



Kosovo

Accounts of a deportation

MSF

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Introduction

In order to evaluate the situation and needs of the Kosovar population deported en masse to the neighboring countries of Albania, Macedonia, and Montenegro, Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) has taken two initiatives:

1 - **an epidemiological survey** was carried out mid-April 1999 among the displaced population arriving in Rozaje, Montenegro [Appendix I].

2 - **the collection of deportee witness accounts** was undertaken in Albania, Macedonia, and Montenegro to complete the epidemiological data with a qualitative approach [Appendix II].

Method

The epidemiological study was carried out on a population of 1,537 people (201 families), considered as representative of the 25,000 refugees who had arrived in Rozaje (Montenegro). It covers the events that occurred in more than 50 villages, as well as in Pec and Istok, between March 24 and April 15, 1999. The aim of this study was to investigate the demographic characteristics of this population, the impact of the exactions committed on them, and to evaluate their most urgent vital needs.

The witness accounts collected by Doctors Without Borders in Albania, Macedonia, and Montenegro trace the experiences of 639 people in 43 cities or villages in Kosovo between March 25th and April 16th, 1999. People answered a standard questionnaire regarding the conditions surrounding their personal departure and the fate of members of their family. By comparing witness accounts and dates, the report attempts to reconstruct events that took place in certain Kosovar villages and towns. In considering only direct eyewitness accounts, the report tries to limit the impact of rumor on the accounts.

The 8 regions of Kosovo concerned are: Dakovica, Drenica, Mitrovica, Orahovac, Klina and north of Klina, Prizren and south of Prizren, Istok, Pec, and Pristina. For ethical reasons, the questionnaire did not raise the question of rape. Sexual violence has been discussed in a medical context only.

Main Conclusions

The coherence and similarities of the witness accounts reveal the deportations from Kosovo as part of a systematic policy in which the modus operandi, participants, and objectives can only have been pre-planned. The crimes committed qualify as war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The epidemiological survey and the individual witness accounts highlight the following:

1. The main cause of population movement is deportation.

The population is not fleeing armed confrontations: they are being forced to leave their city or village under the threat of death. The epidemiological survey shows that 91% of the displaced Kosovars in Rozaje, Montenegro, have been forced to leave their homes after direct threats or attacks. In the vast majority of cases, the military objective is to deport the entire population of a given area. Force and terror are used to empty entire villages. On the other side of the border, groups of displaced Kosovars, including entire families, neighborhoods, and villages are to be found.

- The enforced character of the deportations is illustrated by the conditions of expulsion from the villages and towns. It is also clear that soldiers, police, and armed paramilitary control the convoy of deportees all along the route. These people are forced to take a particular route up to the border: they cannot stray from the route without risk.
- A certain number of witness accounts describe very chaotic evacuation routes. The convoys of deportees were sometimes forced to make long detours instead of taking the shortest route. According to 201 families interviewed in Montenegro, the length of deportation journeys varies between 1 and 23 days. At other times, deportees were given contradictory orders. After having been chased from their homes, Serb forces ordered them to return to their homes where they were attacked once again. During these displacements, convoys of deportees were directed towards the front lines and pockets of KLA resistance in order to destabilize the enemy.

2. Deportation is accompanied by looting and destruction of deportee possessions:

The witness accounts report the burning of buildings, the destruction of property, and the killing of cattle. Deportees are often victims of extortion by different groups of police and paramilitary; among those who cannot pay, certain are executed in front of other deportees. Cars are often stolen or large sums of money are exacted from owners in order to keep their vehicles. Doctors Without Borders teams in the field confirm that refugees arriving in the neighboring countries have few if any personal possessions with them.

Murders in connection with acts of theft and racketeering represent a significant proportion of the deaths mentioned in the witness accounts.

3. Methods of enforced deportation are almost identical everywhere.

Violence and selective murder form an integral part of the method used to spread terror and punish those who refuse to obey evacuation orders. Violence increases in proportion to the amount of time that passes after the initial evacuation order is issued.

A typical method of enforced deportation is as follows:

Firstly: Either the village (or the area) is bombed, or the police go house to house ordering residents to evacuate, threatening them with death if they do not leave.

The presence and actions of the police, paramilitary, and military troops create an atmosphere of terror. Houses are set alight, grenades are launched on buildings, and cattle are killed. Many corroborating witness accounts describe the killing and injuring of family members. Most of the injured or dead are wounded as a result of explosions of grenades inside houses.

Villagers who manage to flee and find temporary refuge in neighboring villages or towns often experience the same chain of events in new locations. Populations from different villages are organized into groups. From these locations, groups of people are deported in convoys to border crossing points.

Secondly: If people refuse to obey evacuation orders, they suffer violent repercussions, including being surrounded by tanks, bombed, and shot at by police or paramilitary. The assassination of entire families has been reported. With the passage of time the attacks on the population remaining in Kosovo become more violent.

At the moment of expulsion: Village residents are gathered together and the men are often separated from the women. They are interrogated and searched, and money and identity papers are taken from them. The men usually rejoin the group later. Once the villages have been emptied they are systematically burned.

The population is then led in convoys, controlled by the military, to other locations where populations are grouped together again and taken to one of the different border crossing points. The journey to the border is usually taken on foot or by tractor. It can take several days or nights without the possibility to stop and rest. 93% of families who have arrived in Rozaje (Montenegro) have crossed the mountains on foot (through an average of 1.2 meters of snow). Trains and buses have also been used, from Pristina, for example.

4. Groups reported to be responsible for enforcing the deportation are always the same.

The police, paramilitary groups, and the federal army are present in all the witness accounts. These different forces act in collaboration with each other; there is no disagreement reported between these troops.

- Nearly every account mentions the presence and violence of the police and masked paramilitary. Some witnesses report having recognized Serb

neighbors or local police among these forces. It appears that some of these police or paramilitary wear masks so as not to be identified if they are locals from the region.

- The presence of Arkan troops is described in certain witness reports from the region of Pec and Istok, particularly in the village of Vrela on the 27th of March.

5. The police and army systematically confiscate and destroy identity papers.

The absence of identity papers varies depending on the individual mode of deportation. Those refugees who have crossed the border posts in Albania have nearly all been body-searched and no longer have any form of identification.

When these searches were not carried out systematically, e.g. at the border crossings with Montenegro and Macedonia, a number of people manage to hide and keep their identity papers. In Rozaje, Montenegro, 46% of the deported population have no identity papers, the rest have some form of identification.

6. The injured, missing, and dead.

Although there are no reliable figures on the number of deaths, injured and missing within each family, the epidemiological survey carried out by Doctors Without Borders in Montenegro shows that the male/female ratio is unbalanced. There is 13% lack of males in the 15-55 age group. The study shows that 28% of families have left at least one member of the family in Kosovo.

More than half the witness accounts describe murders that were committed under various conditions, indicating an extremely high level of violence.

The accounts repeatedly describe the following:

- men, women, and children killed or injured during grenade attacks on their houses
- people killed and injured during the pillage and looting of the population. Those who do not immediately hand over their money or car, or those who no longer have any money or possessions to give are executed in front of the others.
- men, women, and children killed or injured when police fire into the crowd if the population did not obey quickly enough, or if they resisted the expulsion order.
- all along the route, men were picked out of the convoy of deportees and executed.

7. Separation of men and women.

The separation of men and women is frequently mentioned in witness accounts. It often occurs at the beginning of the attacks. In most cases, the aim is to make the

men talk, and to rob them of their money and identity papers. There are some accounts of murders as part of the policy of spreading general terror.

The separation of men and women can occur along the deportation journey. In these cases it is individual men who are targeted. Witness accounts describe the systematic beating of men that have been separated before the Albanian border.

According to other witness accounts men were taken to dig trenches and install military posts on the Albanian border. Most of these men were later expelled to Albania where they were reunited with their families.

It is not only men who are missing from the deported families. On arrival a number of women and children are not with their families. Among all of the accounts collected by Doctors Without Borders, only one specifically reports two young women having been taken away by the paramilitary. Another account from Belanitza describes women and children being taken away in four trucks to an unknown destination.

At the border crossing many witnesses describe the behavior of the military and police towards women in the convoys as aggressive, insulting, and obscene.

Recommendations

The nature of the violence inflicted on the deported Kosovar populations should influence the quality of relief aid provided.

In the context of criminal deportation, looting and destruction of the legal identity of individuals, relief actions should aim to mitigate the most harmful consequences of these crimes on individuals, Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) recommends:

- The quick, systematic, individual registration of the deportees under the international authority of the UNHCR in all the neighboring countries is still the main preliminary to all assistance for deported Kosovar individuals.
- This independent, international registration is also necessary to protect the individuals in neighboring countries against risks related to tension and internal insecurity that the refugees may be the victims of.
- This registration will be the essential reference to ensure a balanced distribution of aid and to limit the risk of the misappropriation of humanitarian aid.
- All relocations of Kosovar deportees should be voluntary.
- So as not to hinder the relief and protection activities, the clear separation of military and humanitarian actions should be sought. It is also necessary so as to :
- limit aid being used as an instrument in the military actions in and around Kosovo;
- limit the pressure on the deportees in terms of enrollment and financial support of military operations.

