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A VILLAGE DESTROYED: War Crimes in Kosovo

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A Note on Terminology and Witness Names

First mention of all place names in Kosovo is provided in both the Serbian and Albanian languages. Thereafter, for the sake of simplicity and consistency, all names are in Serbian.

In order to protect individuals from possible reprisals, Human Rights Watch has used random initials to conceal the identity of the witnesses and survivors mentioned in this report.

SUMMARY

This report documents what happened in one village on one day.

In the early morning of May 14, 1999, in the midst of NATO's air campaign against Yugoslavia, Serbian security forces descended on the small village of Cuška--Qyshk in Albanian--near the western Kosovo city of Pec (Pejë). Fearing reprisals, many men fled into the nearby hills while the rest of the population was forcibly assembled in the village center. An estimated twelve men were killed during the roundup in various parts of the village.

At approximately 8:30 a.m., the security forces in green military uniforms with painted faces and masks separated the gathered women, children, and elderly from the remaining men who had not managed to flee. The more than 200 villagers were threatened and systematically robbed of their money, jewelry, and other valuables. Their identification papers were destroyed.

Twenty-nine men between the ages of nineteen and sixty-four were divided into three groups and taken into three separate houses, where they were forced to stand in a line. In each house, uniformed men sprayed them repeatedly with automatic weapons. In one of the houses, a gunman finished off several of the fallen men with pistol shots. Each house was set on fire and left to burn.

The events in Cuška are far from unique: hundreds, if not thousands, of ethnic Albanians were killed by Serbian special forces and paramilitaries throughout Kosovo between March and June--many of them in a similar manner.

But this case has two special characteristics that make it worth a detailed investigation. First, in each of the three groups of men, there was one survivor. Through pure chance, three people managed to crawl from the burning homes, none of them seriously injured. They, and many others present that day, have told Human Rights Watch their stories.

Second, while ethnic Albanian villagers in Kosovo are usually unable to differentiate between soldiers, special police, paramilitaries, and anti-terrorist units, let alone identify individuals, in this case there is powerful evidence to point the finger at some of the specific people involved in these war crimes. Local villagers are adamant that ethnic Serbs from the immediate area were involved in the action. Some of the forces spoke to the Albanians by name and asked for specific valuables.

More importantly, villagers positively identified in photographs two of the individuals that they claim were present in Cuška on May 14 and a third who was present in the nearby village of Zahac (Zahacq in Albanian) on the same day, when nineteen other men were killed. While none of the individuals identified are known to have opened fire on the ethnic Albanian men, their presence in Cuška and Zahac on May 14 means that they should be able to identify the perpetrators, as well as the commanders of the unit. That information is invaluable to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, which is mandated to investigate and prosecute war crimes in Kosovo.

The photographs used to identify the men in Cuška were provided to Human Rights Watch by representatives of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). While Human Rights Watch cannot vouch for the authenticity of the photographs, numerous Kosovar Albanians recognized the men mentioned in this report from these photographs, and placed them among the Serbian forces in the villages on the day of the killings. Some witnesses were able to provide names.

A Human Rights Watch researcher scanned the photographs into a laptop computer and then showed them to villagers in Cuška, Zahac, and Pavljan (Pavlan, in Albanian, is where another six people were killed on May 14), as well as to people in Pe. The methodology employed was to show the photographs to only one person at a time, preferably in a one-on-one setting. All of the photographs were shown one at a time on the computer screen without any comment or suggestive hints.

Human Rights Watch found five different people, interviewed separately, who said the man second from the left in [Photograph no. 1](#) was among the Serbian forces in Cuška on May 14. Three of these people thought the man was a commander. United States journalists independently investigating war crimes around Pec with the same photographs found three people who independently identified the man as Sreko Popovic. The journalists also found an additional five people who said they saw Popovic in Cuška on May 14.

Two of the witnesses Human Rights Watch spoke to claimed that the man in [Photographs no. 2](#) (on right) and [no. 3](#) had been in Cuška with the Serbian security forces. The man in both photographs appears to be the same as the man identified in [Photograph no. 1](#) as Sreko Popovic.

Three other people said that Zvonimir (Zvonko) Cvetkovi was also present in Cuška on May 14, one interviewed by Human Rights Watch and two by the U.S. journalists ([Photograph no. 4](#), far right). The person who spoke with Human Rights Watch picked Cvetkovi out from the group photograph and said she saw him in Cuška on May 14. "Of course I know Zvonko," the witness said. "We lived on the same street." Human Rights Watch subsequently obtained a copy of Cvetkovi's passport (see [Photograph no. 5](#)).

Two ethnic Albanian men from Zahac, interviewed separately, identified Slaviša Kastratovi from [Photograph no. 1](#) (third from left), and said that they had seen him in Zahac on May 14. Both men claimed to have had previous interactions with him in the Pec area, and to have recognized him clearly that day. Although she didn't know his name, a third witness recognized Kastratovi from [Photograph no. 1](#) as a member of the Serbian forces in Cuška on May 14. This matches the general testimony of other witnesses who claimed that the security forces moved on to Zahac and nearby Pavljan after the killings in Cuška.

Many other people in the villages and Pec identified Vidomir Šalipur in [Photograph no. 6](#) (back row, center, with cap) and [Photograph no. 7](#) (front row, far left) as a Pec policeman who was notorious for his use of torture and beatings against ethnic Albanians in the area. Šalipur, who allegedly headed a local militia group called "Munja," or Lightning, was killed by the KLA on April 11, 1999 (see Šalipur's death announcement, [Photograph no. 8](#)), before the May 14 incident in Cuška.

In the process of the Cuška investigation, two people independently identified Nebojša Mini (aka Mrtvi, or "Death") from [Photograph no. 6](#) (back row, far right) and others said he was well-known in the Pec area for his criminal activity. Although Mini was not seen in Cuška, the two witnesses directly implicated him in the extortion and killing of six family members from Pec on June 12. In [Photograph no. 6](#), Mini is standing next to Šalipur (back row, center), suggesting that the two men might have collaborated in the same militia group, possibly the group known as "Munja."

The motivation for the killing in Cuška, as well as the attacks that same day on Pavljan and Zahac, remains unclear. There is no evidence to suggest any KLA presence in the villages in 1998 or 1999, and no policemen or soldiers are known to have died in the immediate vicinity during the NATO bombing, which might have made revenge a possible motive. One explanation offered by local villagers is that Cuška was the home of Hasan Ceku, the father of Agim Ceku, the military head of the KLA. Hasan and his brother, Kadri, were both killed on May 14. One villager in Cuška told Human Rights Watch that the police showed her a picture of Agim Ceku and said: "We are doing this because of him."

