

ny and his family lived in Prekaz i Poshtëm/Donje Prekaze, under the same roof as Adem's and Hamëz's families, and their parents, Shaban and Zahide.

The family of Shaban Jashari had opposed the Serbian authorities from the early 1990s. Adem formed the first military unit composed of Kosovo Albanians. Serb police had attacked the Jashari family compound on several occasions in an attempt to arrest Adem, but each time the Jasharis managed to repel the attacks. In an attack that took place on 22 January 1998, Hamëz's daughter Selvete and Rifat's daughter Ilirjana were wounded. After that, many men from the village, including Shaban's wife Zahide's brother, Osman Geci, volunteered to help defend the compound.

On the early morning of 5 March 1998, the 37th Detachment of the PJP encircled **Prekaz i Poshtëm/Donje Prekaze**, at a distance of some 300 metres from the nearest houses in the village. The Serb Special Forces - PJP, SAJ as well as JSO – deployed several dozen armoured personnel carriers and tanks to destroy the village. The JSO was under the command of Milorad Luković a.k.a. "Legija" (Legion). Police were ordered to kill, indiscriminately, anyone, be it a child, woman or elderly person, who attempted to get out of or into the village.

Police, shooting uninterruptedly with automatic weapons, machine-guns and tanks, called on the Jasharis to give themselves up. Shaban, Adem and Hamëz organised the defence of the compound in which, along with the Jashari menfolk, men from the *Jashari* neighbourhood of Prekaz i Poshtëm/Donje Prekaze and other villages also participated, including Sherif, Faik, Ali and Sinan Jashari. The women and children, the elderly Zahide, Adem's wife Adile with their children, Fitim and Kushtrim, Hamëz's wife Feride with their children – Besarta, Selvete, Afete, Lirije, Fatime, Blerina, Blerim and Besim - and Rifat's wife Zarife and their children – Hidajete, Igballe, Valdet and Igballe – were crammed into one room in the basement. Some of the women occasionally went out of the basement into the yard or upstairs,

to join in the shooting or to fetch and distribute ammunition.

During the first day of the attack, Adem's wife Adile was killed as she went back to the basement from the first floor. Family members put her body in the basement and covered it with a blanket. On the evening of the first day, Bashkim, Rifat's son, and his cousins Ragip and Billal, were situated next to the third Jashari house, before they moved towards the edge of the compound, from where they could not access weapons nor return to the compound. So they went to Mikushnicë/Mikušnica and hid at Kamber Manxholli's.

Adem, Shaban and Hamëz and the other men resisted the attack for three days. In the heaviest shelling that took place on the morning of Saturday, **7 March 1998**, the Jashari houses were almost completely destroyed by shells and bullets, and the basement walls cracked. Everyone hiding in the basement, except Hamëz Jashari's eleven year-old daughter Besarta, was killed by the shell blasts. Adem Jashari was killed while defending the entrance to the basement. Besarta saw him fall next to the staircase. After his death, his son Kushtrim, carrying an automatic rifle, escaped from the basement and into the yard in order to get to the other house. He was killed as he ran across the yard.

On the morning of 7 March 1998, while police were collecting the bodies of the killed Albanians, Radoslav Mitrović, commander of the PJP 37th Detachment, and Goran Radosavljević a.k.a. "Guri", commander of the Operative Posse Groups of the Serbian MUP, arrived on the scene. Police in *pinzgauers*, accompanied by military *TAM 500* trucks with blue tarps, were driving through the destroyed and burnt house, loading the bodies of killed Albanians onto trucks. These trucks transported at least thirty bodies. Other bodies were loaded onto other vehicles and driven away. Police then put the killed people into wooden coffins, which they stored inside the Lah Tushila's construction material and equipment warehouse, above the village. The police asked the people to recover the bodies of their respective