Appendix I

Mass Expulsion from Kosovo

A Survey of Kosovar Refugees at Rozaje, Montenegro

Vincent Brown, MSF/Epicentre, 4/27/99

A Summary of Results from a Random Survey of 201 Kosovar Refugee Families in Rozaje, Montenegro, April 14-15, 1999

RESULTS	Number	% families
<u>1. Description of the sample and history of deportation</u>		
Families surveyed Size of the sample = 1537 Number of people per family = 7.6 Male/Female Ratio (15-55years) = 0.88 (400/453)	201	100.0%
Families homeless for more than 5 days Average length of exodus = 7.6 days (extremes : < 1 to 23 days)	94	46.7%
Families from "Villages"	189	94.0%
Families who fled on foot	187	93.0%
Without Kosovar identity papers	92	45.8%
Length of stay at Rozaje \geq 5days	93	46.3%
Reason for departure = direct threats / armed men	94	46.5%
<u>2. Impact of the war</u>		
Families with \geq 1 member remaining in Kosovo Total for the sample = 169 people remaining in Kosovo (9.9%)	56	27.8%
With at least one death/ war (24/03-15/04/99)	3	1.5%

With one missing person Total for the sample = 28 missing persons	10	5.0%
With at least one wounded member (Total wounded = 14)	9	4.5%
<u>3. Basic needs</u>		
Without blankets global average for the sample = 1.7 people / blanket	17	8.5%
Without mattresses global average for the sample = 6.7 people / mattress	87	43.3%
Without bread for at least 24 hours global average for the sample = 200 grams of bread per person/ 24hrs.,	19	9.5%
<u>4. Outlook for the immediate future</u>		
"Staying in Rozaje" or "Do not know" 24 families (11.9%) are planning move on to Albania	159	79%

INTRODUCTION

NATO air raids in the region began on March, 24, 1999 and are continuing as this report is issued. The raids have been immediately followed by attacks lead by the Serbian army (and/or paramilitary groups, and /or the special police) on the Albanian majority of the Kosovar population. For over a month, these systematic attacks on towns and villages have forced the civilian population of Kosovo into the neighboring countries or regions of Macedonia, Albania, and Montenegro. More than half a million people have fled to these countries and over 70 000 are now in Montenegro (Source UNHCR : 73 000 refugees in Montenegro as of 4/19/1999).

Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) carried out a survey among Kosovar refugees in Rozaje, Montenegro. It is intended to describe the situation of the refugees and to evaluate their urgent needs.

The refugee population living with "host families" in Rozaje has been estimated at over 15,000. This population and additional refugees housed in local mosques are not reflected in this survey.

SURVEY OBJECTIVES

1. To establish demographic data on the refugee population (and the history of the exodus).
2. To evaluate the impact of exactions on the civilian population.
3. To evaluate the refugees' most urgent needs.
4. To envision immediate plans for the future.

METHOD

A sample was established by randomly choosing participants in the three factories, Kristal, Liego-Biele, and Dekor. These sites are located in the most eastern part of Rozaje. They were chosen with the intention of evaluating the situation of the population that is considered to be "the most in need." From the outset it was decided that the survey would focus on a random sample of 150 to 200 families. The proportional distribution of the refugees among the three factories was taken into account in establishing the sample.

In order for the sample to be as representative as possible, each of the three factories was divided into ten sections (or rooms). The population of each of the 10 rooms was estimated before the draw was made.

When randomly selecting families from each room, the four teams conducting the survey (each team was made up of one MSF member and one translator speaking Albanian) followed the same procedure. The team stood in the centre of the room and chose one family at random and then proceeded with every second family counting from this initial choice. A "family" was defined as "all of the members of a closely knit group living under the same roof in Kosovo (in an apartment, or in a house)."

RESULTS

A total of 201 families, in all 1537 people were chosen to participate in the survey.

All of the families responded to the questions on the individual questionnaire.

Number of people per family = 7.6

Description of the refugee population:

- For the entire population, Male/Female ratio = 0.99 (768/769)
- For the 15-55 age group, Male/Female ratio = 0.88 (400/453)

Table 1 : Distribution of the 1537 refugees into 4 age groups, and by gender, Rozaje, Montenegro, 15 April 1999

Age	Men (%)	Women (%)	Total (%)
0-4	82 (10.6)	77 (10.0)	159 (10.5)
5-14	220 (28.7)	159 (20.7)	379 (24.5)
15-55	400 (52.1)	453 (58.9)	853 (55.5)
+ 55	66 (8.6)	80 (10.4)	146 (9.5)
TOTAL	768 (100.0)	769 (100.0)	1537 (100.0)

Towns/villages distribution:

- Villages = 189 families/201 = 94.0% (56 villages counted + list of names)
- Towns = 12 families/ 201 = 6.0% (mostly from Pec and Ishtok).

Duration of the exodus:

- The average duration of the exodus for the 201 families in the sample was 7.6 days (extremes : <1 day to 23 days). Among these families, a proportion of 53.2% (107/201) reached Rozaje in 5 days (see Table 2).
- Most of the families had to flee on foot across the mountains = 187/201 (93.0%).
- A total of 45/201 families (22.3%) reached Rozaje in less than 24 hours. Among these 45 families, 33 (73.3%) made their way on foot (some of them made a short part of their journey by tractor).
- For the 156 families for whom the duration of exodus was more than 24 hours (> 1 day) the average was 9.8 days (extremes : 1 to 23 days).

Table 2: Duration of exodus for 201 refugee families in three factories, Rozaje, Montenegro, April 15, 1999.

Days on the road	No. Families (%)
< 5 days	107 (53.2)
5-10 days	25 (12.5)
11-23 days	69 (34.3)
Total	201 (100.0)

Identity:

- The names of a majority of refugees have been registered on lists established by 'Mother Theresa' (NGO).
- Only one family (1 / 201) has received an official registration form (which recognises its status as a refugee family).
- A total of 92/201 families (45.8%) have no Kosovar identity papers.

Length of stay:

- On average, surveyed families have already spent 6 days at Rozaje (extremes 1 - 16 days).
- At the time of the survey, 46.3% (93/201) of families have been in Rozaje for at least 5 days (see Table 3).

Table 3: Length of stay for 201 refugee families in three factories, Rozaje, Montenegro, April 15, 1999.

<u>Length of stay</u>	<u>No. Families (%)</u>
< 5 days	108 (54.0)
5-10 days	54 (27.0)
11-16 days	39 (19.0)
Total	201 (100.0)

Impact of the war:

- A total of 56/201 (27.8%) families left "at least" one member behind when they left Kosovo.
- The number of persons left behind in this manner comes to a total of 169 representing a proportion of 9.9% percent of the overall sample. [169 / (1537 + 169)].
- The three main causes cited for fleeing from Kosovo: 1) attacks on towns/villages (bombs, grenades,..), 2) direct physical threats from armed men, 3) to avoid reprisals which had already begun in their region : among 201 families these reasons respectively represented 89 (44.5%), 94 (46.5%), and 18 (9.0%) of the 201 families.
- A total of 6 deaths (civilians) were reported for the period from March 24 to April 14, 1999. Of these six deaths, 4 were violent (caused by bullets,..) and 2 were caused by "exhaustion " which occurred while the refugees were on the run (a child of 7 months and a woman of 80).
- A total of 14 people were wounded during the expulsion. Wounded or injured members were reported by 9/201 of the families (4.5%).

Basic needs

- A total of 17/201 families do not have blankets, 8.5% of the sample.
- The other 184 families surveyed, have a total of 880 blankets, an average of 4.8 per family [or 1.7 (1537/880) people per blanket].
- 43.3% of the families (87/201) have no mattresses.

- A total of 228 mattresses was recorded for the 1537 people in the sample (= 6.7 persons per mattress).
- 9.5% of the families (19/201) had not received a ration of bread (distributed = once a day). These 19 families all belonged to a group of 45 families who had arrived at Rozaje less than 24 hours earlier.
- A total of 525 loaves of bread (600 grams each) were distributed to the 1537 persons in the sample.

Short term prospects

The refugee families were asked what they thought they would do in the following week.

For now, 2/3 of the sample thought they would remain in the factories at Rozaje.

Table 4 : Short term prospects ("a week") for 201 refugee families, in three factories at Rozaje, Montenegro, April 15, 1999.

<u>Prospect</u>	<u>Number (%)</u>
Remain here	137 (68.2)
Another town (*)	8 (4.0)
Another country(**)	34 (16.9)
<u>Do not know</u>	<u>22 (10.9)</u>
Total	201 (100.0)

(*) : A total of 4/201 (2.0%) families wanted to go to Ulcinj.

(**) : A total of 24/201(11.9%) families wanted to move on to Albania.

INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

The sample selected for the survey can be considered as quite representative of the refugee population most in need, however the survey could not take into account the most recent arrivals who were settled in tents in difficult conditions (night temperatures hovering at close to 0° C, windy area, lack of basic necessities, etc.).

The overall sex distribution within the sample appears to be "normal," although the figure for males in the 15 to 55 age group is under-represented. This may indicate that a proportion of men have stayed on to fight, or are dead. A further possibility is that they were taken prisoner. During the survey it was reported that some civilians were taken prisoner.

The proportion of children aged under 15 (36%) seems higher than the expected figure for this type of population in peace time. Due to a lack of reliable reference data, no conclusions can be drawn for the moment.

Nearly 46% of the families surveyed no longer have their Kosovar identity papers. Neither did they receive papers when they were recorded on the lists maintained by " Mother Theresa " (NGO) or by the local police. Given that this population is officially considered to be displaced in Montenegro (Republic of Serbia), and given that under current conditions the UNHCR is unable to grant them the status of refugees, official recognition of their identity and status is now a serious problem.

More than half of the surveyed population arrived in Rozaje less than five days ago. They had fled to avoid the recent series of exactions which took place in the villages around Ishtok. Now that a list of the names of the villages that produced this wave of refugees has been established, it is possible to determine the order of successive attacks launched by Serbian forces.

The survey has also facilitated the documentation of military strategies used against villages: mortar or grenade attacks, followed by heavy gunfire or firebomb attacks, and then the pursuit of the fleeing population (direct fire on civilians, including women and children). The reports of this kind of attack are corroborated by accounts of shootings and wounded civilians which were reported in the survey. Furthermore, almost half of the refugee families questioned in the course of the survey report having their lives threatened in their own homes.

