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Note: document taken from the files of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina - Croatian Community of Herzeg-Bosnia, HVO Konjic, Head of the Civil Affairs Department, Marin ZADRIĆ

Acts of genocide committed by Muslims against Croats in the Konjic municipality,
March- June 1993

On 20.03.1993, Muslim military leaders in the territory of the Jablanica, Konjic and Hadžići municipalities held a meeting. On the orders of the commander of 6th Corps of the BiH army, Arif PAŠALIĆ, they created a global plan of attack on the Croats in the municipalities of Konjic and Jablanica. The plan was known to the Muslim military and political leadership, including Alija IZETBEGOVIĆ who was in New York at the time. (The order to proceed with the plan was officially issued; it had been made public on previous occasions; I am making it public anew on this occasion)

On 21.03.1993 the then president of the War Presidency of the Municipality of Konjic -an exclusively Muslim authority intent of becoming the authority of all the ethnic groups in the municipality - forbade any public announcement or address in writing by the representatives of the Croatian people by means of the local radio station /as printed/ about which he had issued a written decree to the editor-in-chief of the radio station, Vesna BAKTAŠEVIĆ (according to our information she was removed from this post because she was not a Muslim). There is written evidence and a witness who will testify - Vesna BAKTAŠEVIĆ.

The day before, in the Croatian village of Kostajnica, Muslims Ismet GABEL and Sakib BOLOBAN threw a hand grenade from a moving vehicle at three young Croatian girls - on that occasion Katica ŠAGOLJ was wounded. On the same day, Goran BLAŽEVIĆ's car was blown up.

23.03.1993, the Muslim commander Hasan HAKALOVIĆ (source: monitoring service of the "Herceg Stjepan" brigade, Konjic) gave the order which said: " Disarm all Croats, and if they do not hand over their arms, kill them!" It was on that day that the attack on the Croatian village of Orlište (area of the Neretvica valley) took place; the village was burnt down although nobody had resisted the attack. Killed in a savage manner were:

1. Ivan KOSTIĆ, born 1907 - killed in his own house;
2. Anda KOSTIĆ, born 1923 - killed in her own house, shot in the mouth; she was paralysed for the last eight years of her life;
3. Branko KOSTIĆ, born 1937 - killed by a machine gun burst in his head and in his back;
4. Janja KOSTIĆ, born 1913 - killed near the stable; the stable and the cattle were burned.

The footage of the village and of those killed were aired on HTV and we are making them public anew.

According to the testimony of Jela RAIĆ (published in the magazine of the Konjic HVO "Znaci i koraci"), on the same day the Muslim army killed in cold blood the imprisoned and unarmed soldier of the HVO Zvonko ĐOPA, and wounded her. The murder and the wounding were done by her neighbour Sejdo HAKALOVIĆ. In the afternoon of that day, the driver of the ambulance car Dragan VUJIČEVIĆ was killed from behind, while he was trying to persuade his neighbours, Muslims, to release the imprisoned doctor Mladen KREZIĆ. The witnesses to this murder can testify to this.

During the truce negotiations, several meetings were held but the Muslim military representatives Hasan HAKALOVIĆ and Esad RAMIĆ along with Dr Safet ĆIBA did

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everything they could so that nothing would come out of the truce. At one point, Hasan HAKALOVIĆ said in front of Zdravko ŠAGOLJ, Zvonko BARUN and Marin ZADRIĆ that he would continue the operation he had started and that he would beat the Ustashas (Croats), that he would raze Kiseljak to the ground as well as other Ustasha enclaves and that no one would stop them.

14.04.1993 - The Muslim army attacked the village of Bušćak early at dawn and killed three Croats. According to a testimony from the files of the Centre for Human Rights, one of those killed, Miroslav MAJIĆ, had been tricked and called to his Muslim neighbours' house, where he was then killed. The young man's skull had been crushed, brains spilt, a letter "U" engraved on his forehead; there were visible marks of blows on his body and several shotgun wounds on his stomach. One of the witnesses to the murders of two other Croats as well as to the mistreatment of Croats in the village gave his statement to the /US?/ State Department representatives and it is possible to check the statements through this authority.

16.04.1993 - units under the leadership of Zulfikar Ali Špaga a.k.a. Zuka, Hasan HAKALOVIĆ and Seid PADALOVIĆ, perpetrated a massacre on 15 civilians and seven captured HVO soldiers. The perpetrators were: Muharem MRAVOVIĆ a.k.a. Mrav, Sejdo HAKALOVIĆ, Zejnil GOSTEVČIĆ, Sanela VARIŠČIĆ and ŠABIĆ (a woman, first name unknown).