Motivation aside, the killings in Cuška, Pavljan, and Zahac were closely coordinated. This was not random violence by a rogue element in the Serbian security forces. As in other villages throughout Kosovo during the war, the Yugoslav Army maintained security on the periphery of the fighting, installing checkpoints on roads leading out, while special police forces and paramilitaries went into the villages to kill and "cleanse." Whether the principal perpetrators in Cuška were a local militia, a special police unit, or perhaps both, there is no question that they were working in concert with the local police and military authorities.

There is also evidence of Yugoslav Army involvement in the attack. A number of sources reported seeing documents from the army regarding a military buildup around Cuška shortly before May 14. One Western journalist claimed to have seen Yugoslav Army documents that ordered the village to be "cleansed."

BACKGROUND

Cuška is a small village about five miles east of Pec near the main Pe-Priština road that had approximately two hundred houses and 2,000 residents. Three ethnic Serbian families lived in the village, each named Jašovi, as well as one Montenegrin family named Bojovi. Relations between the Serbs and Albanians were good, the ethnic Albanian villagers said. All of the non-ethnic Albanian families left Kosovo when the Serbian and Yugoslav forces withdrew from the province on June 12.⁽¹⁾

According to villagers, there was never any KLA activity in Cuška, Zahac, or Pavljan, although some of the military-age men in the area were admittedly members of the KLA who fought in and around Pe, including in the village of Loa (Loxhë in Albanian).⁽²⁾ The immediate Cuška area was not the scene of any fighting between government forces and the KLA in 1998 or 1999. The only incident occurred in Zahac on December 22, 1998, when the police killed one ethnic Albanian man, Sali Kabashi, and arrested five others in disputed circumstances. The Serbian government said

the police came under fire during the arrest,⁽³⁾ but ethnic Albanian sources claimed that Kabashi was summarily executed.⁽⁴⁾

During the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999, Cuška, Zahac, and Pavljan were initially left relatively untouched even though most of the surrounding villages and the city of Pec were systematically "cleansed" beginning on March 25. By March 29, more than 90 percent of Pe's population had been sent to Montenegro in the north by foot or to Albania in the southwest by bus. Other villages along the Pe-Priština road were also vacated of ethnic Albanians in March and April, except for Cuška, Zahac, and Pavljan. Why they were not "cleansed" at this time is unknown, but they remained a pocket of villagers in the middle of the Pec area.

Special police forces came to Cuška three times before the May 14 attack to demand weapons and money, and they burned a few houses, but nobody was injured or killed, and everyone was allowed to stay. The first visit was April 17 around 4:00 p.m., and the forces only entered the Kristal neighborhood of the village. Between four and seven houses were burned, villagers told Human Rights Watch.

Four days later, at around 12:00 p.m., security forces entered Cuška, Zahac, and Pavljan. Witnesses told Human Rights Watch that the men were in green camouflage uniforms, and some of them had green cowboy hats. Villagers also said that the forces told them not to worry. "All of you can go home. No one will touch you. You're safe," they reportedly said. The forces came again the following day and searched Cuška for weapons. A number of villagers said that some villagers had handed over some guns they had in their possession at this time. Syl Gashi reportedly handed over a hunting rifle and his brother gave a pistol, as did Brahim Lushi, even though he possessed a gun license. The police also reportedly took Syl Gashi's BMW car and 1,200 DM.

The motive for the May 14 killings remains unclear. One hypothesis is that Cuška was the home of Hasan Ceku, father of the KLA's chief military leader, Agim Ceku.⁽⁵⁾ One villager claimed that the security forces on May 14 showed her a photo of Agim Ceku and said "We are doing this because of him."⁽⁶⁾ This is supported by testimony given to the Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights, a U.S.-based human rights group. In video footage taken by the committee's Witness Project, members of the Ceku family testify that the security forces specifically asked for Agim Ceku's father, before killing him.⁽⁷⁾

The police action on May 14 was clearly "more aggressive" than on previous visits, many villagers said. From the beginning, it was clear that the forces' objectives and orders went beyond a routine search for weapons.

THE KILLINGS IN CUŠKA (QYSHK)

The May 14 offensive began without warning around 7:30 a.m. when a large force believed to be special police and paramilitaries entered Cuška from the direction of Pe. Villagers told Human Rights Watch that they heard automatic gunfire at about that time and saw some houses on the edge of the village being burned. Many of the young and middle-aged men fled in fear into the nearby hills, as they had during the previous police visits to Cuška, although some decided to stay with their families.

The police swept from west to east, forcing people towards the center of the village. Some villagers went willingly to the center since, as one woman said, they thought they were being expelled to Albania and "it would be safer to assemble in one place."⁽⁸⁾ An estimated twelve men were killed at this time in various parts of the village, including Hasan Ceku, the father of KLA military commander Agim Ceku.

The Witness Project of the Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights interviewed two witnesses to Hasan Ceku's killing. Both of them testified about the incident on video, the transcript of which was made available to Human Rights Watch. One witness said:

They [the security forces] then asked who was the father of Agim Ceku, that he was big now, that we brought NATO to them, now they will eliminate us.... They took Hasan, twice then let him go, and released the cattle. When he came back the last time, they had even stabbed one of the cows. They shot Hasan right there, and set him on fire. I snuck close by and saw Hasan dead, with his legs on fire.⁽⁹⁾

Another witness testified to the Witness Project:

We knew that they were killing the families of Albanian officers. I believed it was just a matter of time before they killed us all. They separated us, not knowing who Agim's father was, and asking about it. [Hasan] came forward. They told him to take his family and separated us. They took [Hasan] to find a picture of Agim, while they questioned me and my sister-in-law. They asked us when was the last time we saw him [Agim]. Where? But we had already decided that no matter what, we would never admit that we have any contact with him. I was telling him never. At that moment [Hasan] brought the picture, in which I was with Agim. He recognized me, but I denied it. He told me I was lucky because I was carrying a little child with me. They asked me to follow them and tell them whose house was the one across the street. Then I heard the shots. I ran but my uncle did not let me see [Hasan] dead.⁽¹⁰⁾

Despite these initial killings, some men decided to stay with their families. One thirty-eight-year-old man, B.B., remained with approximately forty people from his family, including his mother and children. He explained for Human Rights Watch:

When I saw them [the Serbian forces] near my house they looked very aggressive, so I decided to run. Down the road I saw some young men who told me they [the Serbian forces] had killed three men. I decided to come to the neighborhood of the Gashi family. When I got there I spoke with some old men who had decided to wait for the military to come. Right after that, the Lushi and Kelmendi families came--women, men, and children.⁽¹¹⁾

B.B. and other villagers interviewed separately told Human Rights Watch that a group of approximately 200 ethnic Albanians from the village was soon surrounded by an estimated one hundred security forces. All of the witnesses said that the forces were wearing green military-style uniforms. All of them had their faces covered in some way, either with black grease paint or a mask, and some of them had black scarves and green cowboy-style hats.

