

**Ovčara case**  
**Trial for the war crimes against the war prisoners**  
**War Crimes Chamber of the District Court in Belgrade, Serbia**  
**Number of case: K.V. br.1/2003**

**Trial Chamber:** Vesko Krstajić (the presiding judge), Gordana Božilović-Petrović (judge) and Vinka Beraha-Nikićević (judge).

**Prosecutor:** Deputy War Crimes Prosecutor Dušan Knežević.

**Defendants:** Miroљjub Vujović, Stanko Vujanović, Jovica Perić, Ivan Atanasijević, Predrag Madžarac and Milan Vojnović, Serbs from Croatia.

**Report:** Nataša Kandić and Dragoljub Todorović, victims representatives

**29 April 2004**

Witness **Ilija Galović** pointed out that he knew most of the defendants. In his statement, witness Galović spoke more about the difficult situation of the Serbs from Vukovar in 1991 than about the subject matter of the trial itself. In his words, at the time of the fighting in Vukovar he had been in the background together with the defendants Milan Vojnović and Predrag Madžarac and had no direct superior. He pointed out that on 19 or 20 November, when he had gone to visit the father of defendant Madžarac, he had seen the defendant at home there. It was only some eight to 10 days later that he had heard about the shooting at Ovčara.

Witness **Milan Filipović** stated that he knew well the defendants Miroљjub Vujović and Stanko Vujanović. In his words, he had come to Vukovar with a group of volunteers who were assigned to the command of captain Radić whose commander, in turn, was Milan Sofronijević, aka Guto. Witness Filipović pointed out that he did not know which unit the defendants Vujović and Vujanović were in, but he knew that they were under the command of captain Radić whose headquarters were in Vujanović's house. He remarked that he did not believe that Vujović and Vujanović were in command and added that he was glad to have met them. In his words, the group of volunteers he was a member of was returned home to Smederevo on 21 November. The witness pointed out that he had asked captain Radić, whom he had found at the headquarters, for a transport, and then said that, before leaving for home, they had checked in their automatic rifles. At that time, nobody even mentioned Ovčara. He said that he did not know where Ovčara was and, in the end, he added that today even the parrots know what had happened there.

Witness **Stevan Mišćević** stated that of all the defendants he knew Miroљjub Vujović and Stanko Vujanović. In his words, on the day of the liberation of Vukovar, on 18 November 1991, he was in Borovo Selo, where he had gone to fetch his wife and children. The witness said that he had returned to Vukovar on 19 November and added that more than 10,000 persons were at Velepromet, at the agricultural cooperative, at Modateks and at Ovčara. In his words, those people, among whom there were women, children and the elderly, were coming out of the cellars once the fighting had stopped. They were guarded by the army and they were waiting for the buses which drove them to Serbia or Croatia. He pointed out that he thought that on 20 November, at about two or three o'clock in the afternoon, he had gone to Ovčara to look for his

aunt and her son. In his own words, he had gone to Ovčara dressed in civilian clothes. There he saw four or five civilian buses, military vehicles, a big, green truck, many cars and many people and soldiers. Two soldiers stood at the entrance to the hangar, but they did not forbid people to enter the hangar. It was very dark in the hangar so that one could not see much there. Along the right hand wall of the hangar there were soldiers, while along the left hand side there were civilians. In the hangar he saw former municipal inspector, Emil Čakalić, who asked him "where are we going", whereupon the witness answered him that he did not know, but he had heard that some of them would be taken to Croatia, some to Serbia. Beside Čakalić, he saw Vladimir Dudas. In his words, he spent some 20 minutes at Ovčara and saw there Stevo Zorić and Pero Miljanović, while he did not know other uniformed persons. The people inside the hangar had been tortured and there were women and children among them. The witness pointed out that he had received the first piece of information about the shooting at Ovčara in April 1992, from the chief of police, Dragan Đukić, although there were all types of rumors in Vukovar even before that.

