

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

Report: Nataša Kandić and Dragoljub Todorović, victims representatives

30 June 2004

Defendant **Predrag Milojević**, aka **Kinez**, said that he had understood the indictment, but he denied that he had committed the criminal act and refused any criminal responsibility. Defendant Milojević said that he had known that the investigative judge and the warden had exerted pressure on a certain person to make that person accuse him (Milojević) and added that for two months he did not know who it was that had accused him and connected him with this crime. He expressed hope that truth would be uncovered during the proceedings and that those truly responsible would have to pay for the crime. Also, he said that the presence of the representative of the plaintiffs, Nataša Kandić, would help with uncovering the truth. In his words, during the fighting in Vukovar, he had been a member of "Leva supoderica", the detachment with the largest number of volunteers from the Serbian Radical Party, but also people from Vukovar, Hungarians, etc. Defendant pointed out that the crime at Ovčara was not committed on 20 November, but on 19 November 1991. In the evening of that particular day, he had started toward Ovčara together with Kameni, Mare and Ceca. There they saw a large number of people most of whom defendant did not know. Although he did not enter the hangar, he saw the prisoners inside, sitting, and many local inhabitants. Defendant Milojević pointed out that he had not seen major Šljivančanin, captain Radić and captain Mrkšić at Ovčara, nor had he seen anyone from the YNA Guards brigade. In the words of the defendant, they had stayed between 30 and 40 minutes at Ovčara. On the way back from Ovčara, a certain person joined them and returned with them to Vukovar. Before leaving, judging by the gestures, he saw his commander, Kameni, arguing with the defendants Vujović and Vujanović. After the argument, Kameni told them: "Let's leave here, jump in". In Milojević's words, there was a tractor with a trailer in front of their car, with the trailer full of prisoners, with the soldiers all around. The people "loading" the trailer with prisoners were the civilians whom defendant Milojević had seen then for the first time and whom he had not seen afterwards. After they had followed the tractor and covered some 100 meters, they got stuck in the mud while the tractor turned off the road. In the words of the defendant, they managed to pull themselves out of the mud after 10 to 15 minutes, turned around and returned to the headquarters. Defendant said that the atmosphere at Ovčara had been hellish and unpredictable. There were some 100 soldiers there, with white harnesses, and the defendant further said that he could not believe that what had happened would happen. Defendant further said that upon their return from Ovčara, around 19:00 hours, they went to his aunt Radojka for dinner where they saw captain Radić. On the occasion, captain Radić told them not to worry about what would happen at Ovčara as the army was there. When he saw captain Radić the following day, he was cursing and shouting: "I've guarded him all the time, and he has blooded his hands", thinking of the first protected witness. Speaking of the functions of the defendants Vujović and Vujanović, defendant Milojević pointed out that they had been company commanders and added that Vujović was under the command of captain Radić, while Vujanović

was under the command of captain Bojkovski. Defendant then spoke about his contacts with other defendants and the first protected witness. In his words, he met twice with defendant Lančužanin and the protected witness, while once, together with the protected witness, he went to Marko Ljuboja. He said that he had known the protected witness since 1991, that they did not go into action together and that he did not see him at Ovčara. He added that the protected witness was suffering from a "persecution mania and believed everybody was informing on him". Upon the publication of the text "The truth about Ovčara", the protected witness came to him and told him that he was not involved with the crime, but that he was afraid of the inhabitants of Vukovar and thought they were going to frame him. Then he said to the defendant that "one should drown all the inhabitants of Vukovar, Stanko, Nada, Miroљjub, Kresojević and the rest of them". He also told him that "he will revenge himself should Stanko agree to talk".

Defendant **Predrag Dragović**, aka **Ceca**, said that he understood what he was charged with, but he said that there was nobody who could corroborate the charges from the indictment against him. Dragović said that he had gone to Ovčara together with Ljuboja, Kinez and Lančužanin and that he had spent some 10 to 15 minutes in front of the hangar there. Because he was wounded he stayed in the car and left it only to light a cigarette and to urinate. In his words, there were soldiers in different uniforms there and that, after 10 to 15 minutes, Lančužanin told them to leave, so they left after the tractor with a trailer, but that their car got stuck in the mud. There was a tarpaulin on the tractor trailer so he could not see whether there were people in it, and a man was sitting on the left hand mudguard. The person who had come with them went out of the car and started in the direction the tractor had gone in order to ask someone to help them pull the car out of the mud. Defendant Dragović pointed out that he had gone after him although he did not know why. Then a volley from automatic rifles was heard and the said person asked: "What are we going to do now?" After they had pulled the car out of the mud they returned to Vukovar. Defendant pointed out that he had not seen the defendants Vujović and Vujanović at Ovčara and added that he was aware of the fact that his commander, Lančužanin, had had an argument with Vujanović. Defendant then said that at Ovčara he had not seen any of the YNA officers and added that he knew that major Šljivančanin had issued an order prohibiting the shooting of any of the prisoners because of the intelligence that could be gotten from them. In the end, defendant Dragović pointed out that he had immediately, after only a day or two, learned about what had happened at Ovčara.