

1992

## Chronology of Events in the Area of Zvornik

M. Cherif Bassiouni 1937-2017

Hans Fredrik Lehne

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarlycommons.law.case.edu/documents\\_780](https://scholarlycommons.law.case.edu/documents_780)

---

### Recommended Citation

Bassiouni 1937-2017, M. Cherif and Lehne, Hans Fredrik, "Chronology of Events in the Area of Zvornik" (1992). *Documents*. 67.

[https://scholarlycommons.law.case.edu/documents\\_780/67](https://scholarlycommons.law.case.edu/documents_780/67)

This Document is brought to you for free and open access by the United Nations 780 Commission at Case Western Reserve University School of Law Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Documents by an authorized administrator of Case Western Reserve University School of Law Scholarly Commons.

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS  
IN THE AREA OF ZVORNIK

CITY OF ZVORNIK

FEBRUARY 92:

The Yugoslavian National Army slowly starts to encircle the city of Zvornik with armoured tanks and artillery: In Karakaj<sup>1</sup> and in Celopek<sup>2</sup> forces from the JNA start to station themselves. The gunfire is directly aimed at the settlements of Divic and Kulagrad. Officials claim that the tanks were positioned in order to ward off an immediate attack from the Turks of Tuzla. Serbian families, mainly women and children begin to flee the city at once.

THURSDAY, APRIL 2, 1992:

Discreetly, the Zvornik regular police force (Bosnian-Serbs), starts to evacuate the Police Headquarters in Zvornik. Weapons, equipment and vehicles are moved to Karakaj by regular, on-duty Policemen belonging to the Serbian National Party. Until this point in time, Karakaj did not have a formal police base. Policemen from the Muslim National Party protested, but were unsuccessful in their efforts.

FRIDAY, APRIL 3, 1992:

On the week-end, the first Muslims start to abandon the city of Zvornik, heading for Malia Zvornik in Serbia or neighbouring villages in Bosnia.

SUNDAY, APRIL 5, 1992:

At night, Radio Zvornik reports that barricades between Zvornik and Karakaj had been erected by the Karakaj Police Force and by members of the SDS (the city is now divided into two zones; Serbian and Muslim). TV Belgrade warns of an imminent attack by the Turks on the Serbian population.

---

<sup>1</sup> In the northern part of Zvornik lies the highly industrialized area of Karakaj, where 60-80% of its population was gainfully employed. (Textile factory "Alhos", Shoe factory "Standard", Brickworks, among other things). The Technical Training Centre is also located here.

<sup>2</sup> North of Karakaj lies a conveniently located area (on the outskirts of the city of Zvornik); it is also considered to be an industrialized area and is inhabited by 93% of the Serbian population.

MONDAY, APRIL 6, 1992

That morning, due to the existing barricades, city dwellers were neither able to go work nor to school. There are more and more Muslims leaving the city (the majority go to Mali Zvornik).

TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 1992

In front of the barricades, the people of Zvornik organize violent demonstrations for freedom.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8, 1992

A meeting takes place between Serbian Politicians (SDS) and Muslim representatives (SDA) in Mali Zvornik. Also "Arkan" (Raznjatovic Arkan) is supposed to be present at this meeting. The SDS and SDA Politicians try to find a compromise, but Arkan gives an ultimatum. They cannot confirm with certainty, what is being demanded, for the reason of contradictory statements. One thing that they can confirm is that on 8 April at 7.00 hrs, Radio Zvornik made reference to an Ultimatum. Muslims go to the Mayor (SDA) and demand to have weapons for self-protection, but the Zvornik Police only have very few weapons left; old weapons, where the magazines had already been cleaned out (see above). Finally, a Muslim barricade is erected by the Serbian barricade.

At around noon, the first gun shots are heard. The Arkan Troops attack the northern part of the city alongside the barricade. Shortly afterwards, the grenade shelling on the city begins. The first grenades are shot down by the Serbian Troops in Karakaj, and strike the Serbian side of the Drina-bank (in Mali Zvornik<sup>3</sup>). Thereupon, the Serbs maintain that the Muslim people had also attacked the area from Mali Zvornik to Kulagrad<sup>4</sup>. The artillery and grenade bombardment on the city resulted from the JNA and "irregular groups" originating in Bosnian and Serbian territories. There was also gunfire from the Hills above and beyond Mali-Zvornik, the so-called "Vlaske Njive", where heavy artillery was positioned.

---

<sup>3</sup> Mali Zvornik is located on the eastern bank of the Drina (in Serbia) and is connected by two bridges to Zvornik. The "old bridge" joins the residential area of Zvornik with Mali Zvornik, and the "new bridge" joins Karakaj and Serbia together.

