

£BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

@*Rana u duši* - A wound to the soul

Introduction

International commitments and initiatives, but continuing abuses in Bosnia-Herzegovina

International initiatives between August and October failed to make an impact on the scale and nature of human rights abuses committed mainly by Bosnian Serb forces against Muslim civilians in northwest Bosnia-Herzegovina in the course of forcible expulsions. This is the conclusion of research conducted by Amnesty International within Bosnia-Herzegovina in November. While international outrage appears to have had some effect on the conditions and number of people held within detention centres, abuses outside these centres - particularly deliberate and arbitrary killings of civilians - escalated in some towns and villages between August and November. At the same time that the abuses were continuing, all parties to the conflict, including Serbian leaders, publicly made commitments to the international community that their forces would respect human rights and humanitarian law principles. On 27 August 1992 at the London Conference¹, the parties to the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, including Radovan Karadžić, leader of the Bosnian Serbs, Mate Boban, leader of the Bosnian Croats and Alija Izetbegović, President of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, signed a Program of Action on Humanitarian Issues. The commitments included respect for human rights and humanitarian law standards, exercise of control over "undisciplined elements" and an end to "all practices involving forcible displacement, all forms of harassment, humiliation or intimidation ... and all acts involved in the practice of ethnic cleansing". These commitments were publicly supported on 11 September by Dobrica Ćosić and Milan Panić, respectively President and Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, who issued a Joint Communiqué in which they declared "our total condemnation of all practices related to `ethnic cleansing', and commit ourselves to helping reverse that which has already happened"². On 19 October, a Joint Statement issued by President Ćosić and by President Izetbegović of Bosnia-Herzegovina, reiterated "a firm conviction that all perpetrators of criminal acts during the armed conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina should be punished in accordance with all relevant legal provisions"³.

¹ This meeting established the joint United Nations-European Community International Conference on the former Yugoslavia which now meets on a permanent basis in Geneva.

² See the Belgrade Joint Communiqué of 11 September 1992, UN Doc: A/46/971-S/24553, which was witnessed by the Co-Chairmen of the Steering Committee of the International Conference on the former Yugoslavia.

³ See Joint Statement of 19 October 1992, UN Doc: A/47/571-S/24702.

Forcible expulsion and continuing patterns of human rights abuses

This document focuses on human rights violations committed in one area of Bosnia-Herzegovina in the period from June to September 1992. Amnesty International believes that it illustrates a systematic pattern of deliberate and arbitrary killings, arbitrary detention, torture and ill-treatment including rape, together with widespread burning of mosques and Muslim houses and the forced transfer of property. The pattern reflects a policy intended to terrorize the surviving non-Serbian population to such an extent that they had no option but to flee or accept places offered in convoys out of Serbian controlled territory. No attempt is made here to cover the full range of human rights violations which took place in Bosnia-Herzegovina during this period which also included abuses by Bosnian Croatian and Bosnian Government forces.

The core of this document describes events in and around the Bosnian Serb-controlled town of Bosanski Petrovac between April and November 1992. Although the scale and chronology of abuses has varied in different areas, Amnesty International considers that the events in Bosanski Petrovac are broadly representative of the patterns of gross abuses committed across Bosnia-Herzegovina in the process of the forcible expulsion of thousands of Muslims from their homes. The testimonies set out in this document highlight the stark fact that many of the patterns already documented by Amnesty International in its report *Bosnia-Herzegovina: Gross abuses of basic human rights*⁴ continued unabated. The organization made ten recommendations to the parties to the conflict in the report. It is tragic that all these recommendations remain valid today.

Amnesty International is also concerned about new patterns of human rights abuses which emerged in the second half of 1992, some of which are described in this document. Even after being assured safe passage, some refugee convoys leaving Serbian controlled territory have been stopped and some men separated from their families and arbitrarily imprisoned. Some convoys have been fired upon by Serbian forces, on at least one occasion killing and wounding refugees. Thousands of refugees from these convoys have been made to cross the front line at night by foot. Some have been attacked with knives, beaten with rifle butts and a few possibly killed. Many have been threatened, robbed of money and belongings and stripped of some of their clothes.