All of the villagers believed that some of the security forces were from the Pec area, such as the ethnic Serbian village of Gorazdevac (Gorazhdvec), which is across the Bistrica River from Cuška. Some of the forces seemed to know a few of the local Albanians personally, villagers told Human Rights Watch, since they asked for specific valuables, such as the "car keys to your Mercedes." One woman who was in close contact with the forces told Human Rights Watch:

They wore green camouflage uniforms. Most of them had handkerchiefs around their heads, and two of them had hats, but some of them had their heads uncovered. All of them had their faces painted. We could only see their eyes, so we could not recognize them. But it was obvious that some of them knew us. There is a very short man from Cuška, a drunkard, whom people make fun of. Some soldiers started making fun of him, and from the way they did it, it was clear they knew him... Also, some of the soldiers would say to a person: "Get the keys of your Mercedes!" or "Give us the keys to your van!" That is, they knew who was who and who owned what.⁽¹²⁾

B.B. told Human Rights Watch:

I think they were from around here because they knew the men by name and they told them to get their cars. I recognized some of their faces.⁽¹³⁾

For more details on the identities of the security forces, see the section on perpetrators in this report.

After the crowd of villagers was concentrated in the village center, twenty-nine men were separated from the women and children. The entire group was then systematically robbed of their valuables. B.B. explained:

They ordered us to empty our pockets of all valuables--money, jewelry, gold. After they finished that, they ordered two kids, aged thirteen and fourteen. One was to take our IDs and the other to collect the valuables. The man who [later] executed us put a knife to the childrens' throats and said "give us everything you have." They shot near the kids' legs and above their heads.⁽¹⁴⁾

C.C., aged fifty-seven, was also captured as he tried to leave his house and forced to gather in the village center. He told Human Rights Watch:

The wife of my brother was twenty meters away. They told her to stop and they put a machine gun to her neck. They took about 850 DM from her. One of them cursed me and hit me in the face with his hand. "What do you think, you will never have a democracy," they said. "This is Serbia. America or NATO have no business here."

They took us to the cemetery. The Gashi, Lushi, and Kelmendi families were there, along with some guests from Lodza, Graboc, Rausic, and Gorazdevac.... They started to separate the women, children, and old men from the younger men. I didn't recognize them because at that moment most of them were masked or with black color on their faces. They stole from us; from me they took about 200 DM. They took our watches, documents, some of which they burned, our gold, and jewelry.⁽¹⁵⁾

Another woman who was present, D.D., told Human Rights Watch that the women and children stayed in the village center for approximately one hour. She said:

The soldiers were taking things from us: money, cigarettes, watches, jewelry.... One soldier took a knife and started licking it. He put it under the throat of a child. One of my children, my three-year-old son, broke free from my hands and started running to the direction of the group of men, where my husband was. The soldiers shot into the ground close to my son's legs to stop him.⁽¹⁶⁾

Another woman, A.A., corroborated this account. She added:

We [the women] stayed at the square. A soldier told us that they had an order to kill all of the villagers, but that they would spare women and children. He asked: "Do you want us to take you to Albania or to Montenegro?" We did not answer.⁽¹⁷⁾

After stripping everyone of their documents and valuables, the security forces separated eleven men from the group of twenty-nine and brought them into a yard between the houses of Ajeta and Haki Gashi. The eleven men were led into the nearby house of Syl Gashi. What happened next is best described by the testimony of C.C., who was in the group:

Four of them came with us, three soldiers and one policeman. One had an automatic machine gun with two legs and the other three had normal machine guns. They put us near the wall. One of them was at the door with the machine gun--a young soldier. He said, "We will execute all of your families at the cemetery. You'll give us all your money if you want to be saved." We said we didn't have any more money and you can do anything you want with us.

Then he said he would talk with his colleagues to see what he'd do with us. They spoke by walkie-talkie with their commander but I didn't hear what they said. At once he stepped into the door with the machine gun. We were against the wall with our hands up. He said, "In the name of Serbia you will all be shot."

Ibro Kelmendi was on the left side. He has a weak heart and when he heard what he said, he died and fell on top of me. I pretended like I was dead too. Then he opened fire and everyone was killed except one guy. He shot once more at that person--I don't know who it was. I was wounded too, in the upper leg. Another guy came and shot again, then a third guy emptied his machine gun, then the fourth. I was alive under Ibro Kelmendi and my brother.

They cursed Albanians and then they set the house on fire. They broke a window and lit the stuffing from a mattress and put it over the bodies. I pushed the bodies aside and got out. I decided it was better to kill me than to be burned alive, so I jumped out the window. I went 100 meters and hid. I hid from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. [\(18\)](#)

Human Rights Watch inspected Syl Gashi's house on July 16. Only the walls were standing, and the interior had been completely burned. Small fragments of bone were scattered among the charred roof tiles and wooden beams that lay on the ground.

B.B. was among the men waiting outside the garden gate. He told Human Rights Watch that he heard shooting two or three minutes after the first group had been taken away, and he knew they had been killed. He told Human Rights Watch:

The police returned, talked among themselves and asked some young boys around fifteen and sixteen to go with the women and children. Then they separated us into two groups. When they took us [ten men], one guy didn't know which way to go and they hit him with a gun and said "Go this way!" They told us to go with our hands on our head and walk quickly. When we came here [house of Sahit Gashi], one said, "put them here." Another said, "It's not good to put them here because it will smell." So we went to Sahit Gashi's house.

First they said stand near the bathroom. I first thought they would execute us there but one guy with many bullets on his chest--12.7 mm-- said, "No, go in this room." They were very calm. They cursed us but they were not shouting. I wonder how they can kill us when they are so calm.

We went into the kitchen. I saw the fire from the machine gun and I fell to my left. I think everyone was killed but I wasn't even wounded. He sprayed three times. The same man went to the other side of the room and shot again at those who had fallen Three times again. One bullet hit me in the leg. I was hit on my left leg below the knee. Then I was hit on the right leg above the knee. The third bullet hit me in the right shin and broke the bone. [\(19\)](#)

Then he took out his pistol and shot six or seven people but I wasn't watching because my eyes were closed. Then everything stopped. There was silence. I waited for two or three minutes and slowly opened my eyes. When I saw no one was around I looked to my right and saw Isuf Shala was dead. Arian Lushi was dead on my right. The others were dead too.

I saw five police from the window and I heard one of them coming. I stayed lying down with my eyes half closed watching what he was doing. He just put his head in the room and threw something and very quickly some black smoke started going from that. After a few seconds, I couldn't breathe. When I thought I was going to scream because I was choking, I was thinking "please God, help" and I got up and went to the door. I thought I'd be killed but it is very hard to be burned alive.