<sup>4</sup> Kulagrad is located on the Bosnian side in the mountains that surround Zvornik and is a middle-aged fortress. Most likely, fully-armed Muslim defenders retreated to this area. (They maintain never to have possessed artillery or grenades). It was only at the end of April/beginning of May that Kulagrad was overtaken by the Serbians, with massive support from tanks and helicopters from the JNA).

FROM THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 1992

The city was under heavy artillery and grenade bombardment all night long. At 7.00 hrs, Radio Zvornik spoke once again about an Ultimatum: the inhabitants should surrender their weapons or else the attack on the city would recommence. During the battle pause, many people could still flee to Mali via the "old bridge". Throughout the day, Arkan troops invade the northern area of the city. The remaining citizens of Zvornik take shelter in their basements for fear of further bombardments. Different Serbian "irregular groups" march through the streets: fetching people out of their basements and inspecting the people themselves for weapons, as well as their homes; men in possession of weapons, business men, those trying to resist, were killed or otherwise deported to Karakaj<sup>5</sup>. Part of the population is taken to Mali Zvornik. Others could organize their own escape, attempt to keep themselves well-hidden within the city, or possibly "arrange" a deal with the aggressors.

The End of April On television the SDS Politicians from Zvornik ordered the fleeing people to return back to Zvornik, and to report themselves to the municipal authorities. They should register their personal property with the authorities until 15 May, otherwise the property would be handed over to the "Serbian Community of Zvornik". In that respect, many families went back to Zvornik, in order not to lose their property.

Around the 15th of May, the systematic exodus began: The people of Zvornik are repressed (arrested, deported to Karakaj, robbed, executed, raped); it is almost impossible to leave the city alone, without being molested. It was only possible to leave the city under the condition that the people give up their property "freely" to the Serbian authorities.<sup>6</sup> In Zvornik, these "barter agreements" lasted almost until the end of June/beginning of July (it is not possible to determine the exact time period, as to when the supposed "ethnic cleansing" took place).

After Zvornik, other villages soon became occupied and "ethnically cleansed". Many people (even those in the city, as well in the villages) were brought to Subotica in Serbia, where they received Serbian passes and were deported to Austria. Others meanwhile, fled in the direction of Tuzla or were forcefully taken there.

---

<sup>5</sup> In the industrialized area, Serbians constructed numerous camps, where people were forced to do hard labour and/or were tortured or killed. As well as the "irregular groups" and members of the JNA became the administrators of these camps. Most of the prisoners were later on moved to Batkovic near Bijeljina.

<sup>6</sup> After the signing of the "Agreement (for the exchange of property)", they were allowed to leave the city.

DIVIC

Divic, a southern suburb of Zvornik, fell only in the middle of April, as the Serbs suspected the "green berets" to be there. Women and children were deported the men were brought into various areas of the occupied (Bosnian) territories belonging to the Serbs, where they were seized as hostages, and kept for further "barter agreements". If no exchange occurred, many were brought to Batkovic, a camp close to Bijeljina.

KOZLUK

This area was most likely overtaken by Serbian "irregular groups" (and/or the JNA?). A member of the City Hall handled negotiations of terms, so that inhabitants could leave the city. Around noon, 25 June, approximately 2,000 people were taken in trucks and cars out of the city. Almost the entire "population" went through Subotica into Austria.

