

STATEMENT 93

HAPPENINGS IN THE UNPROFOR BASE AT POTOCARI

I PART

My name is Hasa Selimovic. I was born in 1951 in the village of Tokljaci, Srebrenica municipality where I got married and lived till the beginning of May 1992 when my village was attacked by the Chetniks. The attack was launched from the direction of Krnjici and Jezero. In that attack several civilians were killed and when we escaped from the village the Chetniks looted all the houses and burnt them down not sparing a single one.

When we escaped from the village, I went with my family to Miholjevine where we spent 7 days and after that we had to go into the woods located in the area called Sehiti where we were hiding from the Chetniks. We lived in the woods till the winter and then we went to Osmace and stayed there till the end of March 1993. When the Chetniks launched a severe offensive on all the Muslim villages in that region, we had to escape from Osmace and to go to Srebrenica. We found accommodation in one building in the settlement of Knjazevac where we lived till the fall of Srebrenica.

When Srebrenica was pronounced a demilitarised zone in April 1993, I thought that it was the most beautiful thing that could happen to the people who were dying of hunger and could see horrific scenes of women, children massacred in shelling. I simply cannot describe how happy I was when I heard that Srebrenica was proclaimed a demilitarised zone. I was even happier when UNPROFOR soldiers, whose mandate was to protect Srebrenica and its inhabitants from the attacks of the Chetniks, arrived in Srebrenica.

We were all overcome by joy although we lived in terrible conditions without electricity, water or basic toilet articles. We could live with that but we wanted the war and killing of civilians to stop. During the first several months I was more than happy because the convoys with humanitarian help were coming to the town regularly and the security situation was rather good. Unfortunately, the situation worsened very soon and began resembling that one before the demilitarisation. The Chetniks resumed shelling of the town killing and wounding civilians.

The convoys with humanitarian aid rarely arrived in the town. We were deeply disappointed to see how passive UNPROFOR soldiers ie. the Dutch battalion soldiers were. We were disappointed to see that they did not want to take any measures under their mandate to prevent the Chetniks in shelling the town and killing innocent civilians. Moreover, the Chetniks intensified shelling of the town when they realised how passive UNPROFOR soldiers were. They even began infantry attacks on the town.

II PART

As the Dutch battalion soldiers were very passive and did not respond to the Chetniks' attacks on the demilitarised zone, on 6 July 1995 the Chetniks openly attacked the demilitarised zone of Srebrenica. During the first several days of their attack we were hiding in the basement of our building because

shelling was literary razing the town to the ground. On 10 July in the evening hours we left our shelter and set off in the direction of the factory called “Vezionica” and the Post office building. We had to leave our shelter because on that day in the afternoon hours the Chetniks reached the surrounding hills above our building and we were afraid to stay in it.

On 11 July we were in front of the factory “Vezionica” where some Dutch battalion soldiers were stationed. We wanted their help and instructions where to go now when the Chetniks entered the town. However, the Dutch battalion soldiers were within their compound and did not show up at all and they behaved as nothing was happening in the town. If they had been present in the streets of Srebrenica I am sure that it would have slowed down the Chetniks’ advancing towards the town.

On the same day the Dutch battalion soldiers forced us to leave that place and to go into nearby buildings telling us that allegedly NATO planes would bomb Serb positions. We really believed that the air raids were imminent and that they would prevent the Chetniks taking over the town coming into the buildings where we were.

However, in no time we heard the roar of one or two planes which allegedly dropped a few bombs around Pribicevac but as they missed the target the Serb Army continued their advancing towards the town. When the roar of the planes silenced we went out and heard another roar, this time the roar of masses of civilians gathered in front of the factory “Vezionica”. They were trying to enter that factory compound where I saw the Dutch battalion soldiers getting in their trucks and vehicles ready to leave that base. I saw masses of civilians trying to get on the trucks and vehicles.

Together with my husband Ismet, son Junuz and daughter Amira I managed to get on one truck and soon the truck was driving in the direction of Potocari. My husband and my son who was born in 1978 decided to go to Potocari because they trusted the Dutch battalion soldiers. They believed that they would be saved as well as all those who came into their base to seek for their protection. I also believed that we would be saved once inside the main UNPROFOR base at Potocari. When we arrived in Potocari it was around 1400hrs. The truck on which we were, entered the UN base and it is difficult to explain how happy we were at that moment. As soon as the truck stopped, a few Dutch soldiers came.