If we extrapolate the results of the survey to the entire refugee population of Rozaje (at least 25,000 people), almost one hundred violent deaths are likely to have occurred in this population, over the period from March 24 to April 15, 1999. In the same period, the number of those wounded by bullets and mortar grenade shrapnel is likely to represent more than 200 cases.

Since March 24, 1999, the refugee population has also been affected by the separation of families. About a third of families report being separated from at least one close family member - either "left behind" in Kosovo (28.0%), or "missing" (5.0%). Extrapolating from this data, the figure for those left behind or missing for the 25,000 refugee population in Rozaje may be as high as 3,000.

Figures for dead and wounded as well as "missing persons" and persons "left behind" were also reported for the period from February 28, 1998 (attacks on Drenica) to March 23, 1999. These 1998 figures are lower than those reported for the period from March 24 to April 15, 1999, and they are not analysed in this report.

Regarding basic needs, the refugees living in the factories, under tents or in the mosques brought virtually nothing with them to Rozaje, and sanitary conditions are very precarious (before the survey was conducted a rapid evaluation of basic needs in the three refugee sites was undertaken). The results of the survey confirm the findings of the rapid evaluation particularly with regard to food and bedding (blankets and mattresses).

The survey attempted to establish the effectiveness of the last distribution of bread rations on the preceding day. The survey found that the average individual bread ration per refugee was around 200g (instead of the 300g officially announced planned).

It is possible that some families are still living on their meagre savings, but from now on it is important to envision that the nutritional situation could deteriorate. With the constant influx of new arrivals, the limited resources of NGOs and the local community may soon prove to be insufficient.

In terms of basic needs, the question of the living conditions of the refugee population must be addressed immediately. Sanitary problems pose a serious threat

in the short term. Usual indicators (number of square meters/person, number of litres of water/day, the ratio of refugees/latrines) show that recommended norms are not being respected and that there is a real risk of epidemics.

Despite registered departures for Albania (over 20 000 departures registered at the border post in Tuzi, for the period March 24 to April 22, 1999), it is likely that the global needs of refugees will remain more or less constant in the following weeks. The influx of refugees arriving from Kosovo to Rozaje can reach 1000 - 2000 per day (confirmed from April 13 to 20, 1999). One must keep in mind that thousands of other refugees, blocked in Kosovo because of security reasons, can still arrive.

Given that Rozaje is only 20 km from a war zone, the question of security is one of the most urgent issues. Since its arrival in the municipality of Rozaje, Montenegro, the Kosovar refugee community has lived in fear. Refugees are frightened by the possibility of exactions perpetrated by groups of armed men crossing the border from Kosovo (since April 15, non-identified cars with armed men were met on several occasions between Rozaje and the border). On April 20, 1999, two refugees were killed only 7km south east of Rozaje. Others have reported being insulted and beaten by paramilitaries, the Serbian army or the special police. The wounded avoid seeking treatment in Rozaje because they are afraid of drawing attention to themselves. All of these facts confirm the existence of the current repressive policy adopted with regard to the Kosovar refugees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Obviously a long-term solution to the problem of the Kosovar refugees in Montenegro will be some time in the making. In the interim, it is imperative that they should be provided with living conditions that meet acceptable levels of security and sanitation. Urgent measures to be taken are as follows:

1. Take measures ensuring usual security conditions in refugee situation

- Register each family and provide them with an individual registration document.
- Inform the international community of any exactions perpetrated on refugees.
- Relocate refugees to sites which are at a sufficient distance from the border (the usual recommended distance = at least 50km from the border).
- Settle a security perimeter around the sites.
- Maintain security during transport of refugees from one site to another.
- Monitor and defend cases of murdered, missing, imprisoned and wounded refugees.

2. Ensure a minimum scale of decent living conditions for refugees in exile in Montenegro:

- Install refugees in accommodation providing a minimum of 3.5 square meters per person (at the moment, this figure is usually < 1 square meter per person).
- Set up a water supply system. It is recommended in refugee situations to provide a minimum of twenty litres per person per day, the usual

recommended level, and at least one tap for every 250 people. (At the moment the refugees in Montenegro have less than 10 litres / person / day; and a tap of water for several hundred refugees).

- Ensure a minimal individual ration of 2300 Kcal / person / day "during cold weather". (At the moment there is no reliable data on the refugees' diet).
- Provide a sufficient number of WCs and latrines; the norm is 1 WC / 20 people (the current estimate = 1 WC / 200 - 300 people).
- Ensure a minimal provision for protection from the cold (mattresses, blankets, and clothing).
- Ensure minimal conditions for personal hygiene and group hygiene are maintained (soap, hot water, privacy/showers, diapers, sanitary towels, flea treatment).

3. Medical services: as access to medical services is complicated by security issues, overworked staff and lack of means, the following must be monitored closely:

- Ensure basic treatments are available (necessary means should be given to Kosovar doctors working on the refugee sites, and support of the Montenegrin health service should be encouraged).
- Ensure the management of medical and surgical cases (heart problems/HTA, endocrinous problems/diabetes, war wounds..).
- Vaccinate children under five with the five antigens (children under five are known to have low vaccine coverage in Kosovo).
- Evaluate the extent of psychiatric problems so that the management of particular cases can be envisioned.
- Set up the surveillance of common diseases, and also monitor "deaths" and "wounded" (c.f. appendix), alert in case of any outbreak.

CONCLUSION

This survey allows us to describe the drama suffered by Kosovar refugees since March 24, 1999. It also sheds light on the particular difficulties the refugees face in Montenegro, particularly in the Rozaje municipal area.

When the refugees are asked about their immediate plans (see Survey), only a small percentage of families envision to leave Rozaje for another Montenegrin town (e.g. Ulcinj) or to move on to another country (Albania).

One of the main reasons for this is that the refugee population living in the factories (and also in the mosques and under tents) has very limited finances or no finances whatsoever.

The current situation is characterized by issues of security and sanitary priorities. The NGOs are unable to deal with these problems alone. In as much as this situation is likely to continue, the international community in agreement with the local national government ought to seek medium term solutions for the Kosovar refugees.

Appendix II

WITNESS ACCOUNTS

The following witness accounts collected by Doctors Without Borders in Albania, Macedonia, and Montenegro trace the experiences of 639 people from 43 cities or villages in Kosovo between March 25th and April 16th, 1999. People answered a standardized questionnaire regarding the conditions surrounding their departure and the fate of members of their family.

NOTE: The names of the witnesses, victims, and aggressors have been removed from the following accounts.

The Region of Klina and to the North-East of Klina

These witness accounts tell of attacks and expulsions in this region during the period from March 25 to April 12, affecting the towns of Klina and Kladernica and their surrounding villages (Josanica, Rakenic, Kasterc, Padalista, Rezold, Vocnjak).

In and around Klina

Around the March 25, the police ordered the inhabitants to leave the villages near Klina. These expulsions were carried out with violence in the presence of the police, soldiers, and paramilitaries. The inhabitants of these villages descended on Klina. At around 6.30 in the evening on March 28, the police surrounded the homes and ordered the evacuation of the inhabitants of Klina. The evacuation took place over several days, at least until March 31.

The people left the town of Klina in convoys, district by district. The police decided the route taken: people were obliged to head south, in the direction of Dakovica. Along the way, at Kraljane, the police proceeded to separate the men from the women. The men were stripped and searched, attacked and injured. Some of them were taken by the police to places unknown.

The journey of one day and one night was undertaken on foot or by tractor as far as Krume, on the Albanian border. The police kept the cars. Some of the people expelled from Klina on March 31 came via Dakovica to Morina, another point on the Albanian border.

Villages surrounding Klina :

Josanica: This is a village near Klina. On March 27, it was attacked by groups of paramilitaries who proceeded to execute people. The inhabitants were sent to Klina, from where they were evacuated in convoys to Albania.

A woman told us: "At about 6.30 in the morning, on Saturday the 27th of March, groups of paramilitaries came into our house. They slaughtered my uncle in the garden, followed by my father inside the house. We went as far as Klina to hide, but policemen ordered us to leave the town. They were burning the houses. We went to

Kraljane, where we were stuck for two days because there was fighting between the UCK/KLA [Kosovo Liberation Army] and the Serbs who were surrounding the area. The UCK must have surrendered because they had no munitions left. The Serbs then separated the women from the men. I went to Dakovica without being allowed to stop except at the Serb checkpoints where I had to surrender everything I had."

Vuciterna

One man, forced to leave on March 28, tells his story: "I left my home about a year ago after soldiers burnt down some houses in my village and occupied others. Me and my family were staying with friends on the 28th of March when once again the Serbs drove us out. We carried on to Voinic where my wife has relatives and from there on to Tushila.

At 11 in the morning the village was surrounded. We took refuge in a school but after an hour we gave ourselves in as there was no escape; a man walked out of the school waving a white flag. Men were separated from women and children. Some policemen and soldiers wore masks, others didn't. They let women, children and the elderly go. I was taken in an armoured vehicle to the barracks and then some soldiers began to beat me up. One soldier recognized me and told the soldier to stop. Then another came, an officer, and said that all men had to be killed. They took our money and jewelry from the women who were also there. I tried to defend myself, saying that I spoke Serbo-Croat very well, that I'd worked all over Serbia, that they shouldn't be doing this, that they must have families of their own. I showed them my retirement papers to prove that I had no more money. They let us go, ordering us to go to Klina. We walked for 2 days and 2 nights. I still have no idea where my two sons are.