On that occasion the following civilians were killed:

1. Tomo (son of Andrija) DRLJO, b. 1926
2. Andrija (son of Ilija) DRLJO, b. 1947
3. Franjo (son of Ilija) DRLJO, b. 1942
4. Kata (daughter of Ivan) DRLJO, b. 1937
5. Kata (daughter of Mićo) DRLJO, b. 1918
6. Ivan (son of Pero) DRLJO, b. 1939
7. Branko (son of Andrija) MLIKOTA, b. 1925
8. Cmiljko (son of Mirko) KREŠO, b. 1940
9. Velimir (son of Andrija) KREŠO, b. 1934
10. Ivica (son of Jure) KREŠO, b. 1935
11. Ilija (son of Ante) IVANKOVIĆ, b. 1926
12. Anda (daughter of Jure) IVANKOVIĆ, b. 1936
13. Jure (son of Ante) ANĐELIĆ, b. 1926
14. Stipo MANDIĆ, about 70 years old

The following soldiers were executed by shooting or slaughtered:

1. Nedo (son of Marko) KREŠO, b. 1953
2. Pero (son of Cmiljo) KREŠO, b. 1961
3. Stipo (son of Pero) LJUBIĆ, b. 1961
4. Mile (son of Stipe) MANDIĆ, b. 1961
5. Zdravko (son of Ivan) DRLJO, b. 1963
6. Željko (son of Slavko) BLAŽEVIĆ, b. 1965
7. Ivo (son of Andrija) DRLJO, b. 1971

The testimonies of survivors had been made public before and I am making them public anew. Even mothers with children in their arms were shot at and the following were wounded:

1. Mario (son of Rade) ŠAGOLJ, b. 1990
2. Arijana (daughter of Pero) KREŠO, b. 1983
3. Anđelka (daughter of Vinko) ŠAGOLJ, b. 1969

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During May 1993, under the leadership of Zulfikar Ali Špago "Zuka" whose Muslim units, according to witnesses' statements, had many mujahedins - Arabs - killed three civilians whom they first used as a human shield while burning Croatian houses.

According to the statements of several witnesses from the files of the Centre for the Human rights, those killed were:

1. Ivan (son of Pero) STANIĆ, b. 1935 - both his hands were severed; he was then slaughtered and shot with a machine-gun burst
2. Stoja (daughter of Marko) KOŽUL, b. 1935
3. Ana (daughter of Vinko) KOŽUL, b. 1929

In the village of Mrkosovice, the units of Hasan HAKALOVIĆ executed the following men:

1. Cvitan KNEŽEVIĆ (about 60 years old)
2. Ilija ILIĆ (about 75 years old)

In May, above the town of Konjic, in the village of Zaslavlje, units under the leadership of Fikret PREVLJAK butchered the bodies of the following people: (noses and ears severed)

1. Zlatko TRLINA,
2. Joze BRENIK,
3. Ante BANOVIĆ

The testimonies are also in the Centre for Human Rights.

In the town of Konjic, according to witnesses' statements kept in the files of the Centre for Human rights, Croats were terrorised as during the age of Fascism. Croatian property was looted, Croatian houses burned and Croats were imprisoned. There are about 500 soldiers and 400 civilians in Muslim prisons and over 3000 Croats in towns and villages under house arrest. Prisoners had their blood taken several times which was also confirmed by the ICRC. This was done by Emir KOVAČIĆ who was acting on the orders of Ahmed JUSUFBEGOVIĆ. The blood was also forcibly taken from doctor Zvonko JURIĆ.

There are several testimonies about murders, physical and psychological suffering which are available to the public. I would like to emphasise the testimonies about three Catholic priests from Konjic and about prisoners with the status of "political detainees". This is obviously a reference to the political leaders of the Croatian HDZ party and to HVO officers. I would particularly like to emphasise the testimonies about Croats used as a workforce or a human shield during military operations (Vrci, Radešine, Zlatar, Budišnja Ravan).

On this occasion I am also quoting the request of the Konjic HVO brigade "Herceg Stjepan" dd. 19.06.1993 addressed to all international organisations in the village of Kostajnica and given to the European Community monitors (Mr Klaus), to the UNHCR (Miss Rita REDDI) and to the military observers (Major COUPPE). The demand proves real efforts exerted by the HVO in solving the problems in particularly with regards to respecting the Geneva conventions. Several representatives of the aforementioned organisations witnessed the refusals of the Muslim side to fulfil their duty to exchange prisoners. The observers can also testify to the efforts of the representatives of the "Herceg Stjepan" brigade and to the attacks of the Muslim army on civilian targets (Major COUPPE was in the village of Kostajnica when the hospital was attacked as well as other, solely civilian, targets).

