

**Ovčara case**  
**Trial for the war crimes against the war prisoners**  
**War Crimes Chamber of the District Court in Belgrade, Serbia**  
**Number of case: K.V. br.1/2003**

**Trial Chamber:** Vesko Krstajić (the presiding judge), Gordana Božilović-Petrović (judge) and Vinka Beraha-Nikićević (judge).

**Prosecutor:** Deputy War Crimes Prosecutor Dušan Knežević.

**Defendants:** Miroљjub Vujović, Stanko Vujanović, Jovica Perić, Ivan Atanasijević, Predrag Madžarac and Milan Vojnović, Serbs from Croatia.

**Report:** Nataša Kandić and Dragoljub Todorović, victims representatives

**5 July 2004**

Defendant **Miroslav Đanković** denied that he had committed the criminal act and rejected criminal responsibility and said that, in his opinion, all this was an organized campaign against him. Defendant said that he did not want to present the totality of his defense until after he had heard the evidence presented by the second protected witness, as he was afraid he would once again go through what he had already gone through, namely that he would be detained without knowing who had accused him and of what criminal act. As defendant Đanković remained firm in his decision not to present his defense, the presiding judge brought a decision, on the basis of Article 321, Paragraph 2, of the Law on Criminal Procedure, to have the statements of the defendant given in the investigation on 26 December 2003 and on 18 May 2004 read in the courtroom.

Defendant **Slobodan Katić**, aka **major Katić**, told the trial chamber that he had problems with his voice due to the cancer of the throat. He said he was not guilty and denied the criminal act he was charged with. He said he wanted to present his defense, but he did not know what else to say in addition to what he had said in the investigation. Katić pointed out that he had gone to Vukovar on 18 October 1991, as a volunteer from Šid, together with Kameni, Ceca and Kinez, whom he had met in Šid. He was in Milan Lančuzanin's detachment and was, unofficially, in charge of procuring cigarettes, drinks, food etc. His detachment was under the command of YNA major Tešić, while his commander was captain Radić.

Defendant Katić said: "I learned about Ovčara much later, when those from the Hague started accusing Mrkšić, Radić and Šljivančanin". He said that on 17 November 1991 he had driven Goran Valjarević, aka Džo, who was wounded, to the hospital in Negoslavci. After he had taken him to the hospital, he returned to his unit and the following day, 18 November 1991, he left for Belgrade. He returned to Vukovar on 22 November. During his stay in Belgrade, on 19 and 20 November, he called on Valjarević in the Belgrade emergency center. On 20 November he attended the celebration of a *slava*, the patron saint day, in a café in Zemun where they celebrated the liberation of Vukovar as well. He said he did not know where Ovčara was, that he had not been there and that he had lived in Vukovar until 1997. He was armed with an automatic rifle and a scorpion.

Defendant **Nada Kalaba** stated that she understood the charges from the indictment and that she did not commit any crimes and then added: "I don't want to present my defense now as only the protected witnesses, the ones who had made deals with the prosecution, are accusing me."

Defendant **Milan Bulić**, aka **Bulidža**, said that he understood the charges from the indictment

and denied the criminal act and rejected criminal responsibility. He said that in June 1991 he had left Vukovar together with his family. After two and a half months, which he had spent in Borovo Selo, he returned to Vukovar and joined the TD unit at Velepromet whose commander was Ljube Stojanović. This was around 20 September. His task, as well as the task of other members of the unit, was the guard duty and the protection of Velepromet. He said that four or five days before the fall of Vukovar he had left the unit and returned to Petrova Gora where he was in charge of transporting the corpses and cleaning the buildings. A day or two after the liberation of Vukovar, that is, on 18 November 1991, he returned to Velepromet because he had heard that some people were arrested, including doctor Bosanac. When he learned that they had been taken to the barracks, he himself went there. When he arrived to the barracks, which was around 10:00, 11:00 or 12:00 hours, he saw five or six military buses where, he was told, the arrested fighters and employees from the hospital were. The army was in charge of providing security for the buses. Within the perimeters of the barracks there were both the members of TD and civilians. After some time, maybe an hour or two, somebody said that they should start and that the prisoners would be taken to Mitrovica to be exchanged. The defendant, together with Goran Mugoša and Mirko Vojnović, aka Čapalo, left by car toward Ovčara farm. A military vehicle was in front of them and when they reached Ovčara a double row of people was formed and he, together with Mugoša, searched the prisoners. Defendant Bulić stressed that Mugoša had told him that major Šljivančanin had personally ordered them to stand in the double row and search the prisoners. There were some ten persons searching the prisoners, looking for arms, knives and the like, and then they let them enter the hangar. When the search was over, he went into the hangar and stayed there some 15 to 20 minutes. In the hangar he saw a YNA officer making a list of prisoners, but he did not see anyone beating the prisoners. After that, around 5:00 or 5:30 hours, he left Ovčara for Petrova Gora, to Branko Miljanović's house where he spent the night. The column of vehicles, headed by a military vehicle on the way to Ovčara consisted of rather many civilian vehicles. When they reached Ovčara, there already were soldiers, in his opinion some 100 soldiers, and the civilians working at the Ovčara farm. Defendant Bulić stated that the soldiers wore either regular olive-grey uniforms or battle fatigues, while those accompanying the buses had white harnesses. He pointed out that he had seen YNA officers at Ovčara, but that he did not know any of them. In his words, personal documents, money and jewelry were not taken from the prisoners, nor were they beaten. He pointed out that he had recognized many of the prisoners. For instance, Čale Zvonimir, Mandić Mile, Zeljko Josip, Zvonko Varenica and Toma Pravdić. Of the other defendants, at Ovčara, he had seen Miroljub Vujović and Stanko Vujanović, while he saw Kameni only when he left for home. Also, he saw the defendants Đanković and Mića Medonja, as well as Darko Fot and Bora Krajišnik. At the end, Bulić pointed out that, as far as he remembered, in addition to Ružica Mrkobašić, there was another woman at Ovčara, but he could not be sure.

***Observers' remarks:***

*During the four days of the trial, members of the defendants' families and their friends reacted strongly whenever the representatives of the plaintiffs, Dragoljub Todorović and Nataša Kandić, posed a question to the defendants. Beside the abusive language, their questions often met with derision. The presiding judge and the representatives of the court security failed to react to all this. While defendant Vujo was presenting his defense, from the part of the auditorium where members of the defendants' families and their friends were sitting one could hear comments like "Vujo is insane".*

**Note:**

On 31 August 2004, when the presentation of evidence was continued, the presiding judge asked the members of the public to leave the courtroom as a hearing of a protected witness was about

to take place. The protected witness presented his evidence on 31 August, but also on 1, 2, 3, 27, 28 and 29 September 2004.

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