They were so kind, those Dutch battalion soldiers, that they helped my son and my daughter get off the trucks. Actually they almost carried them in their arms. After that they directed us to one building in which we were supposed to stay until the evacuation from that place. They also promised us that all those civilians who were in the main UN base would be protected and they said that they guaranteed their full safety as well as the evacuation from that place to a free territory. When we came into that room we were directed to, I saw a lot of civilians and among them lots of men but still there was enough space in that room to receive some more civilians. During those three days we spent in that factory, the Dutch battalion soldiers distributed some food but that was not suffice for all of us. There was no water inside that room so we had to go to one brook to fetch it . On 12 July around noon one Dutch soldier accompanied by Enez Harbas from the village of Rijeka came into the room with a notebook and a pencil. Enez told my husband to write his name in that notebook because the Dutch battalion soldiers wanted to know the exact number of the men in their base. My husband did it as well as my son Junuz

(Later my son's name was not found on any of those lists), while a number of the men in that room refused to have their names put on any of those lists most probably being afraid that the lists would fall into the hands of the Chetniks.

According to my assessment and according to what I could see during those three days there were at least 500 men in that room. When the lists were ready all those whose names were put on the lists were sure that they would be saved. During the three days we spent in that factory my husband and my son were very calm and they behaved quite normal being sure that nothing bad would happen to them. Most probably they behaved like that because they believed in all those promises the Dutch battalion soldiers gave them when we entered the base.

They never mentioned nor did they try to leave that base and they did not have a feeling that anything terrible would happen to them later. We did not know what was going on outside because the Dutch battalion soldiers did not tell us a word about those civilians who were in front of the UN base. It was on 13 July when we heard that the men were being separated from the women and children. We heard that from Ismet from Gladovici who went to fetch some water and who saw tens of men lying slaughtered around that brook and who saw that the men were being separated. During the night of 12 /13 July we heard the women and children who were in front of the base crying and screaming. It was not clear to us what was happening. On 13 July in the morning, one Dutch soldier again came into the room where we were and told us to prepare ourselves to be evacuated from that place. He told us to leave the room in groups and not to panic and not to make any noise.

At that moment I noticed that my husband looked worried most probably because he heard from Ismet from Gladovici about the separation of the men. I thought that only those men who were fit for military service were endangered but that the others would be safely evacuated from that place.

It was around two o'clock in the afternoon when our turn came to leave the room and to proceed towards the evacuation spot. We were walking towards the gate not having a presentiment of anything terrible ahead. When we were close to the gate I saw that from the gate up to the place where the vehicles intended for our transportation were parked, there was a path marked by plastic tapes we were supposed to go along. Suddenly I saw a large group of the men separated from the others and standing a bit further from the road. Then I paid attention to the path we were supposed to go long i.e. to the point where those tapes ended and I saw the Chetniks or the Dutch battalion soldiers separating the men and ordering them to go aside. I say the Chetniks or the Dutch battalion soldiers because the Dutch battalion soldiers had given their uniforms to the Chetniks and it was difficult to tell the difference between them

When my husband saw what was going on, he and some other men who were in our group tried to stay at the gate because they were afraid they would be separated but then two or three Dutch soldiers approached them and pushed them thus forcing them to walk along the path marked by those tapes. It was clear to me that once again the Dutch soldiers lied to us and betrayed us, this time for the last time, because we knew that all the men would be slaughtered. The only thing left to me at that moment was to try to hide my son Junuz and save his life at least.

My husband was immediately separated but I managed to pass with my son Junuz and my daughter Amira. Unfortunately, when we got on one of the trucks I was approached by Mladic who ordered my son Junuz to get off the truck. I tried to explain to Mladic that my son was just a child and that he was not to be blamed for anything. He just said that my son would come back. It is true, they returned my son Junuz in a black bag from a mass grave in the vicinity of Zvornik.

Statement taken by: Hidajet Kardasevic

Statement given by: Hasa Selimovic

STATEMENT 80

OCCURRENCES WITHIN THE UNPROFOR BASE AT POTOČARI

I PART

My name is Zlata Salihovic. I was born in 1957 in the village of Novo Selo but I lived with my husband in the village of Pahljevici, Zvornik municipality. I lived in the village of Pahljevici with my family till 1992 when the war broke out. Then we had to leave our house which was located by the Konjevic Polje-Zvornik main road. We found shelter in the village of Konjevic polje where we lived till 1993 when that village was taken over by the Chetniks. We had to escape from that place running away from the Serb Army which was attacking from all sides.

We went to Srebrenica which was at that time the only free territory in eastern part of Podrinje. When we arrived in Srebrenica we found accommodation in one building in part of town called Bratovo and we shared that, one room accommodation with another family till the fall of Sreberenica on 11 July 1995. When Srebrenica was proclaimed a demilitarized zone we were all exhilarated and when UNPROFOR soldiers arrived that was a day of unheard of celebration for tormented people of Srebrenica.

I personally thought and most of civilians in Srebrenica shared my opinion, that the war was over and that we would be able to work and have a normal life. At the beginning the situation was as we fancied it in our dreams, however, as the time was passing by the situation was becoming worse and worse and reached its acme on 6 July 1995 when the Chetniks openly attacked the demilitarized zone from their positions. During the following days ie., till 11 July we were in the basement trying to protect ourselves from the Chetniks' shelling.

