

Your Honours, I was born in a small place in Eastern Bosnia called Bratunac. I spent most of my life in that town. I grew up there, made my friends, and worked at the job that I was trained for. I established my family. I started my family. My life was no different from the life of the majority of the people I knew. In our neighbourhood, only about 10 kilometres away, there is a similar town called Srebrenica. We were connected by numerous connections which life itself weaved, business connection, family connections, neighbourly connections. We lived our ordinary lives. Altogether, we were a little bit poor, a little bit forgotten by everyone. In the early 1990s, our common state began to break apart. The state was called Yugoslavia. Soon afterwards, war began. In the beginning, we hoped that perhaps it will not reach us. But connections amongst the people had begun to break apart. Instead of our lives, the only true value that we had, we began to make up and accept some other values. Instead of ordinary words that we knew, we began to speak some great words: State, nation, religion. Those who taught us those words did not even know us, and we believed that they were doing that precisely for us. Soon, we understood that we began to be endless lines of dead in the chronicles of the dead, the missing, the bereaved. The war, which did not pass us by for some inexplicable reasons, expressed its anti-humane and anti-civilisational nature precisely there, all of its brutality, precisely in that area, its bloodiest and most terrible events were acted out. There is nothing that it did not touch. People, their property, everything that had been built up over decades, even the gifts of nature about which we were so proud, although we were poor, forests, places where we went for holidays. There is no way to explain and describe all of these things or express this entirely in words. When everything was over and it seemed as if it lasted for an eternity, those of us who survived, instead of the paradise that everybody promised, found ourselves in hell. Thousands of dead remained around us. Tens of thousands of destroyed homes. Deserted properties without people. Destroyed religious facilities. Bridges. Schools. Sadness and devastation remained inside us and all around us. Deep wounds which will continue to burn us for decades. Today, the town that I am speaking about, the town called Bratunac, is situated between two graveyards. One is on the northern side, and the other is on the southern side. One contains the bodies of one group, and the other contains the bodies of another group, divided even in death. Both graveyards came to be during and after the war. When you count all of those who are buried in those graveyards, there are twice as many of those than those who today inhabit that town. That is the result of war, the result of the terrible events we went through. That is the result of mindless political concepts to which we agreed and in which we participated. The town of Srebrenica does not exist any more. Whom does it belong to today? The Serbs? The Muslims? It is a town of the dead. Those who committed this killed a town. It doesn't have its present; it doesn't have its future. All that remains is its past which can be measured in

centuries. Is there a greater condemnation for those who did that, no matter who they are and what their names are? They are hiding today, and they once spoke -- described themselves as heroes. They said that they were the faithful. How is it possible, then, that they're afraid of earthly justice and what are we to do with the justice that is expecting all of us quite soon?

It is difficult to live with the memories of everything that happened, with the feeling of shame and embarrassment. In the years that are behind me, during many sleepless nights, I kept asking myself the same questions: How is it possible that we did this to each other? How is it possible at all that we agreed to something like this? If we are the way we are, is there anything salvation for all of us together? A lot of time has passed since then, and I haven't found the answers to those questions. But I know one thing: If the truth cannot save us, then really nothing can save us. And that is why, Your Honour, I spoke the truth. I'm not claiming that it is the only truth or the complete truth; the only thing that I am asserting is that I said everything that I knew, and that it is all correct. The truth may not be liked by everybody, but is it also necessary to say that I myself don't like it either?

In numerous interviews to the Prosecution, which can be measured in thousands of pages, the four times that I testified before this Tribunal in different cases, I said everything that I had to say, including the truth about myself. From the very first day when I entered politics as far back as 1990 until the day I definitely left it, I did not conceal anything. I am what I am, no matter what that means. I cannot defend myself from myself. I accepted responsibility for Glogova, and I did not accuse anyone of the things that I am guilty of. I did not understand my guilt only in the legal sense, but in a broader, human sense. Even the things that I did not understand in the best way at the time or the things that I did not know, I was obliged to know and understand. Because I know, Your Honours, that I am capable of it.

That is why my guilt is greater and more profound. I am aware of it completely, and that is why I admitted it. When I realised what really happened in Glogova, and I understood that for the first time completely when I was here listening to certain testimonies of survivors in other cases, I decided without much thinking to admit my guilt because what is my life in relation to the lives of those innocent victims? What is its value? And what can we measure it by? I did not calculate in any sense, particularly not in relation to a sentence which may be passed down. I did not think at that time, nor am I thinking about the sentence today. I have too many years and too much guilt to permit myself to think about that.

I will accept my punishment in the same way that I accepted my guilt, aware that it cannot in any way be greater than the one I passed on myself, having permitted myself to be in the position that I am in and of which I am ashamed, aware that no punishment can pay my debts to the -- settle my debts to the living and the dead. I loved those towns in Eastern Bosnia. Today, they don't love me. They have renounced me,

and that is my punishment. There is no greater punishment.  
Your Honours, I bow to the spirit of innocent victims in Glogova.  
Everything that I did in this Tribunal, for whatever it's worth, I  
dedicate to them in the hope that it will at least somewhat alleviate  
the pain of their dear ones. I am familiar with that pain because I  
also carry that pain. I regret the expulsion that I committed, and I  
express my remorse about all the victims of this war, no matter in  
which graveyards they lie. I apologise to all those whom -- to whom I  
caused sorrow and whom I let down.  
The last sentence that I wish to state before this Trial Chamber, I  
address exclusively, solely to my family, to my children: Never in  
this war did I wish, order, nor commit a single murder.