The individuals who committed these abuses are often unknown, particularly in cases of killings to which there were no eye-witnesses. It is often not even known whether the offenders were members of military, paramilitary or police forces or linked to the civilian authorities. There is evidence that local Serbian police or military authorities did begin investigations into some

⁴ Amnesty International: *Bosnia-Herzegovina: Gross abuses of human rights*, AI Index: EUR 63/01/92, October 1992.

killings, although the depth, intention and outcome of these investigations are disputed. In a few cases victims reported that individual Serbs, including some officials in the local Serbian administration, tried to protect non-Serbs against abuses or tried to take some administrative action after the fact.

In many cases, however, eye-witnesses saw uniformed Serbian forces or known members of the Serbian civilian administration carry out deliberate and arbitrary killings or other abuses. In some cases markings on uniforms have been identified but in many cases the victims or witnesses were too terrified or confused to be able to provide accurate descriptions of the uniforms. In other cases bodies have been found in circumstances which implicate Serbian military and/or civilian authorities.

Notwithstanding the difficulties in individual cases, the pattern of abuses is unambiguous and the responsibility clear. The abuses described in this document occurred in areas of northwest Bosnia-Herzegovina which were under the control of Bosnian Serbian civilian authorities and military forces. Many officials claimed to be acting on behalf of the self-proclaimed "Serbian Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina" (now known as the "Serbian Republic" or "Republic of *Srpska*").

In some cases Serbian authorities ordered the abuses to be carried out. In other cases the authorities failed to protect non-Serbs from abuses committed by subordinates or irregular forces. Regular and irregular Serbian forces knew they could act with impunity because of the policy of ridding the area of non-Serbs, in particular Muslims, using whatever methods were considered necessary. In other cases the authorities failed to protect the population from attacks by paramilitaries or other irregular forces. In some cases investigations of incidents were initiated by the Bosnian Serb authorities, but no thorough investigations appear to have been completed. Through direct orders, active encouragement and/or acquiescence, the Serbian leadership in Bosnia-Herzegovina remains responsible for this pattern of gross abuses of human rights. Amnesty International further considers that leaders in Serbia who have given political and material support to Bosnian Serb leaders pursuing such policies or who have failed to bring effective influence to bear to change these policies also carry their share of responsibility.

This document describes abuses committed by Bosnian Serb forces in one specific area. Amnesty International also continues to investigate abuses committed by Bosnian Government and Croat forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Human rights abuses have, for example, accompanied clashes between forces of the Bosnian Government and the HVO (*Hrvatsko Vijeće Obrane* - Croatian Defence Council)⁵. According to interviews carried out by Amnesty International, arbitrary detentions of Muslims by HVO forces occurred during and after such a clash in the

⁵ For background to the HVO see the Amnesty International report *Bosnia-Herzegovina: Gross abuses of basic human rights*, p9.

town of Prozor in late October 1992. In one case a 14-year-old Muslim boy was detained by HVO military police and held for four days in their headquarters. His release was reportedly conditional on his father and others surrendering their arms. At least six Muslim civilians and one Serb civilian were killed during the clashes in Prozor. Amnesty International is investigating allegations that some of them were deliberately or arbitrarily killed.

A group of several hundred Serbs, almost all women, children or men above military age were detained with a HVO guard at the village entrance in Raščani near Tomislavgrad at least up to early December 1992. They were reportedly forbidden to leave the village. Many were natives of the village, while some had originally taken shelter there from nearby villages. Others reportedly had been forcibly transferred to Raščani. The villagers had told the HVO authorities that they wished to leave the area for Serbian-controlled territory. This desire was repeated to representatives of Amnesty International. HVO higher command had reportedly agreed to release the villagers following representations made by international agencies. The villagers were not, however, released, reportedly because local HVO authorities wanted the villagers to remain in the area as a safeguard against further bombardment by Serbian forces.

The HVO and Bosnian Government must also take active steps to prevent the occurrence of abuses by forces under their control. Abuses committed by one party cannot in any circumstances excuse abuses committed by another party.

Bosanski Petrovac

In the 1991 census the municipality of Bosanski Petrovac, in northwest Bosnia-Herzegovina, about 50 kilometres southeast of Bihać, had a population of about 15,000 people. The majority of the population declared themselves as Serbs by nationality, about 20 per cent as Muslims and a small number as Croats and other nationalities. By late September 1992, most of the Muslims had gone from the town. The nature of their departure is described below.