On 10 July in the evening hours most of Srebrenica inhabitants gathered in front of the buildings located in part of town called Bratovo and in front of the factory "Vezionica" where Dutch battalion soldiers were stationed. We civilians thought that Dutch soldiers would protect us because that was why they had been sent to Srebrenica. When everything was over and the Chetniks entered the town, I talked to my husband as we had to decide where to go. He said: "Zlato, take our children and go to Potocari and I will go with our soldiers through the woods towards a free territory. That is the only way that some of us survive". Thus we separated and he went towards Kazani and I went with our children towards the

factory" Vezionica". We spent there some time and then after being told by Dutch soldiers to go to their base we set off in the direction of Potocari. At that moment I believed in Dutch soldiers and I thought they would protect all the civilians who came to their base to seek for their protection. I felt so safe and peaceful and I began thinking that my husband Sead made a mistake and that he should have come with us to Potocari. When I arrived in Potocari with my children we stopped in front of some busses and truck trailers. I planned to stay with my children under one truck trailer till the moment of evacuation. However, somewhere in the evening hours of the same day one Dutch soldier came and told us to follow him. He told us that he would take us to one of those factories. I told my children to collect their bags and we followed him. Besides me and my children there were some other 20 civilians who also followed that Dutch soldier. Upon entering one factory workshop I noticed lots of civilians who had arrived before us.

There were lots of men among them. The Dutch soldiers told us to stay in that workshop and not to leave it until we were allowed by some of their soldiers. At that moment I was very happy to be within their compound because I saw how many people were still waiting outside in front of their compound and could not enter it. During our stay in that factory only on the first day we got some food from Dutch soldiers.

Later not only that they did not give us food but they also forbade us to go and fetch water. In spite of the fact that we did not have food or water I still believed the Dutch soldier who brought us into their base and told us that we would be safer in their base.

Next day ie., on 12 July, around noon two Dutch soldiers came into that workshop where we were and told us that we should make a list of all men in the factory otherwise the Chetniks would not allow the evacuation to commence. There was one man with that Dutch soldier and he was entering the names of men into that list. When they approached me I told them to put my son's name on the list. My son Senad was born in August 1978 and at that moment he was 16 going on 17. I also noticed that some men refused to tell their names and I did not understand at that moment if they were afraid of something or simply did not want to have their names entered into that list for some other reason. Now it is as clear as day to me because they knew that those lists would be handed over to the Chetniks. I personally expected so much from those lists. I believed that even if they decide to separate men fit for military service from women and children that they would not touch those who are under 18 years of age.

During those three days we spent in that workshop, my son Senad was quite calm. Actually he was still a child and he did not know what might happen to him. Of course that other men were not calm at all because they knew what might happen to them. We did not know what was going on outside that workshop in which we were nor did Dutch soldiers tell us anything. Shortly after those lists were made the Chetniks showed up in the factory accompanied by Dutch soldiers. They were walking among us and were discussing something. During the night of 12/13 July we heard some women scream outside the factory but nobody informed us on what was happening there.

On 13 July, around 1000hrs in the morning one interpreter entered the workshop in which we were and told us to get ready for evacuation. He further on told us not to create a commotion while leaving that workshop and to leave in groups of 20 people each. When that interpreter left two Dutch soldiers came and men were requested to take all metal objects out of their pockets and to hand them over to them. I remember that they put one table in that workshop and men were asked to put their pockets' contents on that table. I remember that besides other things I saw small wooden cigarette boxes on that table. When the process of evacuation commenced Dutch soldiers were escorting civilians from the said workshop.

They were not armed and the whole process was very slow. It was around 1700hrs when it was my turn to leave that workshop with my children. All the time I prayed to God to protect my son and not to allow anything bad to happen to him. While we were passing through a gate I noticed that from that gate there were some yellow tapes stretched and we were supposed to walk between them.. On either side of those yellow tapes there were both Serb and Dutch soldiers. Those yellow tapes were stretched up to the place where there were busses and trucks parked. When I approached those vehicles intended for evacuation of civilians for the first time I saw that men were being separated from women and children. I was walking in front of my son Sead who was followed by my daughter Senada. I tried not to pay attention to those Serb soldiers who were separating men from women and children.

When we were very close to one of those trucks, one Chetnik approached us and said to my son: "Give that rucksack to that woman and follow me". I turned at that moment and tried to explain to that Chetnik that my son was only 16 years old but he was not listening to me. He took my son by his hand and took him aside. I grabbed my son Senad by other hand and tried to twist him out of the Chetnik's grasp. A few meters far from us there were 4 – 5 Dutch soldiers who were watching us not undertaking any measures to protect my son. As that Chetnik was stronger than me and was pulling my son's hand harder than me I had to let my son's hand. He took my son and ordered him to board one bus which was full of men. I began to cry and approached the Dutch soldiers and tried to explain to them what happened to my son although they clearly saw it.