I went to the other room and jumped from the window. I jumped out and saw their cars. One had a big Gulinov. They had civilian vehicles, trucks, and tractors and military vehicles too. [\(20\)](#)

Like Syl Gashi's house, Sahit Gashi's home was also burnt out, with only the walls remaining, when visited by Human

Rights Watch on July 15.

E.E. was in the last group of eight men waiting outside the garden gate. In a brief interview with Human Rights Watch he confirmed that his group had been taken into Demë Gashi's house and was shot there. He survived uninjured. During the discussion, however, the photographs of his deceased family members and neighbors arrived for use in the ceremonial service that was planned to take place in Cuška the next day, July 18, rendering the moment improper for an in depth interview.

Some foreign journalists, however, did speak in detail with E.E. about his experience. In an article published in the June 28 edition of *Time*, the survivor is quoted about what happened after the security forces took him into the two-story house:

I was together with eight others. When we entered the hallway of the house, one of the VJ [Yugoslav Army] soldiers gave us a lighter and told us to burn down the house. When I bent down to take the lighter, the shooting started. I started crawling, not lifting my head.[\(21\)](#)

Human Rights Watch also spoke with E.E.'s niece, A.A., in Montenegro where she was a refugee. She told Human Rights Watch that she met her uncle near Cuška the night of May 14 and relayed what he had said to her at that time:

At twilight, our uncle E.E. came and told us that the men had been separated into three groups and led into three houses. He was the first to enter one of the houses. He was given a lighter by a soldier and ordered to light a curtain in the room. When he kneeled down to set the curtain on fire, he heard a machine gun burst. He jumped out of the window and ran away.[\(22\)](#)

The events described by the three survivors were corroborated by other individuals in Cuška on May 14, including the women who were in close proximity to the security forces before being sent out of the village around the time the first group of men was being led into Syl Gashi's house. As they were leaving, they heard shots, some of them said, but they were not able to determine where they came from. A.A. told Human Rights Watch:

While we were leaving Cuška, the soldiers started shooting in our direction, but they were only shooting into the ground. Because of the noise and the fear we felt, we were unable to discern precisely what was shot at, and all the places the shooting was coming from. Maybe there was some other shooting as well at the same time, but we were not able to discern it.[\(23\)](#)

The women and children in the village were loaded onto tractors and escorted by the Serbian forces to the nearby Trepca battery factory on the Pe-Priština road. One woman in the group told Human Rights Watch that they met the commander of the Pe-Kliina police station at a checkpoint near the factory. He was apparently surprised to see the women and children, asked who had sent them there, and returned them in the direction of Cuška, accompanied by men in three civilian cars, a grey Audi and two Zastavas. D.D. said:

The soldiers set Sali's house on fire. The roof began to fall. Then they put us on tractors and horses. Around 10:00 a.m. they took us --women, children, and several old men--in front of the Trepca factory, which is between Cuška and the center of Pe. While we were leaving, we heard gunfire. The soldiers didn't say much on the way to the factory.

We stayed for four hours in front of Trepca. The police there told us to go back to Cuška. When we got close to the village, we saw the burnt houses. I entered the house of Ram Binaku. I saw burnt bodies in one of the rooms. Most of the bodies were impossible to recognize. The woman recognized pieces of things belonging to their husbands, such as lighters, watches, keys.... I think Skender Dervishi was burned alive, because next to his body I saw traces in the ground, as if somebody was scratching his hand in the surface. I fainted.[\(24\)](#)

Another man, F.F., aged thirty-five, fled into the hills when the security forces arrived but returned later that day to discover many of the bodies, ultimately burying thirty-five of the forty-two victims. He told Human Rights Watch:

We went about 300 meters from the village where there is a wooded hill. We saw the burning houses and heard shooting and screaming. Then the forces went away. About thirty or forty-five minutes later, [E.E.] came. We saw he was not okay. I asked him what happened. He couldn't speak a word but just replied, "What happened to us. What happened to us" while putting his hands on his head. He looked inhuman.

[\(25\)](#)

E.E. told the men in the hills that people had been killed in the village but he was too traumatized to explain, F.F. said. About an hour later, F.F. and another man named Ajet went into Cuška to see what happened. On the way, they saw Zoran Jašovi, an ethnic Serb civilian who lived in Cuška, waving a Yugoslav flag in front of a burning house, apparently to let the security forces know that he was Serbian. He didn't see the ethnic Albanian men and then he left the area. F.F. explained what happened next:

He [Jašovi] left and we went to that house. I went inside and saw the bodies burning. It was the house of Demë Gashi. I didn't identify them or count them. We went back to the woods and invited Sadik Gashi to come with us. We went back and tried to put the fire out. The forces had left at that time. None of our family members were around....

I saw the burning house of Sylë Gashi and we saw a large number of burning victims. I cannot tell how many people were there, it's better to speak with an eyewitness. I decided to inspect each house. In the house of Ahmet Gashi we found burning bodies but we couldn't put out the flames. In Ajet's house we saw two other burning bodies: Sylë Gashi and Skender Gashi... Then we went to Sali Gashi's house. We saw the body of Ibish Gashi with many bullet holes. We saw an outhouse near the road riddled with bullets. I opened the door slowly, very slowly, and I saw Qaush Lushi dead. He was killed with a 7.9 mm machine gun.

Human Rights Watch inspected the outhouse where Qaush Lushi was reportedly killed. It was a small wooden structure on the side of the road with ten bullet holes in the front door, and nine bullet holes on the far wall inside (see [Photograph no. 9](#)). Danish forensic experts who were coincidentally examining the site at the time told Human Rights Watch that they had gathered positive evidence of human blood inside. Two bullets were found, they said, one inside the outhouse and one wedged into the wood. They appeared to be 7.6 mm caliber. [\(26\)](#)

Villagers in Cuška told Human Rights Watch that Qaush Lushi was the richest man in the village, and that he had been forced to give the police 10,000 DM before he and his son, Osman, were killed. An article in *Time* covering the killings in Cuška also said that Lushi returned from his house with money for the police to find his son already dead. He was then forced into the outhouse where he was killed. [\(27\)](#)

B.B. confirmed that the police had targeted Qaush Lushi. He told Human Rights Watch:

They [the security forces] said "Do you want a state? We are 11 million Serbs so if you want a state ask for help from Clinton and Blair. Ask for NATO's help now." Qaush said "We have a state." And one of them said, "While I was defending you, you got rich." Two times they took Qaush to his home and when he went to this garden [near Azem Gashi's house], they shot above his head. Qaush came back with his car. [\(28\)](#)

F.F. told Human Rights Watch what happened the next day, May 15, after he and other villagers had spent the night in the forest:

The next day, the families who had slept in the Kelmendi house, Ajet, Milaim, and me, decided to bury

the bodies because we didn't want the families to see them in that condition. I proposed and we decided to dig one mass grave because it was too dangerous to take the time digging many graves. Some women and children came and realized that their men had been killed and burned. They asked me "where is so and so." I said, "everyone who is not here is dead."

