

**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

**28 March 2006**

### **Examination of witness Sredo Vuković**

Before the war the witness was a street constable in Zvornik. After Serb government was established in Zvornik, he was mobilized and took part in military actions as a member of the police. He served in a unit guarding trenches.

### **The expulsion from Kozluk**

The witness said he did not know anything about the expulsion of the Kozluk Bosniaks.

### **The ‘Ekonomija’ war crimes**

In May and June 1992, the witness was appointed, by oral order of his superiors Slavko Erić and Petko Panić, as head of security in the prison established at the ‘Ekonomija’ agricultural estate. An office was converted into a prison which the guards kept locked. The guards were six elderly reservists who, the witness said, volunteered for this duty in order to avoid being sent to the front. The witness replaced Miloš Milanović, who had suffered a nervous breakdown brought on by members of various paramilitary formations forcibly entering the facility and abusing the detained civilians. At the time the witness was placed in charge of security, there were 10 to 15 prisoners; new men were brought in all the time and the prison population rose to at least 20 before the prisoners were transferred to the Misdemeanour Court. The prisoners were brought in by territorials: they were Muslims who had been abducted from buses and buildings or at barricades, returned from Serbia... The witness did not stay at ‘Ekonomija’ all the time but went there once a day, and at times less often, to make sure everything was all right.

The witness saw a man called Mrki or Crni beat a prisoner by name of Fadil Handžić, a taxi driver whom he had known in Zvornik. He saw Handžić being taken out of the room and beaten with a bat. He threw Crni out and ordered the guards to let no one in as well as to notify the

Zvornik police station of any unauthorized attempt to enter the facility. He personally informed his superiors of the incident.

The witness believed that the prison was established by the Provisional Government, with the police being instructed to provide security. He said that all the prisoners were Muslim civilians. No records of prisoners were made and no incident reports written because the witness had been told by his superior to 'commit nothing to paper'.

After a month or a month and a half at 'Ekonomija', the prisoners were transferred to Karakaj and placed in a workshop of the Technical School. They were guarded by the same guards as those at 'Ekonomija', who were under the witness's command. The witness knew that 10 to 12 new men were brought by territorials to the Technical School prison. The prison operated less than a month and the prisoners were transferred to the Misdemeanour Court building, its windows having been provided with iron bars for the purpose.

The witness set free a 17-year prisoner, Zahid Osmanović, on his own initiative. Asked whether he had been given permission to do so by his superiors, he said he had asked no one because a thing like that was not done; if the thing got out, he said, he would have been killed by the men who had brought the boy in.

The Misdemeanour Court prison was repeatedly forcibly entered by the 'Gogić men' from Loznica. On one such occasion, they beat a prisoner by name of Ramiz Smailović a.k.a. Čelo. The witness reported the incident to his superiors but they took no action. Over time, the prison population increased appreciably. The prison operated until October, when the prisoners were transferred to a collection centre in Batković.

The witness had known Grujić since 1983 and saw him once or twice during the war. He heard that Grujić visited the Misdemeanour Court while it served as prison and inquired about a Muslim; he was told that the man he was looking for was not there and did not enter the facility.

### **The war crimes at the Čelopek camp**

The witness knew Cvijetko Jović, who was the commander of the reserve police stations in Tršić and Čelopek during the war. He learned of the existence of the Čelopek camp some time before the residents of Divič were transferred to the Misdemeanour Court. The witness was ordered orally by the then chief of police, Marinko Vasilić, to transfer the residents of Divič to the Misdemeanour Court under police escort, adding that they would stay there two or three days and then be taken to the Batkovići collection centre. He did not dare ask Vasilić why the men from Divič had been detained because the Chief cursed and beat everybody including policemen. In the witness's words, 'one didn't dare approach him'.

The witness took to Čelopek two buses belonging to the Drina trans company and transferred the prisoners to the Misdemeanour Court. He did not see any dead, injured or sick men. In Čelopek, he saw the police officer Sreća Ikonić but not Cvijetko Jović.

The witness knew that chief Vasilić had called for an ambulance car and a doctor and that a women doctor bandaged an injured man. The prisoners spent seven to 10 days in the Misdemeanour Court before being transferred to Batković.

The witness said he knew Abdulah Buljubašić a.k.a. Bubica, the driver of the Glinica company general manager. He last saw him in July in the Misdemeanour Court prison when Buljubašić and three other men had been brought in by Captain Dragan Obrenović. Buljubašić had been severely beaten. The witness was not sure whether Bubica was 'returned to Standard' by Captain Obrenović the same day or next.

**Observer's notes:**

*The witness appeared frightened and careful about what to say. At first, he denied everything he had told the investigators but when confronted with evidence he corroborated his original statement.*

During the examination, Vuković was visibly in great fear. For this reason, the Trial Chamber President often found it necessary to confront him with his earlier statements, which were far more specific as to the subject of the indictment.