Then one of them tapped me on the shoulder and said: " Do not worry mother, your son will come to Tuzla after you." I knew that his words were only empty promises but yet I hoped I would see my son again.

Statement taken by: Hidajet Kardasevic

Statement given by:Zlata Salihovic

STATAMENT 11

CONDUCT AND ROLE OF THE DUTCH BATTALION SOLDIERS IN POTOCARI ON THE OCCASION OF SEPARATION AND TAKING AWAY OF MALE PERSONS FROM 11 THROUGH 13 JULY 1995

My name is Salih Ibrisevic, born in 1943 in the village of Pribidoli, Srebrenica municipality. On 17 May 1992 I had to leave my village along with my spouse and three children because on the said day my village was attacked, looted and burnt down by the Chetniks.

The same misfortune befell other people who lived in the village. From Pribidol we escaped to Osat and were accommodated in a primary school building called "Hasan Brkic" where we had stayed till 31/01/1993. On the said day we had to vacate that school as it was mercilessly shelled by the Chetniks from their position in Srbija from the hillsides of mountains Tara and Zvijezda and Perucac, precisely speaking from one tunnel located over there.

We went to Srebrenica and I managed to find one abandoned garage, before belonging to a Serb, in Kiselica where we stayed for about two months and after that we went to N. Basca as the living conditions in that garage were more than terrible. It was very difficult to provide any food for my family, one of the reasons being that I was a DP in Srebrenica and did not have any land to cultivate. My sons used to go to Zepa in order to bring a kilogram or two of flour putting their lives at risk as they had to pass 20 kilometres of the Chetniks controlled territory in order to reach Zepa.

Humanitarian aid would rarely arrive in Srebrenica and in those rare situations when it would arrive, there was not enough food for all the people. We were mostly provided with blankets, stoves and similar. In July 1992 my brother Husein disappeared. He attempted along with a group of people to come to Srebrenica from Tuzla and from that date we have not heard anything about him. When the Chetniks launched their offensive on Srebrenica at the outset of the month of July 1995, I again moved together with my family in that garage in Kiselica where we stayed till 11 July 1995.

In the afternoon hours of 11 July, we received a news that the Chetniks entered the town of Srebrenica from the direction of a baker's shop and I told my sons that I and their mother would go to UNPROFOR base. I told them: "You have to go to where the majority of fit men plans to go". We took some food and clothes with us and set off towards a nearby petrol station as the majority of people were heading in that direction. It was about 1400hrs when I and my wife reached that petrol station. I have never before seen so many people gathered at one place and at such a small place. Soon shelling commenced. The Chetniks were sending shells from the hills surrounding Srebrenica. I saw that one shell landed in the compound of the factory "Vezionica" where Dutch soldiers were. Together with my wife and other people I set off in the direction of Potocari.

When we reached the factory "Vezionica" where Dutch soldiers were, we noticed that they blocked the road not allowing us to go to Potocari. They were showing us to go back to the town of Srebrenica telling us that soon a bombing raid on the Chetniks' position would be launched. Of course we did not understand all that they were telling us but soon they started pointing at the aircrafts that were really flying over Srebrenica. Hoping that a bombing raid would really begin we all went to find a shelter in

the nearby buildings. We were standing and looking at the sky. Those planes that were flying over Srebrenica began to fire some tracer projectiles but no detonation could be heard.

The Chetniks' reaction was even more intensified shelling of the area around the factory "Vezionica" and the petrol station. Several people were wounded. We tried again to go to Potocari but we were again stopped by Dutch soldiers who were telling us the same they had already told us. We all again attempted to take shelter from shelling and being panic stricken we removed the barrier placed by Dutch soldiers who seeing that withdrew in the factory "Vezionica". It had surely taken us more than one hour before we set off in the direction of Potocari. In the meantime another group of civilians arrived and told us that the Chetniks had already reached the place where the department store was and that caused panic among people who were not sure whether to go to Potocari or not. Nevertheless, we all continued towards Potocari. While I and my wife were going towards Potocari we saw lots of soldiers on either side of the road and due to a great number of civilians they were not able to go towards UNPROFOR base in Potocari. We saw two Dutch trucks which were moving so slowly that I and my wife managed to get on it. We arrived in the camp around 1730hrs.

There were some civilians already in the camp, most probably those who lived in those settlements close to the said factory and who were not thwarted in their attempts to reach the camp. At that moment I felt so safe and protected and even began to think that I made a mistake telling my sons to go through the woods with other men instead of bringing them with us to this camp. Civilians were allowed to enter the camp till evening hours when the Dutch closed the gate, and placing some armed soldiers at the gate they prevented other civilians to enter the camp. On the first day of my stay in the camp, i.e., on 11 July, I noticed that Dutch soldiers had their weapons with them. The next day i.e., on 12 July not a single soldier had his weapon with him. At that moment I felt terrible fear asking myself why Dutch soldiers were not carrying their weapons any more. That happened at the moment when the Chetniks arrived in front of the camp and when it was not allowed for civilians to enter the camp any more although there was enough space within the camp to accommodate another thousand of civilians. When I saw Dutch soldiers walking without their rifles, I talked to some men who were also shocked seeing them without weapons.