Near Betsa soldiers opened fire on 4 young people. I didn't know them but they came from Shtupel. There were two brothers and two sisters from the same family; they were on the edge of the road with injuries to their legs, feet and upper-body. Their father was with them."

A village somewhere near Klina

A woman (age not known) gives her account: "At around 2 p.m. the Serbs came and drove us out of our village. Seven policemen came into the garden, surrounded the house and told us to leave immediately; my husband was a bit further away from the house and managed to get away. I haven't heard from him since. The police made the seven families in our village (about 170 people) get into a group and then told us to lie down on the ground, firing several rounds. Five people were hit, including three of my own children. The Serbs kept us on the ground like that for 24 hours and then told us to get up and leave. All along the road were soldiers, paramilitaries. They took away our IDs at the border."

Klina

A 27-year-old woman talks of her ordeal: "At 3 p.m., on the 31st of March, the police came into our apartment and gave us 5 minutes to leave. There were four of them, each wearing a mask. We were made to leave, leaving all our things behind. We were told to go to Dakovica, that vans would come and collect us from the town center. Only one van turned up; we had to go on foot, walking two days and a night, for about 50 km. I didn't see any dead, just a burnt-out village. Our IDs were taken from us at the border."

A 28-year-old man tells his story: *"Police entered our house the 28th of March and told us to go to Albania. Around 3,000 people were gathered in the streets. On the road, we were stopped by police and were told to keep our hands in the air for quite a long time. The police then separated men over 16 from the rest of the group. They took us somewhere and then told us to get undressed and to turn to face the manned machine-guns. We stayed there, in the rain, for two hours. Some snipers targeted several men in the group."*

Another man, 20-years-old: *"On the 28th of March, police came and surrounded our area. They took away our cars, but let us leave in our tractors. We went to Dakovica but the UCK told it'd be better to go to Kraljane. We were stopped by the police who separated the men and women. The men were told to undress and the police took all our money. We were made to stay there the whole night. In the morning, tanks came and acted as if they were going to run over us. An officer said that if we wanted to avoid being killed, we would have to pay him; we gave him what we had left. They then led 75 men away - we don't know where."*

A 40-year-old woman tells her story: *"The police forced their way into my house on the 31st of March at around 6.30 in the evening and ordered us to leave the house. My husband was beaten and the Serbs took me and my children to the Albanian border."*

Kladernica and the surrounding area

On April 11, 12, and 13, Kladernica and some near-by villages (Kasterc, Padalista, Rezold, Tushila, Skenderag and Rakenic) were attacked by police and soldiers; grenades were thrown and houses burnt-out. The villagers were forced to flee to Kladernica where they were all gathered together by the police on April 13. Men were separated from the women. No one knows what happened to them.

They were joined at Kladernica by people from Istok and Drenica, 2 other villages attacked, and formed a huge convoy of several thousand people, some on foot, some travelling in tractors, heading for Dakovica, Prizren. On April 14, the convoy arrived, just missing the air raid near Landovitsa, near Prizren. The refugees heard that 15 people were killed and more injured.

A bus takes people from Prizren to the Albanian border (Morina). Soldiers line the road.

The people in the convoy had their I.D. confiscated.

- **Rakenic**

A 47-year-old woman tells her story (March 30): *"We were forced to leave by the Serbs, demanding money if my husband wanted to leave with the tractor. Since my husband is almost deaf, he didn't hear, so the Serbs said that if he didn't obey they were going to give him "another operation" (he'd just had an ear operation), gesturing that they were going to cut his throat; they took him away."* She has not heard from him since. Her ID was confiscated at the border.

- **Kasterc**

A 73-year-old women :*"At 7 a.m., on the 12th of April, the soldiers began to throw grenades at our houses and opened fire. The whole village (170 people) went to the school at Kladernica where we stayed for 3 days. More than 7,000 people were there, from neighboring villages ransacked and burnt-out by the Serbs. There weren't any Serbs at Kladernica so we thought we were safe.*

But on the 13th of April at 7 a.m. we were surrounded and separated men from the women; the soldiers didn't wear masks. Women and children were taken to Klina, then the elderly and some men were released and rejoined us. We carried on our way, constantly followed by police and soldiers.

At Turishev, men between the ages of 20 & 40 (more than 200 in all) were separated from the rest; women, children and the old had to go to Djacova. We walked the whole of Tuesday night until we got to a school where we sheltered for a few hours. There weren't any police or soldiers.

At 5 in the morning, Wednesday, we moved on. There were soldiers in the road, in groups, but only at Klina and Prizren. They shouted things at us: "So where's America to help you now? Go to your Grandmother's - Albania!"

On the 14th of April, we walked to Prizren. At Cerxe, which we got to at midday, villagers gave us bread and water. An old man died of exhaustion. Nothing particular happened on the route between Djacova and Prizren that morning, except when we were at Ura Eshejt; soldiers told us to hurry up as NATO were going to bomb the bridge. We saw the smoke from a distance [+/- 9 km] and later, when people from the convoy behind us arrived, they told us that the bridge had actually been bombed and 60 killed. According to rumour, it was a Serb plane that bombed the bridge and 20 minutes later, NATO attacked the same place, which I actually heard. At Prizren, a coach came to take us nearer to the border; the driver told us that he couldn't take us further than Zur since he was too scared; he told us that after that, the road was mined and he told us not to split up. We crossed the border at 5 p.m. after waiting 2 hours."

- **Rezald**

A young 15-year-old girl: (April 12) *"The village was surrounded by policemen; we were at home. There were soldiers everywhere, as far as the forest. A hand grenade was thrown in the direction of our house, and it landed just in front of me. My hand was wounded and I lost a lot of blood. We managed to escape along the river, through the forest and then along the road. Soldiers were posted every ten meters along the road. Once we had crossed the border, I was taken to the Italian camp (and from there onto Kukes hospital to get some X-rays done). My ID papers were confiscated at the border."*

- **Padalista**

A 62-year-old woman: *"I was forced to leave my village three weeks ago. I took refuge in a school in Kladernica. On 11th April, the Serbs came and surrounded us, separating men from women. I don't know what has become of my two sons. Along the road I only saw policemen, no soldiers; I wasn't allowed once to stop and rest. At*

around 4 p.m. on 15th April I arrived at a place near Prizen. Somebody opened the village school, where we were allowed to spend the night. There were thousands of us, and none of us had eaten or drunk anything for three days. One person died of exhaustion."

- **Kladernica**

A 47-year-old woman: "At six o'clock in the morning of 12th April, our village was surrounded by the police and soldiers wearing no masks. Several men gathered around each of the houses. They entered our house and told us to leave immediately if we didn't want to burn along with the house, and with no other warning, they set the place on fire.

The children were still asleep, so we plucked them from their beds and ran to the center of the village of Tushila, half an hour away from Kladernica, where the police 'grouped us together'. There were about 5,000 people, maybe more. Men and women were separated. The women were allowed to leave with the children, then around fifty old men were allowed to join us; we were told that the men were then taken to Skenderaj, and that there, the police would execute any members of the UCK, and the rest were to be freed.

We were now behind the place where the bombing had taken place; it was near Landovitsa, just before Prizen (10 minutes away by car in normal conditions). A man came along in a tractor to tell us that the bombing was continuing. Further on, we saw blood and parts of human bodies on the road; the dead and wounded had been taken away; there was an awful lot of military traffic, including many military ambulances as well as three Serb Red Cross cars. We were told to keep moving.

When we arrived at Prizren, we were put in a bus and taken to the border; the army followed us as far as Vermitza. Soldiers were also posted every 10 meters along each side of the road, some wearing camouflage face-paint, with beards and long hair.

At the border, our ID papers were taken from us. Lining us up two-abreast, they made us walk along without straying from the road as there were mines. One girl had no ID papers; the customs officers pulled her to the sidelines, searched her and shouted at her, demanding to know where her ID papers were, and why she didn't have them on her. They finally let her past. There were still more people arriving behind us; they'd come from Itoki."

A 35-year-old woman : "We haven't been able to sleep properly for a year now. We were afraid that they would come to kill us. On Monday morning, 12th April, the Serbs attacked our village with grenades. We were forced to leave with around a thousand others from Kladernica. We took refuge in a school. The Serbs separated men and women, and I was forced to leave with my grandmother and my two sons. Later, I was told that half the men had managed to escape. There are also rumours that the men were taken to Serbia.

Many people were arriving from Istok by tractor. It seemed that the entire population of Drenica was on the road. On Wednesday, we arrived at Prizren, and on the road we saw lots of wounded and dead, bodies which were torn to shreds. The people at the head of the convoy shouted to us to go no further as shells were being fired at us ahead. They were bodies and injured all along the road for one kilometer. We saw a plane passing above our heads. There was quite a lot of military traffic on the road, but they were nowhere to be seen during the shelling attack.

The police came to take the wounded away ten minutes after the shelling. I heard that there were around fifteen killed and around the same number wounded. There was blood everywhere, decapitated, corpses, some with even the arms and feet blown away: the wounded howled with pain when we moved them: it was horrible. A dozen Serb police came to collect them. All they said is that they would take them to hospital, then, once they were better, would drive them to the border. They told us to go to Albania.

On the road from Prizren, once again there were soldiers and police of all ages in lorries and on foot. They raised three fingers in the air to insult us, and told us to do the same and shout out "Serbia, Serbia." We lowered our heads. Only one of them was wearing a mask.

We wanted to stop a moment to rest a while, but they fired bullets into the air to force us to move on. I saw two 7-8 month old babies being hastily buried by their parents at a stolen moment whilst the police weren't watching. Not even a year old, dead from exhaustion and dehydration. It then rained all night. Abandoned vehicles lay all along the road.