G. SEPAK

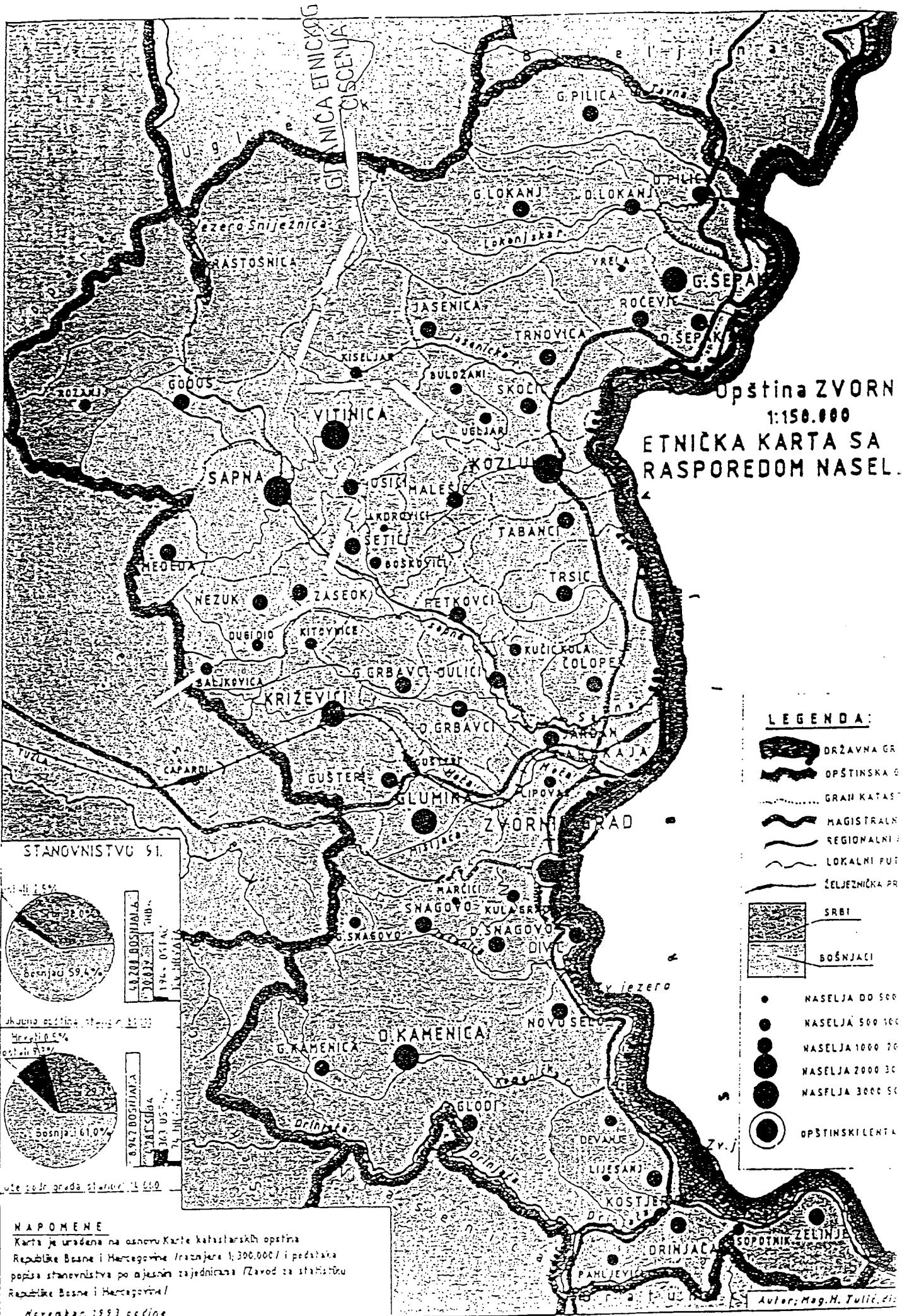
Located on the Drina, G. Sepak which was inhabited by 2,000 people, was the last place in the Zvornik region to be "cleansed".

PRESENT SITUATION

The Zvornik Region is divided into two areas: The larger area (Eastern part) is under Serbian control (see the enclosed map of the Frontline). At this border crossing, one can still encounter serious conflicts.

REMARKS:

This summary is based on the corresponding accounts of living refugees who fled to Austria. Otherwise, reports were compiled from various international media sources, where individual witnesses or news reports from Radio Sarajevo were used. This was supported by the news agency TANJU, as journalists were refused entry into the city and forbidden to enter certain areas.

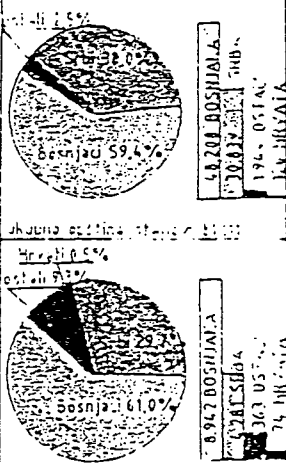


Opština ZVORNİK  
1:150.000  
ETNIČKA KARTA SA  
RASPOREDOM NASEL.

LEGENDA:

- DRŽAVNA GR.
- OPŠTINSKA G.
- GRAN. KATASTR.
- MAGISTRALNA P.
- REGIONALNA P.
- LOKALNI PUT
- ŽELJEZNIČKA PR.
- SRBI
- BOŠNJIACI
- NASELJA DO 500
- NASELJA 500-1000
- NASELJA 1000-2000
- NASELJA 2000-3000
- NASELJA 3000-5000
- OPŠTINSKI CENTAR

STANOVNIŠTVU 51.



NAPOMENE

Karta je urađena na osnovu Karte katastarskih opština Republike Bosne i Hercegovine Iraznjere 1:300.000 i podataka popisa stanovništva po mjesnim zajednicama (Zavod za statistiku Republike Bosne i Hercegovine) /  
Novembar, 1993 godine

Autor: Mag. H. Tulić, dr.