Around 0900hrs Dutch soldiers began making a list of the men within the compound. Who ordered and organised that, was not known to me but I am sure that there were at least twice more men in the camp than the number entered on the list. The number of those, among which I was too, put on the list amounted to 239. Among those who were putting the names on the list, I recognised my neighbour Samir Begic, born in 1979 who has been missing since that day (he was separated and taken away). On the same day around 1300hrs one Dutch soldier approached us accompanied with a female language assistant. He told us that the Chetniks would enter the camp and showed us how we, men should surrender to them. He squatted down, putting his arms up and said "You have to be in this position when they enter the camp".

When he said that the Chetniks would enter the camp, my neighbour Fatime lost her consciousness because her husband and her son were in the camp. Upon hearing this information all men in the camp were panic stricken. We felt we had been betrayed by Dutch soldiers and we knew what we could expect

knowing what had already happened to those men who were outside the camp. We attempted to leave the camp but Dutch soldiers would allow only a small group of men and women to leave the camp at a time and would close the gate again. They were deliberately procrastinating the whole procedure by not permitting us all to immediately leave the camp. I want to say that during our first day in the camp, Dutch soldiers brought a cistern with drinkable water. On the next day they prepared some food for us but they did not give us any bread. When I went to fetch some food for me and my wife I heard one Dutch soldier said: "Stop pushing and shoving, you Baliije (Derogatory term used for the Muslims- Interpreter's note), soon you are not going to need any food". When I heard those words I refused to take food and returned to my wife. I also want to mention that my brother's twenty years old daughter with another girl, her very close friend was in the camp. When I met her and while talking to her, one Dutch soldier approached us. He was not carrying a rifle, he did not have a helmet on his head, he was of average height, his hair was fair and very short. He was standing and looking at my niece and her friend, then went and again returned to the place where we were standing.

That lasted for more than half an hour and I was quite sure that he would have taken them away if I had not been there. Early in the morning of 13 July the gate to the camp was opened and they ordered people to leave the camp in small groups. There were some trucks parked by the road. Some Dutch soldiers were standing on the road and according to my assessment only one Chetnik was standing there. At the moment when a group of people would approach the place where Dutch soldiers were standing, they would separate men from woman and children. When I approached that place I heard the Chetnik that was with them said: "Take that one, we are going to need him". I was pretending that I did not hear his words and proceeded towards the truck and at the moment when I was about to get on the truck one Dutch soldier came and pushed me aside saying : "women only".

As the Chetnik did not react I tried again to get on the truck but the Dutch soldier pushed me aside for the second time pointing towards the place where other separated men were standing. I was very persistent and after the third attempt my wife who had already boarded the truck, gave me her hand and I got on the truck, thus managing to reach a free territory ie., the place of Kladanj.

09/04/2001

Statement taken by: Hidajet Kardasevic

Statement given by:Salih Ibrisevic

STATEMENT 6

Physical maltreatment of Jasmin Buljubasic by the Dutch battalion soldiers

My name is Jasmin Buljubasic. I was born in 1975 in the village of Ljeskovik where I had lived with my family till the spring 1993. In April 1993 we had to leave Ljeskovik . Namely, although Ljeskovik and some other areas extending up to the Drina river, ie the border between Bosnia and Serbia, were under control of the defenders of Srebrenica, these areas did not become part of the demilitarized zone.

Together with my family I went to Srebrenica and we lived in a basement of one Serb abandoned house. (Note: At the beginning of 1994 we moved to one settlement in Slapovici where some houses were built by one Swedish humanitarian organization) During my stay in Srebrenica I got married and became a father of one child. With every passing day the situation was becoming worse and worse. It was very difficult to find any food and a humanitarian aid would arrive very rarely. Being the only person of working age in my family in order to support it I decided to make different objects such as pots, buckets in order to sell them and buy some flour, salt and other groceries. However, in order to make the said objects I needed sheet metal and I had to go to the nearby abandoned factories located in Zeleni Jadar and find that material. In the summer 1994, I cannot recall which month that was, but I remember it was in the late afternoon hours, I approached one of the said factories in order to take a piece of sheet metal.

