

## **Court Told of Dobož Disappearances**

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Witness says many of the people he shared a cell with were taken away and never seen again.

Judges hearing the case against two former Bosnian Serb police chiefs at the Hague tribunal this week were told of the arrest, maltreatment and disappearances of non-Serbs in the north-western Bosnian town of Dobož in the spring and summer of 1992.

Stojan Zupljanin and Mico Stanisic, who are alleged to have participated in a joint criminal enterprise aimed at the permanent removal of non-Serbs from the territory of an intended Serbian state, are accused of crimes committed between April 1 and December 31, 1992, in municipalities throughout Bosnia and Hercegovina, BiH, including Dobož.

Zupljanin, who became an adviser to the then Bosnian Serb president and Hague indictee Radovan Karadzic in 1994, is accused of extermination, murder, persecution, and deportation of non-Serbs in north-western Bosnia between April and December 1992.

Stanisic is charged with murder, torture and cruel treatment of non-Serb civilians, as well as for his failure to prevent or punish crimes committed by his subordinates.

Prosecution witness Edin Hadzovic, from the Dobož municipality, had already testified on various occasions on the events of 1992 in Dobož, both before the Hague tribunal and the BiH state court.

At the beginning of his testimony, Hadzovic said that he was arrested by Serb soldiers in early May 1992 at his family home in Dobož, "They were wearing coloured military uniforms and red berets.

"On May 8, 1992, when according to the Serb troops Dobož was liberated, there was a raid in the city which had led to the arrest of all Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims) and Croats who stayed at their homes."

Together with some neighbours, he was taken by the soldiers to the Dobož police station, he said.

There, the witness said, he was questioned by Inspector Branislav Petricevic, who Hadzovic "knew back from high school". Petricevic confessed to him that he had no idea what to do with the prisoners, as new ones were constantly being brought in.

"He said he had no idea what was going on, and that we would be taken to prison. The prison building was right behind the police station," Hadzovic said.

After brief processing at the police station, they were taken to prison cell number seven, he said.

Stanisic and Zupljanin are charged with torture, cruel treatment and other inhuman acts at the Dobož central prison during May and June 1992, where prisoners were regularly beaten and insulted, based on their national identity.

Hadzovic said he was kept at the prison for three days, and had shared his cell with several well-known Dobož citizens. He also said that many of them were taken from the cell and have since been recorded as missing persons.

"Ilija Tipura, a Croat by nationality and one of the best known people in Dobož, was the director of the railways in Dobož and later its mayor. He had a doctorate in economy and taught at the faculty in Brcko. He has since been unaccounted for and is still considered missing," Hadzovic said.

He said Karlo Grgic, another Croat, was also taken from the prison to an unknown location. He was the retired police commander for Dobož, and was ordered to say goodbye to his cellmates. "He, too, is still missing and no trace of him has been found," Hadzovic said.

Hadzovic said he was released on May 11, 1992, and arrested again a month later at his home. On that occasion, he was beaten with baseball bats and detained in Usora military warehouse, which was being secured by military police.

From that warehouse, he was transferred a few days later to the Percin Disco in Dobož.

"Were you interrogated there?" prosecutor Alexis Demirdjian asked.

"Yes, once. I can't remember the date, but police officers came and because the weather was nice, they installed their tables outdoors. Some ten inspectors came and then took us prisoners out in groups of ten,

assigning each to one inspector for questioning. I was interrogated by my school friend I had already mentioned, Branislav Petricevic," the witness answered.

"I also recognised Slobodan Dujkovic and Milan Savic from among the other inspectors."

The witness described how, during questioning that day, Inspector Slobodan Dujkovic took a shovel and hit prisoner Slobodan Cicak on the head. Cicak was imprisoned there alongside his father, Stipe, who was over 70.

"What happened to Stipe Cicak?" the prosecutor asked.

"He was brought to the prison having already been beaten up in his apartment, barely breathing and not being able to drink water. He died there and stayed on site for three or four days. We asked them to take him out because he started stinking and falling apart," the witness said, adding that the police took the corpse away some days later.

Hadzovic described how, together with some 50 prisoners, he was taken out of the disco on July 12, 1992, and they were forced to make a human shield for BiH army positions.

"We were taken to a school, we were stripped of our top clothing and put into lines of ten," he said. Hadzovic said he heard Milutin Blaskovic, "one of the police chiefs", use a radio to inform someone that Andrija Bjelosevic, the police commander, had authorised him to use a human shield.

"What happened then?" Demirdjian asked.

"The man who was putting people in lines was referred to as Golub (pigeon). He immediately killed one prisoner by shooting him in the head. He killed Drago Kalem from the village of Dragojevci and said that this should serve as an example to us all, adding that if we tried to run, we would get a bullet in our head."

At the end of June 1992, while he was in a human shield, the witness managed to flee to BiH army controlled territory. However, according to his testimony, a large number of people who were in the human shield that day were killed in an exchange of fire between Serb and BiH forces.

The trial continues next week.

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**Location:** Balkans

**Topic:** War crimes

**Focus:** International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia

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**Source URL:** <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/court-told-doboj-disappearances>