The troubles started in Bosanski Petrovac in April 1992, shortly after Bosnia-Herzegovina's independence was internationally recognized. Muslims in Bosanski Petrovac reportedly started to lose their jobs, particularly prominent members of the community. In May the Serbian authorities demanded that all weapons, even if legally licensed, be surrendered. This was enforced by visits by the military or police to Muslim houses. In about May roadblocks were set up around the town and while initially most people were allowed to pass, by June there were reports of Muslims being prevented from leaving at these checkpoints, particularly if they were males of military age or appeared to be leaving with many of their possessions. It reportedly became difficult for Muslims to buy food and other supplies from Serbian-run shops.

A shooting incident that occurred after a curfew was imposed in these early months typifies the apparently random attacks which quickly spread fear through the Muslim

community. An eyewitness recalled that one night around 11pm two or three Serbian soldiers were walking past a house where the lights were on. They fired automatic weapons into the house wounding a woman, Šemsa Bajrić, in the arm and chest and her seven-year-old daughter, Sanela, in the stomach. Muslim men, in particular, have said that because of the growing fear they tried to avoid walking in the streets of Bosanski Petrovac, even during the day.

One middle-aged Muslim, AH, kept a diary throughout the events in Bosanski Petrovac this year, recording the growing anguish and fear as he and his community witnessed the deliberate and arbitrary killing of civilians, the burning of their houses and the arbitrary imprisonment of their men, until almost the entire Muslim population were forced to flee in late September. Much of what he recorded has been confirmed by interviews which Amnesty International conducted with other refugees from the town. He writes of events in July:

"Great fear reigns among Muslims, anxiety about what will happen. Terror, fear."

(From the diary of AH, 15-20 July 1992.)

Civilian men of military age in Bosanski Petrovac were required by the Serbian authorities to do forced labour. This usually meant working in the fields, digging ditches or constructing fences around military buildings. On 24 July 1992 a group of 55 Muslim men was forcibly taken to the front line at Grabež near Bihać by Serbian military police. They were told to bring axes because they would be clearing trees and undergrowth from a mined area. However, a Serbian commander reportedly refused to allow the group to do this work. After being made to clear trees elsewhere, the Muslims were returned to Bosanski Petrovac the same day.

By the end of June 1992 between 50 and 70 civilian men from Bosanski Petrovac had been arbitrarily imprisoned in a workers' barracks near woods at Kozile, about 20 kilometres from Bosanski Petrovac. An unknown number of detainees were also held for short periods at one or more prisons or makeshift detention centres in Bosanski Petrovac. Many Muslims were transferred to Kozile after several days detention in the police station in Bosanski Petrovac. Most detainees at Kozile were released on 21 August but were still required to report to the police every morning and evening. These detentions are described in more detail in the following section.

Of particular anguish to many Muslims was the destruction with explosives of two mosques in Bosanski Petrovac in early July. In July the first Muslim houses were also set on fire. On 7 July AH concluded his note of these events in his diary with the words: "A wound to the soul [Serbo-Croat: *Rana u duši*]."

The first deliberate or arbitrary killing of a civilian in the town reportedly occurred at the beginning of June. Thirty-one-year-old Muhamed Terzić was allegedly shot in the back in front

of the *Alpina* café. By the middle of September about 14 Muslim civilians had been killed in a series of separate incidents. On or around 8 August 1992 four members of the same family were killed in their home: Šefko Balić, aged 54 years, his wife Balić, 51 and their two children Zahid, 29, and Admira, 23. Other Muslims who found the bodies the following day reported that the house had been ransacked and apparently looted. All the bodies had bullet wounds. Local police reportedly visited the house, as did police from Banja Luka, although the outcome of any investigation is not known.

AH records in his diary that the day after the killing of the Balić family, Muslim community leaders started to negotiate with the Serbian authorities to allow the Muslims to leave the town in safety. The municipal authorities reportedly refused to allow Muslims to leave unless they had signed documents transferring their property to the authorities or to individual Serbs, including displaced Serbs who had fled from the fighting in the Bihać region. By the end of August many Muslims were too frightened to sleep in their own homes and stayed at night with relatives or friends or in surrounding areas. Serbian authorities organized the first convoy of four buses with about 300 Muslims to leave on 12 September. A second group of eight buses left on 13 September but was forced to return on the same day for reasons which are unclear.