When we arrived at Prizren, we were taken by lorry to the border. Five buses and lorries went back and forth. At Vermitza, the police made us get out of the bus and put us in file, telling us not to stray to the sides as there were mines. A customs official came round with a torch and inspected our legs and eyes. There were still more people arriving behind us, from Istok, Mitrovica, Skenderaj and Klina."

Istok region and Pec

The witness accounts indicate that 31 towns in the Istok region and Pec were attacked and their inhabitants deported between March 24 and April 10. Doctors Without Borders has more detailed accounts concerning attacks on the following towns between March 25 and April 14: Padalista, Vrela, Belaj, Cerce, Racosh, Pec, the Istok region. The inhabitants of Istok itself and the other towns in the vicinity were attacked or deported on March 27 and 28.

· Padalista

Padalista is a village near Istok, attacked on March 27 in mid-morning by the police, paramilitaries, and the Yugoslav army, with jeeps, trucks, and tanks. Some of the attackers wore masks to cover their faces; they were the ones who did the killing. Some of the population fled into the forest, the rest were sent to Istok.

A 21-year-old woman, accompanied by 27 members of her family:

"On the 27th of March in the middle of the morning, the police, the paramilitaries, and the Yugoslav army attacked our town with Jeeps, trucks, and tanks. There were about 300 of them; some of them had their faces covered. We heard shooting non-stop for about an hour which prevented us from leaving the house. Then someone broke a window and came in that way. It was my neighbor's son. He was wearing a black scarf on his head. When he came in he said, 'We aren't neighbors anymore'. The police ordered us to leave the house. Three members of my family did so. As soon as they were outside they were shot and killed by the Yugoslav army. The rest of the family managed to get away and we hid in the surrounding area. During the time that we were hiding I witnessed several similar scenes in which people were killed, including a two-year-old child."

· Moistir

The police deported the non-Serbian inhabitants of this town on March 28.

A 36-year-old man describes what happened to him:

"On the 28th of March, four armed police officers went by car from door to door demanding that the residents leave the town. I left with my family. All the inhabitants left except the Serbs. I spent 10 days in the forest but the police caught up with us and told us to leave the area. We were sent in the direction of Prizren. But in Prizren we were turned away by the police; they told us to go back to Moistir. When we arrived in Moistir, the police threw grenades at us and started shooting, our houses were set on fire. My father and my five-year-old son were killed, my wife and my four other children were wounded. We managed to leave for Montenegro with those who were injured."

· **Racosh**

Racosh was attacked by the police and the army on March 28.

A 31-year-old man, a refugee in Montenegro along with 27 members of his family. His mother, father, and a young brother are still in Kosovo:

"Two weeks ago (the 28th or 29th of March), the police and the Yugoslav army used tanks to deport us from the town. The police set themselves up in houses where Serb families lived. We went into the mountains along with the people from two other towns. Everyone was on foot. Our houses were burning during that time. My father was injured by a bullet, we had to leave him on the mountain. In all there were three people from our town who were wounded who we had to leave in mountain villages along the way. There were a lot of other injured people from other towns. An 85-year-old woman died in the mountains."

· **Istok**

On March 27 and the days that followed, the town of Istok was cleared of its non-Serbian population.

A 26-year-old woman, a refugee in Montenegro along with 20 members of her family:

"On Saturday (the 27th of March), the chief of police in Istok, asked some of his police officers to order us to leave the city and the Istok region as soon as possible. They told us, "After 6:00, we cannot guarantee your safety anymore." Arkan's troops were there, their faces were covered. At 5:00, they ordered us to go to the bus station. There were over 500 people there, maybe 1000. We were all afraid. We left for the mountains. But after two days and 13 hours of walking, we had to go back-we were cold, there was nothing to eat, there was too much snow. That Monday, the police saw us. They were expecting us and they led us to the bus station. Those who had access to a tractor or a lorry or a car left the city at that point, but a lot of people didn't have any of those. The police forced us onto a bus and took us outside the city. The police also had a lorry that was covered with a tarpaulin, but no one would go on that for fear of being massacred. The police threw grenades into the houses."

A 44-year-old woman who had fled with her father and five children: *"On Saturday (the 27th of March) the police showed up at my house and ordered us to leave: 'You have to leave if you don't want to be shot'. I went to the city center. The houses had been looted by the Gypsies and then burned down by the police. The OSCE house had been burned. Then I fled into the mountains in the rain. I walked for about ten hours, along with children (the youngest was a month old) and some disabled people. We spent three days in the mountains with nothing, no food, no change of clothes, no money. Eventually we went back to the town. The police were waiting for*

us. They brought everyone together (maybe 5000 people) at the bus station. They hit us and they threatened us. Old people and paralysed people were shot. The police gave us an ultimatum: "If you haven't left by 11:00 tonight you're dead." We waited for five hours. The police were all around us and they started shooting in the air. Some Albanians with tractors took me to Rozaje, in Montenegro. But some people had no way to pay. Then the police requisitioned a bus, driven by police, and forced people onto it."

A 19-year-old woman with her wounded parents and brother: "We were attacked. We tried to escape and the police took shots at us with their weapons. My mother, my brother, my father and I were injured. We somehow managed to get to the mountains. In all, 300 people left as a group. After spending three days in the mountains we finally arrived in Montenegro."

A man, 39, with seven members of his family: "Eight days ago (31st March or 1st April) the police came to find me in my office and told me to leave the premises within a half-hour. They also came to my house in Cerce (a town 2 km from Istok). All the houses were destroyed. The trip was terrifying. People had left cars, bikes, clothes, all along the way. When we were going through Istok we saw armed Cetniks. I worked with Serbs: the director and the senior managers started crying. I don't have any more news about my mother who was at Pec."

Pec and the surrounding area

Based on the accounts Doctors Without Borders has collected, the population was deported from the city of Pec (neighborhood by neighborhood) and the surrounding towns between March 25 and 31. These accounts indicate that the police participated in the deportation during the first few days and the Yugoslav army thereafter.

· Belaje

A 65-year-old man and his nine children: "I had to leave once before on 5th September 1988. They had burned our houses in the town of Belaje. I went to Pec. But on 25th March, the police surrounded us and threatened us with guns. We were rounded up at Vitomorica, then we went to Radapt where we stayed in houses belonging to Albanians. The next day, we left the area. We walked for two days in the mountains and arrived in Montenegro."

· Pec

An 18-year-old man with his two parents, his two brothers, and his sister: "We were in the Dardania neighborhood. On Saturday (27th March), the police ordered us to leave the house. But we didn't leave. Our neighbors told us not to leave until we were forced to. After two or three hours the police came back. They threatened us with guns and ordered us again to leave the area. We formed a group in the city center and spent the night there. The next day at about 3:00 in the afternoon the police started firing into houses and burning them down. So we went into the mountains. We walked until nighttime. We were cold, we were soaking wet, there was snow everywhere. We had no clothes but what we were wearing. Eventually we arrived in Montenegro."

A 27-year-old man, his parents, his wife, and his two children: *"On 31st March, soldiers from the Yugoslav army ordered the townspeople to leave the town. Fifteen people were injured. The soldiers began going into houses and shooting people. At 7:00 in the morning we all got in the car and drove to Rojaze (in Montenegro). Pec was deserted."*

· **Novocelo**

According to a witness account, the offensive against Novocelo began on March 28. It was conducted by paramilitaries, the Yugoslav army, and the police. In the beginning it only involved certain neighborhoods, so this witness was able to hide in the town until April 14. On that date he fled with eight members of his family, including four children, with a group of about 500 people across the mountain towards Montenegro.

Pristina and vicinity

According to testimony collected from witnesses, towns located in the vicinity of Pristina were attacked on about March 28. These attacks were conducted by police units, often with faces hidden, and apparently by Serb civilians as well. Houses were set on fire and threats made in order to force the population to leave. Residents fled to Pristina, where the systematic expulsion and deportation of inhabitants to Macedonia via train was begun on April 1.

Other cities and town in the Pristina region were also attacked on about April 9 and 10. In Vergoli, for example, masked men, heavily armed and attached to either the police or the army, began to violently force the population out of the town in the direction of Albania. Identity papers were systematically taken and houses burned.

A woman, her two sons, and 11 members of her family:

" I was forced to leave Pristina on 29th March. Masked men entered my house and made me leave. Wz had to walk in convoys to the train station. While we were walking, a police officer stopped them and forced them at gunpoint to hand over their money. We were insulted and threatened along the entire route by police officers and military men wearing Serbian uniforms. Some of them spoke Russian. When we arrived at the train station, they made us get on a train. While we waited in the queue, the Serbs looked for our passports and for money. They destroyed any passports they found. We managed to hide what we had. The trip took two hours. We waited an hour and a half at the border. Then we had to walk on the tracks because they told us that there were mines planted alongside. There were no guards on the Macedonian side. We arrived at Blace in Macedonia, a death camp, no water, no food, rain. We spent five days there waiting."

A man and his wife, deported from Pristina on April 1:

" We were forced to leave our house after the police made their way in and broke everything. During that time, the police assembled all the inhabitants in a square. After two hours we were allowed to return to our homes. We tried to put things back in order. Then, two hours later, the police returned with guns and told them to leave. We didn't have the time to take anything with us; we were forced to leave immediately. There were about 1000 people walking in a convoy in the street. We had to walk for two hours to reach the train station. The police officers and military

personnel who were there insulted us and beat us. At the station there were thousands of people waiting. The police and the army tried to collect identity papers and would destroy them. They also stole money."

A woman and her daughter were forced to leave Pristina on April 4: "The only people left were those who lived in the center of Pristina; everywhere else was empty. Masked men forced us to leave our home and walk to the train station. They were going from house to house and telling everyone to leave. There was a train waiting for us at the station and it left right away. We were travelling for two hours. At the border, we had to stay in the train for hours. When we were allowed to leave, they opened the doors and told us to walk on the tracks because the road was mined."

