

Face to face

WOMEN, VICTIMS OF THE WAR CIVIS

I begged them to kill me

I was watching from the attic of one deserted building unknown people stealing the belongings from my apartment in Capljina.

I've personally felt what war Golgotha was. I have three sons. The oldest one is married and he lives in Croatia. The other one was 19 years old when the war broke out. At the time, he was in Prevlaka. He went to Split, then to Zagreb, then all the way to Hungary. Finally, after 3 months he arrived in Belgrade. The youngest one has been studying in Sarajevo and he went to Banja Luka then to Kljuc and finally to Belgrade as we were not able to finance him anymore.

My deceased husband Desimir and I stayed in Capljina. He was already receiving invalid pension for one year and I was still employed.

Camouflaged people used to come to our place during the night, they threatened us...they were taking us to informative talks. Each time they were in our apartment, they used to break everything, they destroyed television and they were damaging all the things in the apartment. Their faces were under masks, with kerchiefs on their foreheads. They had knives and bombs.

One night they took us in front of the building. Behind the same building certain S.E. was killed. They pushed us into the car where three camouflaged persons were already sitting. They took us to outskirts, in some house. The agony has started; abusing, they turned the light on and off, they held their finger on the rifle's trigger and they laughed at our distraught. We got separated. They were lighting candles and beat me with the boots. I was pushed around and they took off my golden necklace and than my clothes. I recognized some of them by voice. They were from the village Sovic (Ljubusko) and Zivinice near Tuzla. Third of them was called by the name of Chicago. He looked a lot like my son and they were approximately of the same age. The youngest of them took his knife. I heard the door opening and closing all the time. It was an endless night. They put my husband by the door to listen. When I awoke, I was all in blood. Next morning they took us to Kravica. There was a terrible story on family Tripic who used to run a cafe in that village. Two more women were raped in Capljina. I knew one of them very well. Her name was Jelena and the other one was D. Olga who was imprisoned in the camp Dretelj. In case I was killed, which did not happen, would have been a relief for me. They took me back home. People who helped me the most were my neighbor Kata and catholic priest who use to go to police station and asked them to take us back home and leave us alone. Each shift brought other people. The worst was when there was shift from Kljuc, especially when there was certain B. Vinko. We had the Croat neighbor who delivered us food in garbage bags despite all the danger. I was crying and praying for these sufferings to end. One morning I was brave enough to go and see a man who was one of the commander officers in Capljina Main Staff (certain Lubovic) and asked him to kill me which would have ended my sufferings. That night they did not come to our apartment. We were peaceful. We found out from Kata that harassers had spent that night in prison but as soon as next day they released them. Everything was depending on who was in the shift. I only know that on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays invited by neighbor Sejo, Vinko used to come to café where he was getting drunk and than braking into our apartment. Later on, as soon as neighbors used to see him, they were informing us on time...Doctor Macin informs Kata, Kata informs the priest and than he goes to police. That was repeating day by day. He was often locked up but when another shift arrives he was released again. On one occasion I spent a night in radio station with Sudo, reporter who now lives in Norway.

Building was guarded by four persons. I often asked myself, why this all is happening: we were common people. We were not even members of any political party...Our telephone line was restored. We had to report in Main Staff every half hour. Comparing to our life in that period, imprisonment would have been very pleasant. The last time when Vinko came to break the door of our apartment, I took a vacuum machine cable trying to hang myself but I was rescued by Kata and the priest who informed the police on time. Since then I don't know anything except that Vinko lives normally in Sibenik like nothing has ever happened.

Even the security of the building did not help. I had to leave my apartment. They moved us to one attic. Tenants from our building came out and observed the arrest of three extremists ordered by HVO-

Croatian Council of Defense, in other words certain special unit members from Zagreb (Zarko). After that, I was taken to Secretariat of Internal Affairs. Some people who knew me were crying. Finally, certain Ozren from Domanovici decided to help me and tried to get me out of Capljina. At that time, everybody were talking that dentists, Dr. Kuzman Nikola and his wife Duska were brutally murdered. The young man who found them and buried them got sick and died after a year.