"This nation - that is the Muslims of [Bosanski] Petrovac - are for the first time confronted with ethnic cleansing in an organized way. The official authorities of the SDS [*Srpska Demokratska Stranka* - Serbian Democratic Party] are ostensibly against ethnic cleansing but ... with all their powers they are supporting the departure of Muslims. A group of citizens without any party affiliations are persistently trying to establish a dialogue with the SDS authorities in the town, primarily to protect the Muslims from the genocide and Serbian anger which these days is manifested by killings, the burning and destruction of houses, shooting [indiscriminately] in the parts of the town where the Muslims live, bombing and the looting of Muslims' property.

(Diary of AH, 10 September 1992.)

Early in September 1992 a Muslim woman from the town was raped in a nearby village where she had been staying in her mother's house. A group of Serbs in camouflaged uniforms came across her, her husband and several other Muslims in a field. Three of the Serbs took her into a nearby house where two of them raped her and the third threatened to. They later released her. She believed that the same three men on this occasion also raped two young girls, aged between 14 and 16, who had been with her and her husband at the time of their capture. Her husband and another man were taken to the nearby forest where they were held for several hours, bound with chains, beaten and burnt with cigarettes.⁶

⁶ For more details of this case see the Amnesty International report *Bosnia-Herzegovina: Rape and sexual abuse by armed forces* (January 1993, AI Index: 63/01/93), pp 6-7.

20 September 1992 is described by AH in his diary as "black Sunday for Muslims". This day marked the start of a four-day period when around 30 civilian Muslims were deliberately and arbitrarily killed in Bosanski Petrovac. It ended when over 2,000 Muslims left Bosanski Petrovac in a convoy organized by the Serbian authorities. It is unclear why the killings escalated at this time, although many accounts said that they followed the reported deaths of 17 Serbian soldiers at the front near Bihać which angered Serbian soldiers returning to Bosanski Petrovac.

On 21 or 22 September, 82-year-old Omer Bolić and his 23-year-old granddaughter, Fatima Bolić, were allegedly shot dead on the street by two Serbian soldiers for no apparent reason after a brief conversation. Several eye-witnesses report seeing two cars, one a white Volkswagen *Golf*, with soldiers inside who drove around the town indiscriminately firing automatic weapons. One eye-witness described how he and seven other Muslims were in an orchard around noon when he saw one man shot dead:

"One boy ran to us and told us that three soldiers were coming our way and that they were killing people. So we ran about a kilometre to the other side. Women and children were running to us from this other side and they said the *Golf* car was coming. We hid behind some houses. One man [Salih Ibrašimović, an electrician aged 57] was in front of his house, taking a cow for a drink. The *Golf* drove along with two men in uniform. It stopped, the window was wound down and two separate shots fired from a 'Zastava' [a Serbian manufacturer] gun [which killed him] and the car drove away."

The dead were sometimes not buried for several days because of fear of the shooting. Some were buried in orchards or gardens rather than in cemeteries which were considered more dangerous. One 49-year-old man, Džafer Bakrač, was allegedly killed as he tried to bury another victim, Rasim Kavaz. During the four-day period more Muslim houses were burned and looted and people robbed of their possessions. Most, if not all, of the town was without running water, telephones or electricity. Some Muslim men, who felt especially at risk, slept away from their homes in places such as orchards. Women slept in the basements of their houses.

"The coming night is uncertain, one awaits it with fear and trepidation. The Muslims are utterly terrified, conscious that they are surrounded and left to the mercy of those whom no one can pacify ... The time is ideal for murder, plunder, ill-treatment, rape and arson, etc. It is all so terrible: sensible countries look to the future and work for their future generations while dark minds and dark forces, darker than fascism, reign around us. How much hatred is there among these nations who were only recently neighbours and friends? Dark minds rejoice because they have achieved what they desired - to destroy the trust between nations and nationalities ... The world reacts at almost a snail's pace, slowly surveying the situation, slowly estimating and judging, etc, what is happening in Bosnia-Herzegovina."

(Diary of AH, 21 September 1992.)

