

INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE PROSECUTION
OF PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR SERIOUS VIOLATIONS
OF INTERNATIONAL LAW COMMITTED IN THE TERRITORY
OF THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA SINCE 1991

WITNESS STATEMENT

WITNESS INFORMATION:

Last Name MORINA

First Name(s): Halil

Father's First Name: Halit

Nickname: -

Gender: Male

Date of Birth: 19/11/36

Place of Birth: Landovice

Ethnic Origin: Kosovar Albanian

Religion: Muslim


Language(s) Spoken: Albanian -Serbian

Language(s) Written (if different from spoken): Albanian, Serbian.

Language(s) Used in Interview: English/Albanian

Current Occupation: Retired

Former: Farmer

Address: 

no phone contact

Date(s) of Interview(s): 4th 5th October 2001

Interviewer: Clifford SMITH

Interpreter: Asllan TAHIRI

Names of all persons present during interview(s):

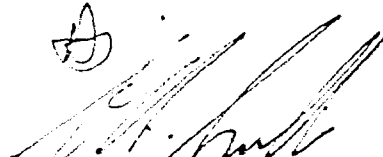
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Halil Morina

OTHERS PRESENT:



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WITNESS STATEMENT:

I was born in, and have lived in Landovice all my life. I am married with eight children aged 24 to 46 years. The village of Landovice is situated about seven kilometers north of Prizren town, on the main road towards Gjakove, in the municipality of Prizren.

In early 1999 there were about one hundred and twenty houses in the village, I estimate that one hundred were Kosovar Albanian, the remainder were Romas. There were about one thousand three hundred people in total. My own compound is situated as the second on the left as you enter the village from the mosque by the main road

In 1958 I completed military service in an anti aircraft artillery unit in Brcko, Bosnia, and later in Novi Sad, Serbia.

I have been asked specifically about the destruction of the mosque in my village in 1999: however I will first briefly describe the events leading up to this.

On 26th March 1999 at 1000hrs three Serbian VJ soldiers killed in our village, by the KLA. The Serbian response to this came within the hour, the same day. Mixed Serbian forces; VJ, police and paramilitary arrived in the village. They were accompanied by several tanks, APC's, Praga's and cannons. There were many soldiers stretching from the vineyards to main road. These had come from the direction of the motel at the top of the hill from Prizren; they were burning the houses on the outskirts of the village as they arrived.

They made no attempt to enter straight away, but commenced to shell the village. This started about 1100hrs and continued until 1500hrs. The lower half of the village was badly damaged, it was all civilian property, there were no KLA in the village at that time, the village was not a haven for the KLA and never had been.

My cousin s daughter Njomza MORINA, 15 yrs killed in the shelling, so was her mother, Fatime MORINA 44 yrs, and eleven other villagers, I remember three by name;
Ismet GA SHI b 1952
Dalife GASHI 70 yrs
Festime MORINA 2 yrs.

Having just spoken to my cousin, he has assisted me to remember the other names of those killed;

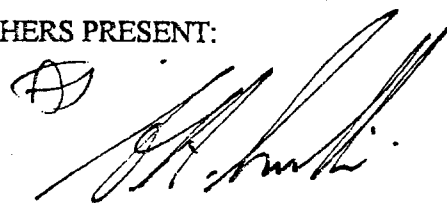
Afrim GASHI 16yrs
Bukurije QARETI aged 36 yrs.

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Halil MORINA

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Luljeta QARETI aged 28yrs,
 (the victim above was later found in the mass grave site known as "The firing range", on the road between Prizren and Suva Reka)
 Gzim QARETI 13 yrs.
 Nazlije QARETI 15 yrs
 Diellza QARETI 18months
 Kushtrim SELIMAJ 7yrs
 Kosovare SELIMAJ 9yrs
 The body of the victim above, Kosovare, was later found in bushes in the village; to this day the bodies of the others are still missing
 There were also at least thirteen other civilians injured

When the shelling finished then the mixed Serbian forces entered the village, there were police and regular soldiers, they were obviously working together. They went from house to house killing when they could. At this time another three died;

Avdi MORINA 60 yrs
 Avdi GASHI 53 yrs
 Hadije GASHI 65yrs, she was handicapped; the Serbs burned her in her yard. I did not see these killings but found the bodies afterwards

I went and hid by the stream close to my house with my wife and brother Esat, we stayed there for three hours. I think there were only three other people who stayed, hidden, in the village. The rest fled in two different directions; half went into the woods and hills, north east, eventually reaching Serbica village, close by; subsequently traveling to Prizren and the Albanian border. The remainder went south west towards Tupec village, also nearby, and on to Albania. Another villager, Shefki JAHA, aged 50 yrs, was taken prisoner by the soldiers the same day, he has not been seen since.

The troops withdrew from the village at about 1900 hours; from where I was I could see that the mosque was burning, I saw the smoke. I subsequently examined the building and found that the wooden fixtures and furnishings, carpets, had been burned.

My house had been burned so I stayed with at my brother's house next door.

