

Before the war in Bosnia, we all lived together in good neighbourly relations regardless of who or what we were. Prijedor was a good place to live in in the former Yugoslavia and to live together. I had many friendships, many of which transcended ethnic differences.

Unfortunately, when the war broke out, we had to go where we were told to go. We didn't have much choice. We could either obey orders, refuse to obey them, or desert. I was sent to Keraterm, although I would have preferred to go somewhere else at the time, because to go and work in Keraterm was the worst thing that could have happened to me.

After the events in 1992, I personally had occasion to see the consequences suffered by Serbian refugees who arrived in Prijedor because of similar events elsewhere, and I was able to imagine what the people who had to leave Prijedor had to go through. I fully understand that these events had destructive consequences and that they still affect Muslims today, some of whom were my friends.

After I saw and I understood the consequences, I wish to tell the Trial Chamber that I deeply regret everything that happened in Keraterm while I was there. I feel only regret for all the lives that have been lost and the lives that were damaged in Prijedor, in Keraterm, and unfortunately, I contributed to the destruction of these lives.

I am especially sorry that I did not have enough moral courage and power to prevent some or all of the terrible things that happened. I would like to be able to turn back the clock and act differently. I understand that by taking responsibility for my role in these events I have to be punished, and I hope that what happened to me will be a good lesson to anyone anywhere who finds himself in similar circumstances in the future, and I truly hope that I will be forgiven, although I do understand that some will find it very difficult.

I also hope that my family will forgive me, because through my thoughtlessness, I have brought their lives into a difficult situation. I hope that what happened to me will contribute to the faster return of Muslims to their homes and to the faster and more efficient reconciliation of all peoples.

I understand that as a consequence of this, I will be absent from Prijedor for a long time, but let me assure you, Your Honours, that when I do return home one day, I will be the one to speak with the most conviction against such folly, and I hope that you will accept this – that you will accept my regret and my remorse for everything that I did and everything I did not do.

I feel no self-pity because I know that this is an experience I have to go through, but I trust that Your Honours will understand when I say that I deeply regret what has happened and that I regret that I cannot be with my family in my home. I know that it is always difficult to find enough words and the right words to express one's sorrow in such circumstances, but I hope that Your Honours will understand me and reach a just decision.