On the morning of 24 September a police car with a loudspeaker reportedly drove through the town announcing that Muslims should gather at a particular motel so that they could leave Bosanski Petrovac. Muslims hurriedly collected their belongings. A convoy of 12 buses and at least seven or eight trucks was organized by the Serbian authorities to take over 2,000 Muslims south towards the front line at Travnik. Muslims had to pay for their place in the convoy, a seat in a bus costing almost twice as much as a place in a truck. Only a minority of Muslims remained in Bosanski Petrovac: women married to Serb men and their children, and some old or immobile people.

"The day starts calmer with the announcement of the departure of Muslims. People are exhilarated and happy to escape this hell. The day and night pass relatively peacefully but with a lot of shooting and fireworks."

(Diary of AH, 24 September 1992.)

Even after being assured safe passage out of Serbian-controlled territory, and with Serbian drivers and Serbian soldiers as escorts, this convoy was fired on shortly after leaving Bosanski Petrovac, at a place called Zdeni Dol. At least nine Muslims were wounded and three died on the spot or soon after. Two of the wounded reportedly died of their wounds. The youngest survivor of those injured was a six-year-old girl who had been shot in the back. When the convoy stopped in Ključ, where Serbian soldiers asked the Muslims to identify their dead and injured, the child's mother was too frightened to declare her daughter, fearing that she would be separated from her. One 51-year-old man who was shot near the hip was taken from the convoy in Ključ and was transferred, together with two others, to the hospital in the Serbian-controlled town of Banja Luka where he spent 21 days. He reported that a boy died before being put into the ambulance. One woman, 49-year-old Vaseva Hujić was wounded in the left thigh, where the bullet is still lodged. Another woman, Seida Hadžić, aged 55, narrowly escaped injury when bullets passed through the rucksack on which she was sitting. The convoy was also reportedly shot at on two subsequent occasions.

The same night the convoy reached a front line Serbian position at a place called Smet, on Vlasić mountain. From Smet the convoy passengers, including some who had been wounded in the shooting incident on the way, walked at night across the Serbian lines and down a steep road towards the Muslim-Croat positions and the town of Travnik and relative safety.

"Thousands of Muslims leave their houses, abandoning their age-old hearth, fleeing from terror and fear. The river of men, women, children, elderly people, eyes brimming with tears, paralysed by fear, started off into the unknown towards Travnik."

(Diary of AH, 25 September 1992.)

Some people from Bosanski Petrovac reported shots being fired to scare them and robbery and assaults similar to the scenes described by refugees from other towns in the section below which concerns incidents on Vlasici mountain.

Imprisonment and ill-treatment of male civilians in camps in Kozile and Kamenica

Reference has already been made above to the arbitrary detention of between 50 and 70 civilians, mainly Muslims from Bosanski Petrovac, in barracks for forestry workers at Kozile. Many of the prisoners were interrogated in the camp although most had already been questioned in the police station in Bosanski Petrovac. The questioning appeared to follow the common pattern with questions about alleged resistance against the Serbs.

In addition to the civilians, Kozile reportedly held 22 soldiers captured by Serbian forces after the fall of Kulen Vakuf. Most civilians were held at Kozile for more than two months until their release on 21 August 1992, although between 10 and 20 were transferred on 6 August to another detention centre at Kamenica and not released until 3 November.

Prisoners at Kozile were held in six rooms, each about three by four metres in floor area and holding between 10 and 20 detainees each. Almost all natural light was blocked out by wooden boards nailed over the windows. The prisoners were given three meals a day, of similar quality to that received by the soldiers guarding them but of smaller quantity. At least one meal often consisted of a small amount of cooked vegetables and noodles or rice. A few of the prisoners had beds, some of the others had pieces of foam rubber, a few centimetres thick, to sleep on and most had blankets, either issued by the authorities or brought by the prisoners themselves. On one occasion a doctor or nurse visited and left some medicine for those suffering from diarrhoea.

What prisoners most feared were the regular beatings which usually occurred at night, often after the soldiers had apparently been drinking heavily. "The most terrible thing was waiting for your name to be called out", recalled one former prisoner. "The front door had an old lock with a nail. Whenever we heard the terrible sound of that lock we knew someone would be called out and we feared it would be us". The selected prisoner was usually taken to another building about 15 metres away, from which the other prisoners could hear screams of pain. One or more guards would kick the prisoner, punch him and beat him with wooden truncheons. The victim was returned to the cell usually after a period of between 30 minutes and two hours, usually extensively bruised. While some prisoners appear to have been beaten only once or not at all, others - especially Muslims considered to be wealthy or well educated - were allegedly severely beaten on at least seven or eight occasions. On at least one occasion a prisoner was made to beat another prisoner with a wooden club. Some victims were reportedly placed in solitary confinement after being beaten, for anything from one hour to several days.