- **Vergoli**

A 69 year old man, who has fled to Albania with 25 members of his family

"We had been afraid for a month now: there were lots of soldiers, paramilitaries and police in the region; we hid during the day and only went back to our houses at night time to eat and sleep. We haven't been able to change our clothes for a month. At 10 in the morning, on Friday, the Serbian police came into the village in very large numbers. They shouted at us to leave our houses immediately otherwise they would throw grenades. They told us that if we tried to run away they would kill us. In one house a man was killed in front of his whole family. We were gathered up in the center of the village, in front of the school. We waited there about 40 minutes, then the Serbs told us to take the road to Albania. 3 or 4 people stayed in the village who were too old or sick to travel. There were lots of soldiers all along the road with tanks; they told us "you were the ones who wanted these bombings so you can go straight to Albania"; almost all the houses were burned down. Those that weren't burned down were occupied by the soldiers. With several thousand others we walked to the border where we arrived at 3 in the morning. The Serbian customs asked us for money: 50 DM to be able to keep our car; others asked for 100 DM or even 1000 DM depending on how much we had, they took everything. They also took all out identity papers: driving licences, identity cards, and passports, and tore them up. Very few managed to hide them and keep them. Some police and paramilitaries who were from our region and who we knew were masked so they could not be identified."

A woman of 27 who came to Albania with 26 members of her family: "On the morning of 9th April, the soldiers and police came into our houses and started shooting. There were a lot of them (maybe 300), some were masked, others not. They were in 3 circles around the village, with tanks; they had machine-guns and automatic weapons. They separated the men from the women and children and gave us 10 minutes to leave the village. "This is Serbia, go, get out of here, you will NEVER be coming back" they shouted at us.

A week before this, the Serbian police had confiscated all the weapons from the men of the our village and told them to leave. They said that if they heard a single shot fired in our village, they would kill everyone. But we stayed until 9th April and when we really had to leave, we weren't able to take anything with us. The men were lined up against a wall in the village and chained together by the soldiers. The women begged them not to kill their husbands and sons. After a few minutes the Serbs went to check the outskirts of the village, then came back and set fire to the district archives and told us to leave (the men too). Two cars were kept behind; I think they took away the men who were driving them. We wanted to go to Macedonia as this was the closest

border to our village, but we were forced to follow the road to Albania. At 3 in the morning the next day we arrived there by tractor. There were an incredible number of people and soldiers all along the road. I saw a dead baby in a ditch; the baby couldn't have been more than a month old. I also saw lots of clothes abandoned along the road. I had hidden my identity papers under my clothes, but at the border, the other members of my family had to give theirs up, that they had been keeping in their pockets. My father was in a car and had to pay 200 DM to the Serbian customs to be able to drive it through into Albania."

- **Miradi**

A man aged 38 who has come to Albania with his whole family: "On 10 April, a soldier came into our house. They did the same in all the houses in the village at the same time. There were very many soldiers all masked and armed to the teeth. They came in a lorry. They beat up my son and some other men, and ordered us to go to Albania, giving us one and half hours to get there. "Go to Clinton, he'll look after you." We left as quickly as possible, taking just some clothes and blankets. There were vast numbers of soldiers in Lapushnik. The same all along the road: they were in groups roughly every 200 m. At the border they took our papers away. We weren't extorted along the way. We were all herded out. I left with all my family. The whole village has come to Albania with the exception of one family."

The Orahovac Region

Between March 26 and April 3, the population of Velika Krusa and the villages around Suva Reka (Dvaran, Grikove, Genovoc, Sapi and Salagradj) were subjected to violent attacks, killings and expulsions. In the village of Sapi and Velika Krusa, witness accounts confirm 21 summary executions of men, women and children aged 7 to 75 by police and paramilitaries.

These attacks involve police and masked men. Military resources of the Yugoslav army are also used. The population is then grouped into convoys and flanked en route by a strong military, paramilitary and police presence. The Kosovars are expelled in tractors and on foot via Prizren towards Albania. Along the way the men are often separated from the others and maltreated. Some disappear. Identity papers are systematically confiscated at the border.

- **Velika Krusa**

A man aged 38, who was expelled on March 28, describes one and a half days walking to Albania:

"At 7 in the morning, the police started to fire on our house. They were wearing masks. There were two armoured vehicles not far from our houses. Seven policemen came into the house. There were thirteen of us in the house. They hit me. They killed my mother who was 65 with an automatic weapon, as well as five other members of my family (aged 7 to 53). My children started screaming and crying, and everyone tried to get out of the house. The children went out through the windows. A grenade hit before my wife had the time to get out. She was injured together with my sister and sister-in-law. We managed to flee the village by tractor to Zur, where we had to continue on foot. We took ten hours to get to the border. There were lots of tractors

and the convoy was very slow. In Zur there were lots of soldiers. They asked us where we were going and told us to go: "Kosovo is not your country. Get out of here. You don't belong here."

Just before Vermitza, I was picked out and taken on one side by the soldiers. They set on me with batons. Other men were also taken out of the convoy here and there by masked Serbs to be beaten. There was a commander in a lorry who gave the orders and selected people for beatings. He wore a mask but it was him who told the soldiers (in green uniforms) and the police (in blue uniforms) who to rob and who to beat. They hit me on the legs. I fell near a tractor and managed to partly hide under it, but they kept hitting me with batons, on the legs and genitals, until they were tired. This lasted about an hour. Then they went off to find others who were behind us in the convoy. I managed to drag myself on foot to the border. They took me to hospital and I had an operation. For five days I have not been able to move my leg. The doctors are waiting for the swelling on my ankle to go down before they put me in plaster."

Suva Reka

Several villages around Suva Reka were attacked between 26th March and 3rd April.

- **Dvaran**

A woman of 32 who set off with her six children, her sister and mother in law. She does not know where her husband is.

"I thought there was something going on when on 25th March, paramilitary militia set themselves up in our village. Some of my Serb neighbors joined them. We were expelled on 26th March. The Serbs came and told us we had to leave immediately. The men ran away. I don't know where they are now. The Serbs looted the house and set fire to it. We fled to the nearby village of Mustec, but the paramilitary soldiers followed us and told us to report to the police in a village further away. Because we didn't want to, they forced us to join a convoy. In the evening, we were able to stop to rest, but the next morning the paramilitaries surrounded us and forcibly made us form a convoy again on the road. There were people in our convoy who had come from villages even farther North. We were often stopped en route at what were kinds of check points. There were Serbs all along the way. The women had to hand over all their jewelry. The police and paramilitaries said to us: "You wanted Clinton's help. Go and get it. If you stay here you will die." At the border they confiscated all our identity papers."

- **Grikove**

A woman of 48, expelled on March 30: *"At lunchtime, an armed policeman and soldier entered the house; we were all eating. They took our money and shouted to us to leave immediately. We were unable to take anything with us. On the road we found ourselves in a convoy. There were so many people that it moved very slowly and the police stopped us frequently. When we had stopped on one occasion, my sister asked her 7 year old son to go and look for some wood. Just as he was crossing the road a car hit him at full speed. His body was thrown 30 meters. He was very seriously injured. His stomach was open. My sister gave me her 1 year old baby*

to hold, and with my father they put my nephew straight away into a car to drive him to the hospital in Prizren. We have heard nothing of them since."

- **Genovoc**

A woman of 15, expelled on April 2: "At 10 in the morning on 2nd April, tanks, lorries and three army and police busses entered our village. These men were not masked; only half of them got out of the lorries. They broke down the doors of the houses and started pillaging. They took the women's jewelry and money from the men. The inhabitants were expelled from their houses and driven onto the road. "You don't belong in Kosovo. Go to Albania!" Some managed to take their tractor or car. We wanted to bring blankets but they were confiscated from us. In all there were 300 houses in our village. Everyone left except for the men who left to join the KLA. Two military jeeps followed us on the road. When we looked back a bit later on, we saw that our village was in flames. Apparently a man of 50 was killed. We marched for four days and three nights. The convoy advanced very slowly. There were lots of soldiers and police driving around on lorries along the route. They took the food we had brought with us. Our identity papers were confiscated at the border."

- **Sapi**

The account of a 54-year-old woman, driven out of her village on April 2: "There had been soldiers around the village for several days. On the 2nd of April, the village was really quiet. The police came at around three o'clock. I don't know how many of them there were. We only heard two shots. At the same time the Serbian men from our village took out their weapons and put on masks and gloves. All of our family was in the living room. Five or six shots were fired at our house. The paramilitaries broke down our door and fired shots at the dog and our three cows. They entered all the houses in our village at the same time and in the same way. A man went into the kitchen and demanded money. My husband and my brother-in-law my brother-in-law tried to stop him. Then the paramilitary ordered all the family to follow immediately gave him all they had. The man took the money and left the house, then he fired at our windows. After he came back and wanted to take away my three-year old nephew but him outside and to leave for Albania.

My husband told me to take some clothes and to load them into our van. We all took what we could and got into the van to leave. My brother-in-law was in the garden. The Serbs outside asked us for money again. Suddenly, one of them shot my brother-in-law who fell down. My husband got out of the van. The Serb asked him for money, he gestured that he didn't have anymore. The Serb executed him. We started crying. The Serb went 20-30 meters away, then he came back. To make sure that my husband and brother-in-law were really dead he cut their throats. We waited until he was good distance away before we dared to take the bodies and to carry them a bit further off. We were all crying. As soon as my other nephew arrived, we left immediately.