We found thirty-one burned bodies and buried them with two unburned bodies, that of Ibish Gashi and Qaush Lushi... [The next day] it rained very hard. We decided that we, Skender, Ajjet, Milaim, and me would go and take two other bodies, one near my house, with a stretcher and we saw one old man who was watching the body of my uncle Brahim, who was killed by a bullet to the heart. We took him to the grave site. We went to look for our neighbor Rasim.... We found Rasim in his garden. He had been killed by many bullets. In his garden had been another executed person, Metë Shala, but he had already been taken by his brother. [\(29\)](#)

By mid-afternoon, the group of women, children, and elderly had been sent back to Cuška. Uniformed men put people from three families--Lushi, Gashi, and Kelmendi--into the house of Shaban Binaku. They, and those who had managed to escape the attack, stayed in the village or the nearby forest until the end of the war.

THE ATTACKS IN PAVLJAN (PAVLAN) AND Zahac (Zahaq)

The killing in Cuška is the focus of this report. But it appears that the May 14 offensive included attacks on the neighboring villages of Zahac and Pavljan as a coordinated action. The evidence suggests that some of the same forces were involved in the attacks in at least two of the villages. Many witnesses, for example, told Human Rights Watch that the security forces moved on in the direction of Zahac and Pavljan after the killings in Cuška.

Zahac

Villagers told Human Rights Watch that the police had come to Zahac, a village with approximately 140 houses, a few times prior to May 14, mostly to demand money. After the NATO bombing began on March 24, the police and paramilitaries were based in private properties near the village, including shops on the Pe-Priština road and the house of Xhemail Rama.

The police arrived on May 14 at around 8:00 a.m. Many people fled into the hills, but a number of villagers were captured in the village. Sadri Gashi, Fatos Gashi, and Valdet Gashi were reportedly killed at this time. Forces described as police and paramilitaries ordered most of the villagers to flee toward Pec on tractors and on foot, with orders to "go to Albania."

Another group of paramilitaries stopped the convoy on the road and separated out fourteen men. The rest of the group continued on to the Trepca battery factory near Pe, but they were stopped there by police around 1:00 p.m., held for a while, and turned back toward Zahac. Around 5:00 p.m. the convoy passed the spot where the fourteen men had been detained, villagers said. They didn't see any bodies, but they later heard from other villagers that the fourteen men were in a ditch there parallel to the road. It is not known precisely when they were killed or by whom (see appendix for names).

Back in Zahac, security forces robbed the villagers who had returned and then separated the men from the women and children. The men were ordered to hand over all of their money if they didn't want to be executed. After all of the valuables had been handed over, the forces left. The villagers stayed in the hills for more than one month, coming back to the village only for food, until NATO forces arrived in Kosovo on June 12. In total, twenty-eight people were killed in Zahac, nineteen of them on May 14. The others were killed on May 12 (one person), June 10 (seven people), and June 14 (one person).

Pavljan

The security forces arrived in Pavljan around 10:30 a.m. on May 14, according to villagers. Many of the men fled the village since they had heard that people were being executed in the area. Forty-six people from the village were captured, however, including six men. After the police took their identity documents, they detained the six men but let the others go. As they were leaving, the villagers said they heard three rounds of shooting. When they returned to Pavljan that evening, they found the six men dead in the burned house of Zymer Gashi.

Human Rights Watch visited Zymer Gashi's two-storey house on July 17. It was completely burned with only the walls standing. On the wall at the height of the second floor, opposite the door, there were fourteen bullet holes. The villagers had collected the remains of some bones, which were placed in a plastic bag hanging on the wall by a nail.

The villagers told Human Rights Watch that Ajshe Gashi, aged forty-three, had had the most direct contact with the security force since she spoke good Serbian. According to them, when the police returned to Pavljan later in May, Ajshe told them that she knew they were from the area. She was killed in unknown circumstances on June 8.

All together, thirteen people were seized and shot by Serbian forces in Pavljan during the NATO bombing, ten of them on May 14. The others were killed on June 5, 8, and 10 (see appendix).

THE PERPETRATORS

Since the beginning of the Kosovo armed conflict in late February 1998, ethnic Albanians in Kosovo have rarely been able to identify the perpetrators of human rights abuses against them. On occasion, a specific individual or police chief has been recognized, but witnesses and victims generally refer to abusers in generic terms like "the paramilitaries" or "soldiers."

One reason is that the various forces often used interchangeable uniforms. Pants, shirts, and jackets used by anti-terrorist units, police reservists, and the army, for example, are often mixed and matched, perhaps to avoid identification. Insignias were not always displayed, and name tags or identification numbers were never visible. Ethnic Albanians, therefore, were often confused about precisely which type of security force, let alone which individual, was in their presence.

There were some exceptions, particularly with the Yugoslav Army (VJ), which had more regimented procedures than the various forces of the Interior Ministry. VJ soldiers were usually identifiable by their green camouflage uniforms and the red and white, double-headed eagle insignia on the shoulder. The soldiers tended to be younger--often conscripts. Some commonly identifiable features of security forces from the Interior Ministry included the infamous green, Australian-style cowboy hats worn by the special police forces run by Frenki Simatovi, known as "Frenki's Boys." Paramilitaries often wore black or red head scarves or bandannas on their heads, as well as hand axes or long knives on their belts.

Abuses in the Pec area offer new possibilities for perpetrator identification, since, unlike in other parts of Kosovo, the local Albanians had regular contact on a variety of levels with the many ethnic Serbs who lived in the area. Pec itself, seat of the Serbian Orthodox Church, had a sizable Serbian population, as did some of the area's villages, such as Gorazdevac and Nakle (Nakillë).

In Cuška, many of the local Albanians believed that the security forces who were in the village on May 14 included ethnic Serbs from the area. As described in the section on the killings, the security forces seemed to know some of the individual Albanians, such as the wealthy Qaush Lushi, even asking them to hand over very specific valuables, such as "the keys to your Mercedes," and they teased a local drunkard. Other villagers told Human Rights Watch that the forces spoke Serbian with a clear Kosovo accent, as opposed to Serbs from southern Serbia or Belgrade. One villager in Pavljan said she recognized some of the forces in her village as Serbs from the area, although she knew no names.

