remained in a creek.

Bratunac, October 15, 1992

(sgd.) Ilić Radomir

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Rosa Božić, wife of Milovan, daughter of Stanoje Simić, born in 1949 in the village of Opravdići, commune of Bratunac, permanent residence at Magašići, hamlet of Gornji Magašići, commune of Bratunac, Serb by nationality, housewife, has given the following statement in connection with the attack on the village of Gornji Magašići:

STATEMENT

On July 20, 1992 I and others were harvesting Radojica Jovanović's field. Around 11 a.m. strong fire started on the hill called "Stolice" and I asked Radojica whether he thought that we were being attacked, and he said that he did not think so, as shooting was a common daily occurrence, so that we continued working. Radojica was honing a scythe and I was reaping. The shooting soon became stronger, coming from the hamlet of Deronjići and I turned around and saw a group of Ustashi coming from the direction of their graveyard, led by Šaban Osmanović, son of Junuz from the hamlet of Močilo. One of the men in the group was leading Marko Deronjić's cow. Šaban kept telling them to hurry up and at one moment he said to Mehidin Smajilović, son of Asim: "Why don't you set fire to Luka's stable", so that Mehidin shouted: "you in the rear, set fire to Luka's stable". In that group I also saw Ahmed Ibrahimović nicknamed "Hepa", son of Ibrahim from Močilo, Meho Osmanović, son of Junuz who was naked to the waist and who was carrying a machine gun, Osmo Ibrahimović, son of Omer who was carrying a semi-automatic rifle and one of the grandsons of Havko Ibrahimović, I do not know if he was Ibro's or Nazif's son. They were in the company of another three men whom I did not see very well and whom I did not recognize. I was hiding in the wheat all the time and could see them well. I saw that they first set fire to Luka's stable, then Boja's house and all the houses in Božići, Deronjići and Ilići. After having set fire to all that they started withdrawing over Prisoj to Močilo and from there towards Stolice.

Bratunac, November 7, 1992

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Milka Božić, wife of Drago, daughter of Milan Bogdanović, born in 1946 in Ježestica, commune of Bratunac, permanent residence in Gornji Magašići, temporary residence in Bratunac, Dušana Jerkovića St., house unnumbered, Serb by nationality, housewife, has given the following

STATEMENT

"At the time of the attack on Magašići I was at home and when I heard that the Ustashi had attacked our village, burned Ilići and were attacking from the direction of Deronjići, I started running towards the road leading to Avdagina Njiva. On the road I met Smilja Ilić and her son Marjan who were also running towards Avdagina Njiva. Running in front of them were Milenija Ilić, Zora Ilić, Ljubinka Ilić, Ljiljana Ilić and Nevenka Popović. Smilja started crying, saying: "Woe is me, Zlatko remained all alone in the village, they will kill him", referring to her other son, and Marjan kept telling her to hurry up and run faster, so that he came ahead of all those women who were fleeing, probably with the intention of protecting them, because he was carrying a rifle. When we came near Milisav Popović's house, a man in jeans and a blue T shirt jumped on the road from behind an apple tree in the bushes. I did not recognize him. He immediately started shooting from a rifle and first hit Marjan, after which we all turned around and started running in the opposite direction, and the man stood in the road shooting at us, and shot Milenija, Zora, Ljiljana and Ljubinka in the back. Nevenka Popović pulled me off the road into some nettles so that the two of us survived, and I later learned that Smilja had also survived, because she could not keep up with the others. I saw the man who shot at us well, but I did not recognize him, and as I was awfully scared I am not sure that I could recognize him now".

Bratunac, October 24, 1992

(sgd.) Milka Božić