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COMISION DE DERECHOS HUMANOS
52º período de sesiones
Tema 10 del programa provisional

CUESTION DE LA VIOLACION DE LOS DERECHOS HUMANOS Y LAS LIBERTADES
FUNDAMENTALES EN CUALQUIER PARTE DEL MUNDO, ESPECIALMENTE EN LOS
PAISES Y TERRITORIOS COLONIALES Y DEPENDIENTES

Carta de fecha 24 de noviembre de 1995 dirigida al Presidente de
la Comisión de Derechos Humanos por el Representante Permanente
de la República Federativa de Yugoslavia ante la Oficina
de las Naciones Unidas en Ginebra

Tengo el honor de remitir, adjunto a la presente*, el informe del Comité gubernamental de recopilación de datos sobre los crímenes cometidos contra la humanidad y el derecho internacional titulado "Información sobre los crímenes de guerra cometidos por miembros del ejército croata contra la población civil serbia en la carretera Srbobran-Jajce el 13 de septiembre de 1995, y de rogarle tenga a bien distribuirlo entre los miembros de la Comisión.

* El anexo se reproduce como se ha recibido y únicamente en el idioma en que fue presentado.

El informe contiene declaraciones de testigos quienes atestiguan que el ejército croata ha cometido un gran número de crímenes contra la población civil serbia, en particular contra los grupos vulnerables: niños, mujeres y ancianos.

(Firmado): Dr. Vladimir Pavicevic
Embajador

A N N E X

I N F O R M A T I O N
ON THE WAR CRIMES COMMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE CROATIAN ARMY
AGAINST THE SERBIAN CIVILIAN POPULATION ON THE SRBOBRAN-JAJCE
ROAD ON 13 SEPTEMBER 1995

After the attack of the Croatian army on Srbobran (Donji Vakuf) on 13 September 1995, the Serbian civilian population, mostly women, children and the old, began to flee Srbobran and the surrounding villages towards Jajce and Banjaluka by carts, tractors, buses, trucks and on foot. A great number of them also took their cattle with them.

Their column moving from Srbobran towards Jajce was attacked on 13 September 1995 near the village of Bravnice, about 3 km from Jajce, by the members of the 2nd guard brigade of the Croatian army who ambushed them and began to kill mercilessly unarmed and totally surprised civilians in the refugee column. The population offered no resistance.

Some of them were instantly killed and some wounded during the attack. According to witnesses' statements, the members of the Croatian army opened fire and killed and wounded more than half passengers in one bus only (50 seats plus 30 persons who were standing) and then fired a "Zolja" missile at it and finally burned it with the wounded and dead in it.

Witnesses who were in the column speak about what happened and about the ordeal of the Serbian population in the column, while some of them lost their closest family members or were seriously wounded. They were interrogated by investigating judges and their statements contained in the documents of the Committee for the Collection of Information on the Crimes Committed against Humanity and International Law are given here in codes for the purpose of their protection.

According to their statements, the members of the Croatian army immediately took steps to erase the evidence by removing the bodies of the killed, so that the precise number of the killed and wounded can not be subsequently established; however, the conclusion can be drawn that the number of victims was high.

Thus, for example, witness 715/95-12, 58 years old, who was in the refugee column, says:

"... I was in a bus full of passengers, so that not only all seats were occupied, but many people, including women and children, had to stand.

When the bus, which was in the refugee column of tractors and carts, reached the village of Bravnice, 3 km from Jajce, we were ambushed by the members of the Croatian army who shot at the bus and killed most of its passengers. Then they burned the bus together with the killed and wounded in it.

The members of the Croatian army mercilessly killed the Serbs in the column, mostly women, children and the old, as well as those who travelled on

foot with cattle. I saw Croatian soldiers shoot at the column both in front of and behind the bus I was in. They shot at everything that was moving.

I somehow managed to jump from the bus through the window and escape.

Then, Croatian soldiers captured and detained me in a nearby house in which there were 33 of us, mostly women and children, including 18 wounded.

They took the wounded by truck to an unknown direction and I do not know what happened to them.

I know that many Serbs in the column were killed between Srbobran and Jajce and that the Srbobran-Jajce road was jammed with the refugee column.

I saw that the two children of Novo Jankovic were killed. One child fell instantly and his intestines fell out and the other died in the embrace of his grandfather. Croatian soldiers took their bodies to an unknown direction saying that they had to bury them ..."