The said factories were located outside the demilitarization zone and the Chetniks had one bunker at the entrance to the factory looking from the direction of Skelani towards Srebrenica. I removed two pieces of sheet metal and was about to go home as it was getting dark. When I left the factory compound I sighted 4-5 Dutch soldiers approaching me from the direction of their observation post located at a crossroads in Zeleni Jadar. While they were approaching me their rifles were aimed at me. They were shouting something but I could not understand them. I dropped the pieces of sheet metal and I did not dare to move. I was afraid that they would start shooting at me. They surrounded me shouting at me and then suddenly I received a severe blow on my neck by one of the soldiers standing behind me. The blow was so severe that I almost fell on the ground and then another four soldiers commenced to beat me with their hands and to kick me into my stomach, my back, loins, in other words I was receiving blows all over my body. I was trying to avoid their blows but they became even more aggressive and their blows became severer. I fell on the ground but their beating continued this time they were only kicking me being lazy to use their hands. The beating was so severe that at one moment I lost my conscious.

At one moment I heard the words "kuca, kuca" (home, home) and I guess they were telling me to go home. I could not see their faces because when they surrendered me and began to beat me it was rather dark. When their beating stopped I remained on the ground for a while and they went towards their observation post. I somehow gathered my strength, got up from the ground and went home. I left the pieces of sheet metal because I was badly beaten that I could not carry them.

I am quite sure that the Dutch soldiers could not see me entering the said compound and that they knew it was a Muslim who entered the factory compound since the Chetniks were not in need for sheet metal. I spent several days in bed, suffering unbearable pains. All my body was in bruises and on the first day after being beaten up I noticed some blood in my urine. I could hardly walk and after that I dared not to go to that factory for about four months. It was late autumn 1994 when the need forced me to go to the factory again. This time I went along with a friend of mine who came from Srebrenica to visit me. We entered one of the abandoned factories where different pieces of furniture used to be manufactured and began collecting some chair legs. We were also began searching for some paper as we needed it as cigarette paper. We suddenly heard some voices and realized that the Dutch soldiers were coming. They must have been in the factory when we arrived. Most probably they were patrolling

within the factory compound. In order to avoid to meet them we hid in one container that used to be a refrigerated warehouse hoping they would not be able to find us there.

Unfortunately one soldier opened it, sighted us and ordered us to leave it. He showed us to go towards the exit of the factory. He was following us with his rifle aimed at us. There were another three soldiers standing at the exit of the factory and the fourth one was on a bridge which we were supposed to cross. While I was walking in front of the soldier who found us, the memory of what had happened to me before a couple of months began haunting me. I was so afraid that they would beat us again and as soon as we left the factory I started running towards the bridge because that was my only chance to escape. While I was running towards the bridge I noticed that the soldier who was on the bridge was stretching his arms ready to catch me. I bumped into him hoping that I will manage to pass by him but he grabbed my neck and was holding me tight waiting for the other soldiers to come. I again tried again to twist out from his grasp by pushing him towards the edge of the bridge. The other four soldiers were approaching us and a friend of mine was walking in front of them. He did not make any attempt to escape. I somehow managed to push the soldier that was holding me to the edge of the bridge and when I tilted my body to one side, the soldier being afraid that he will fall from the bridge into the river, eased his grasp and I jumped into the river. I started running towards the hamlet in order to run away from him.

While I was running I heard 3-4 shots fired and the bullets whistled over my head. I noticed the soldier running after me along a macadam road which was parallel to the river trying to catch me. At one moment, most probably realizing that he would not be able to catch me, he gave it up and returned to the place where the other four soldiers were waiting. I was running till I came home. Two hours later my friend also came back. I asked him if they had beaten him up. His answer was negative but he looked very strange, pale in face and his clothes were covered in mud.

06/03/01

Statement taken by: Hidajet Kardasevic

Statement given by: Jasmin Buljubasic

STATEMENT 2

UNPROFOR DEPLOYMENT IN SUCESKA AREA AND CHETNIK OCCUPATION OF THE BANDIERA HILL IN THE WINTER 1995

Immediately upon arrival of the UNPROFOR forces to the area of Local Community of Suceška, and after their deployment in this area to the Observation Posts, the Canadians have, at the very beginning, made a number of great mistakes. These mistakes have undoubtedly badly affected the civilian population living in the area. The Canadian UNPROFOR, while deploying the Observation Posts, has, in many cases deployed them inside the territory far behind the defense front line that we were holding at that period. The Canadians did not want to establish Observation Posts at the places where we have asked them to do, i.e. on the line where we, the defenders, had our positions.

They established the Observation Posts by their own will. The way the Canadians have chosen the places for their Observation Posts, it has turned out that their own security was of much higher importance than the security of the local population who, in a number of cases, remained to live in places that were in front of the Observation Posts (between them and the abandoned defense positions, i.e., Serb positions).

The Canadians have, in the area of Suceška, set up three OPs (Observation Posts): at Slatina, at Donje Zedanjsko and at Buce village. By setting up the Ops at the mentioned locations, the local population living in front of the OPs were on their own and was forced to take care of themselves without any protection. My free assessment is that the Canadians have, in this way, gave away 30 to 40 square km of the territory to the Chetniks. The chetniks have taken advantage of this situation and moved their positions ahead, began setting up ambushes very often, murdering civilians who were cultivating their land at their farms.