In the center of the village, the Serbs stopped us again and threatened us with knives and weapons to make us give them money. They held a knife to the throat of one of our children. We gave them our jewelry. Later when we were on the road we found

out that three of our neighbors family had been killed in the same way: a 75-year-old woman and her two sons.

On the road we saw a lot of people being beaten. The convoy moved very slowly and everyone was too frightened to stop for a rest because there were Serbs all along the road. At the border, our identity papers were confiscated. One woman from our village who had been wounded died on the journey. Her son had been killed and her husband who had been wounded is now in hospital in Kukes."

- **Salagradi**

A 14-year-old girl, driven out of her village on the April 3: *"Our village was surrounded by police and paramilitaries. They started throwing grenades; my father and my uncle fled immediately. None of the family knows where they are now. The police told us to leave. We just had time to take some things and to load them on to the tractor, but later on the road the Serbian soldiers took them from us. We spent three days and nights in a convoy on the road. There were a lot of soldiers, paramilitaries and police along the road, they were all wearing masks. The convoy moved very slowly: every 50 meters, the Serbs stopped us. They wanted money and the women's jewelry, or to ask us where we were going so they could make fun of us and insult us. On the first night we were able to stop to sleep on the roadside. The next day my uncle had to hand over his car. The Serbs were systematically taking the "best" cars. We all went on in the tractor. At one point, we saw the body of a child who had been crushed by a tank. The child must have been about six years old. My uncle and some other people organized a burial. At the border, our money was confiscated."*

The Prizren Area

There have been accounts of attacks on several localities around Prizren (Donaj, Malsi ere...) and on Prizren itself between March 30 and April 16. The population of the area was rounded up in Prizren before being driven into Albania. The men were kept back to dig trenches and to set up military installations. All the Prizren refugees' identity papers were confiscated at the Albanian border.

- **Donaj**

The account of a 27-year-old man who fled with all the members of his family : *"Truckloads of police, soldiers and paramilitaries arrived on 30th March at around 11 a.m. They set fire to our village without warning. They were all masked and armed. My family and I fled into the forest with the rest of the people of our village (3km from the village). The old people who couldn't walk stayed behind. We were chased from the forest to the border which we reached at about 7 o'clock. At the border we waited three or four hours (there were a lot of people); they took our identity papers and insulted the women (verbally and with obscene gestures)."*

- **Malsiere**

A woman of seventy and 12 members of her family fled on April 3 when they heard that the Serbs were burning a neighboring village. *"Two days earlier a grenade had been thrown not far from our house. They set out in the family's tractor and when*

they reached a vantage point five kilometers down the road they saw that the neighboring village was in fact in flames ."

- **A village near Prizren**

The account of L., a 21-year-old woman from Prizren:

" Towards midday my grand-mother warned all the members of the family that our house was surrounded by Serbs. We were forced out of the house and ordered into the center of the village where the men were separated from the women and children. Our money and jewelry was taken away from us and we were forced to leave the village while the men were forced to stay behind."

L.'s mother claims her daughter was held for a long time without supplying any further details. L. arrived in the Italian camp of Kukes in a state of panic and exhaustion; still very agitated and fearful (notably of military uniforms worn by the doctors in the camp, of noise made by helicopters taking off, and of the noise of tent pegs being hammered into the ground). Her identity papers were confiscated at the border. L. is very weak; she has been refusing to eat or drink for two days and claims she has no desire to eat anymore.

- **Prizren**

The account of a 32-year-old woman whose brother, sister-in-law, nephews and nieces and parents-in-law have stayed in Prizren.

"The town had been occupied by police and special forces for some days. On the 16th April at 9 a.m., they told us to move out of our house because they were going to commandeer it. We left in a car with my sister-in-law and her four children. My brother should be arriving tomorrow. For weeks the special forces had been arresting men between the ages of 18 and 50 in the street, in shops etc., My brother-in-law was taken in with some other men we know (friends of my father-in-law). They were released a few days later, that's how we know this happened. The Serbs took them to the barracks, forced them to put on Serbian army uniforms and took them to the border where they had to dig trenches and carry weapons."

Dragas and the surrounding area

Dragas is near to the border between Kosovo, Macedonia and Albania. Witnesses confirm attacks on near-by villages (Kukli Beg, Plava Dragas, Blaç Dragas) from March 31 and April 3. These attacks and expulsions were conducted by soldiers and the police. The population was forced to move in the direction of Albania along with many others to the border at Morina. Customs officers confiscated their IDs.

One woman from Kukli Beg, a 26-year-old woman, left with her parents and grandparents. One of her brothers is in Macedonia, the other in Switzerland.

"We didn't feel safe for 3 days because there were soldiers at the exits from our village (some in a van, the others in 3 tanks). They wore masks and fired up into the air. During the day, we hid in the forests. At 8 in the morning, 3rd April, a lorry full of soldiers came to the village; they shouted at us to leave straight-away, or else they'd kill any man they came across. Finally, they gave us 4 hours to leave. In one of the

villages near by, a house was up in flames. At the exit from the village, they told us to turn back round, go back into our houses and then leave again; the village (about 200 people) split into two: some went north, the others south. No one could leave: the Serbs sent one family back to their house and then fired at the house from all angles. One man was shot in the leg. We had to leave; there were seven of us in the car. "Go to Albania" the soldiers ordered us. We travelled for 3 days and 3 nights; the convoy carried on very slowly, we couldn't even see where it started. We stopped one night to sleep. A lorry passed by filled with soldiers, who shouted insults at the women. At Zur, there were lots of soldiers, all on foot. We got to the border at 3.15 a.m. Our ID papers were confiscated by customs."

- **Plava Dragas**

A 48-year-old man left with his wife and three children.

"At 6 p.m., 31st March, the police came to our village and told us to get out. Two days before they'd set fire to our house which lay a little bit out of the village (around 400m) along with my brother's and my neighbor's houses, and since then we've lived with other families in the village. The 31st March, 3 unmasked policemen came into our house and gave us an hour to leave; they carried automatic weapons. We hesitated as we weren't sure what to do, where to go, but they started to fire into the air, telling us to head to the border, to Morina, so we had no choice but to do as they said. We left without any of our belongings. The whole village left on their tractors. At Dragas, there were just soldiers and policemen."

- **Blaç Dragas**

A 90-year-old man, left with 15 members of his family who he met up with at Kukes:

"I was forced out of my village, burnt-out by the Serbs, on 31st March, after they'd taken all our money and killed all the livestock. I was able to leave by tractor with my family and I stayed with friends in the village of Bresan; I stayed there for 12 days while the rest of my family went on to Albania. The 13th April, soldiers came by car to get me; there were six other old people who were also alone in Bresan, unable to go any further. The soldiers took us to the border. On the way, I saw lots of soldiers. Between Zur and the border, the soldiers were planting mines."

Mitrovica Region

The following accounts describe assaults on, and expulsions from Mitrovica and surrounding villages (Tavnic, Shipolje, Vaganica and Doberluk). The events described took place between April 13 and 16.

People are deported to Albania via Dacovica and Prizren, in tractors, on foot, or on buses chartered by the Serbs. Sometimes the men are separated off from the group and taken by the Serbs to unknown locations.

- **Mitrovica**

A 15-year-old woman describes how she was forced from her home on 14th April: "At around 14.00, 4 armed, masked policemen came into our home and asked where the men were. We told them that there were no men left in our family, except for an old man (my uncle, who's 58 years old). They told us to give them all our money (DM 3,000). They smashed every object they could find, and the doors and the windows,

and then told us to leave our homes, calling us terrorists and telling us to go to Albania. They took us to the bus station. There, we found many others who had been forced from their homes in the same way. Only seven buses left, absolutely packed with people. There were some men in the buses (about 20 in our bus). The police didn't follow us all the way to Prizren, but we were stopped many times on the way by other policemen and paramilitaries. They would speak to the driver and then leave. At Prizren, we were told to get off and continue on foot. We walked for 4 hours. Many people fled. At the border, we were lined up and the customs people took our identity papers away."

A 43-year-old man tells his story: "Around twenty masked paramilitaries came into our home on the afternoon of 14th April, at around 14.30. They told us to leave immediately. They emptied out the town, district by district. On the way, we picked up a woman from Prizren, who was walking alone, with her baby. She told us that her 34-year-old husband had been taken away by the Serbs that morning. On the road between Guracov and Runic, there were many policemen and masked soldiers driving around in trucks, cars, and even tractors. At Prizren, they stole DM 1,000 from us. I'd say around 2,700 people had come from Mitrovica. On the way, at Shipolje, they took some men away. I told them I had a heart condition, and they let me go."

· **Tavnic**

A 19-year-old woman gives the following account: "On 15th April, I was at home with my father and brother, gathering some things together. My mother had just left. She had been warned of what was happening by other members of our family, and she left with them because she was ill and couldn't walk very well. About twenty policemen arrived, forced us out of our home and moved in. At Brobonica, the men were separated off from us. The police told them that if they stayed, they could join the KLA. I don't know what has become of my 60-year-old father or my 20-year-old brother since. At Jabar, we were allowed to rest for half an hour. A little farther on, the soldiers separated off all the young people, including the girls. I hid. We walked as far as Skenderaj, then went by tractor. There were lots of groups of soldiers all along the road. They asked us where we were going, and then they said: "Go to Albania! This is not your country!"

At Prizren, they took money from us. Some of us paid DM 10 or DM 20, others DM 50, depending on how much we had. At Prizren, we each had to pay another DM 10. Between Prizren and Zur, there were a lot of soldiers. They passed us at high speed in their cars, shooting in the air to frighten us. Between Mitrovica and Prizren, I saw many burned-down villages. There's no longer a living soul left in the central part of the country. I think there's hardly anyone left in Prizren."