I got a pass on 19/20 January 1993 with Zarko's help. I decided to leave. My husband stayed. I entered the bus in Capljina. Woman dressed in Muslim national outfit set beside me. She told me that she was leaving Mostar and that she lost her daughter. There was check point in Split but fortunately they did not go into the bus. I continued traveling to Zagreb. Then I remembered that Kata packed some food for me. I opened it...it was kiwi. Believe me; even now I remember that moment when I look at the kiwi. Sister's in law father met me in Zagreb and bought me a ticket to Hungary convincing me that I could not stay in Zagreb. I did not have proper documents based on which I could leave Republic of Croatia. I only had a pass to Zagreb. I sat besides a woman who told me she was a Hungarian and that she was traveling to Subotica. She was in Split visiting her family. At the boarder she had a long discussion with officer convincing him that she was guaranteeing for me saying I was going to Subotica with her. Finally they let me go. She told me how she was harassed (stoned) in Split just because she was from Subotica. Her husband was working in Subotica Secretariat of Internal Affairs. She invited me and woman in Muslim national outfit to have a rest at her place. I instantly refused because I was scared of police uniform. She understood my feeling. She helped me by buying me a ticket to Belgrade because I did not have local currency with me. When I reached the platform at the bus station I couldn't believe that the moment came when I could freely leave the bus without fear that somebody would attack me. My son met me. That was terrible. Everybody in the bus was crying. Soon instead happiness in peace, psychological problems appeared as a result of experienced trauma which I have been treated for several years.

They continued to abuse my husband, they used to take of all his clothes, lock him in the garage...they beat him in Domanovici...God forbid anything like this happens to anybody, not even to those who did this to us. One night, somebody came and opened the garage. He went out in the street where people found him and took him into church to dress him up. He lived like animal. He couldn't get a pass because he did not have any documents. He was exchanged in 1996 by intervention of the Ministry and signature of Mr. Veselinovic even though he was born in Valjevo, therefore he was citizen of Serbia.

In Serbia and Montenegro he was not entitled for pension and he couldn't return to BIH to resolve that issue there. As he was born in Valjevo , he did not have the right to refugee status, consequently no right to humanitarian aid or accommodation in some of the centers. Being so sick and tortured we became subtenants. We changed 33 landlords. No one from Serbia or BIH institutions has ever visited us.

During many years of medical treatment in Belgrade I also decided for expertise with specialized gynecologist. That was very painful for me. ..This is only the part of my story...this is nothing comparing to what I went through in Capljina.

I am still scared of uniform and I sleep with the lights on. Every criminal regardless of his nationality deserved more than punishment...I don't know that punishment...I can't think of one.

My husband passes away at the end of September 2005 in Belgrade.

N.D.

/at the user's request, instead of full name, initials are used/

Young woman suffered

Until the war, I am lived in Zivinice near Tuzla. Today, I am lived in the area of Municipality Loznica with two little kids.

It was a great love. We were both young. We just got the first baby; the second one was on the way. Zoran used to tell stories to his son, he was putting him into sleep, and he loved us both. He went into war only because he had to. We all cried that day but nothing could change that. We were left alone. I am still waiting for him to come back. I hope that one day he will open the door and smile at us. But that is just a dream. After his death I've delivered second baby. I am subtenant for 10 years. In order to finance education of my kids and to provide other necessary things I am employed as unregistered worker. They don't remember their father and his love. I do my best to tell them everything about him...to tell them he was young and honest man and that he loved them very much. I have one photograph which I am keeping for them. As for BIH, I don't have the right for reconstruction of the house because it was not our property. I don't have family pension because Zoran had just been starting to work. I was asking to emigrate in third countries but was rejected. Now I am not sure whether I would

accomplish anything in my life, whether I would be able to provide my kids with necessary education, roof under their heads and my pension.
I can only give them my love.

Jelena V.

The most painful video footage in the world

I am Nura Alispahic, mother of young boy from Srebrenica whose execution was showed on a video published on the 10th anniversary of the massacre in Srebrenica.
I saw the video in my home, on television around 11 pm. Reporter has announced: "now mother will recognize a son, sister her brother..."

My heart was racing because I have realized that would be about Srebrenica tragedy. I saw the truck ...tied up existed young boys forced by uniformed members of special forces to leave the truck. The forth was my son Admir. They killed first four. My son with another boy was carrying executed persons. Then, they took them, tied up their hands...chewing the gum. The both of them got killed, too.

He was only a child, with many fears. He didn't know to shoot, didn't like the rifle. I left him in Srebrenica where he was hungry and thirsty.

In the beginning I was hoping that he will return and than I was moaning him for years and my hart was breaking but when I saw that video...I started to weep feeling very powerless.

I have disturbed the whole neighborhood.

Next day, my daughter comes from work and says: "mother, I need to say something to you but I don't know how".

"I know my daughter..." I said..."I saw the video last night..."

Next day Hajra and Nura from the Association and one reporter visited me. Many others came as well after them. It was especially difficult for me when reporters from Australia arrived, eight of them, with the video. They asked me: "Mother, which one is your son? "

I don't know how I've survived through all of this. I regularly take medications.

I know that the Government of Republic of Srpska had to respect a decision of the House for Human Rights from BIH and that they made report by which it admitted responsibility for genocide in Srebrenica. However, Government has neither arrested nor prosecuted war criminals.

During the war Srebrenica was crowded with refugees because it was declared for protected zone. It was difficult to live there without food and water. Death was everywhere around us. We were deeply affected by the war.

Nura Alispahic