The following day, 27th March 1999, at 0800hrs, my brother and I went with Ruzhdi GASHI, another villager, to view all the dead bodies. We went looking for younger people to help bury them but could not find anyone, we had to leave them where they were, we covered them with sheets and blankets.

SIGNATURE OF WITNESS:

Halil Morina

OTHERS PRESENT:

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About seventy five percent of the properties in the village had been burned, the exception was the Kalimash neighbourhood, which was not so damaged. TM

That day, 27th March at 1100hrs I was watching from my own house, I saw twenty to thirty VJ soldiers arrive in Landovica again. They were dressed in military green, with a few in camouflage uniforms, they had a jeep and a larger military vehicle.

One group of these troops went to the houses on the hill, where the thirteen I named had been killed. A second group went to the house next door to mine, where there was one body; the third group, three soldiers, went to the mosque, they were in a pinzgauer; I noticed that they were wearing two white ribbons on their arms.

I watched, from an upper window of my house; I saw two soldiers enter the mosque later the other joined them, I could not see if they were carrying anything. They stayed in for three to four minutes when they re appeared; at that time they were joined by the other troops leaving the village and they all departed. No more than ten minutes later, there was a large explosion I looked towards the mosque in time to see the minaret falling down as the tower collapsed. As it fell it destroyed the roof of the mosque. There was no shelling at that time, the mosque had been deliberately blown up.

The VJ returned at about 1230 hrs same day, 27th March, in a seven ton ZASTAVA truck. They also had two or three pinzgauers; there were twenty to thirty soldiers in regular green military uniform, one jeep with troops remained on main road by the mosque, on hill. There were no police; I was watching from my brothers house, in the roof. We were close enough to hear the soldiers loading the truck, but not see what they were doing. I heard the commander saying to his soldiers, "Quick, quick." After they left I went to the hill and saw that the bodies were gone; they had been outside Ismet GASHI's house.

About 3rd April, I left the village with my wife and brother, it was too dangerous to stay. We went to Serbica, and stayed there for the next five days, with my nephew Jernin (Binak) THAQI.

In Serbica at that time there were six villagers from Landovica, but there were also eight hundred from PIRANA, the next village on the main road from Landovica going away from Prizren; these people had been evicted from their village on 25th March,

8th April 1999 at 1500hrs hrs, many mixed Serbian troops entered Serbica village, military and paramilitaries with military vehicles and cars, some of the paramilitary had beards like chetniks, they wore red bandanas. These troops told the local (Serbica) Serbs, they were traitors for allowing Albanian refugees in their village. The forces gave these village Serbs twenty four hours to evict us.

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Habib Morina

OTHERS PRESENT:

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The next day 9th April the local Serbs arranged seven buses; they then took all the none residents of Serbica, to ZHUR, the local Serbs drove the buses.

From there we had to walk the rest of the way, about six kilometers, to the border. My brother and about a third of these people had already left on gone to Prizren. The local Serbs had apparently vouched for the Serbica village Albanians, they had therefore remained, however this was only a short respite, as they were eventually evicted in May.

When I say that we were driven to Zhur, I should say that there was a convoy of people and tractors from Landovice slowly making their way to the border, we were escorted by police when we left Serbica and in the buses overtook these people to get to Zhur.

At the border police demanded our identification papers, I gave the my identification card, it was thrown on a pile of other similar papers.

SIGNATURE OF WITNESS:

Hachik Morina

OTHERS PRESENT:

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WITNESS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This Statement consisting of 7 pages, has been read over to me in the Albanian language and is true to the best of my knowledge and recollection. I have given this Statement voluntarily and am aware that it may be used in legal proceedings before the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991, and that I may be called to give evidence in public before the Tribunal.

Signed: Hakim Morina

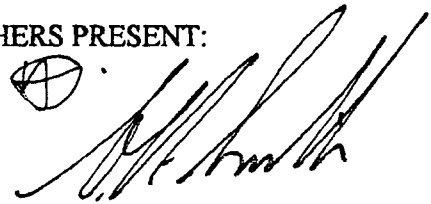
Dated: 05.10.2001

SIGNATURE OF WITNESS:

Hakim Morina

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OTHERS PRESENT:

A handwritten signature, possibly of a legal representative or official, is present next to the 'OTHERS PRESENT' label. The signature is written in dark ink and is somewhat stylized.

INTERPRETER CERTIFICATION

I, Asllan TAHIRI

Interpreter, certify that:

1. I am duly qualified and approved by The Registry of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991 to interpret from the Albanian language into the English language and from the English language into the Albanian language.
2. I have been informed by Halil MORINA that he speaks and understands the Albanian language.
3. I have orally translated the above statement from the English language to the Albanian language in the presence of Halil MORINA who appeared to have heard and understood my translation of this Statement.
4. He has acknowledged that the facts and matters set out in this Statement, as translated by me, are true to the best of her knowledge and recollection and has accordingly signed her signature where indicated.

Dated: 05/10/01

Signed: Asllan Tahiri

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SIGNATURE OF WITNESS:

Halil Morina

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OTHERS PRESENT:

TM
[Signature]