· **Shipolje**

A 56-year-old man gives the following account: "Our village, Drware, was surrounded in mid-March. We hid for a week in the forest, and the women and children went to live with friends in Mitrovica. We met up with them again in Mitrovica, a week later, and then we all went on to Oshlan, where we stayed for five days. Then we returned to stay with my brother in Mitrovica, before escaping to Shipolje, where we stayed for 12 days, until 15th April.

On 15th April, at around 8 o'clock in the morning, we heard the sound of machine guns, and then we heard grenades exploding. We fled to the other end of the village

and hid inside a house, but the police came and we were forced to travel to Skenderaj in a tractor. There, we were told to go to Pec, then to Klina, and then to Dacovica. On the way, we didn't see a single village that was still inhabited."

A 30-year-old woman gives the following account: *"We were forced from our homes on 15th April. On the way, I saw men of all ages being beaten and taken away by the Serbs. I also saw a paramilitary put his gun into the mouth of a 55-year-old woman, whom I know. She was in a tractor behind us. I fear she may be dead now; that they shot her because the Serbs told her son to give them his tractor and he refused. We heard later that they had killed his mother."*

· Vaganica

A 28-year-old woman gives the following account: *"My village was surrounded on 15th April. It wasn't long before we were forced out of our homes, at around 15.00 the same day. Every 5 minutes, our convoy was stopped by soldiers and paramilitaries. We had to pay them money to keep our tractors. We paid DM 100 for the right to keep our three tractors. We saw one woman in a car killed by a sniper. We didn't know her; she was about 70 years old. Other people were killed along the way. The soldiers fired in the air to scare us and to force us to move faster. They told us to walk, to move on, to hurry up. At the border, we had to pay DM 10 per person, and the customs people took our identity papers away."*

· Doberluk

A 65-year-old man gives the following account: *"My village was subjected to a grenade attack by the Federal Army for three days (13th, 14th and 15th April). On 16th April, soldiers and policemen came to the village and ordered everybody to leave. The villagers obeyed. As soon as the houses had been evacuated, the Serbs burned them down. The Chief of Police at Vucitrn (he gives the officer's name) took part in the attack. I also saw two victims of the bombing. Serb forces organized the convoys. I was part of a group of around 3,000 people sent to Albania and Montenegro via Pec."*

The Dakovica Region

Eye-witness accounts tell of the attack on, and expulsions from, the town of Dakovica and surrounding villages (Deve, Beci, Nivocaz, and Batusa). They cover the period from the April 1 to 14. These witness accounts speak of numerous killings and systematic looting of the Kosovars either in their own homes or at the Serb customs post before the border with Albania. This pillaging is carried out by the police, soldiers and paramilitaries. On the border, all identity papers are being confiscated systematically. People are mainly forced out on foot in the direction of Albania, via the border town of Cafa Prusit.

- Dakovica

The attacks and expulsions took place between April 2 and 5.

A 50-year-old man told us: *"On the 2nd of April, 20 policemen came into our house at about 2 in the afternoon. Some wore masks, others didn't, but they were all armed."*

They said 'Leave! We're going to burn your house down. Go to Albania'. We left by car immediately, taking nothing with us. At more or less the same time, my wife's 66-year-old grandmother was slaughtered in her home, along with a 38-year-old uncle and 20 other members of her family. Among them were men and women between 30 and 60 years old, and 12 children between the ages of 2 and 16. (He recited their names one by one). My identity papers were confiscated at the border."

A 34-year-old man told us: "On the 1st of April, during the night, paramilitaries surrounded my uncle Hajdar's house and broke down the door. They asked him where he worked, and he answered: 'In a shop'. They then demanded money, and my uncle said that he didn't have any. Since my uncle suffers from a neurological disorder and has difficulty walking, the Serbs went to see his brother in the adjoining room. My other uncle (aged 40) told them that he had no money either. They shot him through the heart. My uncle Hajdar ran to his brother, but they killed him too in the same way. In all, there were 15 members of my family in the house that day. Hajdar and Mahmud were killed in front of their wives and children who, in the following minutes, were thrown out because the Serbs were setting fire to the house. My grandmother just managed to slide a pillow under the heads of her two dead sons. The family took refuge with neighbors about 300 m away.

The next morning, my aunt called us to tell us what had happened. We had been confined to our house for a week. Two men from the family carried the bodies to the cemetery.

The next day, the 3rd of April, around 9 o'clock, six Serbs came to our house. They said to us 'Are you still here? You've got five minutes to leave for Vermitza!'. They were dressed as paramilitaries, with big black hats such as cowboys wear. Their guns had silencers. Apparently, they were doing the same thing to all our neighbors. We all left on foot together, and walked for seven hours to the border. Our identity papers were confiscated at the border."

A 25-year-old man explained: "About 15 soldiers came into our house at midday on the 5th of April. They were cordoning off the whole district and doing the same thing in all the neighboring houses. We'd been expecting this ever since the bombing started because the Serbs had looted and burned all the Albanian shops in the town and killed people such as the best doctor in the town. Apparently, almost 250 people must have been killed in Dakovica between the 25th of March and the 5th of April. The whole family left together on foot, carrying food and warm clothing. Our grandparents were unable to walk. They were old and sick. We left them in the Dakovica hospital. At the Customs post, the Serbs took the 2 000 DM that I was carrying, along with our identity papers. The Customs officers threatened to kill people who wouldn't hand over their money."

- Deve

A 40-year-old man told us: "The police came in the middle of the night. They assembled a quarter of the village ready to leave. At a checkpoint some way along the road towards the border, other policemen told us to take another route. At another checkpoint further on, the policemen decided to herd us right to the border. At the side of the road, near the village, we saw two bodies. They had been killed; I recognized one of them (he gave us the name). Our convoy was stopped frequently. There was a lot of military traffic on the road. At one point, two young chaps quite close to me were slaughtered with no questions asked; they must have been about

20 years old. The soldiers were about to kill a third when his mother screamed 'He isn't 15 yet!', so they left him alone. We recognized one of the paramilitary assassins because he wasn't masked. We all knew this man: he was the dentist in our district. Further on, they took a father and son aside and executed the son in front of the father, then two brothers, as well as the two oldest men from the village. Their bodies are still on the road. Our identity papers were confiscated at the border."

- Beci

A 66-year-old man told us :

"The police came to our village at around 11 o'clock on the 3rd of April and gave the inhabitants two hours to get out and go to Albania. The village wasn't far from the border, but the commander told everybody to go to Prizren. So everyone had to make a gigantic detour. On the road to Prizren, we saw only one body (a charred corpse by the side of the road). At least every 100 yards along the road, there were paramilitaries in balaclavas or with their faces hidden. As we went we saw villages being looted and the farm animals killed by the Serbs.

Beyond Prizren, they began extorting money from us (600 DM) by threatening us with firearms and taunting us with 'Where do you think you're going?'. A paramilitary ordered my son who was driving the tractor to turn his engine off or he would be killed, but the paramilitary was alone and surrounded on all sides by the crowd; he did not insist.

I saw four bodies in a ditch. The earth around them had been dug up and the bodies were in a terrible state. But since the Serbs were aiming their guns at us, we couldn't really get a good look. A bit further on, when a man got down from his tractor to fill up with petrol, his two daughters were abducted by paramilitaries. They just disappeared. A man who was very near to us in the convoy stopped at one point to answer a call of nature. He saw soldiers lead away a group of people a bit further on and slaughter them.

Around Zur, there were lots of soldiers. An old woman and two children (she was carrying a very young one in her arms and holding the other by the hand) were knocked down and killed by speeding army trucks. Between Zur and the border, the women were insulted regularly; my wife wanted to prepare food for the children. A soldier pointed a gun at her and threatened to kill her if she carried on. At the border, we were told to run. Our identity papers were confiscated near Dakovica."

- Nivocaz

A 76-year-old man :

"A year ago, our village was bombed, and we went to live in Dakovica. Four months later, the Serbs told us we could return to our village; there was only one habitable room left, the rest of the house had been destroyed by fire. Around 7 o'clock in the morning, on the 14th of April, policemen wearing balaclavas came to the village, there were lots of them and they were armed to the teeth. They told us to go to Albania. As soon as we had left, they set fire to the houses in the village which had escaped the first fire a year ago. There were 30 of us on the back of a tractor. Everyone from the village managed to escape (about 300 people). Some headed for Cafa Prusit. As for us, we headed for Vermitza. There were lots and lots of soldiers all along the road. We didn't witness any extortion, but we heard it said that many people coming from Drenitza had been beaten up, abducted and killed. Our identity papers were confiscated at the border."

- Batusa

A 35-year-old woman told us: "I left my home three weeks ago and hid in Dobroshta (near Dakovica) along with my family. We left there nine days ago, but the policemen/paramilitaries sent us back to Dakovica: 'Go home' they said to us 'we won't do anything to you'. On the 13th of April, they came into our houses in Batusa and set fire to them after having taken all our money. They weren't masked, but there were lots of them. My son was taken to a field not far from the house where he was beaten up to force him to give them his money. After that, they left him alone, and we were able to leave together. A few kilometers before Prizren, a plane flew over us. It was flying very low and fast and could see us clearly. For two or three hours, there had no longer been any soldiers with us. It dropped bombs on either side of the road. Everyone tried to throw themselves to the ground to protect themselves. No one was injured, so the plane came back again and bombed the very middle of our convoy, hitting the two vehicles in front of us. Everyone in these two tractors was killed (about ten people). We were in the third tractor; my brother, who was driving, had his arm torn off. Many people were injured. Ten minutes after the bombing, the police arrived with a truck to take away the injured and the dead; my husband helped to put the bodies into the truck; he counted 18 of them. The policemen said they were taking the injured to the hospital in Prizren. Our identity papers were confiscated at the border."