

**Case: Branko Grujić *et al* – ‘Zvornik’**  
**War Crimes Chamber**  
**Belgrade District Court, Republic of Serbia**  
**Case number: KV.5/05**

**Trial Chamber:** Tatjana Vuković, Trial Chamber President, Vesko Krstajić, Judge, Trial Chamber Member, Olivera Anđelković, Judge, Trial Chamber Member

**War Crimes Prosecutor:** Milan Petrović

Accused: Branko Grujić, Branko Popović, Dragan Slavković a.k.a. Toro, Ivan Korać a.k.a. Zoks, Siniša Filipović a.k.a. Lopov, and Dragutin Dragičević a.k.a. Bosanac

Report: Nataša Kandić, Executive Director of the Humanitarian Law Centre (HLC), and Dragoljub Todorović, Attorney, victims representatives

### **15 June 2006**

#### **Examination of witness 1**

The witness designated 1 is a Bosniak from Divič. From 4 April 1992, following the raid of Bijeljina by Arkan’s forces, the residents of Divič started organizing watches and set up a Crisis Headquarters. The watches were posted on the approaches to the village facing Serbia. The witness was a member of the Crisis Headquarters. When the Serb forces captured Zvornik on 8 April, soldiers from Serbia arrived and shots were fired from the village of Sakar in Serbia.

The witness first saw Major Marko Pavlović about 20 April before the fall of Kula grad. The meeting took place at a checkpoint manned by Divič residents. A ‘Stojadin’ [Zastava 101] car stood parked there from which Major Pavlović emerged and introduced himself under that name to the witness. He told the witness he was bringing along a Bosniak youth from Divič and wanted to hand him over. They went to the Hotel Vidikovac to talk the matter over, accompanied with the youth and a number of Serb soldiers. Pavlović wanted the Divič residents to hand over their weapons and the witness replied that they were not safe. He mentioned the murders of Bosniaks in Tabaci and Pavlović blamed them on a group that had run out of control. The witness suggested to Pavlović to supply troops to guard Divič together, but Pavlović rejected this on the grounds that he could only guarantee the resident’s security if they handed over their weapons. Pavlović became irritated and said, ‘You are to gather together all the people in Divič, I don’t want to talk with scum. You’re going to remember Major Pavlović.’ He returned after two days and brought the people together. Some wanted to hand over their weapons, but other did not. Pavlović left the village after two hours.

The Serb forces captured Kula grad on the morning of 26 April. Major Pavlović rang up the Crisis Headquarters in Divič and said that the residents were to hand over their weapons by 9 a.m. The man in the Crisis Headquarters who took the call said that the residents of Divič had been given an ultimatum to hand over the weapons by 9 a.m. Following the telephone call, an all-terrain vehicle drove through the village with someone in it calling on the villagers through megaphone to surrender their weapons or else they would perish. While the villagers conferred a

shell burst in a nearby wood, another landed in the village cemetery, a third set fire to the house of Salih Zahirović, and a fifth set fire to the house of Ahmet Tuhčić.

Divič was shelled again for an hour or two on 27 April. The witness took to the woods and gave himself up to the Serb police after learning that all residents of Divič who failed to surrender would be killed. He was imprisoned by the soldiers in the building belonging to the former Standard factory and stayed there four days. No one maltreated him there. The prison was manned by military police made up of Zvornik residents. The witness declined to give their names for reasons of security. He was released on 4 May and returned to Divič. He slept in a neighbour's house. The witness was arrested again a day before the expulsion and taken to Standard again. In the cellar in which he was placed he found Zaim Pezerović, Abdurahman Okanović, Ibrahim Efendić, Izet Smailović, and Hazir Vejzović. On 25 May they were returned to Divič in a lorry and immediately bundled into one of the 10 buses in which all the Divič Bosniaks were driven first to Han Pijesak, then to Mount Crni Vrh. From there they were returned to the bus station in Zvornik. The men aged 16 to 70 were taken out of the buses, marched to the football stadium and ordered to seat themselves in the stands. As the witness learned later, the women and children were taken by bus in the direction of Kalesija where they entered Bosniak-controlled territory on foot.

From the stadium, the men were marched to the Novi izvor building in the centre of the town and placed in an office. The same day Branko Grujić, the then Mayor, entered the room in the company of a Rado Čvorak from Zvornik. Grujić gave the prisoners a piece of paper and asked them to sign their names. The Divič teacher, also a prisoner, wrote down the names of 174 prisoners. According to the witness, while the list was being made, Grujić said that there would be no problems, 'There, you're going to be loyal, you will be loyal to us, there, if necessary, we're going to defend all this together.' Grujić walked out leaving the men confused because they did not know what being 'loyal' meant; when someone explained that it meant joining the Serb army, they all demurred.

The witness heard someone enter the room and ask for 11 volunteers for a job in Divič and recalled Salih Omerović, Ibrahim Marhošević, Hasan Tuhčić, Kemal Tuhčić, and Alija Tuhčić stepping forward.