One 23-year-old Muslim decorator, was arrested on 30 June 1992 and taken to Kozile after being held for two days at the police station in Bosanski Petrovac. On one occasion at about midnight, another Muslim prisoner in the same room named HK, aged about 35, was taken outside and beaten for about half-an-hour. Twelve guard dogs started barking as they beat him.

In the decorator's words: "It was as if the forest were crying". HK was then made to crawl back into the room on all fours, barking like a dog. The decorator continued:

"When he came into the room we were unsure as to whether he was alive or dead. It was as if he were unconscious ... he was unaware of his surroundings."

His drenched clothes showed that he had been dunked in the trough of water outside. As the other prisoners were removing his clothes HK was called out again and after about 15 minutes he was again made to crawl back on all fours.

"We took off his clothes again, except for his underpants ... and wrapped him in blankets. He started to shiver. We had to sit by him all night and to put him on the toilet bucket. He had to go to the toilet out of fear and because of the water. Then he lost consciousness ... We put compresses on his back all night."

When asked whether they could see HK's injuries the next morning, the decorator replied:

"Yes, because he slept with us in the room. All his clothes were off so one could see everything. His back was black and blue everywhere. One couldn't find a place big enough to stick in a needle that wasn't bruised."

HK had been beaten or kicked over all his body with the exception of his head. After three days he could walk with the assistance of his fellow detainees, but could not walk unaided for at least another two days.

One prisoner, ZR, aged about 35, was beaten about the head. Another prisoner who saw him two days later said:

"it looked as if he had been stung all over by bees. You could not see any white in his eyes - they were all bloodshot ... His cheeks were bruised. His lips were badly swollen."

On 6 August 1992 between 10 and 20 civilian detainees were transferred from Kozile to Kamenica, also described as barracks for workers, about 15 kilometres from Drinić. On 21 August the remaining civilians in Kozile were released. Kamenica camp reportedly held about 70 detainees, mainly Muslims but also some Croats and Serbs. The Serbs were reportedly soldiers who had deserted from the front or had committed thefts. All Muslim and Croat prisoners were held in one room about 10 metres by 15 metres. Basic conditions were better here than at Kozile. The food improved and a doctor visited three or four times over a three-month period. Detainees slept on a thin piece of tarpaulin and each prisoner had a blanket. Prisoners worked in the camp constructing fences, painting and cleaning the grounds.

However, it seems that after the civilian population of Bosanski Petrovac negotiated their departure on 24 September, the detainees in Kamenica started to be ill-treated. One 23-year-old male Muslim was tortured in late September three days after a visit by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). An officer in charge of the guards called him for interrogation and asked him what he had told the ICRC delegation. He answered that he had only handed over a message for a relative, because his interview had then been cut short as he had been called to work and he not had time to tell them anything more. After the answer he was hit on the back with a truncheon by another guard before the officer in charge sent him back to the sleeping room. Returning to his room he was intercepted by a group of six Serbian prisoners who then beat him with truncheons for several minutes before one of the guards who was looking on intervened. Fifteen minutes later he was again called from the sleeping room:

"They took me to the other side of the school ... There were eight of their [Serbian] guards and prisoners. One drove me forward with a rifle in my back. I went there and they started to beat me. They beat me for between 35 and 40 minutes. They said to me, 'Don't cry out or it will be the worse for you'. They also questioned me, 'Did you say [to the ICRC] that Bosanski Petrovac had been evacuated by force?'"

He was beaten about the shoulders, arms, back, legs and groin with ordinary police truncheons, although one of his tormentors wielded something which he described as being like a baseball bat or a riot-control baton - in his own words: "When it hit you it was like an electric shock going through the body". The following is his description of the pain and being returned to the sleeping area:

"At first I felt all the blows [during the beating], but when I entered the sleeping area I just wanted to lie down. I didn't feel pain, but there was no way I could lift my arms since I couldn't feel them ... That night I couldn't sleep. After one or two hours I felt the pain. I could not get up, move or turn, I couldn't do anything. In the morning after dawn they [his fellow prisoners] took the clothes off my upper body. When I was undressed my arms looked...as if they had been inflated with a pump for car tyres."