Witness 715/95-13, 61 years old, says:

"... I lived in my village until 13 September 1995 when we left Srbobran for Jajce, when I and 9 members of my family - wife, two daughters-in-law and five children, aged between 7 and 16 - had to flee. We picked up only the most necessary things. In Srbobran, we boarded a bus full of people fleeing towards Jajce and Banjaluka. All seats were occupied and no one could make a single movement.

A large trailer full of people was moving in front of the bus. There were about 100 people in it.

When we set out from Srbobran to Jajce, the bus was overtaking a very long column of tractors, carts and those who walked with their cattle, as well as many freight vehicles full of people fleeing towards Jajce.

When we approached Bravnice, at one moment fierce fire was opened at the bus and the column behind and in front of it. Many passengers in the bus were killed. I somehow managed to get out of it. We pulled out the wounded and killed. I pulled out my wife who was wounded in the head and

3. my grandchild Borisav

who was wounded and died one hour later. My granddaughter Dijana was also wounded. I pulled out my daughter-in-law Andja who was also wounded and left without left arm. I also pulled out from the bus the son of my older daughter-in-law Mira who was wounded in the right arm.

The fire hit

4. my daughter-in-law Mira and

5. her daughter Danijela

They remained dead in the bus at which a "Zolja" missile was fired and the bus was set ablaze. The bodies of my daughter-in-law Mira and her daughter Danijela burned together with the bus. I do not know how many people remained in the bus, for the people from various villages whom I did not know were in it. All those who remained in the bus were burned.

There were lot of women, children and the old and ailing.

The Croatian soldiers, who had previously shot and fired a "Zolja" at the bus, ordered us, who got out of the bus, to follow them and took us to a house.

I and a group of Serbian civilians, women and children, were detained in a house in the village of Bravnice for 5 days. Then, we were taken to Livno where

we were detained in a sports hall. We remained there for 5 days and we were exchanged near Bosanska Gradiska.

My wife, who was wounded, was also exchanged with me.

The wife of my brother Ranko and her three children were also in the bus:

6. son Velibor, about 14

7. daughter Daliborka, 23, who was with her son

3. son Dragan, 6

All three children were killed. Only the wife of my brother Ranko and her daughter Suzana were saved. They are now hospitalized.

I do not know the names of the other killed for they were from other villages.

The members of the Croatian army opened fire not only at the bus I was in, but at the whole column moving in front of and behind the bus. When I got out of the bus I saw many killed lying on the road. The Croatian army killed not only fleeing Serbs but also their cattle and horses which pulled carts. I do not know how many people in the column were killed, but I saw many victims in and beside vehicles..."

Witness 715/95-14 says:

"...I lived in Srbobran until 13 September 1995 when members of the Muslim army attacked Srbobran. The population left their houses and apartments and fled towards Jajce and Banjaluka. The column of Serbs fleeing towards Jajce was very long and was composed mainly of tractors, carts and buses. Many people walked with their cattle.

I managed to board a bus. My son, born in Bugojno in 1968, an invalid, boarded the bus with me. Half of his right foot was cut.

When we reached the village of Bravnice, fierce fire was opened from all sides.

Many passengers in the bus were shot dead and a number of us managed to get out of it. I got out of the bus and pulled out my son. An explosion was heard. The bus was hit and was in a blaze.

Many bodies of the killed and wounded remained in the bus and burned with it. I do not know how many of them. The bus was burned down.

When I got out of the bus, I saw many dead in the column moving in front of and behind the bus.

Among the people killed in the bus, I only knew the driver

9. Zdravko Bandulaja, who lived in Srbobran

The Croatian soldiers immediately arrived and ordered us to carry the wounded and took us to a nearby house. First, they separated the wounded and took them allegedly for treatment to a hospital.

My son was taken to Mostar. I know nothing about him..."

Witness 715/95-15, 67 years old, testifies:

"... On 13 September 1995, I set out from Srbobran towards Jajce and Banjaluka with the Serbian population. Near the gas station, I, my wife and sister managed to board a bus for Jajce. When we reached the village of Bravnice, fierce fire was opened from all sides at the bus and the column moving in front of and behind it. The bus immediately stopped. The bus was showered by bullets. Many

passengers in the bus were immediately killed. I was among those who got out of the bus as soon as it stopped.

My sister remained in the bus

10. Milja Acimovic, born at Barbarici, near Bugojno, in 1924

When I got out of the bus, it exploded and was set ablaze.

We tried to pull out people from the bus. My hair was burnt while I was trying to pull out my sister since she was still alive, but I did not succeed. I do not know how many people remained in the bus, but I know that they were burned in it.

I know that several children and members of the Jankovic family were killed then since they remained in the bus.

