

Your Honours, never in my life did I want to be the chief of police, but perhaps destiny or a set of unfortunate circumstances put me in that position, and at the worst possible time, the time of war, and here I am today standing before you, before world public opinion, and before God. War is hell. The town of Bosanski Šamac, as well as the police station, throughout the war were actually on the very front line. Artillery shells were falling almost daily on the town, as well as throughout the territory of the municipality. Frequent deaths, the wounding of soldiers, civilians, and children occurred. Attending the funerals of my relatives, friends, and acquaintances was frequent. The testimony of Serbs who came from Odžak and Orašje through a process of exchange, events followed one another at great speed, and at times, it was very difficult to act wisely. A great deal of fear, panic, fatigue, stress, and at times alcohol, too, influenced my actions. Under those circumstances, I made erroneous decisions and I committed erroneous acts. At the time, I didn't have sufficient courage or determination to prevent volunteers and local criminals from committing evil and plundering the non-Serb population, and for this I feel great remorse.

Before the war, I had not planned ethnic cleansing or persecution, nor was I aware of any such plan. Two weeks into the war, I realised that a large number of non-Serbs had left and were continuing to leave the territory of Šamac municipality. I realised but I lacked courage to prevent the illegal and inhuman activities that were going on and that --such treatment of non-Serbs, due to which those people left the territory of Šamac municipality. Some of them left out of fear even before the conflict, some via Yugoslavia to western European countries, while a certain number left through the exchanges and against their own will. Those exchanges in those days seemed to me as a temporary solution. I realise today that those exchanges were unfair and unjust.

In the autumn of 1992, I realised that the volunteers from Serbia had done more harm and evil than good. As I was still afraid of them, secretly we undertook to get rid of them and to expel them into Serbia. After that, they were arrested and transferred to the military prison in Banja Luka. And during that year, the year of 1992, I became aware that Croats and Muslims had suffered a great deal, to my great regret. That is why I feel very profound repentance and remorse. I pray to God every day for forgiveness for my sins.

I have cooperated fully with this Tribunal, and I'm ready to continue to do so. I am ready to testify, to cooperate, and to say everything I know in the interests of truth and justice. My wish and hope is, and that depends on you, Your Honours, to go back to the wonderful prewar times that we had when all the people of Bosnia lived in unity and happily together. Unfortunately, I cannot change history. I would wish and am ready, if you give me such a chance, to try and improve the future. If fate gives me such a chance, I will dedicate myself to my family and my children. I'm also ready to invest every effort in the new multi-ethnic Bosnia, to have a positive effect on the surroundings so that the inter-ethnic wounds should heal as soon as possible and

that peoples and nations should live in mutual respect and harmony and thereby to atone for my sins up to a point, my sins towards men and to God.

Though I stand before you, Your Honours, as the accused, I do thank you very much for your attention, for your reasoning, and for your protection of my rights. Thank you, Your Honours.