By setting up an OP at Buce, the Canadians left a great part of the territory at the village of Podravanje which our forces controlled till the moment of the demilitarization of Srebrenica enclave. By doing this, the Canadians have allowed the only physical link between Zepa and Srebrenica territory to be cut off by the Serb forces. It did not happen accidentally that the Serbs have set up a number of ambushes killing people exactly in this area, the people who have been searching for food.

Later, the Canadians patrolled one part of this area, not to secure the people but to look for those, among the locals, civilians, who moved along the paths in this area, to search them and seize from them a hunting gun or some other device that those people sometimes carried in order to protect themselves. The reason for such a treatment of the Muslims was that the Canadians were awarded, or praised by their superiors for every piece of weapon they have seized from them. There were cases in which the Canadians, in this part of the territory, body searched every civilian who has moved in this area, over 30 km on foot across Susica mountain, with some food obtained in Zepa, searched their rucksacks with food – apparently looking for a weapon, ammunition, etc.

We, my unit, have complied with the agreement on the demilitarization and we have handed over all light and heavy weaponry to the Canadian UNPROFOR collection point at the primary school in the village of Brda (Suceška). But, despite that, the Canadians have continued to make raids, searched different buildings, chased individuals who possessed hunting weapons even though these individuals had proper license for a hunting weapon issued by the authorities. In May 1993, one such a raid happened at the village of Donje Zedanjsko when the Canadians, without any announcement, encircled the whole village with 16 APCs (Armored Personnel Carrier). They dropped by force into private homes, even though the people were still in their beds sleeping. They searched the houses looking for weapons, turned the furniture upside down, ransacked the place, some furniture was broken.

The owners of the houses attempted to ask the Canadians to be more careful with the property and the furniture, but the Canadians just kept pushing them away with their rifles. Some were even hit by rifle butts. After they had searched the whole village, the Canadians found, as far as I can recall, one or two

hunting rifles. The owners possessed proper paperwork for the rifles with license issued by the authorities before the war. As far as I can remember, in February 1994, there was a rotation of UNPROFOR units in the enclave. The Canadian unit was replaced by the Dutch battalion. Because of my, specific, function, I often negotiated with the Dutch officers after incidents that occurred in that (my) area. In my own opinion, the first shift of the Dutchbat was more cooperative than the second one. The second shift was being rood and noncooperative to the local population.

The following examples support my assessment: The role of the second shift of the Dutchbat compared with the first shift has changed. The behavior of the Dutchbat2 personnel, operating in my area, was that they appeared to be more friendly/positive with the Serbs and more negative towards our population. We could not find a common language with them. One of the examples is, when a crew of the OP at Slatina village went to the Serb side in the area of Koprivno, set with them and drank together with them. We watched all that from a high peak called Kik. On their way back from Koprivno to our side, they were passing through the village of Bukovica. At the moment when they were there they opened fire from their rifles at our villages – the Sastavci village especially and the area around it.

They also yelled as they fired rounds from their weapons, and because of that we concluded that they were probably drunk. The inhabitants of Sastavci village panicked thinking that the chetniks launched an attack at them. One of the events is also the situation when the Dutch filled the trenches that we had dug on the roads. Actually, during the war, before deployment of UNPROFOR in Srebrenica, we have dug trenches and holes on the roads in order to prevent or slow down the Serb tanks and other armored vehicles from coming onto us – towards our defense lines. We have dug holes on the roads at several locations. For example, we have dug a trench 6 meters wide, by hand, on the road that leads from Milici and Derventa. Even though the Dutch did not use this road, did not drive on this road, they have filled the holes and trenches on them despite us complaining against it and explaining why we needed those obstacles on the roads. The Dutch have repaired this portion of the road, and that has helped the Serbs in their attack in July 1995.

The Dutch soldiers have also filled in the system of trenches that we have dug at our defense lines at a location Kak near the village of Podgaj. This system of trenches was built there before the period of the demilitarization began. Nevertheless, the Dutch have, using their APCs, destroyed the trenches and bunkers at this position. In July 1995, this was a key position for defense of this area of the enclave, and especially for the defense of the mountain Kak. Because, when the Serbs attacked in July 1995, there were no trenches and bunkers there any more, the first thing their troops did was to quickly climb on top of the Kak mountain.