"One of them worked as a doorman where they sell cheese and milk in Lloma e Bilmetit," she said.⁽³⁰⁾ D.D. from Cuška told Human Rights Watch:

We recognized four [ethnic Serbian] men who were from Gorazdevac. Boban was the leader of the group, he is from Gorazdevac too. He had a beard. He was the one with a hat.⁽³¹⁾

B.B. told Human Rights Watch:

I think they were from around here because they knew the men by name and they told them to get their cars. I recognized some of their faces.⁽³²⁾

C.C. said he recognized some of the men who came on the third visit to Cuška, just before the May 14 killing. He told Human Rights Watch:

There were three brothers from Nakle with a father named Blagoj. Their mother was born and used to live in Cuška. Her father is ivajlevi. Her name was Darinka. Some of them, two of them, were from Zahac.... Two were from Pe, one was Srdjan, the other Boban.⁽³³⁾

In numerous interviews with villagers, a number of physical descriptions emerged. One woman, H.H., described the man she thought was a commander in Cuška (because he spoke on a walkie-talkie) as approximately six feet tall, slightly fat and aged forty. He had short black hair, shaved on the sides, with a bit of white on the top, she said. He had a beard that was speckled with white and he wore an army uniform with no hat.⁽³⁴⁾ Other villagers also described the commander as having a light beard. B.B. told Human Rights Watch:

One guy with a short beard with grey speckles looked like a commander because he gave the orders.⁽³⁵⁾

The most damning evidence, however, is from witness identifications using a series of twenty-one photographs obtained by Human Rights Watch that depict armed and uniformed men who were apparently in some form of military unit or units, either police reservists, special forces, or a local militia. Two individuals in the photographs were positively identified by multiple witnesses as having been present in Cuška on May 14, and a third person was seen in Zahac on the same day. A number of other individuals were identified, although they were not in Cuška on May 14, and some were not identified at all.

Human Rights Watch obtained the photographs on July 16 from the KLA administration in Pe. The photographs depict various individuals and groups in an assortment of military poses. Some show men in military uniforms posing in a field or village. Others have men in full military outfits and automatic guns in front of burning houses or displaying the three-fingered Serbian nationalist salute. The KLA officials told Human Rights Watch that the photographs had been found in the homes of ethnic Serbian citizens in the Pec area after Serbian and Yugoslav forces withdrew from Kosovo on June 12. Human Rights Watch also obtained two other group photographs dated May 6, 1999, of what, from the shoulder insignia, appears to be special police forces, from villagers in Zahac. The villagers told Human Rights Watch that they had found the photographs in the home of an ethnic Serb in Nakle.

A Human Rights Watch researcher scanned all of the photographs into a laptop computer and then showed them to villagers in Cuška, Zahac, and Pavljan, as well as to people in Pe, to see if anyone recognized or could identify any of the individuals. The methodology employed was to show the photographs to only one person at a time, preferably in a one-on-one setting. All of the photographs were shown one at a time without any comment or suggestive hints.

Human Rights Watch cannot confirm the authenticity of the photographs, since their origin, method of procurement, and ownership record are unknown. The fact that they were provided by the KLA, in whose interest it is to identify possible war criminals, should heighten suspicion about their accuracy. But, even if the photographs were doctored, there is no question that the villagers interviewed by Human Rights Watch positively identified some of the people in the photographs--and it is out of the question that this was coordinated between them and the KLA. Human Rights Watch asked the KLA for the photographs, rather than receiving them on the KLA's initiative, and did not mention

that they would be shown to villagers in the area.

The results of Human Rights Watch's investigation are as follows. One man was recognized by six different people, interviewed separately, who said they had seen him in Cuška on May 14. Five of these people identified him from [Photograph no. 1](#) (second from left), and only one of these people qualified this, saying "I am 90 percent sure he was here." The others were emphatic in their answers. Two of the interviewees said the man in the photographs was a commander in Cuška on May 14, and one other who had also placed him there said he "might be the commander," i.e. a person who was directing the others in the group and talking on a walkie-talkie.⁽³⁶⁾

[Photographs no. 2](#) (man on right) and [no. 3](#) appear to show the same person, although cleanly shaven. One of the five witnesses who recognized the man from [Photograph no. 1](#) said the same man was on the right in [Photograph no. 2](#) and

[Photograph no. 3](#), and that the other security forces had called him "Popa." One further witness, who did not react to [Photograph no. 1](#), said that the man on the right in [Photograph no. 2](#) was in Cuska on May 14, and that he had gone to Demë Gashi's house where eight people were killed. "He had no beard," she said. When viewing [Photograph no. 3](#), the witness claimed that the man had visited Cuška with the Serbian forces in April, and that he had worn a beard at that time. By her account, he "waved his assault rifle and said 'you can't run from this.'"

Aside from having heard the nickname "Popa," none of these witnesses knew the man's name when they identified him in the photographs: they only claimed that he had been in Cuška. His name, Sreko Popovic, had been provided previously to Human Rights Watch by the local KLA, but it was later confirmed by two United States journalists who were also investigating war crimes in the Pec area, and using the same set of photographs to identify perpetrators. According to Stephen Smith and Michael Montgomery from American RadioWorks, whose radio production called "The Killers of Pe" aired on National Public Radio's *All Things Considered* in the United States on October 25, the three men they interviewed--one ethnic Albanian and two ethnic Serbs--identified Popovic by name when they saw [Photograph no. 3](#). In addition, Smith and Montgomery found another five people who didn't know Popovi's name but placed him in Cuška on May 14. Two of these people considered Popovic a commander.⁽³⁷⁾

Another man identified as being in Cuška on May 14 is Zvonimir (Zvonko) Cvetkovi. The strongest witness claimed to have seen Cvetkovi in Cuška on that day, and even to have spoken with him. The witness identified him immediately from the group photograph of the men in front of the truck, [Photograph no. 4](#) (Cvetkovi on far right), saying, "Of course I know Zvonko. We lived on the same street." Human Rights Watch later obtained a copy of Cvetkovi's passport that was found in the Petrans trucking company in Pec where he worked. The passport photo ([Photograph no. 5](#)) appears to match the man in the group picture on the right. Another man, F.F., separately told Human Rights Watch that he had seen Zvonko Cvetkovi in Cuška on May 14, but he admitted to only learning his name later, and he did not see the photographs in Human Rights Watch's possession. Smith and Montgomery, however, had two other people separately identify Cvetkovi by name from the Petrans photograph. Both people claimed to have seen him in Cuška on May 14.

Based on these identifications, Human Rights Watch believes there is strong evidence to place both Sreko Popovic and Zvonko Cvetkovi in Cuška on May 14. We do not have evidence, however, that either of these men participated directly in the execution of the forty-one men. It can only be said that they were present with the security forces when these executions, as well as the burning of homes and the theft of private property, took place. In the very least, they possess valuable information about the war crimes that were committed, including the names of commanders, and they should, therefore, be the subject of an investigation by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

Two other ethnic Albanian men from Zahac, interviewed separately, said they recognized Slaviša Kastratovi in [Photograph no. 1](#) (third from left, next to Sreko Popovic) as a member of the security forces present in Zahac on May 14. One of the men who claimed to have had regular contact with local Serbs through his job, said that Kastratovi was from Gorazdevac and that he had worked in the Pik Trading Company. The other man claimed to have known

Kastratovi personally. He told Human Rights Watch:

On May 14, I saw Slaviša Kastratovi. He spoke with me. He asked how I am. "I'm glad your sons are alive," he said. I only have young kids.⁽³⁸⁾

Another person from Cuška, H.H., recognized Kastratovi from [Photograph no. 1](#) as having been in Cuška on May 14, although she did not know his name. She told Human Rights Watch that he had been in Cuška that day, as well as on previous occasions in April when the security forces had checked the village.⁽³⁹⁾ The testimony of the three witnesses from Cuška and Zahac provides some evidence that the same forces were involved in the actions in both places on May 14.

