

**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

## **2 February and 8 March 2006**

### **Examination of witness Stevan Ivanović**

The witness was secretary of the Secretariat for National Defence in Zvornik from 8 March 1991. By virtue of the office he was a member of the Provisional Government of Zvornik Municipality. He knew the accused Branko Popović because he was the commander of the TO Staff and a member of the Provisional Government.

The witness knew Kozluk well because he passed through it daily on his way from his home in the village of Donji Šepak to his workplace in Zvornik. He had also served for 14 years as a teacher of the Petar Kočić primary school in Kozluk in charge of a class in the village of Malešić.

He knew that armed clashes occurred in the vicinity of Kozluk in May and that the Bosniaks were afraid. People became detached and withdrawn, avoided communication, were unable to move about freely, felt insecure, and were occasionally ill-treated.

### **The expulsion from Kozluk**

Regarding the 26 June expulsion of the Kozluk Bosniaks, the witness said, ‘As to the moving out from Kozluk, concerning the procedure itself, whether the residents expressed a wish [to move out] because they’d found themselves in a precarious position deep between the warring parties to the conflict, whether they had a wish to go away from those parts or were forced to do so, in my opinion, the thing was effected without pressure and rather correctly, so far as I was aware of the situation.’

But the witness also passed an opinion that the operation was carried out under orders by a higher authority, ‘This is my personal opinion. I also know that people began to be moved out, the further removal procedure was a policy from on high in which we had no say.’

The witness said that Provisional Government President Branko Grujić, TO Staff Commander Branko Popović, and Marinko Vasilić from the police took part in organizing the transport of the Kozluk residents. Asked by the Trial Chamber President whether those three were the organizers, since that was what his statement suggested, the witness replied, 'It was claimed that the people moved out under pressure, in the presence of military formations, tanks. As I've said before, I have no image before my eyes of such details and of coercion of that kind.'

### **The Čelopek, 'Ciglana', and 'Ekonomija' camps**

While the witness had no knowledge of the Čelopek camp, he knew of the existence of some camps set up by disorderly and uncontrolled groups and individuals.

In the witness's opinion, members of the police were certainly aware of the existence of the camp in Čelopek.

He knew that in May or June Bosniaks were detained in a prison at the 'Ekonomija' agricultural estate. The prison was established after the departure of Arkan's forces from Zvornik. Its inmates were persons who had been found in possession of weapons or were subject to proceedings of one kind or another.

Although he never visited 'Ekonomija', the witness knew a policeman by name of Miloš Milanović from Šepak who was in charge of the prison security guards. Milanović stayed there three days before suffering nervous breakdown after witnessing the maltreatment and torture of detainees by unruly individuals. He had been appointed to the post by the police and he ought to have reported to them what went on in the prison. The detainees were abused and tortured by individuals and groups from paramilitary formations entering 'Ekonomija' without authorization.

The witness said that his immediate subordinate was a Kosta Erić, a civil protection officer charged mainly with recovering bodies, identifying them, and having them properly buried. The witness knew that a number of bodies were found including victims of group executions and that the post mortems were carried out by the pathologist Dr Zoran Stanković.

The witness avoided answering the repeated questions by the Trial Chamber President whether there had been any bodies at Čelopek, 'Ekonomija', and 'Ciglana'. His evidence, however, shows clearly that bodies were recovered from those locations.

### **Attempts to place the paramilitaries under the command of regular formations**

The witness said that a fair number of paramilitary formations operated in Zvornik Municipality and that it was the duty of the accused Popović to coordinate liaison between them and to place all the paramilitaries under the command and jurisdiction of the regular units. In view of this, the paramilitary formations were not supposed to operate independently and were either to leave the area or place themselves under the command of a regular unit. The witness said his opinion was that the TO Staff commander failed to achieve this in spite of being an able organizer in some

ways. Popović however lost his grip over subsequent events and he failed in his mission, so the paramilitaries continued to operate independently and arbitrarily.

### **The camp in the Technical School**

The witness knew that early in June 1992 Bosniaks were brought into the Technical School in Karakaj and that the TO Staff commander failed to organize their exchange. He had several conversations on the subject with the accused Popović and was told by him that an exchange had failed. The witness advised Popović to either set the prisoners free or to have them transferred to a territory of their choice. The witness said that the fate of the prisoners was discussed at a meeting of the Provisional Government and knew that Grujić proposed their exchange through the International Red Cross. The witness did not know how many of these prisoners there were and what happened to them later.

#### ***Observer's notes:***

*The witness avoided answering specific questions, made general statements, and offered opinions rather than facts. Likewise, he consistently avoided disclosing his information regarding the prisoners killed in the camps, this in spite of the fact that his service included a clearing up unit under Kosta Erić, his immediate subordinate with whom he had had several talks about the bodies found in the Zvornik area, their identification, and burial.*