MSF KOSOVO  
HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT

1. Place of interview: Prishtina  
   Date of interview: 20 January 1999

2. Name of interviewer: Bas Tielen

3. Name of witness: Laurence Thavaux  
   Profession: MSF-nurse  
   Address:

4. Direct witness

5. Name of victim: Anonymous  
   Ethnic affiliation: Kosovo-Albanian  
   Family Status:  
   Position: villager  
   Profession:  
   Address: Racak  
   Contact person: Emergency council Racak?

6. Relation of witness to the victim(s): Non relative

7. Type of event: Murder

8. Date of event: 16 January 1999  
   Time of event: 12.00.  
   Location of event: Municipality Stojlje Village Racak

9. Description of event:

   When we were on our way between Stojlje and Petrovo [on Saturday 16 January], we were stopped by a group of women and children, who told us that the police had beaten them yesterday. We came to the entrance of Petrovo, where we were stopped by the UCK, who asked us to go to Racak. We went to Racak, and saw the house in front of which the decapitated man was lying. There was already a car in the yard, and some journalists. Soon after entering the yard I saw the body. The head was cut off in one blow, and was missing. The body had no other injuries. He wore simple clothes: a shirt and green trousers. It was a big man, about 50-60 years old. He was laying on his back, his right arm was folded over his breast and in his right hand he was holding a bullet, pointing upwards. He was laying in front of his house, in a hole near the gate. They killed him there. I went up to the hole, until I was at
about 1.5 metres from the body. There were pictures of the body later on on TV. Only a few people were left in the village. One woman was rolling on the ground, completely hysterical. A very nervous journalist of AFP said we had to go to a ditch further on, cause there were bodies there. We tried to give the woman an injection, but she was moving around too much so we couldn't help her.

We did not want to go up to the ditch, cause there was not much we could do, and the sight of the decapitated man was already enough for us. We went back to the cars to find wounded. In Petrovo we found the representative of Mother Theresa [Kosovo-Albanian charity, BT], we had already met before when MSF worked in this area. He told us that there were 15 wounded in an UCK-base further up the road. We had some dressing material, and went with the representative of Petrovo. In the car, he told us that the attack had started at 06.00 [on Friday] with shelling. After that, policemen, soldiers and masked civilians came into the village. He thinks the masked civilians were from the surroundings of Racak. The people locked up the villagers in their houses, and took a group up the hill. OSCE took the most seriously wounded to hospital in Pristina.

On the way to the UCK-base we met the doctor of that base. He said: “The wounded are ok, I'm going to identify the bodies in Racak.” He asked us to leave some medical materials for the wounded in the base. The UCK-base looked very well organised. It had two big buildings and a very new big tent. The site was very difficult to reach.

The guard at the entrance called the second in command of the base. He said that the people first of all needed protection. He also told us about 200 people in a village further up the hill, who had no food. He took our passports. Then he said: “The Serbs are barbarians. We never killed women and children.”

We started to load our material into one of the cars at the base, but then the commander of the base came up to us and started to shout at us that we should load the stuff back and take it to the civilians: “People will only say that we keep it for ourselves”. He got angry with Skender [one of MSF’s Kosovo-Albanian doctors, BT]. He accused the doctors of staying in the city to make money, and said that a UCK-fighter who was wounded by shrapnel had to pay 500 DM for treatment by a doctor in Urosevac/Ferizaj. He also said that there was going to be a time when the doctors would have to face the consequences of their behaviour.

We decided to go to the village where the 200 civilians were hiding. There was a lot of ice on the road and one of our cars got stuck. We managed to get to the village, and the representative of Mother Theresa, who was still with us, told the people there about what had happened in Racak. There was one woman there from Racak who started to cry. Soon, everyone was crying. We left blankets in the village, and went back with the woman and her family to Racak. 100 Metres from the UCK-base we got stuck again. Coming the other way, there were three cars of ICRC and two from IMC, on their way to the village.

They did not have any info about the massacre, and did not seem to have a plan about what to do. They had already been to the base. I said we were going to Racak. The guy of IMC asked me what I was doing here, and asked me what I was going to do. I said I wanted to go to Bellince, which had also been hit, and that I wanted to leave supplies in Petrovo. That was ok with him. They were not carrying any supplies. Also, the ICRC-team did not have a plan about what to do.

The family we were taking in the car asked us about who was now in Racak. We said it was the UCK, but the people were afraid to go out of the car when we came to Racak. The women
we met first in the small village eventually went out to take a look. After that we took the family to Stimlje, where they had family. We did not see any police in Racak. There was one tank in Stimlje, and 5 to 6 empty civilians truck with soldiers in the cabin. There were two policemen on the cross-roads at Petrovo.

We returned to Prishtina.

The most horrible thing was that we were not welcome: “You came to late, we don’t need you”.

15. Consent for further Human Right investigations / interviews? YES