The other name that came up repeatedly in interviews was Vidomir Šalipur, known by almost everyone in Pec and the surrounding villages simply as Šalipur. Interviews and conversations with dozens of Pec residents revealed Šalipur's reputation for brutality. A member of the Pec police department, he was known for eagerly beating and torturing ethnic Albanians on the street or in detention. Local human rights activists, journalists, and the KLA, as well as a number of ordinary Pec citizens told Human Rights Watch that Šalipur was also the head of a local militia group or paramilitary called Munja, or "Lightning" in English, which was also Šalipur's nickname.⁽⁴⁰⁾ The group was apparently made up of local Serbs, some of whom were in the police and others who were civilians. According to Šalipur's death announcement (see [Photograph no. 8](#)), obtained by Human Rights Watch, he was killed by the KLA on April 8, 1999:

With great sadness we announce to family and friends that our dear

Šalipur Vidomir - "The Lightning"

(1970-1999)

Died a heroic death defending the Holy Serbian land on April 8th 1999 in the 29th year of his life, at the hand of Albanian terrorists.

The funeral will take place tomorrow, April 11th (Easter), at the Dobrilovici cemetery at 1:00 p.m.

The procession leaves in front of the family house....

LAST SALUTE FROM COLLEAGUES AND OFFICERS FROM "OPG"

AND "PJP" UNITS - PEC POLICE DEPARTMENT

"PJP" refers to the special police forces under the Ministry of the Interior (Posebna Jedinica Policije, or Police Special Unit). The meaning of "OPG" is unknown. The fact that Šalipur, as a Serbian policeman, was apparently in a military unit together with ethnic Serbian civilians, possibly the Munja group, suggests that the Interior Ministry knew about the activities of local militias, if it did not organize and coordinate them.

Human Rights Watch obtained two photographs of Šalipur together with a group of armed, uniformed men ([Photographs no. 6](#) and [no. 7](#)). [In Photograph no. 7](#), Šalipur is seen crouching in the front row on the left, holding an Albanian flag. The identities of the other men are unknown.

In [Photograph no. 6](#), Šalipur is standing in the middle of the back row wearing a cap in front of what appears to be a flag marking the Albanian-Yugoslav border. To his right is a man identified separately by two individuals as Nebojša Mini, who has been directly implicated as the leader of a gang that extorted and then killed six members of one

family, aged six to twenty-eight, in Pec on June 12.⁽⁴¹⁾ Two people who said they had had direct contact with Mini told Human Rights Watch that he is heavily tattooed with images of a knife, an axe, and a grenade on his forearm, and a dead man on his chest. The man in the front row of [Photograph no. 6](#), far left, was identified independently by two people, as well as by KLA sources, as "Milan," allegedly a friend of Šalipur's, although no specific allegations were leveled against him. The identities of the other men in the photograph are unknown.

There is also some evidence of the involvement of the Yugoslav Army (VJ) in the attacks on Cuška, Pavljan, and Zahac. Local KLA authorities in Pec told Human Rights Watch in July that they possessed a notebook that, they claimed, belonged to an officer in the VJ. Notes in the book mentioned a military build-up in the Cuška area prior to the May 14 killing, they said.

Shortly thereafter, Natasha Kandic from the Belgrade-based Humanitarian Law Center, one of Yugoslavia's strongest human rights groups,⁽⁴²⁾ published a report in which she mentioned the notebook of a VJ lieutenant shown to her by the KLA authorities in Pe. She wrote that the book:

[R]egister[ed] the military activities in the municipality of Pec after March 24. The entry for March 11 said that the focus of military activities should be shifted to Cuška and its vicinity. The local KLA headquarters in Pec also had a document marked confidential bearing the signature of the colonel in charge of the 125th Brigade.⁽⁴³⁾

A subsequent article in the Western press claimed that the war crimes tribunal had found Yugoslav Army documents that ordered the "cleansing" of Cuška. A journalist for *USA Today* reported that he inspected a black vinyl, three-ringed notebook that contained a direct order typed on army stationery and stamped by the Supreme Defense Council of the Yugoslav Army Headquarters in Belgrade. The order reportedly said, "The aim of the military activity should be to cleanse Cuška and the surrounding villages and terrain."⁽⁴⁴⁾ The article said that investigators from the war crimes tribunal had found the notebook on July 2 near an abandoned military headquarters in Kosovo.

APPENDIX

List of those killed in Pavlan on May 14, 1999

1. Zymber Gashi, age 70
2. Niman Gashi, age 56
3. Shaban Kelmendi, age 52
4. Haxhi Dreshaj, age 41
5. Brahim Nikqi, age 55
6. Hatixhe Nikqi, age 55
7. Agush Selmanaj, age 46
8. Zenun Shala, age unknown
9. Muqê Lulaj, age unknown
10. Xhejrone Nikqi, age unknown

List of those killed in Cuska on May 14, 1999

1. Musë Gashi, age 64
2. Emin Gashi, age 60
3. Brahim Gashi, age 60
4. Ibish Gashi, age 56
5. Halil Gashi, age 55
6. Sylë Gashi, age 49
7. Jashar Gashi, age 47
8. Ahmet Gashi, age 35
9. Skender Gashi, age 37
10. Ramë Gashi, age 60
11. Xhafer Gashi, age 42
12. Brahim Gashi, age 56
13. Selim Gashi, age 42
14. Haki Gashi, age 38
15. Ibër Kelmendi, age 52
16. Skender Kelmendi, age 46
17. Besim Kelmendi, age 36
18. Erdogan Kelmendi, age 19
19. Brahim Kelmendi, age 40
20. Demë Kelmendi, age 41
21. Mentor Kelmendi, age 23
22. Avdi Berisha, age 64
23. Rasim Rama, age 40
24. Muhamet Shala, age 50
25. Hasan Ceku, age 69

26. Kadri Ceku, age 68
27. Sefedin Lushi, age 41
28. Osman Lushi, age 47
29. Xhafer Lushi, age 46
30. Skender Lushi, age 44
31. Avdulla Lushi, age 60
32. Ukë Lushi, age 57
33. Ramiz Lushi, age 41
34. Qaush Lushi, age 51
35. Arian Lushi, age 20
36. Gani Avdylaj, age 42
37. Hasan Avdylaj, age 40
38. Isuf Shala, age 50
39. Emrush Krasniqi, age 49
40. Ismet Dinaj, age 32
41. Zequir Aliaj, age unknown