In the beginning, witness Jovan Radan said that he knew all the defendants, except Jovica Perić. Speaking about his participation in the fighting, Radan pointed out that, after ten days at Petrova Gora, he had been moved to Velepromet to a security detail. In his words, he stayed at Velepromet until the end of the fighting when, at Velepromet, there were between 10,000 and 12,000 civilians coming out of their cellars and driven away in buses. The defendants Vujović and Vujanović were company commanders and he used to see them from time to time at Velepromet. The witness pointed out that after five, six or even ten days he had heard about what had happened at Ovčara. In the end, Radan pointed out that, at Velepromet, men were separated from the women and children and added that it was the suspected ones that had been separated. The separation was carried out by the security personnel, including Žigić.

In the beginning, witness Siniša Lakić said that he knew all the defendants and that the mother of defendant Vujović was his aunt. In view of the fact that that was not a degree of kinship which would free him from the obligation to testify, the trial chamber began questioning him. The witness stated that he had come to Vukovar with a group of some 20 reservists at the beginning of October 1991. There they joined captain Radić's company where their immediate superior was a person whose name was Đorđe. After that, the witness said that defendant Vujović had been in the same company with him and that, being well familiar with the terrain, he had been a coordinator at the headquarters. He added that Vujović had not been the commander of any of the units there. The witness pointed out that at the time the fighting in Vukovar was ended, he had been in Petrova Gora and added that he had learned of the events at Ovčara half a year later. Toward the end of his testimony, witness Lakić said: "The only thing I know is that in some other, patriotic countries, major streets of the cities are named after people like these here (referring to the defendants), and here, this."

At the beginning of his testimony, witness **Goran Valjarević**, aka **Džo** or **Mali Džo**, said that he knew all the defendants and added that he was pleased and honored by this fact. In his words, he had gone to Vukovar as a volunteer, through the organization of the Serbian Radical Party, and joined the "Leva supoderica" detachment commanded by Milan Lančuzanin, aka Kameni. In the detachment there were between 140 and 150 persons and the detachment took part in the fighting together with the army. Valjarević said that he was wounded on 17 November and transported

first to Negoslavci and then to Belgrade, to return to Vukovar at the beginning of December 1991. In the end, Valjarević pointed out that what he knew about the events at Ovčara he had learned from the newspapers and then added that he had no knowledge of the defendants Vujović and Vujanović having any command responsibilities.

In the beginning, witness **Mihajlo Katalina** said that he knew all the defendants and that they were his good friends. Katalina pointed out that on 19 November 1991 he had gone to Belgrade to fetch the members of his family and added that he had heard about the events at Ovčara only in 1992 or at the beginning of 1993. Katalina then said that he knew Goran Ivanković, aka Džo, who now lives in Canada and who was spreading rumors against the defendants. After he was shown his statement given to the members of the Ministry of the Interior, where he said that he had heard about the shooting of the prisoners of war for the first time in 1994, from Goran Ivanković who told him that he, Goran, was not going to report anyone who gave him 1,000,000 German marks. Katalina pointed out that he had heard about it in Novi Sad, possibly from Ivanković as well.

Witness **Ranko Madžarac**, an uncle of defendant Predrag Madžarac, renounced his right not to give testimony, in view of the fact that he was a close relative of the defendant. The witness pointed out that his brother Milan and defendant Predrag had been in his house in Petrova Gora street until the fall of Vukovar. In his words, defendant Predrag Madžarac was in the guard detail and, when he was wounded in the arm and the leg, he had to go to the hospital to have his wounds dressed every day. The witness emphasized that Milan and Predrag Madžarac had remained in his house even after the fall of Vukovar and performed their guard duty, and after two or three days they went to check on their house and returned in tears because the house had been completely destroyed. At the end of his testimony, the witness pointed out that he had not been at Ovčara and that he had learned about the events at Ovčara in 1992.

#### ***Observers' remarks***

*Witnesses whose testimonies were heard at the trial on 28 and 29 April 2004 spoke very little about the crime committed at Ovčara. Their expositions were, first of all, focused on the events in Vukovar before 18 November and on the events at Ovčara. In the course of the trial so far the parties in the proceedings used to pose the same question to the witnesses several times, while the presiding judge intervened by pointing out the fact that these questions had already been asked and by repeating the answers given to the questions. Qualifications of certain events were striking. Not only the witnesses and the defendants, but also the prosecutor and the presiding judge, often used the term "liberated Vukovar".*