The shooting continued when we got out of the bus..."

Witness 715/95-16, 60 years old, housewife, testifies:

"... On 13 September 1995, I set out by bus from Srbobran to Jajce. A very long column of tractors, carts and those who walked with cattle was moving in that direction.

Our bus reached a village 3 km from Jajce. Fire was opened at the bus. I and several other passengers managed to get out of the bus which was afterwards hit by a shell and set ablaze. Many passengers remained in the bus and they were burned.

My son-in-law

11. Zeljko Mihajlo from the village of Blagaj, near Vakuf was in the column, in a cart, near the bus, with his wife, i.e. my daughter

12. Jovanka Mihajlo

and their three children. My daughter and son-in-law were killed and one of their sons was wounded in the attack. I took with me their other two children, while little Jovan was taken by the Croatian army and I suppose that he is in a hospital.

They took me and the children to Livno where we were exchanged..."

Witness 715/95-17, 62 years old, pensioner, testifies:

"... Many inhabitants of Srbobran waited the bus which I and my wife also boarded. It started and was overtaking many tractors with trailers, carts and those who walked...

There were many wounded and injured in the bus. I was sitting on the left side at the level of the back wheel and managed to jump through the window. I helped my wife, who was wounded, to get out. When we got out of the bus, it began to burn so that no one could enter it any longer. All killed and wounded remained in the bus and their bodies were burnt. I do not know how many persons remained in the bus.

I know that its driver Zdravko Bandulaja remained in it, he was from the village of Salici, aged between 40 and 45. His body remained in the bus because he was among the first shot..."

Witness 818/95-21 says:

"... On 13 September 1995, I and my old mother boarded the bus in Srbobran for Jajce. The bus was full of passengers - the old, women and children.

While we were approaching the village of Bravnice, shots were heard in the direction of the column we were in. Cries were heard in the bus, for there were many wounded and killed. When the bus stopped, we began to run when Croatian soldiers appeared and captured us.

Later on, I found out that 22 people were killed and 15 wounded in the bus.

Killed were:

13. Stojan Kaurin from Srbobran, about 70

14. his daughter-in-law and

15. his grandchild, and

16-21. six members of the Jankovic family

While approaching the place where the bus stopped, I noticed many overturned carts on the road and killed people beside them. I could not say how many killed. Very precise and close-range fire was opened at us ..."

Witness 818/95-23 says:

"... We were heading to Jajce in a cart. Near the village of Bravnice, fierce fire was opened at the column. My daughter and son in the cart in front of ours were wounded. My daughter was hit in the head and my son in the right hip and leg.

My neighbours's children, aged between 13 and 17, told me that their parents Zeljko and Jovanka Mihajlo remained on the road in blood..."

Witness 818/95-12 testifies:

"... On 13 September 1995, I was heading for Jajce with my three children in a cart. We were moving in a column and there were many carts, tractors with trailers, passenger and freight cars behind and in front of us.

Near the village of Bravnice, fire was opened at us and many people were killed and wounded. I was wounded in the feet and my younger son, born in 1979, in the stomach, chest and head..."

Witness 818/95-2 was also in the column which was travelling from Srbobran to Jajce on 13 September 1995. She testifies:

"... I and my old grandmother boarded the bus and sat on the back seat. It was a big bus. All seats were occupied and passengers were standing between them. There must have been about 80 passengers.

When we approached the village of Bravnice, fierce fire was opened at the bus and the carts moving in the column beside the bus. Shells broke the windows of the bus and cries were heard, since there were many killed and wounded. Immediately after that, the bus stopped and we began to get out of it.

While I was in the bus I felt a strong pain in the right leg, chest and head. I crept out from the bus. I saw that my grandmother's right lower leg was almost cut, it hang on a small part of skin. Then Croatian soldiers arrived - they had green strips around their heads and their faces were painted with some yellow-greenish colour.

While I was in the bus before it stopped, I saw that the fire was also opened at the column of vehicles moving in front of and behind the bus and that killed people fell from them, including children. In front of the bus, I saw the body of Marinko Zeljko, a young man and his sister Marijana.

I know that the following were killed in the bus

22-23. two children and

24. one woman

I saw a mother who pulled out her child, but I do not know whether the child was alive. The persons killed were

25. the mother of Svetlana Gudalo from Turbet

26. one mother

who left behind two children of 4 and 7 years of age.

Later on, I found out that the 2nd guard brigade of the Croatian army participated in the attack on the bus..."

The responsibility for the killing of the Serbian civilian population is borne by:

1. Members of the 2nd guard brigade of the Croatian army.