List of those killed in Zahac on May 14, 1999

1. Ismet Hyseni, age 41
2. Sabit Hyseni, age 31
3. Naim Hyseni, age 38
4. Agim Hyseni, age 28
5. Bajrush Hyseni, age 24
6. Shpend Hyseni, age 31
7. Shaban Rama, age 45
8. Sadri Rama, age 50
9. Faton Rama, age 24

10. Valdet Rama, age 36
 11. Demë Hatashi, age 28
 12. Shaban Neziri, age 41
 13. Zenel Neziri, age 67
 14. Fehmi Gjukiqi, age 23
 15. Hysen Gjukiqi, age 21
 16. Bekim Delia, age 21
 17. Zymber Smajlaj, age 26
 18. Shaban Smajlaj, age 23
 19. Gëzim Cukaj, age 19
-

1. A large number of Kosovo's ethnic Serbs, Montenegrins, and Roma left Kosovo with the Serbian and Yugoslav forces in mid-June. Many of those who remained were then forced to leave due to harassment, abductions, and killings by vengeful ethnic Albanians, some of whom had returned home after months as refugees. For more information about recent abuses against Serbs and Roma, see "Abuses against Serbs and Roma in the New Kosovo," Human Rights Watch, August 1999, which can be viewed at: www.hrw.org/reports/1999/kosov2/.

2. Loa is a village of 2,800 people just outside of Pec where intense fighting took place between the KLA and government forces in the summer of 1998. In mid-August the police pushed the KLA from the village with ground and air power, looted the valuables, and then systematically destroyed all of the village's 284 houses, including the mosque, with bulldozers. Photographs of the destroyed village, taken in February 1999, can be viewed on the Human Rights Watch website: www.hrw.org/campaigns/kosovo98/photo/pics299/299a.htm.

3. Website of the Serbian Secretary of Information (www.serbia-info.com), "Albanian terrorism after Milosevic-Holbrooke Accord," February 25, 1999, and "Serbia: Shoot-out Reported in Pec as Police Arrest Six Albanians," BBC Worldwide Monitoring, Serbian Radio, Belgrade, 1400 gmt, December 22, 1998.

4. The Centre for the Protection of Women and Children, War Chronicle of the Week, December 22, 1998.

5. In September, Agim Ceku became the head of the newly-formed Kosovo Protection Corps, the successor to the Kosovo Liberation Army.

6. Human Rights Watch interview with A.A., Ulin, Montenegro, Yugoslavia, June 15, 1999. See below for details.

7. Testimony of Ceku family members, Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, Witness Project, Massacre in Qyshk të Pejës, Kosovo. See the Witness Project website: <http://www.witness.org/home.htm>.

8. Human Rights Watch interview with A.A., Ulin, Montenegro, Yugoslavia, June 15, 1999.

9. Testimony of Ceku family members, Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, Witness Project, Massacre in Qyshk të Pejës, Kosovo. See the Witness Project website: <http://www.witness.org/home.htm>.

10. Ibid.
11. Human Rights Watch interview with B.B., Cuška, July 15, 1999.
12. Human Rights Watch interview with A.A., Ulin, Montenegro, Yugoslavia, June 15, 1999.
13. Human Rights Watch interview with B.B., Cuška, July 15, 1999.
14. Ibid.
15. Human Rights Watch interview with C.C., Cuška, July 16, 1999.
16. Human Rights Watch interview with D.D., Rozaje, Montenegro, Yugoslavia, June 8, 1999.
17. Human Rights Watch interview with A.A., Ulin, Montenegro, Yugoslavia, June 15, 1999.
18. Human Rights Watch interview with C.C., Cuška, July 16, 1999.
19. Human Rights Watch saw what appeared to be bullet scars below the witness' left knee and above his right knee. At the time of interview, the witness was still wearing a cast from his right knee down to his ankle.
20. Human Rights Watch interview with B.B., Cuška, July 15, 1999.
21. "Kosovo Crisis - The Awful Truth," *Time*, June 28, 1999.
22. Human Rights Watch interview with A.A., Ulin, Montenegro, Yugoslavia, June 15, 1999.
23. Ibid.
24. Human Rights Watch interview with D.D., Rozaje, Montenegro, Yugoslavia, June 8, 1999.
25. Human Rights Watch interview with F.F., Pec, July 15, 1999.
26. Human Rights Watch interview, Cuška, July 15, 1999.
27. "Kosovo Crisis - The Awful Truth," *Time Magazine*, June 28, 1999.
28. Human Rights Watch interview with B.B., Cuška, July 15, 1999.
29. Human Rights Watch interview with F.F., Pec, July 15, 1999.
30. Human Rights Watch interview with G.G., Pavljan, July 17, 1999.
31. Human Rights Watch interview with D.D., Rozaje, Montenegro, Yugoslavia, June 8, 1999.
32. Human Rights Watch interview with B.B., Cuška, July 15, 1999.
33. Human Rights Watch interview with C.C., Cuška, July 16, 1999.
34. Human Rights Watch interview with H.H., Cuška, July 16, 1999.

35. Human Rights Watch interview with B.B., Cuška, July 15, 1999.
36. One of the people who identified the man as a commander also claimed that he had taken her away into a home, apparently with the aim to rape her. According to the woman, the man told her she knew what she had to do to save her family. For an unknown reason, she was then let go.
37. For more information from the American RadioWorks report, including photographs, see their website: <http://www.americanradioworks.org>.
38. Human Rights Watch interview with I.I., Zahac, July 22, 1999
39. Human Rights Watch interview with H.H., Cuška, July 16, 1999.
40. For an article on Šalipur, see "The Merciless Life and Death of a Paramilitary Killer; Sadistic Cop Tortured Town," by Paul Salopek, *Chicago Tribune*, June 27, 1999.
41. Human Rights Watch interviewed a number of witnesses who observed different aspects of the June 12 killing. A gang led by Nebojsa Mini, they said, entered the Pec home of a family that will remain anonymous for the protection of survivors around 9:00 p.m. and demanded money. One young woman was raped before the family was shot with automatic weapons. Six people died (ages 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, and 28) and four survived. Mini was not said to have pulled the trigger, but he was clearly in charge of the operation, which included extorting money from another nearby family.
42. For information on the Humanitarian Law Center in English, Serbian and Albanian, see the organization's website at: <http://www.hlc.org.yu/>. Kandić later confirmed her report directly to Human Rights Watch.
43. "Special Report, Retribution in Kosovo," VIP Daily News Report, Issue 1559, July 28, 1999.
44. "U.N. Records Link Serbs to War Crimes," by Jack Kelley, *USA Today*, July 14, 1999.