

Municipality Shtërpçë/Štrpce

Sladan (Ratko) Popović

(born 21/07/1971, Serb from Nakëll/Naklo, Pejë/Peć municipality, single, member of MUP RS)

After completing secondary education and fulfilling his compulsory term with the army, Sladan worked for six months at the Post Office in Pejë/Peć. He then completed a police training course in Vushtrri/Vučitrn and in 1992 joined the Klinë/Klina Police Department. On **27 September 1998**, Sladan and his unit were patrolling the wood above the village of **Studenicë/Studenica** when a fellow officer, Slavoljub Đurišić, was wounded by a sniper. As Sladan ran to help him, he was also hit by a sniper bullet in the neck and died instantly. Sladan was buried on 28 September 1998 in the cemetery of his native village. 40 days later his mother had his and his father's mortal remains transferred to the family tomb she had built.

Sources: statement of S.P, HLC-27954; KMC AFRY, Persons died..., HLC-10832; SV SRJ, *Junaci otadžbine*, 54; SMIP, *Teroristički...*, III, 525, 940.

Daut (Avdulla) Rexhepi

(born 12/03/1958, Albanian from Viqë/Viča, Shtërpçë/Štrpce municipality, unemployed, four children)

Daut had been a police officer until 25 March 1990. After serving at the Mitrovicë/Kosovska Mitrovica Police Station and Ferizaj/Uroševac Police Station later on, he became chief of the Police Station in the village of Babush/Babuš. He was married

to Nexhmije, with whom he had two sons and two daughters. They lived under the same roof with Daut's brother and parents. In May 1998, Serb paramilitary groups began patrolling the villages of the Shtërpçë/Štrpce municipality. One such group erected a checkpoint at the crossroads near the bridge on the *Lepenc/Lepenac* River on 27 September 1998. Because of that, the next morning [**28 September 1998**], at about 07:30h Daut accompanied his children to their school in Drajkoc/Drajkovac. At about 08:00h, Serb forces arrived in **Viqë/Viča** and started to search the houses of its Albanian inhabitants. Daut's house was searched too. At about 10:00h, Daut's father, brother and uncle went looking for Daut. A Serb neighbour said to them that police had taken Daut to the police station in Shtërpçë/Štrpce. They went there, but the police sent them away with gross insults. Daut's brother Nazmi then went along to a Serb, a friend of his family, and returned with him to the police station. The chief of the police station, Daut's ex-colleague, [his identity is known to the HLC] said that Daut's destiny was in the hands of a State Security inspector [whose identity is known to the HLC]. The said inspector, however, denied to Daut's brother and his friend that Daut had been detained by the police, and warned Nazmi that he too would "end up in the basement" unless he stopped inquiring about his brother. The Rexhepis waited for Daut's children to return from school, and at around 15:00h fled to Ferizaj/Uroševac. They kept inquiring about Daut wherever they could, but to no avail.