This was a position from which they opened a way for their quick advance towards the center of the local community (Suceska) and even towards Srebrenica town itself. Immediately upon arrival of the second shift of the Dutch contingent (Dutchbat2), their soldiers have asked us, the local population living in that area, several times to accept the Serb requests and allow them to use the asphalt road from Deventa village to Gunjaci Boxit mine, through the village of Zutica (inhabited by Bosniaks). Our population lived in their houses in the village, and we controlled that area throughout the war before deployment of UNPROFOR in the enclave. The Dutch have insisted, several times, that we accept the

Serb request to drive with their (Serb) tanks and APCs through the village giving us an excuse the is was necessary to secure the bauxite mine. The village of Zutica was already very much exposed to the Serb intimidation, attacks, and acts of sabotage, because of its extremely vulnerable position. The people who lived in the village worked in their fields and cultivated their land only by nighttime. The Serbs would not let them do it in the daytime.

The Serbs have all the time fired at the villagers from the heavy machine-guns and snipers. While working in the field, a villager Asim Buhic was killed and several more people were wounded by sniper from the Serb positions. Even though we have many times complained to the Dutch against this kind of situation, the Dutch were deaf to our complaints. They have not fired a single round at the Serbs throughout the period of their mission in the enclave. They did not even fire a single warning shot towards the Serb positions. All they did was to come with us to the place of the incident but there was never any follow up afterwards. They did nothing concrete to help us. When the second shift of the Dutch came to our local community, they abandoned some of the OPs. We protested against it but it was in vain. They kept telling us that they did not have enough personnel and that they would continue to patrol the area. After the Dutch abandoned some of their permanent OPs, they set another OP at a hill called Merajica Brdo above the village of Podgaj. By setting up this OP at the mentioned location, the Dutch left the area of Podgaj village and the Bandiera hill uncovered – in a very vulnerable situation exposed to the Serb attack. In January and the beginning of February 1995, the Serbs took advantage of this situation and occupied the Bandiera hill – because the Dutch created conditions for it. After the Serbs occupied the Bandiera hill, I have seen the local people living in that area negotiating with the Dutch asking them to move their OP ahead – to the location where it used to be. Because -the Bandiera hill was, in this new situation after the Dutch set their OP at a different location, at least 1000 meters ahead of the Dutch OP.

The area between the OP and the Bandiera hill was totally exposed. The other Dutch OPs were several kilometers far from Bandiera hill. I remember talking to an elder Dutch Major, tall slim man, and asked him to make the Serbs withdraw to their old positions so that the people in the area are able to cultivate their land and live in their houses without fear. After that, the Major I am talking about (in fact he was an UNMO), and another officer (also an UNMO) came together. They had a white flag with them. They flew the white flag above their heads and the walked towards the chetniks, i.e. to the top of the Bandiera hill, to negotiate. They returned after approximately an hour and told us that the Serbs refuse to withdraw from the hill. It is important to say that, before this, the Serbs have never been at the Bandiera hill and that the nearest Serb position was in Derventa village, about two kilometers behind the Bandiera hill. After occupation of the Bandiera hill, what the Dutch made it possible for the Serbs to do, the Serbs brought weaponry and armored vehicles to the hill using the only road that connected the village of Derventa and the hill.

The Serbs have launched the operation to occupy the hill during the nighttime and with a strong logistics support of their army. They dug in new positions on the hill that night, and these new position were supposed to protect their personnel in case that the Dutch soldiers open fire at them. But the Dutch did not do it. By gaining the high ground on the new positions on the Bandiera hill, the Chetniks now had full control over the area of the entire Suceška local community. After one failure, we asked the Dutch to

meet with the Serbs and negotiate their withdrawal from the hill. The Dutch did not agree with it. They told us that the Serbs were determined to remain on the positions on the Bandiera hill. Then we asked the Dutch that they intervene by military means, that they use force and make the Serbs withdraw from the Bandiera hill. But, they refused to do that either, and we were powerless unable to do anything on our own since we have handed over our weapons during the demilitarization process. After all attempts to make the Serbs withdraw from the Bandiera hill have failed, the Dutch abandoned even their position at Merajica hill.

They withdrew from this position and moved back to Srebrenica. From their new positions at the Bandiera hill, the Chetniks have shot dead a civilian Meho Ahmetovic. Another civilian, Samir Becirovic, was also shot at and as a result of it suffered serious injury. They were shot while moving around their own houses. Before I end my statement, I will give another example of rood behavior of the Dutch towards the civilian population. I am and eye witnessed to this event too. In the winter of 1994, two hunters were returning from hunting. The Dutch spotted them as they were passing by the village of Bukovica. After the Dutch saw that the two man were carrying hunting riffles they ran towards them and started chasing them. The two hunters were running away and as they passed by bunkers, that had been dug and constructed as a shelter in case of artillery fire, they hid inside them. But, the Dutch surrounded the area where the shelter was, and asked the hunters to surrender their riffles. The local population living in the area strongly protested against it and wanted to protect the hunters. I remember that the Dutch asked their superiors for reinforcements and that, apart from some 20 APCs which came to the location, the Dutch asked for air support too. However, the it all ended in a good way, the hunters handed over their riffles, even though they had proper license for them, and the Dutch drove back to Srebrenica. The riffles were never returned to their owners, the two hunters.

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