

## **Milosevic's Police and the Massacres**

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New revelations about the Serbian police involved in the Srebrenica operation.

Bosnian Serb police documents obtained by IWPR in The Hague provide new details of how Slobodan Milosevic's police participated in the massacre in the United Nations "Safe Area" of Srebrenica in July 1995.

Belgrade's hand in the slaughter was first exposed two weeks ago when IWPR obtained from the tribunal a copy of an order from Bosnian Serb interior minister Tomislav Kovac ordering police units that included members of Serbia's interior ministry, MUP, to be relocated from Sarajevo to Srebrenica on July 10, 1995.

That order, the first piece of evidence linking Milosevic - as supreme commander of Serbia's MUP - to the worst atrocity of the Bosnian war, dealt a serious blow to the central tenet of the former Serb president's - that neither he nor the forces under his command were involved with atrocities committed in Bosnia.

IWPR's documents are daily combat reports written by Colonel Ljubomir Borovcanin, the Bosnian Serb police commander in the Srebrenica operation. They give more details on the Serbian MUP units which were involved, and paint a picture of consistent Serbian police involvement throughout the Bosnian war.

Borovcanin has been indicted by The Hague for the role he and his police force are said to have played in the killing of more than 7,000 men and boys from Srebrenica.

Although they are far from conclusive - many more documents will have to be uncovered and many more witnesses questioned before a picture of Belgrade's role in the massacres is fully understood - they go even further in undermining Milosevic's claims to the contrary.

Borovcanin's reports show that at least three substantial units of Serbian police fought under his command around Sarajevo before he was redeployed to Srebrenica. At the time, he was deputy commander of Bosnian Serb's Special Police Brigade.

He and his troops were fighting to maintain control of Trnovo, a key town just outside the Bosnian capital for most of June and into early July. As well as his Bosnian Serb policemen, he talks about three Serbian MUP units titled "Kajman", "Plavi" and "Skorpija". It is unclear what strength these were - but they were at least company size, since they were big enough to be divided into platoons

In a report to the Bosnian Serb interior ministry dated June 30, 1995, Borovcanin wrote that troops under his command including the Kajman unit attacked Bosnian army positions on the road between Sarajevo and Trnovo. In his report, he complained that poor intelligence had hampered the operation and that two of his men had been wounded as a result.

The following day, on July 1, 1995, he filed another report saying that he had renewed his attacks and that this time two platoons from each of the three Serbian MUP units under his command were taking part. This time, he said, the operation was more successful and his troops had overrun Bosnian army positions and captured some weapons and a cache of "high-quality" documents.

Nine days later, Borovcanin received his order from the Bosnian Serb interior minister to form a special police force and move it up to Srebrenica. The order did not say how many men from Serbian MUP were involved, but indicated they formed part of one company-strength unit. Until now it was unclear what formations they belonged to, but IWPR's documents suggest that they were drawn from two of the units at Trnovo - Kajman and Plavi.

This deduction is based on a report filed on July 24, 1995 by police commander Savo Cvijetinovic, who took over the Trnovo operation after Borovcanin left. His report on troop rotation shows that only one Serbian MUP unit, Skorpija, remained under his command.

Other documents in the dossier show that Serbian police participation in operations across Bosnia was not incidental but routine, and that they and the Bosnian Serb police cooperated closely and relayed orders to one another.

Among the most damning documents is an April 13, 1994 telex signed by the Bosnian Serb border police chief at Bikeljina, Predrag Jesuric, relaying a request from the Serbian police that the Bosnian Serb defence ministry give them 24 hours notice before bringing in arms, ammunition, explosives and other military items from Serbia.

Another is a August 26, 1995 letter from the Bosnian Serb police in Bijeljina to the Serbian and Montenegrin MUP asking for the return of several trucks and buses that had been stolen in Srebrenica and were believed to be registered in Serbia with false documents.

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