The role of the Spanish battalion of the UNPROFOR warrants some criticism. The said forces never did anything to enable the burying of the dead in the village of Trusina; they did not even try to enter the Croatian villages which had been deserted or prevent them from being burnt down. At the same time, they transported the Muslim wounded, while the

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wounded HVO soldiers were carried up mountain paths with a great deal of trouble, for 15 hours on foot, because the UNPROFOR did not want to evacuate the wounded. The ICRC never even attempted to enter Croatian villages or ever visited the Konjic prison. The way we see it, that was hardly enough.

According to the United Nations Convention on War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity, /as printed/ genocide is included as:

1. Killing the members of an ethnic group
2. Causing grievous bodily harm or psychological damage to the members of an ethnic group
3. Conscious imposition of conditions of life to an ethnic group so as to bring about a partial or complete destruction of the ethnic group.

Having in mind the rules quoted as well the aforementioned facts, one could say that the whole area of the Konjic municipality was an area where genocide was committed against Croats in a manner not even reminiscent of the Second World War. These claims are based on the following:

1. About 50 villages inhabited by Croats were totally or partly burned and looted with the intention of expelling Croats and moving them to other regions outside the area of the municipality (see enclosed map)

2. In eight villages (Buščak, Orlišće, Trusina, Mrkosovice, Zaslivlje, Vrci, Podorašac and Dubravice), as well as in the area of the town of Konjic, a massacre was performed against Croats (see enclosed map)

3. Civilians and imprisoned soldiers were butchered and then killed, some were used as a human shield and forced to work for the Muslim army, their blood was forcibly taken. Other physical and psychological suffering was also caused. Criminal proceedings were started against Croats under the accusation that they had organised or took part in the armed rebellion against the BiH Republic.

4. In the "Herceg Stjepan" brigade there were about 2000 HVO soldiers responsible for the area of Konjic and Jablanica. At the same time, there were three Muslim brigades with about 7000 soldiers. During the war, 5,000-6,000-strong Muslim units arrived in the area, among which the most extreme were: Zuka's units, "Crni labudovi" /"Black swans"/, Handžar division from Kosovo, Hrasnik division, several hundred mujahedins from Arabic countries, units sent from Pazarić, Travnik, Zenica and Gornji Vakuf. It seems unreasonable to think that units as inferior as HVO's could have carried out an attack (evidence in the hands of the UN observers showing that there were no other Croatian forces except the members of the "Herceg Stjepan" brigade). The truth is very different. /as printed/

5. The following Croatian villages were ethnically cleansed (first figure: total population, second figure: how many Croats):

Bare (232 - 138 Croats)
Bijela (570 - 123 Croats)
Buščak (164 - 103 Croats),
Budišnja Ravan (188 - 188 Croats),
Bukovice (184 - 184 Croats),
Crni Vrh (181 - 181 Croats),
Čelebići (1177 - 261 Croats),
Dobričevići (154 - 84 Croats),
Dubravice (58 - 48 Croats),
Falanovo Brdo (74 - 68 Croats),
Galjevo (310 - 226 Croats),

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Glavatićevo (541 - 75 Croats),
Gorani and Goransko Polje (580 - 284 Croats),
Gostovići (430 - 205 Croats),
Kanjina (230 - 109 Croats),
Kostajnica (422 - 420 Croats),
Ljesovina (101 - 101 Croats),
Lukšije (155 - 130 Croats),
Mrkosovice (76 - 76 Croats),
Obrenovac (110 - 110 Croats),
Obri (274 - 240 Croats),
Orahovica (870 - 390 Croats),
Orlišće (64 - 64 Croats),
Ovčari (634 - 264 Croats),
Plavuzi (112 - 112 Croats),
Požetva (121 - 105 Croats),
Podorašac (621 - 112 Croats),
Pokojište (200 - 151 Croats),
Priješlog (166 - 100 Croats),
Radešine (124 - 120 Croats),
Repovica (195 - 162 Croats),
Seonica (258 - 128 Croats),
Slavkovići (177 - 83 Croats),
Solakova Kula (228 - 112 Croats),
Spiljani (602 - 133 Croats),
Sultići (197 - 84 Croats),
Trešnjevica (139 - 127 Croats),
Trusina (277 - 166 Croats),
Višnjevica (303 - 127 Croats),
Vratna Gora (276 - 271 Croats),
Vrci (245 - 149 Croats),
Zaselak village of Jasenik (549 - 76 Croats),
and mostly also the town of Konjic (11,545 - 2,566 Croats).