The victim stated that he could not stand for four or five days and that he had serious pains for a whole month. He still complained of pain in his groin and right arm in late November.

A Croat, PŽ, was also a prisoner in Kamenica. He was apparently a shepherd detained while tending his sheep near Kupres. Another prisoner reported that PŽ was regularly beaten and that on one occasion he witnessed how he was severely beaten while Serbian guards tried to force him to read a newspaper clipping which they said mentioned the name of his brother who was fighting with Croatian forces and which referred to the capture of Serbian soldiers by

his unit. Four guards beat him with fists until he fell to the ground, whereupon they kicked him in the back and kidneys. Other Croats had reportedly been brought to the camp with him but they were soon taken away - their fellow prisoners did not know what their fate was.

On 3 November 1992 the ICRC organized the release of the remaining 61 detainees in Kamenica who were taken to Karlovac in Croatia.

None of the former detainees of Kozile and Kamenica interviewed by Amnesty International were ever told the reason for their imprisonment or how long they would be detained. Detainees were sometimes questioned during their detention about their movements over the previous months, whether they possessed weapons, whether they knew about organizers for the SDA (*Stranka Demokratska Akcija* - Party of Democratic Action)⁷. Information was demanded about family members suspected of fighting i Bosnian Government forces. However, as in many similar cases of detention, information does not appear to have been the primary object of imprisoning these men, most of whom were of military age.

Physical attacks on refugees crossing front lines - Vlasić mountain

Since the summer of 1992 Vlasić mountain to the north of the town of Travnik in central Bosnia has been the crossing place for thousands of refugees, largely Muslims, who have fled or been expelled from Serbian-controlled territory in north-west Bosnia. Many prisoners who were held in detention or as hostages have also been exchanged there.

Most were taken by truck or bus to a pass on the mountain and were then made to walk down through no-man's-land to the lines of the Bosnian Government and HVO forces. Many who crossed the front line here between September and November have given consistent reports of threats, robbery and assault by uniformed Serbs as they descended the mountain. Often those who arrived in daylight were not allowed to start walking until after dusk. On at least one occasion the robbery and ill-treatment took place at the point of disembarkation, but most of those interviewed by Amnesty International reported that small groups of Serbian soldiers intercepted them at regular intervals as they walked along the road.

Many people, including women, report being subjected to body searches or being stripped of some of their clothes. In some cases their clothing was not returned to them. However, the behaviour of the Serbian soldiers described by interviewees tended to indicate that their prime intention was to rob rather than to humiliate. Even those who were not assaulted or humiliated appeared to have been terrified by the experience. In some cases, the buses been boarded

⁷ The SDA is the largest political party which draws the support of Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

before reaching Vlasici and the occupants had already been made to surrender their valuables. Those who had nothing to hand over at Vlasici often received extra beatings.

Among those interviewed by Amnesty International was SC, a 19-year-old Muslim man from the village of Fajtovci near Sanski Most. SC's group started down the mountain after 9.30pm on 10 October 1992. A group of between 10 and 15 uniformed Serbs approached them from the woods. One soldier made SC hand over 200 German marks at gunpoint, then let him proceed. Shortly after, another four of the Serbs surrounded him and demanded money. One held a knife to SC's neck. SC tried to show he had no more to give, but was punched in the stomach by one of the soldiers and then in the chest by another. The man with the knife then stabbed him in the left arm, before they took his bags. SC's companions were also threatened by other uniformed Serbs.

A teenage girl, AH, from the village of Večići near Kotor Varoš, reported being stripped almost naked, punched and beaten at the point of disembarkation after arriving at Vlasici in early November 1992. She recovered her clothes after they had been thoroughly searched. BH, a 59-year-old man from the same village, was punched and hit by two groups of two or three Serbian soldiers demanding valuables as he descended the mountain on 4 November. A third group made him strip to his underwear. His clothes were not returned to him and he reached the Muslim-Croat lines in his underwear.

A few interviewees reported seeing bodies on the road, but it is not possible to confirm this or how they may have died. Those who crossed by day reported seeing the road strewn with personal belongings.