

Written Testimony of **Mr. E.B.**

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on "Kosovo's Wartime Victims: The Quest for Justice"

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I was a 39 years old, a married man, a father. I had gotten somewhat used to police actions. They happened very frequently in the village where I lived. All the time, day and night. Houses were burned, people were killed on the streets, people were shot at, families were deported, and so on. One morning, I was going to my neighbor's house to get some coffee when my neighbors suddenly screamed "Run! They're here!" At that very moment, the whole neighborhood started to panic.

We had taken in some refugees from different villages at my house. They stayed there for a couple of weeks. On the first night of the airstrike campaign, the refugees left because they were worried that the Serbian soldiers would burn us down in retaliation. People were legitimately panicking. No one knew what to do or where to go. I told my wife that we should stay at our home because I did not know what was going to happen to us.

Sure enough, the Serbian forces started to burn our houses down. I was going to the house of an acquaintance when I saw Serbian soldiers firing snipers from the roof. I understood that they had taken their positions and that they had us surrounded. A few people were waving at those of us out on the street, signaling that we should leave. I did not know whether I could go back to get my family or not. One man screamed out "Leave, I see the White 101 (Serbian car)." My family had already started to leave, and that is when I was separated from them. I fled too, and I made it for about 100 meters or so, jumping over fences and walls and into a house at the end of the street. There were a few people there.

I went behind the house, and I saw soldiers on the walls, so I started to run again. I ran until I arrived at the crossroad. Just when I was about to cross the street, I saw them. I hesitated so much. I remembered that they would load their automatic weapons with something that burned immediately after they fired. They had me cornered, and I was terrified. I hadn't seen them coming, but they had clearly seen me. Paramilitary officers were stationed on the lower story of the building before me, and Serbian military forces were upstairs. They were armed. Two of them came to get me, and the others scattered all over. I just froze. "Where do you think you're going?" they asked. I said, "I'm looking for my family."

I don't know how they could say or even think all the names and words that they called me and swore at me. They spoke on the phone with one another, and I saw someone approaching us. They punched me and cracked my lip. Then they told me to turn around and punched me again. They threw me into a ditch and I screamed "No! Don't!" They turned to each other and said: "This one, we are not going to kill." That is when the torture began.

They threw me on the ground and took turns raping me. In the beginning, I had some strength to fight them back. However, someone broke a bottle of rakia (alcohol) and wanted to cut my hands.

He did not cut too deep, but just enough to scare me and make me bleed. Then the violation continued. I remember two officers who raped me until I lost my conscience. When I woke up, I was scared and humiliated. My mouth was parched. I thought they had killed me!

When I came back to my senses they told me "You shall remember who we were!" They used rape as a weapon of war. I don't know how many of them raped me besides those two. I do not know how long it lasted. I recovered slowly and went back home. My wife saw that I was beaten up, cut and torn all over. I took a shower that night. I wrapped my bleeding hands, my cut lip, and my black eye. The police action in our neighborhood had ended.

The next day, we went outside our house and we could not believe our own eyes. The entire place had been burned down to ashes. We walked on fire sparks. We saw a store that used to be nearby. The glass on its door had turned into liquid from the heat. I went in and grabbed two bottles of water. The Serbian police were patrolling the streets. They lined us up and we walked. Endless columns of terrified people. We had no idea where we were going. We continued like that until we reached the border. Then they somehow let us go. We were in Albania. It was my first time in Albania.

I implore the United States Congress to demand justice for the victims of war crimes and atrocities that were committed in Kosovo.