6. Prisons for Croats were established in: Konjic, Seonica, Parsovići, Gornje Višnjevice, Ostrožac, Čelebić, Podorašac, Tračina and Krupa (the latter two are in the Hadžići municipal territory). There are about 500 Croatian soldiers and 400 Croatian civilians in prison. The rest of the population is under house arrest. Out of 11,748 Croats who lived in this area about 8,000 have been forcibly moved.

7. Catholic churches were desecrated; churches destroyed and looted in Radešine, Čelebić, Žitače and in Konjic; nothing is known about the churches in Kostajnica and Obri. Catholic priests were arrested and mistreated. Church property was looted as was that of the humanitarian organisation Caritas.

8. With regard to the provisions of the Geneva convention about improving the situation of the wounded and the sick, about protecting the civilian population in times of war and about the procedure regarding POWs, there are many examples of violations and some are mentioned here. All of this was done with the intention of expelling Croats from the Konjic municipality.

The individuals responsible for this are:

1. Alija IZETBEGOVIĆ - was told about the attack on Croats by the Muslim army and approved it.

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2. Arif PAŠALIĆ - commander of the 6th Corps of the BiH army - gave the order to attack Croats.

3. Dr Safet ČIBO - on the orders of Alija IZETBEGOVIĆ took over the municipalities of Konjic and Jablanica; with the help of the trio from the BiH MUP /Ministry of the Interior/ (Nijaz SKENDERAGIĆ, Avdo HEBIB, Avdo GREBO), he was officially promoted to a municipal bigwig. He continuously prevented the exchange of prisoners; he personally arrested certain individuals e.g. Katica LIVAJA and her 11-month-old son Augustin, gave them to "Zuka" who then used them as a human shield during the attack on the Croats in the village of Vrci. The main ideologist and the organiser of genocide against Croats.

4. Zulfikar Ali ŠPAGA a.k.a. "Zuka" and Haso HAKALOVIĆ - commanders of units which perpetrated massacres in the villages of: Orlišće, Buščak, Trusina, Mrkosvice, Vrci and Podorašac.

5. Midhat CEROVAC and Esad RAMIĆ were the commanders of the units which perpetrated the massacres in the town of Konjic, in Podorašac and in Dubravice. There are witnesses who heard RAMIĆ say: "Kill all civilians and soldiers!"

6. Jusuf HADŽALIJA - better known as "Homeini", ideologist and leader of ethnic cleansing in the Neretvica valley.

7. Jasmin GUSKA, head of the public security station /police station/ in Konjic, took part in the ethnic cleansing of the municipality; first getting rid of the Serbs, he organised criminal activities against Serb property; he was also one of the organisers who incited Muslims to commit genocide against Croats.

8. Midhat PIRKIĆ a.k.a. Mitke (former drug addict), issued orders, perpetrated crimes and led units which killed Croats around the town of Konjic.

9. Miralem DURAČIĆ a.k.a. Dura, issued orders and led a gang which looted Croatian property in the town of Konjic, which expelled and physically mistreated Croats and set fire to certain Croatian houses.

10. Dr Ahmed JUSUFBEGOVIĆ is one of the ideologists of Muslim fundamentalism in the Konjic municipality and the man who pulled strings from behind the stage; issued orders to forcibly take blood from Croats. Emir KOVAČIĆ was the one who actually took blood from imprisoned Croats.

11. Fikret PREVLJAK, commander of the Hrasnik unit which perpetrated the massacre in Zaslavlje, desecrated the church in Čelebići and Radešine, looted houses and mistreated Croats in these two villages.

12. Ismet NEHIĆ, Military Court judge, Hasan KAŠIĆ, investigating judge, and Edo ŽILIĆ, head of the prison, are responsible for the imprisonment of individuals in violation of Geneva Conventions, for the physical and psychological suffering of those imprisoned and for the forcible taking of blood from the imprisoned; Edo ŽILIĆ is also responsible for personally taking part in the torture of the prisoners.

13. Seid PADALOVIĆ, Seid HAKALOVIĆ, Muharem MRAVOVIĆ a.k.a. Mrav, Zejnir GOSTEVČIĆ, Sanela VARIŠČIĆ and ŠABIĆ (a woman whose first name is unknown, a.k.a. Lola) perpetrators of atrocities in Trusina.

All of the charges have been established on the authentic statements of the surviving witnesses. One part of the testimonies have already been made public and given for analysis to international and judicial authorities. In this capacity I am authorised to inform you about

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everything and, in close association with the relevant officials, to enable you to gain further insight into the evidence.

Ljubuški, August 1993

Head of the Department for Civil Affairs,
HVO Konjic, Marin ZADRIĆ

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